BAITUL ARQAM AS A STRATEGIC CHARACTER EDUCATION MODEL IN DEVELOPING AL-ISLAM AND MUHAMMADIYAH VALUES AMONG STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The Baitul Arqam program, held at SMA Muhammadiyah Mlati on March 19-20, 2025, aimed to strengthen Islamic identity and build the moral integrity of the participants. The program involved various educational activities, such as discussions on Muhammadiyah ideology, worship training, forums on Islamic values, and reflective activities. It focused not only on theory but also on spiritual experiences that heightened religious awareness. The program was conducted in three main stages: preparation, implementation, and evaluation. The methods used included lectures, role-playing simulations, and discussions. The results of the implementation showed success in motivating participants to delve deeper into Muhammadiyah values, with high enthusiasm throughout the event. Participants also expressed great benefits in preparing themselves to become better Muhammadiyah cadres. Evaluation was carried out using a non-test approach, encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. The success of this activity highlights the importance of careful planning and good coordination in supporting the strengthening of character and religious understanding among students. This program is expected to be held regularly to prepare future generations who are more committed to the values of the organization.

Keywords: *Baitul Arqam Al-Islam, Kemuhammadiyahan, High School*

Abstrak

Program Baitul Arqam yang dilaksanakan di SMA Muhammadiyah Mlati pada 19-20 Maret 2025, bertujuan untuk memperkuat identitas keislaman dan membangun integritas moral peserta. Melibatkan berbagai aktivitas edukatif, seperti kajian ideologi Muhammadiyah, pelatihan ibadah, forum diskusi nilai-nilai keislaman, serta kegiatan reflektif, program ini tidak hanya berfokus pada teori, tetapi juga pada pengalaman spiritual yang memperkuat kesadaran keagamaan. Kegiatan ini dilakukan dalam tiga tahap utama: persiapan, pelaksanaan, dan evaluasi. Metode yang digunakan mencakup ceramah, simulasi peran, dan diskusi. Hasil pelaksanaan menunjukkan keberhasilan dalam memotivasi peserta untuk lebih mendalami nilai-nilai Muhammadiyah, dengan antusiasme yang tinggi selama acara. Peserta juga mengungkapkan manfaat besar dalam mempersiapkan diri sebagai kader Muhammadiyah yang lebih baik. Evaluasi dilakukan dengan pendekatan non-tes yang mencakup aspek kognitif, afektif, dan psikomotorik. Keberhasilan kegiatan ini menunjukkan pentingnya perencanaan yang matang dan koordinasi yang baik dalam mendukung penguatan karakter dan pemahaman keagamaan di kalangan siswa. Program ini diharapkan dapat dilaksanakan secara rutin untuk menyiapkan generasi penerus yang lebih berkomitmen pada nilai-nilai organisasi.

Kata Kunci: Baitul Arqam Al-Islam, Kemuhammadiyahan, Sekolah Menengah Atas

1. INTRODUCTION

Education serves as the foundational pillar in shaping the character of the younger generation, enabling them to face the ever-evolving challenges of the times [1]. In this context, Islamic educational institutions bear a significant responsibility in nurturing individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also spiritually strong. A holistic approach to education is essential to develop students into well-balanced individuals, integrating both knowledge and moral values [2], [3]. This is particularly emphasized in Islamic educational institutions that strive for a balance between spiritual and intellectual dimensions [4]. In Indonesia, Muhammadiyah is recognized as one of the largest Islamic organizations with a longstanding commitment to education, contributing consistently from primary to higher education levels [5].

Muhammadiyah views education not merely as a means of knowledge transfer, but as a platform for shaping students' character and morality. According to Muhammadiyah's perspective, education must address the entirety of human aspects and should not focus solely on academic intelligence. Widodo et al. [6] affirms that Muhammadiyah holds a major responsibility in fostering a future generation with noble character and a strong sense of responsibility. Therefore, education must be designed to instill spiritual, social, and cultural values. This becomes the essence of a learning process that emphasizes not only the outcomes but also the learning journey itself. With this approach, it is expected that students will emerge as individuals capable of contributing positively to various aspects of life.

