

## Fostering Qur'anic Character through Virtual Recitation: A Qualitative Study of the Khatam Al-Qur'an Programme at an Indonesian Medical Faculty

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### Abstract

*This study investigates the implementation and impact of Qur'anic recitation completion (khatam Al-Qur'an) activities as a medium for character development among students at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia (UMI), Makassar. The research is guided by three primary questions: (1) What is the structure of the khatam Al-Qur'an program in the context of student character formation? (2) What character values are cultivated through this activity? and (3) How effective is the implementation of the khatam Al-Qur'an program within the faculty environment? The objective is to analyze the implementation process, identify the character values fostered, and assess the program's effectiveness in integrating spiritual and professional development among medical students. The activity is held regularly during the holy month of Ramadan and is positioned as a strategic initiative for character education grounded in Islamic spiritual values. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, using data collected through observations, in-depth interviews, and questionnaires administered to participating students and program facilitators. The results reveal that the program is systematically implemented in both online and offline formats through two main modalities: (1) One Day One Juz (ODOJ), conducted individually, and (2) collective qira'ah sessions, carried out in turns via virtual platforms or face-to-face gatherings. These formats effectively instill core character values such as religiosity, honesty, discipline, responsibility, and inner peace. Students reported that participation in the program significantly enhanced their spiritual well-being, boosted academic motivation, and shaped a strong foundation for ethical professionalism in the medical field. The present study sheds light on the khatam Al-Qur'an program conducted during Ramadan which serves as an effective and integrative tool for character development, bridging spiritual enrichment with academic and professional ethics. The model demonstrates strong potential to be adapted as a sustainable character-building initiative within higher education institutions rooted in Islamic values.*

**Keywords:** Character Development, Qur'anic Recitation, Ramadan, Islamic Values, Medical Students.

### INTRODUCTION

Character formation constitutes a fundamental pillar of education, especially in cultivating a generation that excels not only intellectually but also in moral and spiritual dimensions. From an Islamic perspective, character education rests on a robust theological foundation, as affirmed in the Qur'anic verse Surah Ar-Ra'd (13):11:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ

*“Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is within themselves”.*

This verse underscores that social transformation begins with individual change, particularly in matters of ethics and conduct. Consequently, character development is not a mere supplement to the educational process but a primary pillar in shaping holistic human quality.

Thomas Lickona (2019), a leading figure in character education, defines it as “the deliberate effort to cultivate virtue that is, objectively good human qualities that are good for the individual person and good for the whole society.” Thus, education must aim not only to sharpen intellect but also to nurture the moral qualities essential for social life.

Echoing this concept, Fitriani Rahayu (2019) observes that it aligns with the views of the classical Muslim philosopher Ibn Miskawaih. In *Tahdzib al-Akhlak*, Ibn Miskawaih asserts that character can be shaped through structured and continuous education. He maintains that ideal character-building rests on four principles: self-control, wisdom, courage, and justice. This correspondence highlights the strong epistemological and practical roots of character education in Islam.

Within the higher-education context, fostering student character becomes increasingly vital particularly at the Faculty of Medicine of Universitas Muslim Indonesia (UMI) Makassar, which is committed to integrating Islamic values into its curriculum and campus life. Medical students are expected to possess not only clinical competence but also high levels of morality and integrity as future healthcare professionals. To support this goal, one approach implemented is the khatam Al-Qur’an [complete recitation of the Qur’an] program.

The khatam Al-Qur’an activity holds significant potential for shaping student character, as it encompasses spiritual values, responsibility, honesty, and discipline. Beyond an act of worship, the program serves as a medium for deep internalization of moral values. Imam Nawawi (2012, فيسبوك | Imam Nawawi - النووي الامام - ... الله رضي النووي الإمام علي العلماء ثناء), in *At-Tibyan*, emphasizes that completing the Qur’an—especially when conducted collectively (Idarotul Qur’an [rotational group recitation])—cultivates camaraderie, discipline, and spiritual consistency within individuals.

Despite the routine implementation of the khatam Al-Qur’an program at UMI’s Faculty of Medicine, no comprehensive scientific study has yet evaluated its effectiveness in developing student character. In everyday academic and social life on campus, serious challenges persist, such as weak discipline, low sense of responsibility, and limited spiritual sensitivity among students.

As the need grows to integrate professional education with spiritual development, the khatam Al-Qur’an program can serve as a strategic model for character formation in higher education. Moreover, this approach aligns with national policy directions aimed at strengthening character education rooted in cultural and religious values.

