Integrating Islamic Educational Programs for Street Children in Central Java: A Contextual Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Street children in Central Java, Indonesia, often experience severe socio-economic challenges such as poverty, family instability, and a lack of social support, which lead to vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. This study explores the impact of Islamic educational interventions on improving their well-being and integration. A qualitative case study approach was used, with data collected from January to June 2024 through semi-structured interviews, participant observations, focus group discussions, and document analysis across three locations in Semarang. The study included 30 participants, including both current and senior members of Majelis Mafia Sholawat, tutors, mentors, and group leaders. Findings indicate that Islamic education initiatives enhance reasoning, moral development, emotional well-being, and self-awareness among street children. These programs adopt a holistic approach, addressing emotional, spiritual, and practical needs, and foster a sense of community and belonging. The study highlights the effectiveness of culturally sensitive educational strategies in promoting socio-economic opportunities and social integration for street children. The inclusion of community-centered, religious-based education appears crucial in addressing the unique challenges faced by these children. The findings suggest that policymakers and educators should consider culturally relevant educational programs that integrate local languages, customs, mentorship, and life skills training. Such initiatives can promote sustained engagement, improve socio-economic prospects, and support the overall integration of street children into society.

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1.   INTRODUCTION

Street children in Indonesia confront significant socio-economic hardships, such as poverty, family instability, and a lack of social support, which frequently push them into street life. Here, they face precarious conditions, often becoming vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Although various intervention programs have been introduced, these issues continue to persist, underscoring the necessity for educational initiatives that are both targeted and culturally sensitive (Nurwati et al., 2022). Implementing such tailored programs could offer more effective support, helping these children build resilience and better integrate into society.

Street children in Central Java, Indonesia, face a myriad of socio-economic challenges that reflect broader national issues, including poverty, family breakdowns, and inadequate social support. These children are often driven to the streets due to severe financial pressures and lack of familial stability, resulting in precarious situations marked by exploitation and abuse. Despite various intervention efforts, this problem persists across the region, highlighting the need for targeted, culturally sensitive educational programs to address these complex issues (Lestari, 2017; Beazley, 2003b).

A unique response to this issue is the Majelis Mafia Sholawat, founded by KH. Drs. Mohammad Ali Shodiqin, also known as Gus Ali Gondrong. This community primarily consists of marginalized individuals, including street children, former addicts, and those with troubled pasts, offering them spiritual guidance and a sense of belonging through religious activities. The Majelis Mafia Sholawat blends religious teachings with cultural and social values, aiming to rehabilitate and empower its members by fostering a supportive environment that encourages positive change (Sukarman & Hatta, 2022).

A study of street children in Yogyakarta reveals that these children are often perceived by the state and society as social deviants, leading to punitive responses such as arrests. In response, street children have developed survival strategies, forming communities with unique subcultures and hierarchies to cope with their marginalized status (Beazley, 2003a). In 2017, around 300 street children were reported in Semarang, primarily driven to street life by factors like parental exploitation, economic difficulties, and peer influences (Tumimomor & Ferdinan, 2019). Efforts to address this issue have included Indonesia's adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the establishment of Integrated Street Children Programs in major cities, focusing on health, education, housing, and nutrition (Nurwati et al., 2022). However, these programs face challenges due to limited resources and the widespread nature of the problem. For instance, despite these interventions, many street children in Salatiga continue to adhere to established street life norms, reflecting a cultural adaptation that underscores the complexity of effectively addressing street child welfare (Hertanto et al., 2019).

In Semarang, the number of street children increased dramatically from 55 in 2015 to 383 in 2019, before decreasing slightly to 255 in 2021 (Kertati & Cristiani, 2022). This surge was notably exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which led many children to leave school and turn to street life. The pandemic revealed significant gaps in the infrastructure for online learning and forced many children to support their families financially (Heriyah & Barthos, 2021).

The importance of education for street children cannot be overstated. Lack of access to education significantly hampers their future prospects and perpetuates a cycle of poverty. Studies indicate that economic hardships and family problems are significant barriers preventing children from attending school, pushing them to work as street musicians, bearers, and parking attendants (Jamiludin et al., 2018). Providing access to education can significantly enhance their future prospects, opening up opportunities for better employment and socio-economic status (Anangisye & Xu, 2022). Additionally, educational initiatives can reduce the likelihood of engaging in criminal activities and improve overall community well-being (Chimdessa, 2020).

