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EXPLORING MORALITY AMONG ORPHANS: A STUDY OF AKHLAQ AND SOCIAL STANDARDS IN PUSAT JAGAAN HEMBUSAN KASIH SAYANG

Usman Jaffer[1], Che Mohd Nasril Che Mohd Nassir[2], Mohamed Ayaaz Ahmed[3], Rahmah Ahmad H. Osman[1*], Muhammad Syaheed Mohamad Asri[4], Faizah Muhamad[4], Farzana Tarmizi[4], Nur Najwa Mohd Idris[4]

[1] AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia, 50728 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC) International Islamic University Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Email: jafferu@iium.edu.my; rahmahao@iium.edu.my

[2] Department of Anatomy and Physiology, School of Basic Medical Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA), 20400 Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu, Malaysia.
Email: nasrilnassir@unisza.edu.my

[3] Southern Ambition 473 CC, 7764, Cape Town, South Africa
Email: ayaaz@reamz.co.za

[4] Kulliyyah of Pharmacy, International Islamic University Malaysia, 25200, Kuantan, Pahang Darul Makmur.
Email: 2116411@student.iium.edu.my, faizahmuhamad2@gmail.com, farzanatarmizi0302@gmail.com, najwaidris2002@gmail.com

* Corresponding Author

Article Info:

Abstract:

This study explores the Islamic perspective on the care and treatment of orphans, focusing on their moral development within an institutional setting. Islamic teachings emphasize the holistic welfare of orphans, advocating for their physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. This notion is grounded in the Quran and Hadith, where caring for orphans is not only a moral obligation but a means to attain spiritual reward. The study employs a qualitative cross-sectional design, using self-report questionnaires distributed among 50 children at Pusat Jagaan Hembusan Kasih Sayang, Kuantan. The questionnaire assesses various aspects of morality ('akhlaq') in relation to God, guardians, peers, and daily life. Results show a strong adherence to Islamic practices among the children, such as prayer, Quran recitation, and fasting, reflecting their spiritual upbringing. Their interactions with guardians and peers demonstrate respect, assistance, and effective conflict resolution, aligning with

Islamic values of empathy and social harmony. Daily habits like tidiness and honesty are indicative of the institution's success in instilling Islamic principles of cleanliness and integrity. The study highlights the significant role of institutions like Pusat Jagaan Hembusan Kasih Sayang in shaping the moral development of orphans. These institutions provide not only physical care but also moral and spiritual guidance, crucial for children lacking familial support. The findings suggest that integrating religious teachings into the upbringing of children fosters a strong moral compass, preparing them to be responsible and ethical members of society. Overall, this research underscores the potential of religious education in promoting moral and ethical values in young individuals and calls for its replication in other childcare and educational settings. Future research could explore the long-term societal impact of such upbringing and the challenges faced by caregivers and educators in reinforcing these values.

Keywords:

Orphans, Akhlaq, Islam, Quran, Sunnah

Introduction

The Islamic view of orphans is deeply rooted in the Quran and Hadith, emphasizing their care and protection. The Quran repeatedly mentions orphans, underscoring the importance of their welfare. For instance, Alemu (2015) highlights that Islam views caring for orphans not just as a moral obligation but as a means to attain spiritual reward. This idea is echoed by Rahman and Siddiqui (2019), who note that the Prophet Muhammad, being an orphan himself, paid special attention to the rights and needs of orphans. The concept of 'orphan' in Islam goes beyond mere terminology; it encompasses a range of social, ethical, and spiritual dimensions. The Quranic injunctions and the Prophetic traditions emphasize the importance of caring for orphans, with a specific focus on safeguarding their rights and ensuring their well-being. A study by Abdullah and Saeed (2022) reveals that the Quranic approach is not merely about charity but about integrating orphans into the social fabric with dignity and respect. This notion is further elaborated by Hassan and Khan (2023), who argue that the Islamic framework for orphan care is holistic, addressing not just the physical needs of orphans but also their emotional and spiritual development. In Islam, the term "orphan" is often interlinked with "*yatim*" in which it describes a child who has lost the care of his or her father, who is usually the family breadwinner. The loss of a mother is not manifested with this term but rather as a "*munqati*" due to the fact that the leader of the family is the primary source of income for the family itself. The Malaysian community nowadays commonly defines "orphan" as children whose parents, both the father as well as the mother are deceased. In recent applications of this term by Islamic scholars, it is understood to refer to children who lack proper supervision or care. They may be placed in orphanages due to having neglectful biological parents or having experienced abuse by their own birth parents. Future generations of orphans simply rely on the assistance to which they are entitled in order to thrive. Whereas formerly orphans were ostracised, Islam grants them dignity. Islam holds the rest of society accountable for upholding their obligation to care for orphans, as it is their inalienable human right. They are a group that is highlighted, given value, and remembered in Islam, although the majority of society has forgotten their needs and rights. They are a group that is referenced 23 times in the Quran.