Against this background, the present study seeks to examine in depth the forms, values, and effectiveness of the khatam Al-Qur’an activity as a vehicle for student character development at the Faculty of Medicine, UMI Makassar. This research is essential for contributing to the development of Islamic-based character-building strategies in higher education, particularly in shaping graduates who are morally upright, professionally competent, and religiously grounded.

## METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of exploring, understanding, and comprehensively describing the process of character development among students through the khatam Al-Qur'an programme at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia (UMI) Makassar. This approach was chosen to gain a holistic understanding of the character values shaped through the activity and to uncover the meaning of the students' experiences during their participation. The qualitative design was considered appropriate because it allows in-depth investigation into the context-specific dynamics of spiritual practices and their impact on student character.

The research was conducted throughout the month of Ramadan, from March 1 to March 30, 2025. It took place at the Faculty of Medicine, UMI Makassar, located on Jalan Urip Sumoharjo KM. 5, Makassar, South Sulawesi. Due to the nature of the activity and the constraints of time and accessibility, data collection was carried out online using the Zoom platform, enabling real-time observation and interaction with participants.

The target population of the study consisted of all students at the Faculty of Medicine who participated in the khatam Al-Qur'an programme. Specifically, the research focused on 100 fourth-year students from the 2023 cohort, with ten of them selected as key informants based on their active involvement throughout Ramadan. Additionally, a lecturer who served as the programme supervisor was also included as a research subject to provide institutional and pedagogical perspectives.

The research was implemented in three primary stages. The planning phase involved determining the research site and subjects and preparing the research instruments. During the data collection phase, the researcher conducted direct and online observations of the programme sessions, in-depth interviews with selected informants, and collected documentation related to the activity. The data analysis process occurred simultaneously with data collection, allowing for immediate reflection, refinement, and contextual understanding of emerging themes.

The primary instrument in this study was the researcher, functioning as a human instrument who actively engaged in observing, interpreting, and recording the data. This role was supported by a set of supplementary instruments, including an interview guide, observation checklist, and documentation tools such as audio and video recordings, field notes, and visual documentation of online activities.

Three main techniques were employed for data collection. First, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with ten student participants, the supervising lecturer, and programme coordinators to gather detailed narratives about their experiences. Second, participatory observation was carried out, where the researcher directly attended the daily sessions via Zoom, noting the dynamics, levels of participation, and interactions among participants. Third, document analysis was undertaken using attendance lists, programme guidelines, and screenshots of the online sessions to support and triangulate the observational and interview data.

The data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which involves three interrelated steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction phase, the researcher filtered and selected relevant data, grouping significant information obtained from interviews and observations. In the data display phase, findings were organized into descriptive narratives, direct quotations, and interpretations of supporting documents to provide clarity and coherence. This process was conducted continuously and iteratively, allowing the researcher to verify the accuracy and credibility of

the findings as the study progressed. Through this method, the research maintained its validity and enabled a nuanced interpretation of how the khatam Al-Qur'an programme contributed to student character development.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

This study reveals that the khataman Al-Qur'an (complete Qur'an recitation) activity at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia (UMI) Makassar is carried out through a systematic structure and produces a tangible impact on student character formation. The programme consists of two main forms One Day One Juz (ODOJ) and Qirā'ah Al-Qur'an and is held daily throughout Ramadan.

#### **1. Forms of the Khatam Al-Qur'an Programme**

The One Day One Juz schedule takes place each morning after the Fajr prayer via Zoom, with a target of one juz' per day for the thirty days of Ramadan. Qira'ah is led in turn by Qur'an-memorising students (ḥuffāz) who have been assigned by the supervising lecturer to recite one juz' each day, while other students follow attentively. Sessions open with greetings from the Dean, a brief exposition of the selected verses, the recitation proper, motivational remarks, and a closing supplication.

Beyond its ritual function, the program serves as an educational vehicle reaching cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Observations confirm that the atmosphere remains solemn and that students participate actively despite the online setting.

#### **2. Formed Character Values**

Character education is an integral component of Indonesia's national education system, as affirmed in the National Education System Act, Law No. 20/2003 (Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional, 2011). In this framework, character development unfolds not only through formal classroom instruction but also via non-formal and informal religious activities such as the khatam Al-Qur'an program, which functions as an effective modality for shaping morally upright students.