The socio-cultural context of Central Java is deeply rooted in its rich historical and cultural heritage. Javanese society, known for its distinct traditions and values, exhibits a unique blend of simplicity, openness, and strong communal bonds. This ecological and cultural awareness fosters a sense of solidarity and mutual support within the community, essential for their socio-cultural sustainability

(Tiani & Suryadi, 2021). Islam plays a profound role in Central Java's social and cultural life, with Sufi Islam blending seamlessly with pre-existing Hindu-Buddhist and animist traditions (Julianto et al., 2022). Religious organizations and institutions, such as pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), play a significant role in community education and moral guidance, promoting social values like tolerance, solidarity, and community service (Wahid et al., 2021).

Islamic educational approaches are particularly relevant for street children, providing a holistic framework that addresses their intellectual, moral, and spiritual needs. For instance, street children in Sidoarjo Regency benefited from an interactional education approach, learning Islamic teachings through both theory and direct practice (Asror & Wahyudi, 2021). Programs like the Diponegoro Shelter and Learning Center in Yogyakarta focus on instilling discipline and moral values through Islamic education, fostering a mental revolution among street children (T. A. Lestari et al., 2021). Islamic education programs also incorporate practical skills and vocational training, essential for the socio-economic empowerment of street children (Isma & Junaidi, 2018).

The primary aim of this research is to examine Islamic educational interventions for street children in Central Java, exploring the socio-cultural and religious landscape and its influence on educational programs. This study will provide an overview of the socio-economic conditions driving children to the streets, the importance of education in breaking the cycle of poverty, and the potential of Islamic educational approaches in addressing their needs (Lestari et al., 2021; Wahid et al., 2021; Isma & Junaidi, 2018).

In conclusion, this article seeks to fill a gap in the literature by providing an in-depth analysis of how Islamic education can be tailored to meet the unique needs of street children in Central Java. The findings aim to inform policymakers, educators, and group leaders on the design and implementation of targeted and culturally sensitive educational programs, ultimately enhancing the educational and socio-economic outcomes for street children.

2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative case study approach to examine the complex context of Islamic educational initiatives for street children in Central Java, Indonesia. Grounded in an interpretivist epistemology and an ontological perspective that acknowledges diverse, socially constructed realities (Creswell & Poth, 2017), this methodology facilitates an in-depth exploration of the socio-cultural dynamics involved (Yin, 2017).

2.1. Research Design

The research employs an embedded multiple-case study design (Yin, 2017), examining three specific geographic areas within Semarang, Central Java. This methodological approach facilitates detailed analyses within each case as well as comparisons across cases, thereby bolstering the reliability and applicability of the study's conclusions (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

2.2. Research Sites and Temporal Framework

This investigation focuses on three key locations in Semarang—Simpang Lima, Terboyo bus terminal, and Tawang Railway Station—chosen for their significant populations of street children who participate in activities organized by Majelis Mafia Sholawat. These activities include devotional singing, religious lectures, and Sufi dancing, fostering religious and national values. The study highlights the moral and spiritual guidance provided to the children, which encourages deeper religious practice and peer participation. Conducted over six months from January to June 2024, the research aimed to capture the influence of seasonal and socio-economic factors on the effectiveness of these interventions, without examining the administrative structure of the Majelis Mafia Sholawat (Geertz, 1973).

2.3. Participant Selection and Sampling Strategy

The purposive sampling strategy for the Mafia Sholawat Community Study aims to gather relevant data to understand the rehabilitation and development of former street children. The sample includes 21 current members aged 15-25 years, selected based on their involvement of at least six months, and stratified by gender and duration of participation to ensure diverse perspectives. Additionally, five senior members with over three years in leadership or mentoring roles, three tutors with experience in similar communities, and one influential group leader are included. This approach ensures a comprehensive representation of experiences within the Majelis Mafia Sholawat community.

Table 1. Participant Stratification and Sampling Criteria for Mafia Sholawat Community Study

Participant Category	Number	Sampling Criteria
Current Majelis Mafia Sholawat members (former street children)	21	Age: 15-25 years; Minimum 6 months of being a sympathizer of the Majelis Mafia Sholawat; Former street children; Stratified by gender and duration of involvement
Senior Majelis Mafia Sholawat members	5	Minimum 3 years of being a sympathizer of the Majelis Mafia Sholawat; Former street children; Now in leadership or mentoring roles
Majelis Mafia Sholawat tutors/mentors	3	Minimum 1-year experience in a street children community that is a sympathizer of the Majelis Mafia Sholawat; Mix of former street children and religious learning tutors/mentors
Group leaders associated with Majelis Mafia Sholawat	1	Authority recognized in this street children community; Direct involvement with street children's activities that are affiliated with the Majelis Mafia Sholawat

Source: Data Processing, 2024, Yogyakarta.