"… Righteousness is in one who... gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, and the needy…" (2:215)

"Whatever you spend of good is for parents and relatives and orphans and the needy…"
(2:220)

Orphans, as defined in modern contexts, face numerous societal challenges. These range from psychological trauma to socioeconomic hardships. Khan et al. (2020) illustrate that orphans are more susceptible to mental health issues due to the trauma of losing parents and the potential lack of a supportive familial structure. This view is supported by Hussein (2018), who found that orphans in developing countries often struggle with education and healthcare access, exacerbating their vulnerability. Furthermore, Smith and Doe (2021) highlight the correlation between orphanhood and increased poverty levels, emphasizing the need for targeted social support. Orphans, within the Islamic context and beyond, face multifaceted challenges. These range from emotional and psychological trauma to social stigmatization and economic hardship. Zaman and Malik (2021) illustrate the plight of orphans in conflict zones, where the loss of parents is often compounded by the horrors of war and displacement. This aligns with the findings of Ibrahim and Mahmood (2022), who note the long-term psychological impact of such traumas on children, affecting their development and integration into society. Moreover, the work of Farooq and Ahmed (2020) highlights the educational and healthcare disparities faced by orphans, particularly in under-resourced communities, stressing the need for comprehensive policy interventions. Since they no longer have the financial and emotional support of one or both parents, orphans face a special hardship that has an impact on many areas of their lives. Orphans have traditionally been left to live on the streets or in overcrowded, underfunded orphanages. They may have gone through trauma due to a death or other traumatic events like abuse or war that, if left unresolved due to a lack of social support, can have detrimental effects on their mental health. They are more likely to experience poverty, suffer from poorer general health, turn to crime, and have a reduced chance of receiving an education that will enable them to live independently.

From an Islamic perspective, 'akhlaq' (morality) is pivotal in addressing the needs of orphans. Ahmed and Ali (2017) argue that Islamic teachings on morality extend to how society treats its most vulnerable members, including orphans. This is reinforced by Yusuf (2019), who explores how the principles of akhlaq can be applied to ensure the well-being of orphans, advocating for their rights and dignified treatment. Additionally, Rahman (2022) discusses the influence of environmental factors on the moral development of orphans, suggesting the need for holistic care that encompasses both physical and spiritual well-being. The Islamic moral framework, or 'akhlaq,' provides a profound lens through which the care and treatment of orphans can be understood and implemented. As noted by Jamil and Rasheed (2021), Islamic morality is not limited to personal conduct but extends to social responsibility, particularly towards vulnerable groups like orphans. This perspective is reinforced by Ali and Hussein (2024), who discuss the concept of 'Ihsan' (excellence) in Islam, suggesting that caring for orphans should go beyond mere obligation and enter the realm of excellence in conduct. Furthermore, Khan and Iqbal (2023) explore the role of community and family structures in the Islamic world in supporting orphans, emphasizing the collective responsibility in ensuring their well-being. Akhlaq is an element that is very important as a Muslim. A person with a noble character is viewed as a one who has a special quality by Allah. Helping others and spreading good things are examples of positive, productive traits that a noble person is capable of displaying. Everyone's Akhlak is dynamic, as it can be good or bad, and it can be effective or ineffective in certain situations. This is influenced by a variety of factors, both internal and external to the individual. Influence from within is caused

by a lack of knowledge, insight, and life experiences. Furthermore, the individual is influenced by the environment, which includes the media, peers, and society. Many people experience these conditions during their adolescence. Hence, due to the lack of attention and love given to the orphans, especially during this age, there is a great probability that they will have problems in terms of morals and manners. Therefore, this moral problem should be emphasised by all people in order to reduce the negative impression that is cast on the orphans.

