Empowerment of Children Based on Cultural Da’wah:
A Study at Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq Foundation in Nagari Malai III Koto

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ABSTRACT
This study aims to analyze how cultural-based empowerment is carried out by the Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq Foundation, as well as the supportive and inhibiting factors in this empowerment process. The research methodology employed is qualitative with a phenomenological approach. Informants include foundation administrators, teachers, students (santri), and community leaders from Nagari Malai III Koto. Data were gathered through interviews, observations, and documentation. The study identified several key findings: first, the integration of cultural and religious values; second, a personalized approach in preaching; third, life skills development; fourth, strengthening social networks; fifth, continuous monitoring and evaluation; and sixth, psychosocial and emotional support. Implications include: strengthening family preaching programs, developing preaching skills, and enhancing the quality of family services.

Keywords: Children; cultural da’wah; empowerment; religious values.

INTRODUCTION
Empowering children has become a significant topic in social and educational studies. The Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq Foundation in Nagari Malai III Koto, for instance, exemplifies a unique approach by integrating preaching (da’wah) into its empowerment programs. Their mission is to develop students (santri) who are faithful, morally upright, and capable of adapting to societal changes.

Empowering santri is crucial, particularly as many of them are orphans, with some being the eldest and main providers for their families. Having lost their parents, they lack role models and often receive less
education and affection compared to other children. These circumstances result in low human resource development and spiritual awareness. In response, the Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq Foundation addresses these challenges through educational initiatives and skills development using a cultural preaching approach.

Cultural da’wah is defined as the propagation of Islamic teachings through cultural approaches. Cultural dakwah is understood as the effort to introduce and convey Islamic teachings using cultural media, which encompass systems of ideas (ideas, thoughts), activities and functions, as well as forms (materials), through various wise methods to create individuals and communities who internalize and practice Islamic teachings (Nazirman, Saharman, & Sihombing, 2021). Cultural da’wah proves to be effective in the development of Islamic communities due to its dynamic, creative, and innovative characteristics (Cahyadi, 2018). Furthermore, among the Minangkabau people, they are known for their adherence to customs and religion. This is reflected in the popular expression “Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah” (Custom is Based on Sharia, Sharia is Based on the Qur’an) (Bukhari, 2009).

At the Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq Foundation, empowerment programs are conducted by integrating culture and religion, facilitating an acculturation between religion and culture without the need for mutual elimination. This phenomenon presents an intriguing area for further research. The foundation cares for approximately 95 orphaned children from diverse backgrounds, as reported by Dewi et al. (Dewi, et.al, 2020). A previous relevant study from Hanifah found that the foundation successfully educates and simultaneously develops social skills among its students (santri) (Hanifah, 2023). Similar finding was presented by Kardinus which indicates that the educational programs have successfully shaped local character (Kardinus, 2022).

In addition, the programs of the Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq Foundation strive to enhance the spiritual quality of children in accordance with Law No. 16 of 2001, which states, “A foundation is a legal entity consisting of separated assets and designated for achieving specific social, religious, and humanitarian purposes without members” (Purba et al., 2021 p. 31). This means that the foundation serves as a place to enhance, manage, and empower the potential of individuals to achieve desired goals in specific fields.

Empowering children is an effort to develop oneself and the
potential within a child, transforming them from a state of helplessness to empowerment. In the context of this research, empowering children is undertaken as an endeavor to nurture and enhance their abilities, aiming for a better life and future. Knowledge gained from both formal and non-formal education is crucial for every individual as it plays a role in shaping personality, character, and in enhancing and developing all abilities and potentials within oneself (Herawati, 2021 p. 1).Imparting knowledge to children is highly significant, especially when it involves religious education. Those who learn and teach it are engaged in jihad and are among those who attain high status in the sight of Allah SWT (Listiawati, 2017 p. 168). This explanation emphasizes that imparting knowledge and religious guidance to children is crucial, as children are individuals with innate purity. Therefore, every virtue taught contributes to shaping a quality personality (Suwaid, 2013 p. 153).