The educational mission of Muhammadiyah is not limited to theoretical religious instruction but extends to practical, daily applications of Islamic and Muhammadiyah values. Muhammadiyah underscores the importance of actualizing Islamic principles in real life, beyond mere textual study. This is reflected in character-building efforts through grounded and contextual education [7]. The goal is to cultivate individuals who not only understand Islamic teachings but are also sensitive and capable of consistently practicing them. Such education motivates students to become agents of change within society. Consequently, every Muhammadiyah educational process is consistently rooted in noble Islamic values.

According to Hasaputra et al. [8] and Hartman [9], strong character formation is the key to creating individuals who can contribute positively to society. In this regard, education plays a strategic role in instilling fundamental values such as honesty, responsibility, and social awareness. The Muhammadiyah educational approach emphasizes not only the cognitive domain but also integrates affective and psychomotor aspects. Thus, this approach aims to instill faith, ethics, and social responsibility through a comprehensive learning process [10]. Through this method, students are expected to become not only academically competent but also morally mature. This is what makes Muhammadiyah education relevant and adaptable to various social contexts.

One concrete manifestation of this commitment is the integration of Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah values into the curriculum across Muhammadiyah educational institutions, including at SMA Muhammadiyah Mlati. This school strives not only to provide high-quality academic education but also to create a religious and conducive learning environment. Islamic values are implemented in various aspects of school life, from regular worship practices to social activities [11]. Character education becomes a primary focus, conducted through enjoyable and in-depth approaches. Through both curricular and extracurricular activities, students are guided to become individuals of integrity [12]. Ultimately, the goal is to produce graduates who exemplify a balance between academic knowledge and moral excellence.

However, in practice, the effective implementation of these values often encounters various challenges that cannot be overlooked. Students come from diverse backgrounds, leading to different levels of understanding and acceptance of Islamic teachings and Muhammadiyah principles. Some students may struggle to internalize these values deeply and sustainably [13]. In addition, external environmental influences and technological developments also impact students' character. Therefore, additional programs are needed to reinforce the internalization of these values more deeply and affectively [14]. Such efforts are crucial to ensure that Islamic and Muhammadiyah values are not only theoretical concepts but are also reflected in students' real-life behavior.

One strategic initiative used by Muhammadiyah to instill character values is the Baitul Arqam program. This program is a character development initiative based on direct experiences and interactive approaches that actively involve students [15]. It is believed to be an effective medium for embedding Islamic and Muhammadiyah values among students [16]. Within the program, students not only receive theoretical

materials but also engage in simulations and spiritual training that touch on emotional and social aspects. SMA Muhammadiyah Mlati has made Baitul Arqam one of its flagship programs, regularly implemented to support student character development. The program also provides a reflective space for students to better understand their identity as part of the Islamic generation.

Nevertheless, further study is needed to assess the effectiveness of the Baitul Arqam program in enhancing the understanding and application of Islamic and Muhammadiyah values in a tangible way. Such an evaluation is important to determine how much impact the program truly has on student character, particularly for 12th-grade students who are in the final phase of their secondary education. This research aims to analyze how the Baitul Arqam activities attended by 12th-grade students strengthen Islamic character and Muhammadiyah spirit. Furthermore, the study is expected to offer concrete recommendations for developing relevant and effective character education strategies. Thus, the findings of this research will not only benefit the school but also contribute to curriculum development and similar programs in other Islamic educational institutions. The ultimate hope is that character education implemented in this way will have a lasting impact on students' lives beyond graduation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1. Muhammadiyah
Muhammadiyah is one of the largest and most influential modern Islamic organizations in Indonesia. It was founded in 1912 by a visionary Islamic scholar, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, in Yogyakarta. Since its establishment, the organization has demonstrated a strong commitment to Islamic reform (tajdid), based on the pure teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Muhammadiyah emphasizes the importance of education, social services, and healthcare as integral parts of its comprehensive and progressive da'wah mission. In the field of education, Muhammadiyah has successfully established thousands of educational institutions across the country, ranging from primary schools to universities. Its primary goal is to shape Muslim individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also possess noble character and a strong commitment to upholding the values of amar ma'ruf nahi munkar in their daily lives [17], [18]. Muhammadiyah's tangible contribution to enlightening the Indonesian nation has made it a crucial element in national character development and the advancement of Islamic civilization.