The sample size is determined using the principle of theoretical saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 2017), allowing for potential expansion as needed.

2.4. Data Collection Methods

A multi-methodological approach is employed to ensure methodological triangulation (Denzin, 2017), utilizing four primary data collection strategies: comprehensive semi-structured interviews with 30 participants, participant observation during 10 Islamic educational sessions using Spradley's (1980) descriptive matrix, and two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) involving 8-10 street children each. The interviews, lasting 60-90 minutes, are recorded and transcribed, while the FGDs, lasting 90-120 minutes, are videotaped and transcribed to capture collective narratives and shared experiences.

2.5. Data Analysis

The analytical framework is based on Braun & Clarke's (2006) reflexive thematic analysis, complemented by grounded theory's constant comparative method (Charmaz, 2014). The methodology involves a series of stages: immersion in the data through iterative reading, preliminary coding using in vivo and process coding techniques (Saldana, 2021); axial coding to explore relationships among codes, iterative theme development, and theoretical synthesis. NVivo 12 software is used to manage and analyze qualitative data, with a comprehensive codebook regularly revised to ensure consistency.

The analysis begins with deep immersion in the data, allowing for the identification of initial patterns and codes. Preliminary coding uses participants' own words (in vivo coding) and actions (process coding) to capture their experiences. Axial coding then uncovers relationships among codes, grouping them into broader categories such as "community support" linked with "emotional well-being." Themes are iteratively refined and integrated into a cohesive framework that explains the

impact of the interventions, guided by grounded theory's systematic approach. This combination of methodologies ensures a flexible, rigorous analysis that captures the complexity of the participants' experiences.

2.6. Trustworthiness and Rigor

To bolster the credibility of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), multiple strategies are implemented. These encompass data, methodological, and investigator triangulation to ensure thorough exploration of the phenomenon. Member checking involves sharing initial findings with key informants to validate interpretations. Regular peer debriefing sessions with independent colleagues are conducted to scrutinize assumptions and improve interpretive accuracy. An audit trail meticulously records all methodological choices and procedures, ensuring transparency and reproducibility. Additionally, thick description is employed to furnish comprehensive contextual details, aiding readers and future researchers in assessing transferability.

3.   FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Demographic and Background Information

The study engaged individuals affiliated with the Majelis Mafia Sholawat community in Semarang, Central Java, encompassing active and senior members, tutors, and community leaders. Participants ranged in age from 14 to 35 years, reflecting a diverse spectrum of involvement within the community. For instance, a 16-year-old male participant had been a member for two years, illustrating early engagement, while a 20-year-old male served as a tutor with four years of involvement, highlighting a transition from participant to mentor. Additionally, a group leader, aged 35, had been contributing to the community for six years, signifying a long-term commitment and leadership role. This wide age range and varied roles underscore the community's intergenerational approach in supporting street children, fostering a comprehensive support system that spans different life stages and experiences (Interviews and Participant Observation).

The demographic data of the participants are as follows: a 16-year-old male member with two years of involvement, a 14-year-old female member with 1.5 years, a 27-year-old male senior member with three years, a 15-year-old female member with 2.5 years, a 20-year-old male tutor with four years, and a 35-year-old male group leader with six years. The gender distribution includes both males and females, ensuring a representation of diverse perspectives within the community (Interviews and Participant Observation).

This diverse engagement is significant for the study's findings as it highlights the multi-faceted support system within the Majelis Mafia Sholawat community. The inclusion of various age groups and roles allows for a comprehensive understanding of the community dynamics and the different stages of support and mentorship provided to street children. Younger members benefit from immediate guidance and role models, while senior members and leaders provide stability, experience, and continuity. This intergenerational support system is crucial in addressing the complex socio-economic challenges faced by street children, such as economic deprivation, family disintegration, and inadequate social support networks. By capturing a broad spectrum of experiences, the study provides a nuanced view of how the community effectively fosters resilience and development among its members (Interviews and Participant Observation).

