

ARABIC AS A MEDIUM FOR THE INTERNALIZATION OF WORSHIP VALUES

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Abstract

This study examines the role of Arabic language instruction as a medium for internalizing worship values through the Takhassus Program at MTsN 3 Jombang. The research data comprise Arabic learning activities directly integrated with students' daily worship routines, such as ablution (*wudhu*), prayer, *dhikr*, and the use of Arabic expressions in everyday communication. The data sources include primary data from participant observation and in-depth interviews with 10 seventh-grade students, 2 Arabic teachers, and 1 principal, as well as secondary data such as program documents, lesson plans, and school archives. A qualitative case study design was employed, with purposive sampling to select informants directly involved in the program. Data collection combined participant observation, interviews, and documentation, while data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model: data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that Arabic instruction is functionally embedded in students' worship practices, positioning the language as both a communicative and devotional tool. This integration is strengthened by teacher modeling and the school's spiritual climate, supporting the internalization of worship values. The study contributes theoretically by framing Arabic as a value-based pedagogical instrument and practically by offering a contextual, replicable model for Islamic schools. Although challenges exist, such as limited time and difficulties understanding classical texts, these are addressed through extracurricular activities and traditional methods like *sorogan* and *bandongan*. Thus, Arabic language instruction linked to worship practice serves as a transformative approach for developing students' moral and spiritual character in a sustainable way.

Keywords

Arabic Language, Takhassus Program, Worship Values.



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INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental pillar in shaping individuals who are intellectually competent, morally grounded, and spiritually aware. In this regard, Islamic education plays a crucial role by integrating academic knowledge with the internalization of religious values. It goes beyond cognitive instruction to include the spiritual and ethical development of students. One of the core elements of Islamic education is the Arabic language, which serves not only as the language of the Qur'an but also as a primary medium for transmitting values through worship practices.

One effective approach is through contextual Arabic language learning integrated with worship values. The study by Muammar et al. (2022) shows that contextualizing Islamic religious education values through Arabic can shape students' religious character in madrasahs. Meanwhile, Setiyawan (2015) emphasized the importance of integrating character values in Arabic language learning processes to support the holistic goals of Islamic education. In addition, Hamidah et al. (2024) and Hasibuan et al. (2023) demonstrated the effectiveness of contextual and CTL-based Arabic instruction in pesantren settings, while Kabir et al. (2024) discussed the significance of Arabic in promoting holistic tarbiyah within Islamic education frameworks.

This is in line with the findings of Muammar et al. (2022), who demonstrated that Arabic instruction, when integrated with routine worship practices, plays a pivotal role in shaping students' religious attitudes. Likewise, Setiyawan (2015) found that the inclusion of moral and character education within Arabic teaching contributes meaningfully to value internalization among students.

Arabic holds a strategic position in Islamic education, serving not only as a linguistic communication tool but also as a primary medium for the internalization of worship values. Based on observations at MTsN 3 Jombang (2024), Arabic language learning activities in the Takhasus Program have been systematically implemented to internalize worship values through daily practices such as ablution (*wudhu*), prayer (*salat*), and remembrance (*dhikr*), using Arabic expressions like *niyyah*, *do'a iftitah*, and short surahs. Interviews with one of the Arabic teachers revealed that Arabic was chosen because it directly relates to the texts of worship that students memorize and recite daily. Therefore, students not only understand the meaning but also become accustomed to using Arabic within a spiritual context. This is different from other subjects, such as fiqh or Islamic creed (*aqidah akhlaq*), which focus more on cognitive aspects and value inculcation through lectures, while Arabic provides opportunities for direct practice through conversation and daily prayer recitation.

In addition to Arabic language learning activities, the school's current policies also include congregational prayer routines, spiritual guidance programs, and the daily recitation of *Juz Amma* every morning, as recorded in the school's daily schedule (Takhassus Program Document, 2024). However, based on interview data with the school principal, there remains a major issue: students' lack of consistency in practicing worship values outside the classroom. Some students tend to merely memorize Arabic texts without fully understanding their meaning and context, resulting in suboptimal spiritual internalization. This issue motivated the author to focus this research on Arabic language learning activities as a medium for strengthening worship values, with the hope of bridging the gap between theory, practice, and the habituation of worship among students at the madrasa.