To support the relevance of this research, there are several relevant studies related to the topic under discussion. Anwar in his study on LKSA Qurrot Aini Kramatwatu Foundation, explains that in enhancing the quality of children’s education, the foundation offers two empowerment programs: educational programs and skills training programs. Under the educational program, the foundation provides several classes including Reading Class, Package B, and Package C. Meanwhile, the skills training program includes training in gift arrangement making, sewing, and electrical welding (Anwar, 2022).

Another study Nugraha dan Fakhrana on the Mutiara Harapan Foundation, it was found that the foundation operates three empowerment programs. First, it includes a social empowerment program encompassing endowments (wakaf), education, humanitarian aid, and religious activities, each with distinct initiatives. Second, the implementation of empowerment and service programs includes (a) educational programs involving parent involvement movements, home tutoring sessions, computer training, and joyful children’s outings; (b) humanitarian programs comprising clean Friday activities, national rice for my family, free health check-ups, economic self-reliance initiatives, and disaster relief efforts. Third, the religious program consists of collective prayers and recitations, Quran memorization (tahfidz), and various activities during Ramadan (Nugraha & Fakhrana, 2022).

Another relevant study was conducted by Muttaqin, et.al. In his research, Muttaqin asserts that in supporting empowerment at the Anak
Shaleh Foundation, several programs are implemented. These include collaboration and training in administration for the students of the Anak Shaleh Foundation. Additionally, there is training provided on composing correspondence and preparing well-structured proposals, which they can later undertake for the development purposes of the foundation (Muttaqin, et.al, 2021).

Tanuwijaya and Tjandrarini explain that one of the empowerment programs at the Benih Kasih Orphanage (PABK) in Surabaya is providing computer facilities for foster children as a means of learning and training in word processing and numerical processing applications. The objective is to enhance the children’s skills in using word processing and numerical applications so that the children at the orphanage gain skills and can be empowered (Tanuwijaya & Tjandarini 2022).

Umarie, et.al describe that empowerment of children at the Miftahul Jannah Orphanage Foundation is conducted through tutoring activities in elementary school subjects and Islamic education. In addition to educational activities, there are also other initiatives such as maintaining silkworms and cultivating catfish through aquaponics, constructing hydroponic racks, and conducting monitoring and evaluation. These activities serve as platforms for economic learning and education for orphanage children, maximizing the use of available land resources (Umarie et.al, 2021).

Dewi, et.al explain that empowerment of children at the Pendidikan & Penyantunan Anak Yatim Foundation (YPPAY) Adinda is achieved through several methods. Firstly, enhancing life skills of orphaned children involves improving hard skills through computer training. Secondly, enhancing life skills includes improving soft skills through job preparation training. Thirdly, there is mentoring to boost children’s self-confidence through self-potential exploration (Dewi, et.al, 2020). Meanwhile, Kristina, et.al explain that in the process of empowering children, this foundation executes nine stages of empowerment. These stages include mapping potentials, analyzing potentials, designing models, socialization and dissemination, forming programs or activities, strengthening institutions, consultation and mentoring, monitoring and evaluation, and finally, the last stage involves follow-up and development (Kristina, et.al, 2020).

In addition, Furqan asserts that nurturing children, particularly street children at the Peduli Anak Lombok Foundation, involves educational, spiritual, and social guidance. Firstly, spiritual guidance aims to shape
children’s behavior in accordance with religious norms. Secondly, discipline guidance from an early age aims to instill self-discipline and time management skills in children. Social relationship guidance aims to help children develop positive relationships within their social environment. Thirdly, cleanliness guidance aims to educate children on the importance of a clean and healthy lifestyle (Furqan, 2019). Bin Tu and Patil argue that well-designed empowerment programs for children in education can significantly enhance well-being through human resource accumulation for these children, and also demonstrate potential to reduce intergenerational gaps (Bin Tu, 2019) (Patil, 2021).

Previous studies have demonstrated the relevance of children empowerment programs in various foundations and educational institutions. However, among these studies, none have examined the perspective of cultural da’wah undertaken by the Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq Foundation. This perspective not only focuses on empowerment aspects but also delves into how empowerment transforms by incorporating and implementing cultural dakwah values.

This article explores the phenomenon of empowerment transformation among children at the Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq Foundation through a cultural dakwah approach. The research investigates how the foundation integrates Islamic teachings with local cultural values to create programs that not only fulfill the spiritual needs of children but also their practical and psychosocial needs. The study also examines how this approach influences children’s development in terms of life skills, emotional support, and social integration.

