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Strengthening Students' Morals Through Internalization of Tawadhu' Values in the Ta'limul Muta'allim Book at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Pekanbaru City

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ABSTRACT

Strengthening the character of students is an important aspect of education in Indonesia, especially in madrasahs. This study aims to explore how the internalization of the value of tawadhu' in the Ta'limul Muta'allim book can contribute to strengthening the character of students at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Kota Pekanbaru. Tawadhu' or humility is considered one of the essential moral values in shaping students' noble character. Through a qualitative approach, this study collected data from observations, interviews, and documentation studies related to the implementation of tawadhu' values in the learning process. The results show that the application of tawadhu' in the Ta'limul Muta'allim book not only serves as a moral guideline but also as a tool for building social awareness and empathy among students. Students are encouraged to respect and honor each other's opinions, contributing to a harmonious learning environment. Supporting data shows that the vast majority of students feel more confident and comfortable interacting with their friends after applying the value of humility in their daily lives.

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INTRODUCTION

The issue of declining morality among Generation Z has become one of the top priorities in human resource development in the modern era, amid the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI). Strengthening religious understanding serves as a vital bulwark to protect the "golden generation" from moral and ethical transgressions, enabling them to grow into individuals of good character (Yuyun et al., 2023).The government's "golden generation" slogan represents an effort to prepare the best generation one that masters science and technology while possessing good character, with Islamic ideals and the values of "rahmatan lil 'alamin" (a blessing for all creation) deeply ingrained in the personalities of Generation Z. Strengthening spirituality is a crucial dimension for the future development of the Indonesian people, particularly through educational institutions.

Madrasahs are among the best settings for developing and integrating scientific and spiritual capabilities. Madrasahs play a vital role in meeting students' needs, particularly in strengthening moral education and fostering a religious culture, so that moral development can be realized through continuous training and applied in students' daily lives within the community (Jannah, 2023). Strengthening moral character is thus an essential component for educational institutions especially madrasahs to prepare graduates who are not only knowledgeable but also spiritually competent, grounded in moral values.

MAN 1 Pekanbaru is one of the leading madrasahs in Pekanbaru, particularly in religious and Islamic studies, with numerous achievements in Quran recitation, Quran memorization, Islamic choral singing, and science, as well as sending students to the Middle East through both scholarship and non-scholarship programs. However, amidst these achievements, there is a perception that academic performance is prioritized over the cultivation of good manners, leading some senior teachers to observe a lack of courtesy among certain students such as using impolite language, a lack of reverence while in the mosque, and a lack of enthusiasm in praying after worship. This situation calls for a renewed awareness of the importance of humility, as stated in the words of Allah SWT: "And do not walk arrogantly on the earth, for you can never pierce the earth, nor can you ever reach the height of the mountains" (QS. Al-Isra: 37).

Muafi (2023), in his study, emphasizes that humility significantly influences an individual's service performance; when interpreted in an educational context, this indicates that humility helps shape the quality of an individual's behavior and social interactions. Humility guides the human spirit to obey Allah SWT, avoid arrogance, and foster sincerity in accepting life's realities. This attitude must be internalized by students so that the knowledge they acquire leads to a balance between the physical and spiritual dimensions. The internalization of values is a process of deeply experiencing, exploring, and mastering values through guidance and mentoring, which ultimately becomes an integral part of the students' character or behavior (Azidar, 2024). This process is inseparable from the exemplary role (uswah) of teachers—particularly Islamic Religious Education teachers—who serve as figures who practice and spread the value of tawadhu' both within the madrasah and in the wider community (Almuniroh, 2023).

The teachings and examples of humility are systematically presented in the book Ta'lim al-Muta'allim by Sheikh Az-Zarnuji, which contains moral teachings regarding Allah the Almighty, His Messenger, parents, teachers, and fellow human beings. This book is generally studied in Islamic boarding schools throughout Indonesia using methods unique to these institutions, such as sorogan, bandongan, or halaqah (Suherman et al., 2025). The study of this text in Islamic boarding schools is relatively easier compared to public madrasahs, as the heterogeneity of students and the different learning environment require special treatment. Roziqin and Hasbullah (2023), for example, found that the implementation of the Ta'lim al-Muta'allim at the Bahrul 'Ulum Tambakberas Islamic Boarding School in Jombang fosters students who are disciplined in their worship and respectful toward their teachers, as the boarding school's culture and environment strongly support the instillation of humility in the students.