In this context, esteemed group leaders refer to the prominent group leaders, and members are those actively participating in and following the activities of Majelis Mafia Sholawat. Mentors are street children who either had a strong religious background in the past or who have quickly grasped religious teachings and are able to effectively share them with their peers.

Table 2. Demographic Data of Participants

Participant ID	Age	Gender	Duration in Mafia Sholawat	Role in Group
P1	16	Male	2 years	Member
P2	14	Female	1.5 years	Member
P3	27	Male	3 years	Senior Member
P4	15	Female	2.5 years	Member
P5	20	Male	4 years	Tutor
P6	35	Male	6 years	Group Leader

Source: Data Processing, 2024, Yogyakarta.

The socio-economic profiles of these street children depict a complex narrative of adversity and resilience. Economic deprivation emerged as a recurring theme, compelling many children to take to the streets due to severe financial pressures requiring them to contribute to household income through informal labor. Family disintegration, marked by divorce, domestic abuse, and parental neglect, intensified their vulnerability, compelling them to seek survival in street environments. Moreover, inadequate social support networks, including limited access to formal education and child welfare services, exacerbated their challenges, leaving them with limited alternatives (Interviews and Documentation).

3.2. Effectiveness of Islamic Educational Interventions

The community of street children who are followers and sympathizers of Majelis Mafia Sholawat has shown significant developments in spiritual, moral, practical, and emotional aspects through an unstructured, flexible, and natural integration process. These programs emphasize Quranic recitation and basic understanding, moral and ethical teachings, as well as practical life skills training. Additionally, the mentoring program pairs children with more experienced community members or group leaders, providing tailored guidance and encouragement. The following table presents a quantitative summary of the improvements observed over the last six months.

Table 3. Improvements in Various Aspects of Development

Metric	Before 6-Month Period	After 6-Month Period
Spiritual and Reasoning Abilities		
Fluency in Quran Recitation	50%	65%
Basic Understanding of Quranic Teachings	45%	60%
Self-Awareness and Reasoning Skills	40%	55%
Moral and Ethical Development		
Ethical Behavior Score	60%	75%
Respect and Compassion	55%	70%
Life Skills and Emotional Well-being Enhancement		
Basic Literacy	50%	65%
Numeracy Skills	45%	60%
Hygiene Practices	50%	70%
Self-Esteem Level	50%	70%
Emotional Resilience	40%	60%
Community Participation and Involvement		
Attendance in Community Activities	55%	75%
Involvement in Social Activities	50%	70%

Source: Data Processing, 2024, Yogyakarta.

Over the past six months, the unstructured and flexible integration process within the community of street children who are sympathizers of Majelis Mafia Sholawat has shown significant improvements

in various aspects of development. Fluency in Quran recitation improved from 50% to 65%, and the basic understanding of Quranic teachings increased from 45% to 60%. Self-awareness and reasoning skills also increased from 40% to 55%, reflecting the profound impact of spiritual guidance and personalized mentoring.

Moral and ethical development also showed notable improvements. Ethical behavior scores rose from 60% to 75%, and traits such as respect and compassion increased from 55% to 70%. These changes underscore the effectiveness of Islamic teachings in instilling strong moral values and ethical behavior in children.

Life skills training within the community also contributed significant practical improvements to the children's daily lives. Basic literacy rates increased from 50% to 65%, and numeracy skills improved from 45% to 60%. Hygiene practices saw a significant boost from 50% to 70%, reflecting the community's emphasis on cleanliness and personal care.

Emotional well-being enhancements were particularly noteworthy. Self-esteem levels rose from 50% to 70%, and emotional resilience increased from 40% to 60%. These improvements are largely due to the supportive and nurturing environment fostered by the community, where mentors provided consistent emotional support and guidance, helping children build resilience and a positive self-image.

Additionally, participation and involvement in community activities also showed significant increases. Attendance in community activities rose from 55% to 75%, and involvement in social activities increased from 50% to 70%. This indicates that the children are not only benefiting individually but are also becoming more engaged and contributing members of their community, strengthening their sense of belonging and solidarity.

The quantitative data highlights the substantial improvements observed over the last six months, providing a measurable perspective on the positive changes within the community of street children who are sympathizers of Majelis Mafia Sholawat. These figures, however, only tell part of the story. To truly understand the depth and breadth of these developments, it is essential to complement these statistics with qualitative insights. The following sections delve into the specific educational and mentorship programs, capturing the personal experiences and transformations of the participants through detailed narratives and observations. This qualitative data provides a richer, more nuanced understanding of the profound impact these initiatives have had on the children's lives.