Previous research has emphasized the potential of contextual and value-based learning in increasing students' engagement with religious material. Mulyati (2020) found that such models enhance religious awareness, while Febrianti et al. (2025) underscore how character education, when integrated with religious values, contributes to moral culture in Islamic schools. Furthermore, Kusworo et al. (2025) argue that a teacher's personal competence plays a significant role in shaping students' moral awareness and learning behavior. Despite these contributions, limited attention has been paid to the specific function of Arabic as a medium in structured religious programs like Takhassus. While Ahmad (2021) and Zain (2022) highlight the role of Arabic in Islamic identity formation, their studies focus more on general language education or moral development in Islamic boarding schools.

In contrast, this study uniquely investigates how Arabic is applied contextually in the daily worship practices of seventh-grade students within a formal madrasah setting. It differs from previous works in its emphasis on the integration of Arabic as both a linguistic and spiritual medium through a value-based educational structure. Furthermore, unlike studies that rely on general surveys or conceptual frameworks, this research employs a qualitative case study with direct classroom observation and in-depth interviews, offering a detailed, context-sensitive analysis of how Arabic facilitates the internalization of worship values. Through this approach, the study aims to contribute both theoretically to integrative Arabic pedagogy and practically to the development of character-based Islamic language programs. This study aims to address that gap by examining the role and implementation of the Takhassus Program in the field of worship practice at MTsN 3 Jombang. Specifically, it investigates how Arabic is utilized as a medium for internalizing worship

values and the extent to which it impacts students' religious character development. Theoretically, this study contributes to the model of integrative Arabic instruction; practically, it offers a reference for Islamic educational institutions in designing value-based language programs.

METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the role of Arabic language instruction in the internalization of worship values through the Takhasus Program at MTsN 3 Jombang. The population comprised all seventh-grade students enrolled in the program, totaling approximately 80 students. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants, consisting of 10 students, 2 Arabic language teachers, and the head of the madrasa, who were deemed to have substantial insight into the implementation of the program.

The research data consisted of Arabic language learning activities integrated with students' daily worship routines, such as reciting niyyah, performing ablution (wudhu), prayer, dhikr, and using Arabic expressions in daily conversations within the madrasa environment. The sources of data included primary data obtained from direct field observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation, and secondary data consisting of lesson plans, program schedules, instructional guides, teachers' meeting notes, and photo archives.

Data were collected through three primary techniques: (1) participant observation, conducted intensively from 15 January 2025 to 15 March 2025, covering 16 class sessions and worship practice observations; (2) in-depth interviews, conducted from 20 January 2025 to 10 March 2025 with 10 students, 2 Arabic teachers, and one principal to gain deeper insights; and (3) document analysis of teaching materials, daily schedules, lesson plans, and reports, collected continuously throughout the observation period.

The data analysis in this study was carried out using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994) with concrete steps adapted to the context of Arabic language instruction and worship practices at MTsN 3 Jombang. First, during the data reduction stage, the researcher carefully selected and sorted all field notes from classroom observations, interview transcripts with teachers, students, and the principal, and program documents collected between January and March 2025. The data were then categorized based on relevant themes, such as students' use of Arabic during prayer, daily expressions, teacher modeling, and supporting school activities.

Second, in the data display stage, the reduced data were organized in thematic matrices and coding tables to identify patterns and relationships. For example, observation sheets showing repeated Arabic phrases used during ablution (wudhu) and prayers were mapped alongside student interview statements describing their understanding and feelings when reciting Arabic texts. This step also included comparing documentary evidence, like lesson plans and daily schedules, to validate consistency between the planned activities and actual practices.

Finally, in the conclusion drawing stage, the researcher interpreted how these patterns illustrated the integration of Arabic with students' worship habits. This interpretation involved linking the frequency and context of Arabic use to students' moral attitudes, such as discipline and sincerity in prayer. Triangulation was conducted by cross-checking observation results with interview responses and document analysis to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings. Through this concrete process, the analysis revealed that continuous exposure to Arabic in authentic worship settings strengthened students' spiritual awareness and daily application of worship values.

