

## ISLAMIC GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING: A PATHWAY TO MORAL DEVELOPMENT FOR STREET CHILDREN

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### **Abstract :**

*The increasing presence of street children has frequently led to problems such as traffic disruptions, public order disturbances, and safety concerns in urban areas, raising significant issues each year. This situation highlights the urgent need for guidance to help street children find purpose in life and develop good moral character. Islamic guidance and counseling emerge as a new approach, incorporating the principles of Islamic teachings to address the specific challenges faced by street children. It is anticipated that Islamic guidance and counseling can offer effective Islamic solutions to various problems in their lives. This qualitative research aims to systematically and accurately describe symptoms, facts, or events related to the characteristics of street children. The study's primary data sources are the street children themselves, with secondary and tertiary data sources providing additional context. Data collection methods include observation, interviews, and documentation. Islamic counseling employs various strategies to improve the morals of street children, including Islamic guidance methods, habituation techniques, role modeling, and creative guidance approaches. These methods are implemented effectively to foster moral development among street children.*

**Keywords :** Street children, Islamic Guidance and Counseling, Morals.

### **INTRODUCTION**

It is essential to provide early guidance to street children to ensure they receive proper attention and do not develop into problematic individuals in the future (Syamsul Haling, 2019). Effective communication and moral development in society are becoming increasingly important (Kühne, O., Berr, K., & Jenal, C., 2023). The rising number of street children each year is a growing concern. Achmad Dzikril (2022) and Hawley, E. (2022) explain that this increase is largely due to economic difficulties. Street children often struggle with low self-esteem, frequently harbor negative perceptions of themselves, and tend to reject acceptance of their circumstances.

The presence of street children in various cities is a topic of debate among communities and authorities, as it is associated with life and livelihood challenges that worsen the situation for these children (Fekadu, D., & Nikapota, A., 2020). According to Ismayilova, L., Claypool, E., & Heidorn, E. (2023), the situation is further aggravated by the range of social problems that street children face. In general, they still desperately need love and guidance from their families. Street children are often perceived as disruptors of public order, as well as contributors to crime and the deterioration of a city's aesthetic appeal.

The ongoing population increase presents global challenges, resulting in urban poverty and limited resources (Zedan, Z.M., El-Gohary, G., & Mohamed,

S., 2022). As a response, various efforts have been undertaken by city government social services to address the presence of street children. However, to effectively improve the situation, there is a need to focus on changing the behavior of street children. One approach to achieve this is through the provision of Islamic guidance and counseling tailored to their needs.

Erhamwilda (2008) explains that the objectives of Islamic guidance and counseling are as follows: First, to help individuals understand and pursue the best actions for a happy life in this world and the hereafter. Second, to cultivate self-awareness by recognizing their unique qualities. Third, to foster a positive attitude. Fourth, to enable individuals to make healthy choices. Fifth, to instill respect for others. Sixth, to develop a sense of responsibility. Seventh, to enhance interpersonal relationships and conflict resolution skills. Eighth, to support effective decision-making.

Bhakti and Muatik (2018), as well as Kühne, O., Berr, K., and Jenal, C. (2023), explain that morality encompasses all aspects related to morals, manners, and ethics within community life. According to Hidayat Ardiyansyah (2019), morality is a person's moral behavior that should be practiced and internalized daily, from childhood through adulthood.

Gunawardena, M., Koivula, M. (2023), and Beck, S.R. (2024) describe street children as those who are visibly living and working on the streets, in fields, or in urban areas around the world, often lacking adequate access to health care and education. According to Grimaldy (2017), street children are individuals who spend most of their time on the streets to earn a living and require a place to rest or seek temporary refuge.

Furthermore, Achmad Dzikril (2022) explains that social support from various individuals within the shelter environment positively impacts street children by enhancing their self-esteem. In relation to this, Badrus Zaman's (2019) research on moral education for street children in Surakarta identifies factors that hinder the effectiveness of moral education, particularly the lack of interest and tendency towards laziness among street children when participating in moral education programs.

To our knowledge, previous research has focused primarily on the social conditions of street children, their behavior, and the state of their social environment. This study is the first to examine the integration of Islamic guidance and counseling as a means to improve the morals of street children who have deviated from their developmental tasks. Islamic guidance and counseling offer a new approach that incorporates the principles of Islamic teachings to address the specific challenges faced by these children. Therefore, this research employs Islamic guidance and counseling services to help enhance the moral character of street children and address the issues they encounter.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This type of qualitative research aims to systematically and accurately describe the symptoms, truths, or events related to the characteristics of a specific population or area (Nurul Zuriah, 2009). The qualitative method employs descriptive data, which includes written or spoken words from individuals and observed behaviors. Qualitative research focuses on the aspects of quality, value, or meaning that underlie the facts.

In research, the data source refers to the subjects from which data is collected. In this case, the researchers utilize two types of data sources: first, primary data sources, and second, secondary data sources. Sugiyono (2010) explains that to ensure the data produced is accurate and authentic, researchers conduct validity tests. In this study, data validity is tested using triangulation, which involves verifying the credibility of the data by employing various data collection techniques across different sources.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Finding**

Based on interview results from informants regarding the moral development of street children, it is essential to first consider their conditions. Before receiving training, these children generally exhibit characteristics similar to those of other street children, particularly regarding education, as they are significantly behind their peers. The majority of their time is spent on the streets, leading to neglect of their educational opportunities. In line with Van Daalen's (2023) observations, street children clearly belong to the lower class of society from an economic perspective. They lack time for appropriate work related to their developmental stage, which is why they often resort to living and earning money on the streets through begging, scavenging, and busking.