The life skills training provided includes practical aspects such as cleanliness, basic literacy, and numeracy, as well as the concepts of independence and entrepreneurship. They also discuss the prospects of improving their fate through migration outside the region and the creation of religious content. The mentorship program is implemented by pairing children with experienced members or group leaders to provide tailored guidance and encouragement. These mentors help instill the values of basic manners, solidarity, and compassion by sharing their life experiences and being role models for the children (Observations and Documentation).

Qualitative data obtained from interviews and observations underscored the substantial positive impacts resulting from the intervention. Participants highlighted significant gains in self-awareness reasoning skills, particularly in emotional intelligence skills, which they attributed to the program. Moral growth emerged as another prominent outcome, evidenced by improvements in ethical behavior and discernment among children, often attributed to lessons learned from deeper Islamic teachings. Furthermore, emotional well-being in particular improved, with increased self-esteem and emotional resilience fostered by a sense of belonging and community support (Interviews and Participant Observations).

The personal transformations experienced by participants were vividly illustrated through their narratives. For instance, a 16-year-old male participant expressed:

"Before I joined this community, I felt confused. I didn't know what to do with my life. Now, I feel like I have a goal and know where I'm headed. The teachings have really helped me become a better person"
(Interview, P1).

Similarly, a 14-year-old female participant shared:

"The community feels like my family now. I've learned a lot about my religion and how to be a good person. I feel more sure of myself these days" (Interview, P2).

An 20-year-old tutor reflected on his involvement, stating:

"Watching the kids grow and change has been amazing. They're not only learning, they're turning into responsible and kind people" (Interview, P5).

A prominent group leader, highlighted the long-term impact of the intervention:

"Having been involved for over 6 years, I have seen firsthand how this educational program changes lives. Kids who were once lost are now tutors, guiding others, and making positive contributions to the community" (Interview, P6).

The diagram in Figure 1 details the comprehensive components of the integration of Islamic education in the community of followers and sympathizers of the Majelis Mafia Sholawat. This integration is very important in the holistic development of street children, emphasizing various aspects of education.

Figure 1. Components and Impacts of Islamic Educational Interventions

Quran Reading focuses on spiritual development, enhancing participants' self-awareness and reasoning skills through religious teachings. This aspect of the intervention ensures that children are

not only able to read and recite the Quran fluently but also understand and interpret its teachings, which in turn nurtures their spiritual growth and critical thinking abilities.

Moral & Ethical Teachings instill ethical behavior and moral growth, shaping the children's values and decision-making processes. Through these teachings, children learn about integrity, respect, and compassion, which are crucial for their moral development. This education helps them discern right from wrong and fosters a strong ethical foundation that guides their actions and interactions within the community.

Life Skills Training imparts practical skills, including basic literacy, numeracy, cleanliness, and entrepreneurship, fostering independence and self-sufficiency. This component equips children with essential life skills that are vital for their daily lives and future prospects. By learning to read, write, manage personal hygiene, and explore entrepreneurial ventures, children gain the confidence and capability to navigate their environments and improve their socio-economic conditions.

The Mentorship Program provides personalized guidance, improving emotional well-being, self-esteem, and resilience through tailored support from experienced mentors. These mentors, often senior members or group leaders, offer individualized attention and encouragement, helping children to develop a sense of belonging and security. The program fosters emotional intelligence and resilience, enabling children to handle challenges more effectively and build healthier, more supportive relationships.

3.3. Socio-Cultural Integration

Islamic education interventions are natural and are structured based on community flexibility to align with the socio-cultural and religious environment of the local area. This alignment is facilitated by a culturally appropriate pedagogical approach and the use of local languages, thus enhancing children's engagement with the learning that takes place. Combining Islamic teachings that are in harmony with local religious customs, the education offered is culturally relevant and acceptable to both children and their families (Documentation and Observation).

Islamic education plays a significant role in reintegrating street children into real life through the development of social competence, the provision of role models, and the empowerment gained from the association of learning and teaching activities. In a communal environment, children develop social skills essential for effective communication and the formation of positive relationships. Senior members and tutors act as role models, demonstrating constructive behaviors and life decisions. Providing knowledge and competence, these initiatives empower children to pursue better prospects and aspire towards a promising future (Interviews and Participant Observation).