This methodological approach aligns with Makinuddin (2024), who implemented project-based Arabic instruction in pesantren contexts to strengthen character education. Likewise, Mariana (2022) demonstrated that the habitual recitation of Juz Amma helped cultivate students' discipline and fluency in Arabic. Nur et al. (2024) highlighted the role of school-based management in supporting the sustainability of Arabic instruction, while Nafsah and Musthofa (2023) emphasized the effectiveness of dialogic strategies such as *muhawwaroh* (conversation) and *munadzarah* (debate) in promoting linguistic fluency and ethical reasoning among students. To guide this analysis, the following conceptual framework was adopted:

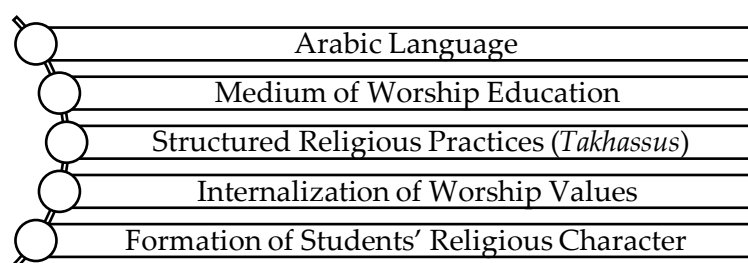


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

This framework emphasizes that Arabic is not merely used as a linguistic tool but as a core medium in religious education that bridges ritual practices and value internalization, thereby fostering a holistic formation of students' Islamic identity and character.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The Arabic Takhassus Program at MTsN 3 Jombang is a flagship initiative aimed at providing students with intensive Arabic language skills integrated with religious education. According to the Head of the Takhassus Center, the program is built upon three main pillars: Qur'anic mastery, classical Islamic text reading (*kitab kuning*), and daily worship practices. The primary objective is not only linguistic proficiency but also the internalization of Islamic values through Arabic as a living language of devotion.

The program demonstrates a strong commitment to integrating Arabic into students' daily acts of worship. Teachers consistently use Arabic instructional language during sessions on ritual practices, encouraging students to understand and memorize essential terms such as *niyyah*, *takbir*, and *tasbih*. Instructional activities include ablution (*wudu'*), prayer, and supplication (*du'a*), where Arabic expressions are taught contextually to help students internalize both linguistic structures and spiritual meanings.

The classroom and school environment are designed to reflect Arabic-Islamic culture, with visible displays of daily vocabulary, hadith posters, and Qur'anic verses. Students actively engage in group prayers, recitations, and memorization activities that utilize Arabic phrases such as *assalamu'alaikum*, *astaghfirullah*, and *audhu billah*, thereby enhancing their pronunciation, comprehension, and emotional connection to the language. As Mr. Khoirul Anwar remarked, "Our aim is not only to teach students how to speak Arabic, but to make them live Arabic as a language of devotion."

Arabic is employed not just as a subject but as a medium for cultivating students' spiritual and moral character. Students are trained to use Arabic in daily religious routines such as ablution, prayer, and appropriate Islamic etiquette. This regular usage deepens their spiritual awareness and reinforces values like sincerity, humility, and obedience. During *Baca Kitab* sessions, students study classical Arabic texts rich with ethical and spiritual content. Traditional methods such as *sorogan* and *bandongan* are used to foster comprehension and contextual application, blending linguistic and religious development.

Teachers serve as role models, not only delivering language instruction but also exemplifying *adab* (Islamic etiquette), discipline, and sincerity. Secretary of the Takhassus Center, "Arabic here is not just a subject, it is part of the students' daily worship." The religiously charged

school environment enhances the internalization process, with structured routines that integrate Arabic across formal and informal activities.

The Takhassus Center is supported by an organizational structure that includes leadership, financial management, and subject-specific coordinators (Qur'an, worship practice, classical texts). The curriculum is designed to integrate linguistic goals with spiritual formation. Instructional materials are developed contextually and applicatively, ensuring that Arabic is not only understood but lived as a daily practice of faith.