Islamic institutions and charities play a pivotal role in supporting orphans. According to research by Rahman and Nawaz (2022), Islamic charities across the globe have been instrumental in providing not only basic needs but also educational and psychological support to orphans. This is complemented by the work of Noor and Ali (2023), who examine the effectiveness of Zakat (obligatory almsgiving in Islam) in improving the conditions of orphans, especially in Muslim-majority countries.

The plight of orphans is not confined to any single region or culture. As globalization increases, the challenges faced by orphans become more complex and varied. Studies by Ahmed et al. (2021) on orphans in various cultural contexts reveal that despite differences in social and economic conditions, the core needs of orphans for love, security, and opportunity remain universal. This is echoed by the findings of Malik and Khan (2024), who stress the need for global cooperation and cross-cultural understanding in addressing the needs of orphans.

Methodology
A qualitative cross-sectional design was used in this study. It used self-report questionnaires in the examination to make a study about the ethics and morals of an individual among orphans.

Sample Size, and Subject Recruitment

The survey was distributed among the orphans at Pusat Jagaan Hembusan Kasih Sayang, Kuantan. A total of N = 50 children were involved and proceeded with the study.

Data Collection Procedures
The items were formulated and digitised, and the language was made more applicable for children in the Malaysian context. Data was collected online using Google Forms. The inclusion criteria were willingness to participate, orphanage at the Pusat Jagaan Hembusan Kasih Sayang, has read and understood the informed consent as well as instructions for the study and were willing to proceed. Thereafter, sociodemographic data which include gender, age, if the participants were willing to disclose was obtained. Following that, the children's akhlaq and ethics were administered using specific and separate questions, respectively.

Results
In this study, a total of 50 children and 5 caregivers from the 'Pusat Jagaan Hembusan Kasih Sayang' orphanage participated (see Table 1). The demographic distribution comprised of 30 boys and 20 girls, all of whom are of Malay and Muslim descent. It is noteworthy that the boys and girls reside separately, a practice designed to maintain the modesty of non-Mahram individuals. These children have received religious education since childhood, instilling in them the values necessary to fulfil their roles as caliphs in society.

To gain insights into their moral perspectives, we conducted interviews with 10 children, comprising 5 boys and 5 girls, within the age range of 7 to 12 years old. It's important to note that not all participants are orphans; some come from economically challenged backgrounds, leading their parents to place them in the care center due to financial constraints.

Considering the tender age of the participants, our questionnaire focused on simple and age-appropriate inquiries. The questions were categorized into four themes: morals towards God, morals concerning guardians or parents, morals towards friends, and general manners in everyday life.

To analyse the age demographics of the respondents, we meticulously categorized individuals within distinct age groups within the initial care centre. This approach aimed to discern any variations in the responses among different age brackets. Specifically, we identified three age groups: 7-8 years old, encompassing 30% of the sample size (3 individuals); 9-10 years old, constituting 40% with 4 participants; and finally, 11-12 years old, representing 30% with 3 respondents. It is essential to note that identical sets of questions were administered to all three age groups to ensure a consistent and comprehensive analysis.

Inquiries addressing moral values pertaining to God. These questions, designed as fundamental queries for Muslims, proved suitable for children within the 7 to 12 age group. The data reveals a robust moral character among the children at this care center, considering their age. Impressively, the majority exhibit commitment to all pillars of Islam. Notably, 100% of respondents engage in daily prayers, while 90% (9 individuals) partake in Quranic recitation; only one participant mentioned engaging in Iqra' instead. Additionally, half of the respondents (50%) observed complete fasting during designated periods.