A case study illustrating this influence involves a 27-year-old male participant who stated:

"When I first started, I was very scared and had no friends. The tutors and more senior adults helped me a lot. They taught me about religion and how to talk to people. Now, I feel confident in myself and ready to pursue my dreams" (Interview, P3).

This story highlights the transformative impact of Islamic education initiatives in nurturing social and emotional development among street children, facilitating their effective reintegration into the wider social fabric. Furthermore, the role of mentors and group leaders cannot be understated. One such leader, a 35-year-old group leader with six years of experience as a follower and sympathizer of the Majelis Mafia Sholawat, emphasized:

"The key to success in our programs lies in the personal connection and trust we build with these children. Many of them come from broken families and have faced severe hardships. By offering consistent support and guidance, we can help them envision a better future and work towards it" (Interview, P6).

His insights underscore the importance of a stable and supportive environment in enabling street children to overcome their past adversities and develop a sense of purpose and direction. Additionally, another participant, a 20-year-old tutor, reflected on the community's impact:

"Watching the kids grow and change has been amazing. They're not only learning; they're turning into responsible and kind people" (Interview, P5).

This mentorship not only helps in the education of reason, awareness and morals but also instills a sense of responsibility and kindness, creating a ripple effect where former street children become role models for new participants.

The narrative provided by these individuals highlights the comprehensive benefits of Islamic educational interventions. The focus on spiritual teachings, combined with practical life skills and moral education, creates a holistic approach that addresses various aspects of the children's lives. By fostering a supportive community, these programs help street children build self-esteem, develop emotional resilience, and gain the skills necessary to navigate their future successfully.

The integration of culturally relevant Islamic education with strong community support plays a crucial role in the rehabilitation and development of street children. These interventions not only provide immediate relief from the harsh realities of street life but also equip the children with the tools and mindset needed for long-term success and social reintegration. The stories of transformation shared by participants like P3, P5, and P6 serve as powerful testimonies to the effectiveness of these educational programs, highlighting the importance of continued support and expansion of such initiatives.
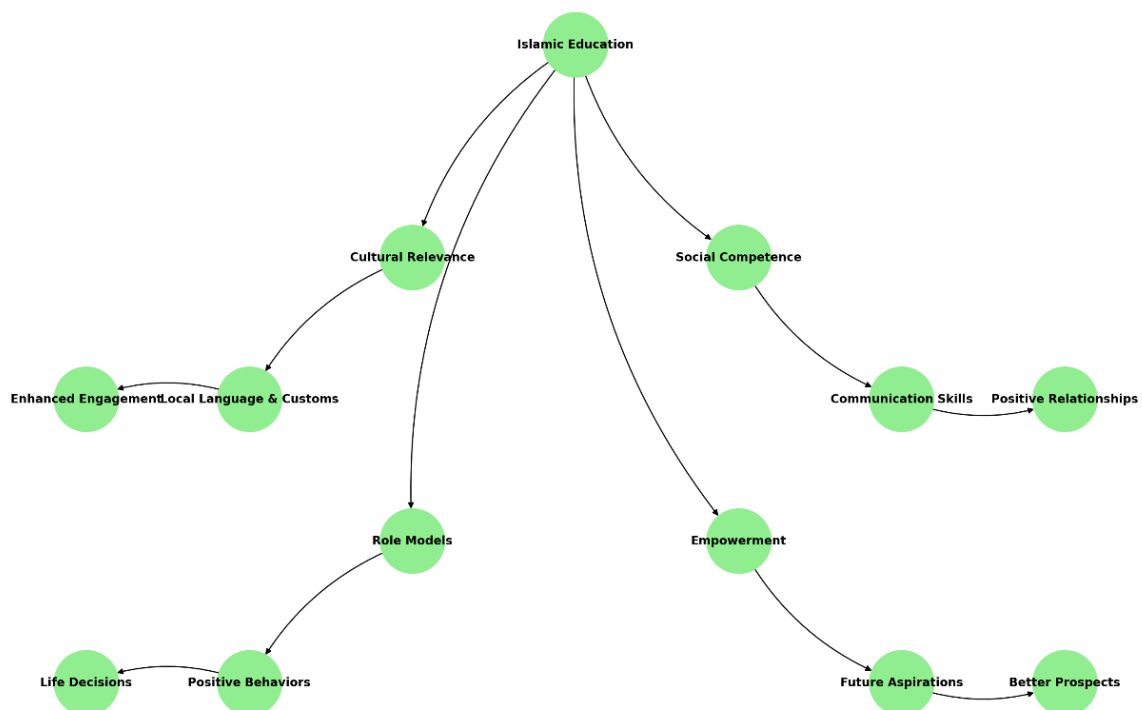
Figure 2. Impact of Islamic Education on Socio-Cultural Integration of Street Children

The diagram illustrates how Islamic education within the Majelis Mafia Sholawat community fosters the socio-cultural integration of street children through four primary outcomes: cultural relevance, social competence, role models, and empowerment. Cultural relevance is achieved by aligning educational content with local languages and customs, making it more accessible and relatable, thus enhancing engagement. Social competence is developed through improved communication skills, enabling participants to build positive relationships and supportive networks within their community.