As a modern Islamic organization, Muhammadiyah positions rationality, social ethics, and the purification of Islamic teachings as its core principles. It firmly rejects all forms of superstition, heresy (bid'ah), and mystical beliefs (khurafat) that are considered incompatible with authentic and rational Islamic teachings. Muhammadiyah's direction in the field of education is not merely about transmitting knowledge but also serves as a strategic da'wah tool to strengthen Islamic values among students [19]. Through its educational institutions, Muhammadiyah systematically and structurally cultivates a learning environment that supports spiritual development, the internalization of religious values, and the formation of students' character rooted in religiosity and integrity. Thus, Muhammadiyah's education is not only intellectually oriented but also actively contributes to improving the overall quality of life, spiritually, socially, and morally [20].

2.2. The Values of Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyahan
The Values of Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyahan (AIK) constitute the essential ideological foundation that every member of Muhammadiyah must possess, especially students educated within Muhammadiyah institutions. These values entail a thorough and comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings, encompassing: tawhid as the basis of faith; akhlaq as the guide for conduct; ibadah as the embodiment of servitude to Allah; and the core Muhammadiyah principles of tajdid (renewal), amar ma'ruf nahy munkar (enjoining good and forbidding evil), as well as a spirit of self-reliance and progressiveness. Through AIK education, the aim is to form true Muslims who not only live in accordance with Islamic law but also possess a missionary zeal and an active commitment to serving the wider community [21].

Within Muhammadiyah schools, strengthening AIK values is a consistently emphasised priority that is integrated across all dimensions of educational activity, both inside and outside the classroom. Internalisation of these values is achieved not only through formal Islamic studies, but also through regular religious practices, exemplary behaviour demonstrated by teachers and staff, and a range of extracurricular programmes oriented toward Islamic character development [22]. Instilling AIK values is central to shaping students who are faithful, morally upright, honest, disciplined, and responsible key elements of

Muhammadiyah's vision to produce an excellent generation that is intellectually capable and spiritually and socially resilient [23].

2.3. Baitul Arqam

Baitul Arqam is one of the hallmark programs of cadre development and ideological formation that has become a distinctive and significant legacy within the Muhammadiyah organization, targeting students, university scholars, and members of the broader Muhammadiyah community. This program is systematically designed with the primary aim of nurturing young cadres who not only understand Islamic teachings textually but also possess a strong ideological foundation rooted in Muhammadiyah values, and who are willing and able to commit to the mission of Islamic propagation (dakwah) and renewal through the Muhammadiyah movement. In the context of formal education, Baitul Arqam functions as a strategic medium that is highly relevant for instilling a spirit of moderate Islam and the values of Islamic struggle among students, teachers, and all members of the academic community in Muhammadiyah schools [24].

The implementation of Baitul Arqam typically involves intensive training activities encompassing various educational formats, such as in-depth studies of Muhammadiyah ideology, worship practice training in accordance with Islamic guidance, discussion forums on contemporary Islamic values, and reflective sessions aimed at shaping participants' moral integrity and character holistically. The program is not limited to delivering content through lectures or theoretical explanations, but also provides immersive spiritual experiences that touch the affective domain and deepen religious awareness. Through participatory learning methods, exemplary modeling, and a spiritually enriched atmosphere, Baitul Arqam has proven to be an effective tool in strengthening Islamic identity and building student loyalty toward the noble values upheld by Muhammadiyah [25].