Subaedah, Radiatul Adawiyah, and Nur Setiawati's study at SMPIT Insan Cendekia Makassar (2024) stresses that character education aims to produce individuals who are faithful, pious, and virtuous an outcome achievable only when educators model exemplary conduct. The khatam program at UMI reflects this principle by involving supervising lecturers, the Dean, and academic staff as living exemplars; their consistent presence provides discipline, sincerity, and religious zeal that students internalise.

A population of roughly 100 fourth-year students from the 2023 cohort engaged in the programme, from whom ten key informants were interviewed. Analysis of observations and interviews indicates that the khatam Al-Qur'an influences not only students' spirituality but also several core character values: religiosity, discipline, responsibility, honesty, and peace of mind.

##### ***1) Religiosity***

Religiosity is a primary value fostered through the khataman activity. Students actively read and listen to Qur'anic verses consistently during Ramadan, directly elevating their spirituality. This is not merely a worship tradition; it forms a profound inner dimension rooted in the words of Allah as exemplified in QS Al-Qalam:4, which illustrates that the Prophet's

character is the Qur'an itself. By reading and contemplating the Qur'an, students are encouraged to emulate the Prophet's character as the pinnacle of religiosity in Islam.

Religiosity manifests not only in ritual aspects but also in behavioural changes such as politeness, responsibility, and increased closeness to Allah in daily life. Spiritual habits such as morning tilawah, listening to verses, and reflecting on their meanings become vital assets in shaping academically inclined individuals with Qur'anic character.

This religious character aligns with the Ministry of Education and Culture (2017) indicators of religiosity believing in and fearing God Almighty and reflecting religious behaviour in daily life. Students go beyond listening; they actively internalise Qur'anic values into their personalities, forming long-term spiritual awareness and piety.

## **2) Discipline**

The khataman activity is held online every morning during Ramadan, starting precisely at 05:30 AM after the Subuh prayer. This schedule trains students to wake early, attend punctually, and maintain consistency in religious activities. Imam Nawawi emphasises the etiquette of reading the Qur'an, including physical and spiritual readiness, observing time, and performing the recitation earnestly and unhurriedly.

Such habituation indirectly instils spiritual discipline that affects students' academic routines; they become more organised, punctual, and appreciative of the learning process as part of their responsibility and devotion to Allah. Discipline is evident not only in attendance but also in students' conduct during the online sessions such as maintaining decorum, staying on topic, and showing seriousness in listening to the Qur'an recitation. This practice trains students to value time and uphold commitments are qualities crucial in the medical field, where precision and professional responsibility are paramount.

## **3) Responsibility**

Responsibility is prominently displayed during the khataman activity, where students assume roles such as Qur'an reciters, hosts, moderators, or technical teams managing Zoom and digital mushaf displays.

These duties require thorough preparation such as fluent memorisation, clear voice, mental readiness, and punctual presence, demonstrating that students carry out not just formal tasks but also spiritual trusts. Muhammad Shulhan (2018) argues that responsibility can be developed through constructivist approaches, in which students are directly involved in situations that demand responsible action. The khataman activity provides real-life experience: students face challenges such as unstable internet, tight schedules, and occasional laziness yet strive to attend and perform their tasks. Thus, the programme functions not only as worship but also as a venue for internalising responsibility through direct practice; students learn that.

## **4) Honesty**

Although the khataman sessions are conducted online with no strict direct supervision, honesty remains a central value among participants. There is no compulsory camera-on presence or required verbal participation, yet most students demonstrate personal integrity by attending voluntarily, listening to Qur'an recitations, and fulfilling assigned roles such as reciter or moderator responsibly.



Agus Wibowo (2013) states that honesty is behaviour grounded in efforts to be trustworthy in all aspects of life. In the khataman context, honesty extends beyond truthful speech; it includes safeguarding spiritual trusts, refraining from manipulating attendance, and reciting as assigned even when unseen by others. Wibowo also emphasises that honesty underpins a healthy and conducive learning environment.

Honesty is particularly vital for medical students, who will later hold critical roles as healthcare professionals; integrity in activities like these serves as early moral training to avoid data falsification, be truthful in recording results, and act responsibly toward patients. The honesty displayed in the khataman shows that character education need not always be tightly monitored; it can flourish through heartfelt spiritual approaches.

### 5) *Tranquillity of Heart*

Tranquillity of heart (sakinah) is crucial for students facing academic pressures and daily life. Many students experience calm and emotional stability through daily interaction with Qur'anic verses during the khataman activity.