The method employed is qualitative with a phenomenological approach. Data sources include interviews with the Foundation’s Chairperson, administrators, teachers, and community leaders. Secondary data provides insights into the foundation’s conditions, types of activities, and strategies for children’s empowerment at the Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq Foundation. Additionally, the study references relevant literature on the research topic. Data collection methods include observation, interviews, and documentation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data collected, this study finds that the Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq Foundation in Nagari Malai III Koto, Sungai Geringging District, has successfully empowered children through cultural da’wah-based
empowerment programs. This aligns with the institution’s goal of shaping children to have noble character, intelligence, faith, piety, and a love for culture. Empowerment programs typically involve nurturing and enhancing children’s spiritual abilities (Anugrah, 2023).

In order to strengthen the data and facts on the phenomenon under study, the researcher presents several relevant pieces of data below.

Table 1

Profile of Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq Foundation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Data and Fact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Profile of Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq Foundation</td>
<td>Nagari Malai III Koto, Sumatera Barat.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of students/children</td>
<td>95 orphaned children from various backgrounds.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Main Program</td>
<td>Empowerment based on cultural da’wah, encompassing religious education, life skills, and character development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Implementation of Cultural Da’wah

| Holistic Approach | Integrating Islamic teachings with local Minangkabau cultural values. |
| Teaching method   | Using the Sima’i method in Quranic memorization (tahfiz), combining memorization with deep understanding. |
| Cultural activities| Teaching Islamic art, traditional music (and participation in local cultural activities. |

Result of Empowerment Program

| Improvement in Life Skills | Children are equipped with computer skills and job readiness. |
| Emotional support          | The interview shows an increase in emotional support and social integration. |
| Academic achievement       | Improvement in academic achievement, especially in religious studies and social studies. |
| Effectiveness of method    | The use of Kitabah and Wahdah methods in tahfidz learning is more effective compared to conventional methods. |
Improvement of Social Skills

Character education programs enhance social awareness and life skills among children in other foundations.

Integration of Cultural and Religious Values

The importance of integrating arts and Islamic education to enrich children's learning experiences.

Source: Interview with informants, 2023

Almost all activities conducted at the Abu Bakar Ash Shiddiq Foundation originate from the ideas of the foundation’s chairperson. Despite not being a college graduate or an alumnus of empowerment training programs, his ideas and thoughts are imbued with empowerment principles (Anugrah, 2023).

In addition, the community also plays a role in providing support and social control over the development of children (Anugrah, 2023). Thus, the implementation of programs in realizing local values becomes a mutually reinforcing system. The limited space of a 10x3 m2 room does not pose a barrier, as when they step outside the classroom, the surrounding community becomes their laboratory (Anugrah, 2023).

Source: Field Work data

Figure 1. Community participate in the foundation activities

The empowerment programs of the Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq Foundation in Nagari Malai III Koto, based on Cultural Da’wah, are implemented through the following activities: First, the provision of creed (akidah) and morality (akhlak) materials. The provision of creed and morality materials is the initial process that must be undertaken to awaken
children to change and behave well. This ensures that children can understand the conveyed materials and subsequently implement them in their lives. These materials teach children about recognizing their God, performing commanded worship, avoiding prohibitions, and behaving well in their lives (Susanti, 2023).

Character education and morals play a fundamental role in shaping children’s personalities. According to Thomas Lickona in Loloagin, et.al Character education involves three main components: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action, all aimed at shaping individuals who possess good character and are able to behave according to their moral values (Loloagin et.al, 2023).

Second, the screening of exemplary videos depicting the story of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH serves to support the process of raising awareness and changing children’s behavior. Therefore, leveraging technology and information such as the internet and infocus has numerous benefits in facilitating and enhancing empowerment activities for children in the foundation. One of these benefits includes screening films or short stories for children to watch. Typically, the videos presented contain stories that exemplify the Prophet Muhammad PBUH (Anugrah, 2023). Thus, raising awareness among children is not only through verbal communication but also utilizing internet media and technology, which can capture children’s attention (Dewi, 2023; Malili, et. al., 2023).