3. METHOD

The Baitul Arqam Program was initiated and organized by the team from SMA Muhammadiyah Mlati and was conducted over two days, from March 19 to 20, 2025, at the Assembly Hall of SMA Muhammadiyah Mlati. The participants consisted of 29 twelfth-grade students who took part in the entire series of activities. The implementation of this program was carried out through three main phases: the preparation phase, the implementation phase, and the monitoring and evaluation phase. During the implementation, the methods used included lectures and role-play simulations. The materials delivered aimed to introduce theoretical concepts through a variety of learning methods and strategies presented by selected speakers. The evaluation process was conducted continuously throughout the program and afterward, using a non-test approach that assessed cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Preparation Phase

The initial preparation for the Baitul Arqam program began with the school's monthly meeting held on January 20, 2025. During the meeting, an organizing team was appointed, consisting of teachers and representatives from the Muhammadiyah Student Association (IPM) of SMA Muhammadiyah Mlati. This appointed team was entrusted with the responsibility of comprehensively planning and executing the program. Within the committee structure, Sumpono, S.Ag. was designated as the person in charge, Deny Hadi Siswanto, M.Pd. served as the team coordinator, and Syaikha Dziyaulhaq, M.Pd. was appointed as the secretary. The establishment of this structure aimed to clearly divide roles and responsibilities to ensure the program would run more effectively and in a well-coordinated manner.

Once the team was formed, the preparation phase proceeded with the drafting of a detailed and systematic activity plan. This plan was developed based on the anticipated real needs during the program's implementation and aligned with the primary objectives of the Baitul Arqam program. All planning efforts were carried out with input from various stakeholders, including the school administration and IPM leadership. Upon completion, the program proposal was submitted to all relevant parties who would be involved in the implementation, including speakers, facilitators, and technical support personnel. This process served as a crucial initial step to ensure the program could run as expected and achieve its intended goals.

4.2. Implementation Phase

The implementation of the Baitul Arqam program began with an opening ceremony held on Thursday, March 19, 2025, from 09:00 to 10:00 AM at the hall of SMA Muhammadiyah Mlati. This meaningful event was attended by various important figures, including Mr. Nazrul, M.Pd., the Chairman of the Muhammadiyah

Branch Leadership of Sleman, as well as all students, teachers, and staff of SMA Muhammadiyah Mlati. The presence of these various parties highlighted the significance of the Baitul Arqam event in strengthening religious understanding and Muhammadiyah values among the academic community of the school, as well as symbolizing full support for this activity.

The opening ceremony was conducted according to standard formal procedures. It began with an opening speech delivered by the event's host, followed by the recitation of verses from the Al-Qur'an, which was read solemnly, and the singing of the national anthem Indonesia Raya and the Muhammadiyah anthem Sang Surya, led by Ms. Pisriwati. The event then continued with remarks from Deny Hadi Siswanto, M.Pd., the coordinator of the activity, who expressed the hopes and objectives of the Baitul Arqam program. This was followed by a speech from Mr. Nazrul, M.Pd., Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Branch Leadership of Sleman, who officially opened the event. With this grand opening, the Baitul Arqam program commenced with high enthusiasm to carry out the primary objectives of character education and da'wah (Islamic preaching) that are the main focus of the event.

The activities of Baitul Arqam began promptly at 10:30 AM and continued until 11:00 PM, following a well-structured schedule prepared by the organizing team. The event was meticulously planned with several key components designed to provide a comprehensive experience. It kicked off with an orientation session, where the participants were introduced to the overall direction, objectives, and significance of the event. The first session, titled "Islam and Ideological Conflicts", delved into the history and development of major world ideologies, their impact, and the central role of Islam in providing liberating values amidst these diverse ideologies. This insightful session was delivered by Drs. Dumono, M.Pd., who guided the participants through the complexities of the ideological landscape. The second session shifted focus to the "Preamble of Muhammadiyah's Statutes," providing a thorough discussion of its core values, substance, and the seven key ideas outlined in Muhammadiyah's foundational documents. This session was presented by Syaikha Dziyaulhaq, M.Pd., who brought depth and clarity to the topic.