One notable finding is the psychological effect of tranquillity: students report feeling calmer, more peaceful, and motivated in their daily activities after participating. In the midst of high academic pressure, the programme serves as a contemplative space fostering inner balance.

One key function of the Qur'an relevant to character formation is its role as a source of healing (shifā') and mercy in QS Al-Isrā':82. Ibn Kathīr explains that shifā' includes the eradication of heart diseases such as doubt, hypocrisy, and ignorance—directly affecting emotional and cognitive stability (Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, vol. 5, p. 92). Al-Qurṭubī adds that "mercy" in the verse encompasses divine guidance toward worldly and hereafter salvation and fosters peaceful religious and social conduct (Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī, vol. 10, p. 24).

Suhaili, Hasan, and Azhari (2022) reinforce this view, asserting that the Qur'an fundamentally heals spiritually and stabilises mental and academic well-being. Empirical studies by Rahman also show that listening to Qur'anic recitation reduces stress and enhances students' emotional welfare. The routine khataman during Ramadan thus offers multi-dimensional benefits of spiritual, emotional, academic, and social in synergy with the Qur'an's role as a soothing guide.

وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

*"And when the Qur'an is recited, listen to it and be silent so that you may receive mercy." (QS. Al-Araf: 204)*

### 3. Programme Effectiveness

The programme's core objective is to instil Qur'anic character and strengthen student spirituality. Effectiveness indicators include consistent attendance, active participation, emotional engagement, and observable behavioural shifts toward greater religiosity and discipline. Interviews and observations confirm marked improvements in students' punctuality, honesty, and responsibility; supervising lecturers note that these changes extend into academic conduct. Therefore, the khatam Al-Qur'an at UMI's Faculty of Medicine is not a temporary religious exercise but a strategic, continuous character-building initiative aligned with national education goals for producing resilient, virtuous graduates.

## Discussion

This study aimed to examine the structure, character values, and effectiveness of the khatam Al-Qur'an programme conducted during the month of Ramadan at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia (UMI) Makassar. The findings indicate that the programme, delivered through One Day One Juz (ODOJ) and daily Qira'ah Al-Qur'an, is a well-structured spiritual activity that significantly contributes to the development of students' religiosity, discipline, responsibility, honesty, and inner tranquillity. The discussion that follows interprets these results in light of the study's objectives and existing literature, outlines theoretical and practical implications, addresses limitations, and provides recommendations for future research.

Religiosity emerged as the central value cultivated through the khatam programme. Students engaged in consistent Qur'anic recitation and listening during Ramadan, which led to a marked increase in their spiritual consciousness and moral awareness. This finding affirms the programme's alignment with Islamic principles of character formation, particularly the Qur'anic view of the Prophet Muhammad's character being shaped by the Qur'an itself (QS Al-Qalam: 4). Participation in the daily sessions encouraged students to internalize divine values, reinforcing the transformative power of sustained religious practice. This finding supports Lickona's (2019) framework that emphasizes the integration of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior as key elements of effective character education. The structured daily practice and communal setting functioned as a pedagogical strategy that not only instilled knowledge but also nurtured affective and behavioral change.

The value of discipline was cultivated through the programme's strict timing, which began at 05:30 AM each morning. Students were required to be present, attentive, and engaged shortly after dawn prayers. This requirement demanded students to develop time management skills and a sense of commitment, which translated into greater consistency in both religious and academic activities. Discipline was not merely about punctual attendance but also encompassed appropriate conduct during online sessions, including attentiveness and respectful behavior. The findings support the view that spiritual routines can reinforce practical life skills such as punctuality and task completion. This is especially relevant in medical education, where discipline is a critical attribute for professional conduct and patient care.

Responsibility was another prominent value identified in the study. Students who were assigned as Qur'an reciters, moderators, or technical support staff were required to prepare thoroughly and perform their duties diligently. These tasks required not only technical and cognitive readiness but also a high degree of commitment and integrity. The active role students played in managing the programme helped them develop a stronger sense of ownership and accountability. This observation aligns with Shulhan's (2018) argument that student responsibility can be effectively cultivated through experiential and constructivist learning approaches. The programme thus functioned as a platform for moral development by immersing students in real-life roles that required both preparation and performance under pressure, thereby reinforcing the value of responsibility as a lived experience.