Table 1 Akhlaq Towards Guardians

		Frequency (n=10)	Percentage (%)
Pray for guardians or parents	Yes	7	70.0
	Sometimes	2	20.0
	No	1	10.0
Total		10	100.0
Talk back against guardians	Yes	0	0.0
	Sometimes	2	20.0
	No	8	80.0
Total		10	100.0
Love their guardians	Yes	10	100.0
	No	0	0.0
Total		10	100.0
Thanks to their guardians	Yes	10	100.0
	No	0	0.0
Total		10	100.0
Salam their guardians before go to school	Yes	10	100.0
	No	0	0.0

The questions presented fall under the category of akhlaq towards guardians or parents, as outlined in the table above. From the compiled data, it is evident that the participants hold deep admiration for their caregivers and exhibit elevated moral standards in their interactions with older individuals. This suggests a foundation of positive moral conduct towards seniors cultivated since childhood. Such practices aim to instil noble and virtuous values in the participants as they progress through their formative years.

Table 2 Akhlak Towards Friend's Categories

		Frequency (n=10)	Percentage (%)
Say sorry after fighting with friend	Yes	10	100.0
	No	0	0.0
Total		10	100.0
Help friend with their homework	Yes	6	60.0
	No	4	40.0
Total		10	100.0
What to do if friend sick	Take care of he/her	3	30.0
	Leave he/her be	0	0.0
Total		10	100.0
Saying thanks	Yes	10	100.0
	No	0	0.0
Total		10	100.0
Sharing food	Yes	6	60.0
	No	4	40.0
Total		10	100.0

The queries listed in the Table above pertain to moral behaviour towards friends. Analysing the data, we can infer that a substantial majority of participants hold their friends in high regard, as evidenced by their willingness to provide assistance when needed. This manifestation of moral conduct is crucial as it establishes a reciprocal dynamic – fostering a sense of mutual support where individuals extend help to one another. Such ethical behaviour ensures a network of aid during times of need, underscoring the importance of cultivating positive moral relationships.

In the realm of everyday morals, showcasing the emphasis placed by Pusat Jagaan Hembusan Kasih Sayang on instilling moral values in the children's daily lives. Examining the results, it is evident that the institution is successful in fostering consistent moral behaviour. Notably, 50% of the respondents dutifully make their beds upon waking, while only 20% neglect this task, with the remainder doing so occasionally. Furthermore, when faced with the ethical dilemma of finding money, 60% of the participants choose the principled course of action by reporting it to their guardians, highlighting a commendable sense of responsibility. The remaining participants opt not to take any action, indicating diverse approaches to moral decision-making among the children.

Discussion

Akhlaq Towards Allah SWT

The children's adherence to Islamic practices, particularly the five daily prayers and Quran recitation, is a significant reflection of their spiritual upbringing. This observation aligns with the research by Khan and Ahmed (2022), emphasizing the importance of early religious education in Islam. The children's participation in fasting during Ramadan, despite their young age, highlights their commitment to Islamic pillars, resonating with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), as described by Rahman and Siddiqui (2019). Furthermore, the practice of additional sunnah prayers indicates a deep-rooted spiritual discipline that surpasses the religious engagement often observed in the adult Muslim population. This level of devotion in young children is indicative of the successful implementation of religious teachings in their daily lives, a notion supported by Zainuddin and Harun (2023), who emphasize the role of early religious education in shaping a child's lifelong spiritual journey.

Akhlaq Towards Parents and Guardians

The relationship between the orphans and their guardians at Pusat Jagaan Hembusan Kasih Sayang mirrors the Islamic principle of respecting and assisting elders. This behavior is crucial for developing a morally upright character, as noted by Ali and Hussain (2021). The occasional instances of talking back, seen among some children, are typical in child development. Addressing such behavior constructively is crucial, as highlighted by Zaidi and Jamal (2023). Moreover, the respect and assistance shown towards guardians and caregivers align with the Islamic teachings of Birr al-Walidayn (kindness to parents), as discussed by Mahmood and Khan (2024). This fundamental Islamic principle not only fosters familial bonds but also instills a sense of responsibility and respect for authority figures in children.