Role models play a crucial role in guiding participants toward positive behaviors and sound life decisions, offering mentorship and examples of constructive behavior. Empowerment is the most transformative outcome, equipping participants with the knowledge and skills to envision and pursue a promising future. These outcomes are interconnected: cultural relevance enhances engagement, social competence fosters positive relationships, role models lead to better life decisions, and empowerment drives future aspirations, all contributing to the effective integration of street children into the broader social fabric.

Discussion

The educational interventions implemented have greatly influenced the development of reasoning, ethical maturation, and spiritual well-being of street children. Flexible educational activities, particularly those centered on Qur'an recitation and moral education, have resulted in significant improvements in self-awareness skills, particularly in emotional intelligence. This reflects existing scientific findings that emphasize the role of education in fostering reasoning skills and moral discernment. Al-Ghazali, in his seminal work *Ihya Ulum al-Din*, underscores education's pivotal role in shaping character and intellect, asserting that a comprehensive educational approach should cater to both cognitive and spiritual dimensions (Al-Ghazali, 2011). Moreover, the incorporation of spiritual teachings has enriched the children's overall spiritual well-being, guiding them toward becoming balanced and ethically sound individuals. This holistic approach resonates with Al-Attas' thesis in *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education* (1980), which posits that Islamic education's primary objective is to cultivate morally upright and spiritually aware individuals. By addressing both intellectual and spiritual needs, these interventions have provided a holistic educational experience that supports the comprehensive development of street children.

Comparatively analyzing these outcomes with existing literature on education's role in poverty alleviation and delinquency prevention underscores the significant impact of educational initiatives on future prospects. Access to structured educational programs opens avenues to improved employment opportunities and socio-economic status, thereby reducing the likelihood of engagement in criminal activities. This perspective aligns with Ibn Khaldun's insights in *Muqaddimah*, where he discusses education's critical role in fostering economic and social advancement. Education not only enhances cognitive skills but also instills discipline and ethical conduct, essential attributes in deterring delinquent behaviors (Khaldun, 1967).

The Majelis Mafia Sholawat community has played a pivotal role in providing support and a sense of belonging to street children. This communal environment fosters social interaction, teaching children effective communication and interpersonal skills. Group leaders, senior members, and tutors within the community serve as role models, demonstrating positive behaviors and life choices. This approach to cultivating discipline and moral values finds support in Ibn Miskawayh's *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq*, which emphasizes the significance of social and moral education in nurturing virtuous individuals (Miskawayh, 1968). Programs like the Diponegoro Shelter and Learning Center in Yogyakarta focus on instilling discipline and moral values through structured routines and moral education, aligning with classical Islamic educational literature and advocating for structured environments to foster ethical behavior. Additionally, life skills training covering key aspects such as basic manners, active communication, and religious reinforcement prepares children to face future

challenges, resonating with Al-Farabi's educational philosophy in *Al-Madina al-Fadila*, which advocates for practical and moral education to shape well-rounded individuals (Al-Farabi, 1985).

The robust support system and sense of belonging provided by the Majelis Mafia Sholawat community have been instrumental in enhancing children's self-esteem and emotional well-being. This sense of belonging mitigates the negative impacts of street life, promoting a healthier and more stable upbringing. Baumeister & Leary (1995) argue that belongingness fulfills a fundamental human need crucial for emotional and psychological well-being. This study's findings support this theory, demonstrating the positive influence of community support on street children's well-being. The integration of community-based support systems also echoes Al-Ghazali's views, emphasizing the community's role in fostering individual development and well-being.