Honesty emerged as a key character trait, particularly given the online nature of the programme, which lacked strict surveillance mechanisms. Despite the absence of mandatory video presence or attendance verification, most students consistently joined the sessions, listened attentively, and fulfilled their assigned roles. This behavior illustrates the internalization of moral values rooted in spiritual commitment. According to Wibowo (2013), honesty involves being trustworthy in all aspects of life, and the study's findings reflect this principle in practice. Students' voluntary participation and sincerity in reciting or moderating sessions despite limited external monitoring suggest that character education rooted in religious

consciousness can foster authentic behavioral integrity. This is particularly significant in the context of medical education, where ethical integrity is essential in clinical practice and professional responsibility.

The programme also contributed to students' emotional and psychological well-being, particularly in terms of inner tranquillity or *sakīnah*. Many students reported a sense of calm, emotional balance, and renewed motivation after participating in the daily Qur'an recitation sessions. These accounts align with the Qur'anic concept of the Qur'an as a source of healing and mercy (QS Al-Isra: 82). The programme's effect on students' mental and emotional state provides empirical support for the therapeutic benefits of spiritual practices, which have been noted in previous research, including Suhaili, Hasan, and Azhari (2022) and Rahman (n.d.). Students reported being better able to manage stress, regulate emotions, and approach academic responsibilities with a more centered mindset. These outcomes highlight the programme's function as a non-clinical intervention for student well-being, offering a faith-based method to support psychological resilience amidst academic pressures.

In connecting these findings to the broader literature, it is evident that the study supports and extends existing theoretical frameworks. The values emphasized by Islamic philosophers such as Ibn Miskawaih self-control, wisdom, courage, and justice are echoed in the student experiences described. For instance, discipline and time management relate to self-control, while the courage to assume leadership roles and manage technical challenges corresponds to the virtue of bravery. The programme also aligns with Thomas Lickona's (2019) model of character education, which underscores the role of structured, value-driven activities in shaping individual character. Moreover, the findings contribute to the medical education literature by illustrating how religious character-building practices can be harmonized with the development of professional ethics in future healthcare professionals. In this way, the khatam Al-Qur'an programme can be seen as an integrative model that bridges religious, educational, and professional development.

The implications of this study are manifold. Practically, the results suggest that similar religious character-building programmes can be adopted in other faculties and universities to support holistic student development. Given the observed benefits in terms of discipline, emotional stability, and moral integrity, integrating such programmes into student support services or campus spiritual activities could enhance institutional efforts to promote character education. Theoretically, the study adds to the literature on religious education by demonstrating the effectiveness of daily spiritual practices in shaping moral behavior, even in online settings. The findings also have policy implications: education authorities may consider formally recognizing non-credit spiritual programmes as legitimate components of national character education frameworks. This would encourage universities to invest in infrastructure, faculty training, and curriculum design that support the integration of faith-based initiatives.

## CONCLUSION

This study investigated the structure, character values, and effectiveness of the khatam Al-Qur'an programme conducted during the month of Ramadan at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia (UMI) Makassar. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the study found that the programme, implemented through One Day One Juz (ODOJ) and daily Qira'ah Al-Qur'an, served not only as a spiritual routine but also as a strategic medium for character education. The findings revealed that the programme successfully fostered five key character values among students: religiosity, discipline, responsibility, honesty, and inner tranquillity. These values were developed through students' active and consistent engagement in the programme's daily activities, which involved Qur'anic recitation, reflection, and role-



based participation. The presence of supervising lecturers and faculty leadership further reinforced moral exemplarity, creating a spiritually charged and supportive environment. Students internalized Qur'anic values not merely through listening, but through lived practice showing punctuality, commitment, integrity, and emotional stability in the face of academic and personal challenges. The study concludes that the khatam Al-Qur'an programme at UMI's Faculty of Medicine is an effective and sustainable model of Islamic-based character development. Its success demonstrates the potential of integrating structured spiritual activities into higher education to strengthen students' moral foundations and personal growth. The programme not only aligns with national goals for character education but also contributes to the holistic formation of future medical professionals who are ethically grounded and spiritually resilient. These findings shed light on the importance of continuing and expanding such initiatives across other faculties and institutions. They also call for policy support and curricular innovation to formally recognize faith-based programmes as valuable components of character education in higher education. Through this integration, universities can play a pivotal role in nurturing a generation of graduates who are intellectually capable, morally upright, and socially responsible.

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