MAN 1 Kota Pekanbaru has a flagship "Middle East Class" program that examines Arabic grammar alongside classical Islamic texts, including the Ta'lim al-Muta'allim, which is taught in grades 10 and 11. Unlike the traditional pesantren methods of sorogan or bandongan, the study of classical texts at MAN 1 Pekanbaru City is presented through a step-by-step text analysis model: reading line by line, adding vowel marks, analyzing word by word, analyzing i'rab, and finally translating with the hope that students will be better equipped to understand and practice the value of humility in their daily lives. Based on this background, the research questions for this study are: How is the moral character of students at MAN 1 Pekanbaru City strengthened, and how is the value of tawadhu' internalized through the study of the book Ta'lim al-Muta'allim? The objective of this study is to describe the strengthening of the moral character of students at MAN 1 Pekanbaru and the process of internalizing the value of tawadhu' in the study of the Kitab Ta'lim al-Muta'allim.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to deeply understand the strengthening of students' morals through the internalization of tawadhu' values in the Ta'lim al-Muta'allim book at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Pekanbaru City. The research subjects were determined using purposive and snowball sampling techniques, involving teachers of classical Islamic texts, Islamic Religious Education teachers, homeroom teachers of the Middle East Class, as well as tenth and eleventh-grade students. Primary

data sources were obtained through interviews and direct observations, along with related documents such as the Ta'lim al-Muta'allim text, interview transcripts, student data, and student activity records. Secondary data sources were gathered through literature studies and documentation from print and electronic media.

Data collection techniques included semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation study (Arikunto, 2013). Interviews were conducted to explore in-depth information about the transformation, transaction, and trans-internalization stages of tawadhu' values in shaping students' morals. Non-participant observation was conducted to observe the book learning process and the students' daily behavior in the madrasah environment, while documentation study was used to collect supporting data such as the book study schedule and student activity records. Data validity was tested through member checking and triangulation of sources, data, and techniques. The data were then reduced, displayed, and analyzed using descriptive-analytical techniques following the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994), before conclusions were drawn.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 in Pekanbaru offers several specialized classes, one of which is the Middle East Class, designed to prepare graduates to pursue higher education in the Middle East through scholarships from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, such as to Al-Azhar in Egypt, Sudan, Morocco, and Turkey. The practice of studying classical Islamic texts is a hallmark of the Middle East Class, and one of the texts that guides the improvement of students' moral character is *Kitab Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* by Sheikh Az-Zarnuji, which contains moral values regarding Allah the Almighty, His Messenger, parents, teachers, and fellow human beings. The strengthening of students' moral character through the internalization of the value of humility (tawadhu') in this text is carried out by presenting passages from the book that contain teachings on humility so that they can be understood and practiced within the educational environment. Based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentary studies, this moral strengthening was found to occur through four main stages, namely: (1) presenting an understanding of the essence of humility, (2) the process of internalizing the value, (3) implementing the value in daily behavior, and (4) the impact of moral strengthening on students' character.

Research Findings

The Values of Tawadhu' in the Book Ta'lim al-Muta'allim

A documentary analysis of the text Ta'lim al-Muta'allim taught at MAN 1 in Pekanbaru reveals that the value of tawadhu' is conveyed both explicitly and implicitly across four core dimensions. First, humility before Allah the Almighty emphasizes the awareness that knowledge is a gift and a trust from Him, and thus not something to be boastful about, as emphasized in the phrase: "Knowledge is the enemy of the arrogant youth, just as a flood is the enemy of high ground." Second, humility toward the teacher is manifested in respectful manners, such as not walking in front of the teacher, not sitting in their seat, and not initiating conversation without permission, because the blessings of knowledge depend on respect for the teacher. Third, humility toward knowledge involves respecting religious texts and textbooks, maintaining personal purity (performing wudu) while studying, and not placing books carelessly. Finally, humility toward peers involves respecting one another's opinions, not looking down on classmates who do not yet understand, and helping one another in acts of kindness. These four core values serve as the primary guidelines for teachers in designing instructional materials and fostering daily etiquette within the madrasah environment

The Process of Internalizing the Value of Tawadhu' in Students

Data from interviews and observations indicate that the internalization of the value of tawadhu' among students in the Middle East Class at MAN 1 in Pekanbaru takes place through three stages: value transformation (cognitive), value transaction (affective), and transinternalization (psychomotor). During the value transformation stage, teachers provide a deep understanding of the importance of tawadhu' through the gradual reading and analysis of the text Kitab Ta'lim al-Muta'allim: reading line by line, adding vowel

marks, analyzing word by word, analyzing grammatical case (i'rab), and finally translating and explaining the moral meanings contained within. During the value transaction stage, a two-way interaction occurs between the teacher and the students, allowing the value of tawadhu' to begin to touch the students' affective realm, marked by the emergence of sincere respect (ta'zhim) toward the teacher and the text being studied. At the stage of transinternalization, the value of tawadhu' begins to become integrated into the students' personalities, marked by a willingness to listen to others' opinions, refraining from showing off one's abilities (not "flexing"), and maintaining proper etiquette while in a gathering of knowledge.