The third session of the day introduced the practical and spiritual aspects of Thaharah (ritual purification) and Shalat (prayer), in accordance with Muhammadiyah's Tarjih decisions. This session, delivered by Nurcahyo Yogyanto, S.Pd., helped participants understand the proper procedures for these fundamental Islamic practices. To wrap up the first day, Sumpono, S.Ag., presented on the topic of "Fathul Qulub," which further enriched the participants' spiritual knowledge. Throughout the day, the participants exhibited strong engagement, their enthusiasm continuously fueled by the expert instructors who created a welcoming and conducive environment for learning. The sessions were delivered interactively, encouraging participants to ask questions, reflect, and engage deeply with the material, thus enhancing their overall learning experience.

On the first day of Baitul Arqam, the event followed the carefully laid-out schedule, ensuring that each session was completed in a timely and organized manner. The participants' enthusiasm and commitment were evident throughout, as they actively participated in every session and eagerly absorbed the valuable knowledge being shared. The atmosphere at SMA Muhammadiyah Mlati on that day was vibrant and full of energy, with students deeply focused and dedicated to the learning process. This positive energy was captured in the event photos, which showcased the students' serious and enthusiastic involvement in the activities. The dedication of the participants reflected their strong commitment to the objectives of Baitul Arqam, marking the event as a significant success in fostering both meaningful learning and a deeper understanding of religious values.

On March 15, 2024, the activities of Baitul Arqam took place from 03:00 AM to 12:00 PM. The event began with qiyamullail (night prayer), a Quranic study session, and the Subuh prayer, which lasted from 03:00 AM to 06:00 AM. After these religious activities, participants proceeded with an outbound activity designed to strengthen team cohesion, followed by personal hygiene and a communal breakfast. Following this, the first session was presented by Syaikha Dziyaulhaq, M.Pd., who discussed the religious thought in Muhammadiyah and the importance of understanding Burhani, Bayani, and Irfani from an Islamic perspective. This session aimed to deepen participants' understanding of the rational, textual, and spiritual approaches in interpreting religious teachings.

The next session was delivered by Nazrul, M.Pd., who spoke about the role of kader (cadres) and the values of struggle represented by Muhammadiyah figures in the historical context of the organization's struggle. This discussion provided valuable insights to participants on the significance of understanding the efforts of Muhammadiyah figures in advancing Islamic civilization in Indonesia. The event continued with the final

session, focusing on the principles of organizational leadership, presented by Deny Hadi Siswanto, M.Pd. This session covered essential aspects of leadership and organizational management, offering practical knowledge for the participants. At the end of the day, a group photo was taken with one of the speakers, Drs. Dumono, M.Pd., as a memorable keepsake from the event.

The figure above shows a moment before the closing ceremony of the Baitul Arqam event began, where participants and speakers gathered for a group photo as a symbol of togetherness and appreciation for the successful execution of the event. This photo was taken as a souvenir from the event, which was carried out with enthusiasm and spirit, and as a form of appreciation for the role and contributions of the speakers in sharing their knowledge and experiences with the participants.

4.3. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Baitul Arqam event ran smoothly and as planned, which was evident from the orderliness and smooth flow of the event from start to finish. Every session and activity followed the scheduled plan, demonstrating that the well-prepared planning had been implemented successfully. Throughout the event, participants showed remarkable enthusiasm, which was clearly visible through their active engagement in asking questions and discussing the material presented by the speakers. This active participation not only reflected their interest in the topics but also demonstrated how involved they felt in each session, as well as the significance of the discussed topics for their personal development as part of Muhammadiyah's mission.

The majority of the participants stated that the event was extremely beneficial for them, and its impact was particularly positive in helping them prepare to become more involved in Muhammadiyah's future activities. They felt more ready and motivated to take on responsibilities within the organization and perform their roles more effectively. They also believed that the event gave them a deeper understanding of the values of Muhammadiyah and how they could contribute more actively. The organizing team hopes that such activities can be held regularly every Ramadan, involving 12th-grade students as participants. The main objective is to prepare the next generation of Muhammadiyah members who not only have a strong understanding of the organization but are also capable of driving and strengthening Muhammadiyah in the future with high enthusiasm and commitment.