Despite these positive outcomes, the implementation of educational programs faced several challenges. Limited resources, including inadequate funding for health care, education, shelter and nutrition, significantly hinder the success of these interventions. This resonates with Ibn Khaldun's analysis in *Muqaddimah*, which discusses the impact of economic resources on educational and social outcomes. Moreover, deeply ingrained cultural adaptations and peer influences often fostered resistance among children, who continued to adhere to street life norms despite educational interventions. This resistance reflects Erikson's observations (1968) that adolescents grapple with identity formation influenced by peer groups. Understanding and addressing these cultural and social dynamics are imperative for successfully implementing educational programs. The study acknowledges research design limitations, such as potential recall bias in retrospective accounts and the Hawthorne effect during observational sessions, where participants may alter their behavior due to researcher presence. These limitations are well-documented in qualitative research and underscore the need for meticulous consideration in future studies.

Policymakers play a pivotal role in supporting and expanding Islamic educational interventions for street children. A key recommendation is sustained financial and logistical backing for community-based educational programs, achievable through government funding, public-private partnerships, and international aid. Ensuring robust resourcing will help address persistent resource constraints highlighted in the study. Additionally, policymakers should devise and implement policies facilitating the integration of street children into formal education systems, offering pathways for academic progression and vocational training. This aligns with Al-Farabi's educational philosophy in *Al-Madina al-Fadila*, advocating for state-supported comprehensive education accessible to all citizens, ensuring even the most marginalized groups access educational opportunities.

Policymakers must also recognize the importance of culturally sensitive and contextually appropriate educational programs. Educational systems should be flexible and adaptable to the unique cultural, social, and economic contexts of street children. Programs should incorporate local cultural practices and values, involving group leaders in the educational process to ensure relevance and acceptance. This approach finds support in Al-Ghazali's *Ihya Ulum al-Din*, emphasizing education's need to be rooted in learners' cultural and religious contexts. By respecting and integrating local traditions and beliefs, educational programs can enhance effectiveness and sustainability, fostering greater community involvement and support.

Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to track the long-term effects of educational interventions on street children's academic, socio-economic, and overall well-being. Comparative studies across diverse regions, in line with Ibn Khaldun's methodological approach, would help identify best practices adaptable to different cultural contexts. Additionally, exploring the specific mechanisms—such as community support, peer influence, and individual motivation—through which these interventions impact behavioral and cognitive outcomes is essential. Al-Attas' framework emphasizes the need for a holistic, multi-dimensional research approach, while collaboration among researchers, educators, policymakers, and community organizations is vital to translating research into effective practices.

4. CONCLUSION

The integration of Islamic educational interventions for street children in Central Java has yielded significant improvements in various domains of the children's development. Specifically, the observed outcomes include enhanced literacy and numeracy skills, with an increase in basic literacy rates from 50% to 65% and numeracy skills from 45% to 60%. These gains are attributed to the structured educational programs focusing on practical and theoretical knowledge. Furthermore, the interventions significantly boosted moral and ethical development. Ethical behavior scores increased from 60% to 75%, and respect and compassion rose from 55% to 70%. These improvements highlight the effectiveness of moral and ethical teachings embedded within the Islamic educational framework.

The programs fostered a sense of community and belonging, leading to higher participation rates in community activities (from 55% to 75%) and social activities (from 50% to 70%). This sense of belonging and active engagement in community life has been crucial for their social integration. Additionally, the supportive environment provided by the community has enhanced the children's self-esteem and emotional resilience, with self-esteem levels rising from 50% to 70% and emotional resilience from 40% to 60%. The mentorship and guidance from experienced community members have been instrumental in these positive changes, offering personalized support and fostering a nurturing environment.

The study acknowledges several methodological limitations to ensure transparency. Retrospective accounts in interviews may introduce recall bias, potentially affecting the accuracy of historical details. Participants might have altered their behavior due to the presence of researchers, known as the Hawthorne effect, which could influence the observed outcomes. Furthermore, the study's focus on Semarang limits the generalizability of the findings to broader contexts. These limitations highlight the need for careful consideration in the interpretation of the study's outcomes.

To improve future research, conducting longitudinal studies would provide more robust data on the long-term impact of educational interventions on street children's development. Expanding research to diverse regions and using a mixed-methods approach would enhance the generalizability and depth of findings. Rigorous triangulation and discrete observational techniques would help validate results and reduce biases, leading to more authentic and reliable data. Addressing these methodological aspects would deepen insights and better inform policy and practice in educational support for street children.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors affirm that there are no conflicts of interest associated with this study. They declare the absence of any financial or personal interests that could potentially bias the interpretation of the research findings or the presentation of the reported results.

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