Challenges faced by the program include limited instructional time, diverse student motivation, and the difficulty of interpreting classical Arabic texts. These are addressed through regular mentoring, structured learning, and extracurricular activities such as *muhadharah* (public speaking), *tahfidz* (Qur'an memorization), and *qira'atul kutub* (classical text reading), all conducted in Arabic.

Table 1. Arabic-Language-Based Worship Practices in the *Takhassus* Program

No	Worship Activity	Arabic Expression Used	Implementation Context
1.	Prayer Preparation	<i>Niyyah, Basmallah</i>	Before performing <i>wudhu'</i>
2.	Congregational Prayer	<i>Takbirat al-Ihram, Surat al-Fatihah</i>	Daily <i>Duhr</i> prayer in class
3.	Remembrance (<i>Dhikr</i>)	<i>Subhanallah, Alhamdulillah, Allahu Akbar</i>	Post-prayer reflection
4.	Morning Assembly	<i>Du'a' as-sabah, hadith of the day</i>	Monday and Friday gatherings
5.	Study Ethics	<i>Ihtiram al-ustadh, al-adab fi talab al-'ilm</i>	During <i>kitab</i> and Qur'an sessions

Source: Field Observations and Program Documentation

The data presented in table 1 shows that the use of Arabic expressions is systematically integrated into various worship activities within the Takhassus Program at MTsN 3 Jombang. During prayer preparation, students routinely recite the *niyyah* (intention) and *basmallah* before performing *wudhu'*. This indicates that the process of purification is not only a ritual act but also a linguistic practice that familiarizes students with basic Arabic phrases connected to worship. Field observations revealed that this practice helps students internalize the spiritual significance of cleansing while strengthening their habit of reciting Arabic naturally in daily routines.

The integration continues during congregational prayers and post-prayer remembrance (*dhikr*). In the daily *Duhr* prayer held in classrooms, students perform *takbirat al-ihram* and recite *Surat al-Fatihah*, reinforcing memorization and proper pronunciation of core Quranic texts. Following the prayer, students engage in short *dhikr* sessions, repeating phrases like *Subhanallah*, *Alhamdulillah*, and *Allahu Akbar*. This regular repetition fosters a deeper emotional attachment to

these expressions and creates an atmosphere where Arabic functions not merely as an academic subject but as part of the students' lived religious practice.

Furthermore, the Takhassus Program extends the use of Arabic beyond formal prayer by embedding it in school assemblies and study ethics. During Monday and Friday morning gatherings, students recite *du'a' as-sabah* and listen to short hadith, encouraging them to link Arabic with prophetic traditions. In kitab and Qur'an study sessions, expressions such as *ihthiram al-ustadh* and *al-adab fi talab al-'ilm* remind students to maintain respect and ethical conduct in seeking knowledge. Together, these practices demonstrate that Arabic in the Takhassus Program is not confined to the classroom but is woven into the daily moral and spiritual formation of students.

Discussion

The findings of this study affirm the effectiveness of integrating Arabic language instruction with Islamic worship practices in the Takhassus Program at MTsN 3 Jombang. This integration aligns with the principles of Islamic character education (*tarbiyah Islāmiyyah*), where language functions not only as a means of communication but also as a central medium for spiritual development and value internalization (Muammar et al., 2022; Setiyawan, 2015).

Unlike conventional Arabic teaching methods that emphasize grammatical drills and memorization, the Takhassus Program adopts a functional and experiential approach. Students "live" the Arabic language through its direct application in worship routines such as ablution, prayer, daily greetings, and expressions of humility. This approach is strongly aligned with Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, which states that knowledge is best constructed through concrete experiences. In this study, students are not merely learning Arabic linguistically but are experiencing it as a sacred language that shapes their everyday behavior.

Furthermore, this study reflects Lickona's (1991) framework, which views moral development as a process involving moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. The use of Arabic expressions like *niyyah* (intention), *Subhānallāh* (Glory be to Allah), and *Alḥamdulillāh* (All praise is due to Allah) goes beyond language acquisition. These expressions evoke emotional responses and encourage behavioral alignment with Islamic values. Students begin to associate language with devotion, enhancing their emotional engagement and spiritual awareness.