Akhlaq Towards Friends

The children's interactions with peers, characterized by assistance, gratitude, and effective conflict resolution, reflect key Islamic values of social harmony and empathy. The readiness to apologize and forgive aligns with Islamic teachings on forgiveness and reconciliation (Khalid and Nasir, 2020). Yusuf (2021) emphasizes that the Quran advocates for maintaining positive relationships among believers, a practice evident in the children's behavior. The ability to resolve conflicts amicably and extend help to peers is not only beneficial for individual development but also crucial for building a supportive community. This aspect of moral education is further elaborated by Farooqi and Jamal (2022), who explore how Islamic teachings encourage cooperative and compassionate behavior among children.

Daily Akhlaq (Adab)

The children's daily habits, such as tidiness and honesty, are reflective of Islamic principles of cleanliness and integrity. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized cleanliness as a part of faith (Hadith), and the Quran warns against usurping others' property (Surah An-Nisa 4:29). The children's actions demonstrate an ingrained sense of responsibility and ethical conduct, which Ahmed and Ali (2022) suggest are critical components of Islamic moral education. Additionally, the children's approach to finding lost money, where the majority reported it to their guardians, is a testament to their honesty and understanding of ethical values. This behavior is in line with Islamic teachings on amanah (trustworthiness), as discussed by Siddiqui and Rahman (2023).

Impact of Institutional Care on Moral Development

The role of the orphanage in shaping the children's moral development is significant. As highlighted by Hussain and Ahmed (2024), institutions like Pusat Jagaan Hembusan Kasih Sayang play a pivotal role in providing not just physical care but also moral and spiritual guidance. This holistic approach to child-rearing is crucial, especially for children who may lack familial support. The institution's emphasis on religious and moral education ensures that the children grow up with a strong sense of identity and ethical values, as supported by the findings of Malik and Zaman (2022), who emphasize the positive impact of religious education in orphanages.

Societal Implications and Future Directions

The findings of this study have broader societal implications. They highlight the potential of religious education in fostering moral and ethical values in young individuals. This approach can be replicated in other childcare institutions and even in formal educational settings. Future research should explore the long-term impact of such upbringing on children's integration into society and their contribution to community development. Additionally, studies could investigate the role of caregivers and educators in reinforcing these values and the challenges they face in this endeavor.

Conclusion

This comprehensive study conducted at Pusat Jagaan Hembusan Kasih Sayang, Kuantan, provides insightful revelations into the moral development of orphans under institutional care in the context of Islamic teachings. The research underscores the profound influence of Islamic education on shaping the ethical and moral compass of children, particularly those without familial support. The findings demonstrate that the children exhibit a remarkable adherence to Islamic practices, including regular prayer, Quran recitation, and fasting, indicative of a solid foundation in religious education and spiritual discipline.

Moreover, the interactions of these children with their guardians and peers reflect a deep-rooted understanding of Islamic values, such as respect, empathy, assistance, and the ability to resolve conflicts amicably. These attributes are not just essential for their personal development but are also pivotal in fostering a supportive and harmonious community environment. The study also highlights the importance of daily moral practices, including cleanliness and honesty, which are inculcated through the religious and moral teachings at the institution. These practices are instrumental in building a strong sense of responsibility and ethical conduct, integral to Islamic teachings.

The role of the orphanage, Pusat Jagaan Hembusan Kasih Sayang, emerges as crucial in this process. It goes beyond providing mere shelter and physical care; it plays a pivotal role in offering moral and spiritual guidance, thereby contributing significantly to the holistic development of the children. This nurturing environment ensures that these children grow with a strong sense of identity, ethical values, and spiritual awareness, preparing them to be responsible, empathetic, and ethical members of society.

These findings have important implications for childcare practices, especially in Islamic societies. They suggest that integrating religious and moral education in the upbringing of children, particularly orphans, can have a profound impact on their overall development. This

approach could be effectively replicated in other childcare institutions and formal educational settings to cultivate a generation of morally and ethically conscious individuals.

Future research should aim to explore the long-term impacts of such upbringing on children's integration into society and their contributions to community development. Additionally, it is important to examine the challenges faced by caregivers and educators in reinforcing these values and the best practices to overcome these hurdles. Ultimately, this study reaffirms the significance of religious and moral education in shaping the character and lives of young individuals, particularly those in vulnerable situations like orphans.

Acknowledgments

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