The Implementation of the Value of Tawadhu' in Students' Behavior

The results of the observation show that the internalization of the value of tawadhu' is reflected in three forms of students' daily etiquette: etiquette toward teachers, etiquette toward knowledge, and etiquette toward peers, as presented below.

1. Etiquette toward teachers: not walking ahead of the teacher, not speaking excessively in the teacher's presence without permission, and being mindful not to hurt the teacher's feelings.
2. Etiquette toward knowledge: respecting textbooks and study materials by not leaving them carelessly on the floor, and maintaining personal purity (performing wudu) while studying.
3. Etiquette toward peers: not looking down on classmates who have not yet understood the lesson and helping one another in acts of kindness, including during group study sessions.

The Impact of Moral Strengthening on Students' Character

Supporting data from interviews and qualitative self-reports administered to students in the Middle East Class indicate that most students feel more confident and comfortable interacting with their peers after applying the value of tawadhu' in their daily lives. The teachers in charge of the religious studies classes also noted that students who regularly attended the religious study sessions exhibited more polite behavior, were more patient in listening to others' opinions, and were more composed in responding to their own achievements, thereby minimizing displays of arrogance (flexing) both at school and on social media.

Discussion

The Essence of Tawadhu' in the Book Ta'lim al-Muta'allim

In the book Ta'lim al-Muta'allim, tawadhu' (humility) is presented as the primary washilah (means) for attaining the blessings of knowledge. The findings of this study confirm that tawadhu' is not merely a shy attitude, but rather a middle ground between arrogance (kibr) and self-deprecating humility (dzull). Students who internalize this value view knowledge as a gift from God and therefore do not feel superior to others, especially toward teachers and fellow seekers of knowledge. These findings align with the results of a study by Syairozi (2025) at the Darul Ulum Sugio Islamic Boarding School, which found that this text is not merely a reading material but a guide to life that shapes the character traits of discipline, humility, and respect for teachers through consistent practice and exemplary behavior. This also reinforces the findings (Suherman et al., 2025), which affirm the relevance of the teachings of *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* as an effective instrument of Islamic character education that addresses the moral challenges of the younger generation, including Generation Z, which is the focus of this study.

Stages of Internalizing the Attitude of Tawadhu' Among Students

Research findings indicate that the internalization of the value of tawadhu' at MAN 1 Pekanbaru City occurs through three stages: cognitive (value transformation), affective (value transaction), and psychomotor (value internalization). This phased pattern aligns with the concept of value internalization, which emphasizes that the instillation of values is a gradual process—from mere knowledge to internalization, and ultimately becoming an integral part of one's personality (Azidar, 2024). A key difference lies in the delivery methods: while in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), the internalization of values from religious texts is generally carried out through the sorogan and bandongan methods, as well as intensive role modeling within the boarding school environment (Langeningtias et al., 2024; Pirkun, 2022) at

MAN 1 Kota Pekanbaru—a non-boarding public madrasah—the internalization of values is supported primarily by systematic text analysis in the classroom and teachers' exemplary behavior during daily interactions at school. This situation reinforces the argument that the heterogeneity of students and the limited time available for religious text study in public madrasahs require a more structured strategy for the internalization of values compared to the study patterns in pesantren.

The affective stage, characterized by the development of a sense of ta'zhim (sincere respect) toward teachers, aligns with the findings (Al-Rosyid et al., 2023) that interactive guidance in the Ta'lim al-Muta'allim text—reading, understanding, and discussing its content—is capable of fostering a deep moral understanding and a character of integrity. As for the psychomotor stage, reflected in the students' willingness to listen to others' opinions and avoid showing off, it demonstrates that the value of tawadhu' has transformed from knowledge into a habit (habituation), as emphasized by (Alqudsi et al., 2023)who state that the effective development of religious character is formed through consistent and sustained habituation.

Implementation of the Value of Tawadhu' in Students' Lives

The implementation of the value of tawadhu' among students at MAN 1 Pekanbaru is evident in three dimensions of etiquette: etiquette toward teachers, etiquette toward knowledge, and etiquette toward others. This finding is consistent with the results of a study (Roziqin & Hasbullah, 2023)at the Bahrul 'Ulum Tambakberas Islamic Boarding School in Jombang, which found that the implementation of the *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim text fosters students who are polite toward teachers, do not walk in front of them, and do not initiate conversations unless given permission. The similarity in these patterns of etiquette indicates that the values in the Ta'lim al-Muta'allim are universal and remain relevant for application in both Islamic boarding schools and public madrasahs, despite differences in teaching approaches.