4.4. Discussion

Based on the results of this study, the Baitul Arqam event held at SMA Muhammadiyah Mlati demonstrated success in organizing and executing a well-structured event. The preparation stage, systematically carried out by the organizing team, began with monthly meetings and the establishment of a clear committee structure. This provided understanding that good coordination is key to successfully carrying out such events. This aligns with the research conducted by Astutik et al. [26] and Pisriwati et al. [27], which found that thorough planning and clear task delegation in organizational activities can enhance the effectiveness of implementation and participant involvement. Furthermore, the success of this preparation also contributed to the participants' enthusiasm, as evidenced by their high participation in various event sessions.

The implementation of the Baitul Arqam activities on the first day, starting with the opening ceremony and followed by the material presentations, showed that every element of the event proceeded smoothly and according to plan. The high enthusiasm of the participants in engaging with the material presented by experienced speakers was also an important factor that influenced the success of the event. This supports the findings of a study by Tarso et al. [28] and Siswanto et al. [29], which stated that the presence of competent speakers and engaging material delivery can increase participant involvement in an activity. In the context of Baitul Arqam, participants not only received information but also actively engaged in discussions and interactions with the speakers, creating an enjoyable and conducive learning atmosphere.

On the second day of the event, various materials related to Islamic values and leadership were presented, with the aim of providing participants with an in-depth understanding of their roles as Muhammadiyah cadres. The material on leadership and the struggles of Muhammadiyah figures offered important insights for participants, strengthening the main goal of the Baitul Arqam event in preparing cadres capable of continuing the organization's struggle in the future. Research by Widyastuti et al. [30] and Yogyanto et al. [31] also emphasized that training activities based on organizational values can deepen participants' understanding of the organization's ideology and objectives, while equipping them with the necessary skills to play an active role within the organization.

Throughout the Baitul Arqam event, there were essential elements such as outbound activities and religious study sessions that not only provided in-depth theoretical insights but also offered participants opportunities to interact and strengthen their bonds. This is consistent with the research conducted by Syah et al. [32] and Syahrir et al. [33], which found that activities involving social collaboration, such as outbound, can strengthen relationships among participants and enhance a sense of togetherness and unity within an organization. In the Baitul Arqam event, collaboration among participants through such activities was expected to produce cadres who not only understand the organization but also possess a high spirit of mutual cooperation and solidarity.

Overall, the Baitul Arqam event at SMA Muhammadiyah Mlati was not only successful in its execution but also had a positive impact on the participants. The majority of participants expressed that they felt more prepared and motivated to take on a more active role in Muhammadiyah's activities. Research by Hadi et al. [34] and Suardin et al. [35] reinforces that activities like Baitul Arqam, which combine religious training, leadership, and social unity, can positively impact the development of participants' character and ability to face organizational challenges. Therefore, such activities should be continued, and it is even recommended that they be held regularly, with the hope of preparing the next generation of Muhammadiyah members who not only possess knowledge but also the ability to drive and strengthen the organization in the future.

5.   CONCLUSION

The Baitul Arqam event at SMA Muhammadiyah Mlati was successfully executed through thorough preparation and a well-structured implementation, with the establishment of a clear organizing team and well-organized task delegation being key to its success. The success of this event is reflected in the high enthusiasm of the participants, evident in their active participation during study sessions and discussions. The material presented by competent speakers had a positive impact, deepening the participants' understanding of Muhammadiyah's values, Islamic ideology, and leadership within the context of Muhammadiyah's organization. Based on the evaluation results, the Baitul Arqam event had a significant impact on the participants' readiness to take an active role in Muhammadiyah's activities in the future. Collaborative activities such as outbound and religious study sessions successfully strengthened the unity and cohesion among participants, which is essential for building solidarity within the organization. Therefore, it is recommended that similar activities be held regularly, especially during Ramadan, to continue preparing the next generation of Muhammadiyah members who not only possess knowledge but also leadership skills and a strong sense of responsibility in advancing the organization.

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