According to multimedia learning theory from Richard E. Mayer learning through visual and auditory media can enhance understanding and retention of information (Mayer, 2020). This method is also consistent with dual-coding theory by Paivio as discussed in Kanellopoulou, Kermanidis, & Giannakoulopoulos which emphasizes that humans have separate channels for processing verbal and non-verbal information (Kanellopoulou, Kermanidis, & Giannakoulopoulos, 2019). Iyamuremye dan Ndagijimana explain that the use of technology such as videos can make learning more engaging and effective, especially in capturing children’s attention. Despite space constraints faced by the foundation, this approach remains beneficial in providing more dynamic and engaging learning experiences (Iyamuremye & Ndagijimana, 2022).

Third, counseling guidance. Children are essentially small humans full of ego. Therefore, guidance and direction are needed regarding the child's condition and development within their social environment. The family serves as the first school for shaping a child’s personality (Syukur &
Parents play a crucial role in this personality formation process. However, many children are entrusted to foundations because their parents are busy working and have limited time at home. The implementation of counseling guidance in foundations is highly beneficial for the mental and psychological development of children (Sari & Ain, 2023). Counseling guidance involves providing continuous assistance to individuals (children) aimed at developing their potential for optimal growth, fostering creativity and innovation, nurturing independence, and addressing issues they face (Basyid, 2022: 5).

According to Carl Rogers as cited in Syakur and Mufaridah Mufaridah, client-centered counseling approach emphasizes the importance of empathy, unconditional positive regard, and genuineness from the counselor (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007; Syakur & Mufaridah, 2019). This approach is highly effective in assisting individuals to develop their potentials and address their issues. Mohamed, et.al mention that counseling guidance in schools is very effective in developing children's mental health and reducing anxiety levels (Mohamed, 2023).

Fourth, tajwid learning materials. In reading the Qur’an, knowledge of tajwid is crucial because in reality, children do not yet fully understand the rules for reading the Qur’an correctly (Mailita, 2023). Cognitive learning theory by Piaget as cited in Etika, et.al emphasizes that effective learning occurs when children grasp basic concepts and then apply them (Etika, et.al, 2023). Vygotsky’s scaffolding principle. Vygotsky’s scaffolding principle (Pranyata, 2023) is also relevant, stating that in the learning process, teachers provide necessary support to children until they can understand and master concepts independently. Additionally, Rakimahwati, et.al explain that systematic and structured tajwid instruction is highly effective in improving Qur’anic reading skills. The tajwid program at the foundation, which includes understanding basic concepts and regular practice according to this approach, helps children read the Qur’an correctly (Rakimahwati et.al, 2022).

Fifth, salah (shalat) learning materials and its practice. This program requires students to be able to perform salah correctly according to Islamic law. This aims to ensure that children know which obligatory worship they should perform. Salah must indeed be taught from a young age so that they can make it a habit that must not be neglected (Sari, 2023). According to behaviorism theory by Skinner dalam Hamruni, et.al learning behavior that is repeated and reinforced will form strong habits (Hamruni, et.al, 2021).
Learning the practice of salah through repetition and reinforcement aligns with this approach. Rouzi, et.al affirm that habituating salah from an early age through repeated learning and direct practice is highly effective in forming worship habits in children (Rouzi et.al, 2020). The foundation uses this method to teach correct salah and instill consistent prayer habits in children.

Sixth, muraja’ah. Muraja’ah is defined as a repeated reading activity of memorized verses or chapters, whether newly memorized or already memorized (Waliko, 2022: 8). Muraja’ah is a mandatory activity aimed at ensuring that children do not easily forget their memorization. This muraja’ah activity is held every Tuesday and Thursday, focusing on juz 29 and juz 30. The methods used are as follows: First, the writing method (kitabah method). The kitabah method involves memorizing by writing verses or chapters on paper and then memorizing them (Nurfitriani et al., 2022). Children can grasp what they write faster. Additionally, writing verses also hones children’s Arabic writing skills. Second, the listening method (sima’i method). The sima’i method involves memorizing the Qur’an by listening to the sound that will be memorized (Liliawati & Ichsan, 2022). The listening method is quite effective in the memorization process and enhances children’s memory by listening, as they directly hear how the recitation is done, even for two children with nearsightedness. Third, the collective method (jama’ method). The jama' method involves doing this memorization collectively (Yusra, 2019).