Kühne, O., Berr, K., and Jenal, C. (2023) as well as Badrus Zaman (2019) point out that street children also experience a degree of freedom, making them difficult to control during coaching sessions. Harsh language is often used among street children, which can test the patience of their mentors. However, this behavior is understandable, as these children are accustomed to living freely on the streets from noon until evening. When working with street children, coaches do not simply dictate instructions; rather, they must adapt to the children's way of life. By building rapport with them, coaches can then guide and direct their behavior more effectively.

Khasanah, Y. N., and Umriana, A. (2017), along with Kühne, O., Berr, K., and Jenal, C. (2023), explain the conditions of street children and outline the methods of moral development through Islamic guidance and counseling, which can be divided into several components. Street children are often characterized as free-spirited individuals who resist regulation, displaying negative behaviors such as speaking rudely, being unkempt, and showing disrespect towards older individuals. Their lack of knowledge about Islamic teachings is often attributed to inadequate parental upbringing and an unsupportive environment. Living on the streets without proper guidance or supervision leaves many street children

unfamiliar with basic religious practices, such as Quran recitation and regular prayer, leading to behaviors that deviate from social norms.

According to Putri, D. A., and Habibah, S. (2022), the method employed in developing the morals of street children involves Islamic guidance and counseling. This approach aims to enhance knowledge, raise awareness, and empower individuals to overcome life's challenges and everyday problems. Efforts to foster the moral development of street children are grounded in normative behaviors, such as the regular recitation of the Quran.

Bhakti and Muatik (2018) and Kühne, O., Berr, K., and Jenal, C. (2023) explain that transforming the negative morals of street children into positive ones is a challenging task. Moral change cannot be achieved through a single effort; it requires consistent habituation and ongoing commitment. To facilitate meaningful change, it is essential to provide effective Islamic guidance and counseling for street children, accompanied by patience and continuous support.

The exemplary method is a coaching approach that involves providing a positive role model for children through both words and actions. This method is one of the most effective educational strategies, significantly influencing the success of conveying a particular message. Many believe that coaching by example is the most effective approach; while coaches can easily communicate their messages verbally, children often struggle to grasp these messages without practical examples demonstrating what is being conveyed.

Rahman, I. K., and Anwar, L. (2023) explain that the behavior of street children differs significantly from that of children in general. Rude and unkempt attitudes, along with coarse language, are commonplace among street children and have become part of their daily interactions. Therefore, it is essential to educate them to avoid using offensive terms, such as 'dogs' or 'pigs.' This educational effort is implemented by encouraging the children to greet their coaches and kiss their hands each time they enter a classroom session. In response, the coaches greet the children warmly, akin to a parent-child relationship.

According to the coach, the habituation method alone is insufficient; it also requires involvement from the family environment. Therefore, supervisors engage with the families of street children to encourage their participation in fostering habits such as prayer, Quran recitation, and maintaining cleanliness at home.

In line with Zaman's research (2019) referencing Hidayat (2007), the semi-social home-based approach model is implemented by the Bina Ruhama Orphanage Home in Metro City, which supports school-age children through the 'Back to School' program. This initiative aims to enroll children who have not attended school or who have dropped out into various elementary and middle schools in Metro City. Additionally, the orphanage fosters productive-age children through a 'Life Skills' program that offers training in sewing, cosmetology, and cell phone repair at local educational institutions. Furthermore, the 'Family Empowerment' program provides families or parents of street children with basic food assistance and capital for starting productive businesses.

## **Discussion**

In line with the research conducted by Beck, S. R. (2024) and Dwi Nur Attira Ain et al. (2023), religious methods, particularly Islamic guidance and counseling, play a crucial role in optimally developing the potential of street children, enabling them to achieve independence and attain happiness in life. In the process of shaping the morals of street children, the researchers identified several methods, starting with the direct method.

According to Van Daalen, E. (2023), street children receive regular face-to-face advice that helps them recognize good behavior and understand the consequences of bad behavior. This approach is evident in the coaching of street children, where many are encouraged to abandon street life and focus on continuing their education. The second method is indirect. Indirect Islamic guidance and counseling involves using intermediaries, such as information boards or mass media. The local government implements this by installing banners along the roadside that promote messages related to moral improvement.

Dwi Nur Attira Ain et al. (2023) and Beck, S. R. (2024) explain that exemplification is a highly effective religious method employed by educators in the teaching process. The presence of exemplary education significantly influences individuals' habits, behaviors, and attitudes. In fact, childhood is the most suitable phase for providing exemplary guidance, making it the longest-lasting and most crucial method for educators to instill positive values and correct principles in children's souls and behaviors (Zulkifli, 2023).

Khasanah, Y. N., and Umriana, A. (2017) explain that a habit is an activity performed repeatedly until it becomes second nature. Habituation involves consistently engaging in behaviors to help individuals develop correct attitudes and thought processes. According to Rahman, I. K., and Anwar, L. (2023), the process of habituation is grounded in experience, where the behaviors being habituated are practiced until individuals become accustomed to acting positively, such as offering help in times of need.

Putri, D. A., and Habibah, S. (2022) explain that equipping street children with specific skills is essential for their future, enabling them to develop an entrepreneurial mindset and reducing the likelihood of returning to street life. While this effort may not completely alleviate their challenges, it represents a significant step toward improving the morals and prospects of street children.

## **CONCLUSION**

The contribution of Islamic guidance and counseling to the moral development of street children has been effectively implemented and plays a crucial and beneficial role in fostering a better life. Several methods employed in Islamic counseling to enhance the morals of street children include Islamic guidance and counseling techniques, habituation methods, modeling approaches, and targeted efforts to provide comprehensive guidance.

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