As for etiquette toward knowledge—such as maintaining personal purity while studying and respecting the book as a source of knowledge—this reinforces the finding by Almuniroh (2023) that students' humility is largely shaped by the example set by Islamic Religious Education teachers who consistently demonstrate respect for knowledge in the presence of their students. Meanwhile, etiquette toward peers—manifested in mutual respect and refraining from belittling classmates who do not yet understand—demonstrates that the internalization of the value of humility has not only a vertical dimension (toward Allah SWT and teachers) but also a horizontal dimension (toward fellow human beings), consistent with the findings (Yuyun et al., 2023) regarding the importance of strengthening social ethics through habitual practices within the educational environment.

Social ethics is a form of moral behavior manifested through a person's relationships and interactions with others in social life. Social ethics are not merely related to ethical norms or rules but encompass life values that serve as a guide for an individual's attitudes, responses, and active participation in society. Fundamentally, social ethics reflect the character inherent within an individual, as behavior in social life does not form without a foundation. Such behavior stems from a pure heart, inner peace, and a sound understanding of the rights and obligations that must be upheld in building relationships with others (Yantika et al., 2025).

Social ethics is Islamic ethics, which serves as one of the key foundations in character education and the process of developing a well-rounded individual. In Islamic teachings, aqidah, sharia, and akhlak are three fundamental, interrelated elements that form a comprehensive framework for developing both an individual's spiritual integrity and social life. Furthermore, the active involvement of young people in social activities—such as charity events, aid for those in need, and environmental awareness initiatives—facilitates the internalization of Islamic values into their daily lives (Istianah & Solikhin, 2025).

The Impact of Moral Strengthening on Students' Character

Data showing that 85% of students feel more confident and comfortable interacting with their peers after applying the value of tawadhu' indicates that the internalization of this value has a positive impact not only on the spiritual dimension but also on the psychosocial dimension of students. A humble attitude that

grows from an understanding of religious texts makes students more open to receiving feedback, more empathetic toward their peers, and more self-controlled in responding to their achievements, thereby avoiding the tendency to show off (flexing), both in the school environment and on social media. This finding reinforces the results of a study (Muafi, 2023) showing that an attitude of humility has a significant effect on an individual's performance and service quality; in an educational context, this attitude also influences the quality of social relationships and fosters a harmonious learning environment in the classroom. This impact is also consistent with the findings (Jannah, 2023) that strengthening moral character through a religious-cultural approach in madrasahs is effective in fostering mutual respect and a conducive learning environment.

Factors Supporting and Hindering the Internalization of the Value of Tawadhu' in Public Madrasahs

This study also identified a number of factors supporting and hindering the process of internalizing the value of tawadhu' at MAN 1 Pekanbaru City. The primary supporting factor is the consistent exemplary behavior of teachers of classical Islamic texts and Islamic Religious Education in practicing the value of tawadhu' in front of students, as emphasized by (Almuniroh, 2023), who states that teachers' exemplary behavior is a key factor in successfully fostering a sense of tawadhu' among students. Another supporting factor is the existence of a religious madrasah ecosystem, such as congregational prayer activities and the regular study of classical Islamic texts in the Middle Eastern Studies class, which provide a space for the continuous reinforcement of values (Alqudsi et al., 2023).

The identified inhibiting factors include the heterogeneity of students' religious backgrounds—not all of whom come from pesantren environments—the limited time allocated for studying classical Islamic texts compared to the intensive study patterns in pesantren, and the influence of digital culture and social media, which have the potential to foster a desire to show off (flexing) among students. These conditions reinforce the statement in the research background that strengthening religious understanding serves as a vital bulwark amid the rapid development of digital technology and artificial intelligence faced by Generation Z (Suherman et al., 2025; Yuyun et al., 2023). Thus, the internalization of the value of tawadhu' in public madrasahs such as MAN 1 Pekanbaru requires a more adaptive strategy—namely, integrating a systematic model of textual analysis of religious texts with the reinforcement of teachers' exemplary conduct and the cultivation of daily etiquette—so that the noble values in the book *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* can be optimally internalized even without the full support of a boarding school system as found in traditional Islamic boarding schools (pesantren).

CONCLUSION

The strengthening of students' moral character at MAN 1 Pekanbaru City is effectively carried out through the internalization of tawadhu' (humility) values derived from the Ta'lim al-Muta'allim book. This process is conducted systematically across three domains: cognitive (through gradual text analysis in class), affective (via teachers' exemplary behavior), and psychomotor (through the habituation of daily etiquette toward teachers, knowledge, and peers). Consequently, students develop a deep sense of respect (ta'zhim), exhibit academic integrity, and demonstrate better self-control against boastful behavior (flexing) in both real-world and digital interactions. Despite facing challenges related to students' diverse religious backgrounds and the pervasive influence of digital culture, the success of this character-building relies heavily on a supportive religious madrasah ecosystem and the consistent exemplary conduct of educators.

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