Source: Field work data

Figure 2. Reciting al-Qur’an and muraja’ah
The theory of memory by Baddeley and Hitch as cited in Susanti, et al proposes a model of working memory that is crucial in the memorization process (Susanti et al., 2022). Repetition and rehearsal are key to transferring information from short-term memory to long-term memory. Khan dan Dzulkifli explained that the method of repetition (muraja’ah) is highly effective in enhancing memory retention and recall of Quranic memorization. The foundation employs the methods of kitabah, sima’i, and jama’, which have been proven effective in this study, to assist children in memorizing the Quran (Khan & Dzulkifli, 2021).

Seventh, socialization of humanitarian development. This aligns with the graduate profile, which emphasizes upholding humanitarian values and hablum minannas in accordance with Islamic principles. The socialization organized by the foundation can support the formation of children’s character to be more caring towards their environment and prioritize humanitarian values (Kardinus, 2022). Children’s moral development progresses through stages influenced by social interaction and practical experiences (Ibda, 2023; Arinofianto & Wijaya, 2023). For example, Afzal mentioned that social activities such as zakat and charity can enhance children’s social responsibility and moral development (Carson, et. al, 2017; Afzal, 2020).

Eighth, introduction and development of cultural da’wah. Introduction and development of cultural da’wah is an effort to introduce the values of wisdom contained within culture, especially in empowering children. This is necessary to create a community environment while still considering the existence of superior potential and culture, without eliminating or conflicting with religious and cultural values (Balaya & Zafi, 2020). This is one of the efforts to introduce, inherit, and preserve cultural wisdom, while also serving as an effective da’wah approach to children in their developmental and learning processes (Syarofah et al., 2022).

For example, like the art of rebana. Rebana is a blend of art and religious teachings (Marlisna & Marzam, 2020). This activity is carried out on holidays to fill children’s leisure time. Another example is the art of Indang. Indang is one of the forms of Minangkabau oral literary arts in the form of singing accompanied by the musical instrument called rapa’i (rapa’i: a percussion instrument originating from Aceh) (Septiana, 2022). This activity is also conducted on holidays to fill children’s leisure time or during cultural festivals of the Minangkabau customs.

Clifford Geertz as cited by Riady emphasizes that culture is a system
of meanings produced by humans in social contexts. In this regard, cultural dakwah serves to introduce cultural values within a religious context, facilitating the acceptance and internalization of these values (Riady, 2021; Sukmana, 2021). Kondratieva, et.al explain that integrating local culture into religious education can enhance the relevance and acceptance of the materials by children (Kondratieva et.al, 2022).

Through the implementation of various empowerment programs at Yayasan Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq, children receive holistic education covering spiritual, moral, academic, and physical aspects, aligning with theories and findings from various literature reviews.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted, it was found that the empowerment of children at the Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq Foundation in Nagari Malai III Koto is implemented using a cultural da’wah approach. This approach has significantly positive impacts in enhancing the religious, moral, social, and skills awareness of children. The programs implemented include teachings on faith and morals, screening of videos portraying the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), counseling guidance, tajwid lessons, prayer practices, muraja’ah, and socialization of humanitarian development.

For readers, this research is expected to contribute to knowledge regarding empowerment of children based on cultural da’wah. Regarding future research to be conducted at the Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq Foundation, it is necessary to modify the variables or add time series data used in the research. For the government or policymakers, there is still much work to be done by the social services and Empowerment Services, including providing facilities for orphans and providing da’wah activists to help empower children.

There are three implications of this research. First, it contributes to the literature on empowerment of children based on cultural da’wah by demonstrating the effectiveness of programs that integrate religious values and local culture. Second, these findings support social transformation theory, stating that changes in children’s behavior and character can be achieved through a holistic and integrative approach. Third, foundations and other educational institutions can adopt and adapt the empowerment model applied at the Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq Foundation to enhance the quality of education and character formation of children.

Thus, this research not only provides an overview of the
effectiveness of empowerment programs at the Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq Foundation but also offers practical recommendations and policies that can be implemented to improve the quality of education and empowerment of children in Indonesia.

REFERENCES


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