The role of teachers as consistent models—not only as language instructors but also as moral exemplars—mirrors Bandura's (1977) social learning theory. Students observe, imitate, and internalize the teachers' use of Arabic in worship contexts, reinforcing value-based behavior. This

modeling process is crucial in instilling values into students' characters, as they witness sincerity, discipline, and respect demonstrated within a religious framework.

Compared to previous studies, this research offers several novel contributions. Ahmad (2021) and Zain (2022) emphasize Arabic as a component of identity formation, particularly in pesantren contexts. Although symbolically important, their research does not address the pedagogical application of Arabic in daily structured worship. Zuhdi (2021) discusses the integration of Arabic and religious values in general terms but does not provide classroom-based empirical data. Azra (2019) focuses more on curriculum integration at the macro level, whereas this study addresses micro-level implementation through direct classroom interactions, teacher behavior, and student routines. Waizah et al. (2022) and Syagif (2021) also highlight the importance of value integration in Arabic instruction but do not examine formal worship practices as embedded in the Takhassus model. Likewise, Hasnah et al. (2024) and Hamidah et al. (2024) demonstrated how contextual strategies rooted in pesantren learning models are effective in enhancing spiritual-linguistic fluency among students.

Theoretically, this study enriches the understanding of Arabic as a spiritually significant language and a tool for cognitive and affective education. It supports the idea that language acquisition can serve as a medium for character formation when integrated with religious practice and embedded in a supportive cultural environment (Akla, 2016; Nurhaliza & Yusri, 2023).

Practically, the findings provide insights for Islamic educational institutions aiming to develop contextual and value-based Arabic instruction. The Takhassus Program, with its clear objectives, organized curriculum, qualified teachers, and spiritual atmosphere, serves as a replicable model. Schools seeking to go beyond formal Arabic instruction can adopt similar strategies, such as using Arabic in worship routines, applying experiential learning, and fostering religious environments that support internalization. In line with Kurniawan et al. (2024), who proposed integrative instructional strategies combining Islamic religious education and Arabic language learning, this study confirms that a holistic pedagogical approach can foster both cognitive and affective student development. These findings are also consistent with Kabir et al. (2024), who emphasized Arabic's role in promoting comprehensive tarbiyah practices across Islamic learning systems.

Nevertheless, the study also identifies several challenges, such as limited instructional time, varied student motivation, and difficulties in understanding classical Arabic texts. These are addressed through reinforcement activities (*muhadharah*, *tahfidz*, and *qirā'atul kutub*) and traditional learning models such as *sorogan* and *bandongan*, which allow differentiated instruction and deeper engagement with the material. This aligns with habituation strategies proposed by Badrud Dhujjah et al. (2024), who found that consistent daily vocabulary practice significantly improved students' language skills and discipline. Likewise, Rusli et al. (2024) illustrated that sociocultural factors greatly influence Arabic learning success in Southeast Asian Islamic schools.

In conclusion, this discussion confirms that Arabic, when contextually embedded in Islamic education and supported by consistent teacher modeling and institutional commitment, becomes a transformative tool for nurturing students' spiritual and moral development. This reinforces the pedagogical value of Arabic not just as a language, but as a conduit for living Islamic values in everyday life.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Arabic language instruction in the Takhassus Program at MTsN 3 Jombang plays a significant role as a medium for internalizing worship values. Arabic is not only taught as a linguistic skill but is also functionally integrated into students' daily religious practices, such as ablution, prayer, and daily dhikr. This integration is reinforced by the exemplary behavior of teachers and the supportive spiritual environment of the madrasa. The findings support experiential learning theory, character education models, and social learning theory. Theoretically, the study contributes to value-based and language-centered Islamic education discourse. Practically, the instructional model applied in the Takhassus Program offers a replicable framework for other madrasahs seeking to strengthen students' religious values through Arabic learning. Despite challenges such as limited time allocation and difficulties in reading classical texts, these are addressed through habituation strategies, extracurricular reinforcement, and traditional methods such as *sorogan* and *bandongan*. In conclusion, the integration of Arabic with worship practices is proven to be a transformative medium for cultivating students' religious character in a contextual and sustainable manner.

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