



The Role of the Tabligh Jamaah Fi Sabilillah Khuruj Method in Building the Religious Character of Youth in Padang City

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of the Khuruj Fi Sabilillah method, practiced by the Jamaah Tabligh movement, in developing the religious character of Muslim youth in Padang City. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive approach rooted in phenomenology and ethnography, data were gathered through indepth interviews, field observations, and document analysis involving both active and inactive youth participants, as well as organizational leaders. The findings demonstrate that the khuruj method significantly shapes youth religiosity, especially in the areas of congregational prayer, Qur'an recitation, dhikr, and night worship. Supporting factors include sincerity (ikhlas), spiritual concern (fikir risau), and peer solidarity, while hindrances such as post khuruj inconsistency, societal stigma, and modern distractions reduce long term impact. The study concludes that non formal, experiential spiritual education such as Khuruj Fi Sabilillah holds strategic value for youth moral development and offers implications for da'wah institutions, educators, and policymakers aiming to strengthen character education in Islamic contexts.

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INTRODUCTION

The moral and spiritual degradation of youth in contemporary Muslim societies has become a major concern among educators and religious leaders. Globalization, Western cultural infiltration, and the decline in internal religious commitment have contributed to increasingly permissive behaviors such as free sex, substance abuse, and weakening ties with traditional Islamic practices. These challenges highlight the urgency of promoting character education based on Islamic values to shape a generation that is pious, responsible, and spiritually resilient. Religious non-formal education, particularly through movement based da'wah efforts such as the Jamaah Tabligh's khuruj fi sabilillah (outreach in the path of Allah), offers a distinctive approach. Unlike conventional pedagogical methods, khuruj emphasizes direct engagement, spiritual discipline, communal worship, and experiential learning through structured practices like bayan (religious lectures), musyawarah (deliberation), ta'lim, and amalan malam. This movement, which originated in India under Maulana Muhammad Ilyas, has grown into a global missionary force, including significant influence in Indonesian Muslim communities.

Youth participation in khuruj offers a unique opportunity to instill religious discipline through immersive routines. Yet, there remains a lack of empirical academic studies evaluating the actual impact of khuruj on religious character formation among Muslim youth. While anecdotal reports often laud its transformative effect, systematic qualitative research is necessary to understand the depth and consistency of such outcomes.

This study differs from previous research by directly examining the role of khuruj fi sabilillah in shaping religious character particularly in daily practices such as prayer, Qur'an recitation, and remembrance (dhikr) among young participants in Padang City. The research explores both active and inactive youth participants to provide a comparative understanding, while also identifying factors that support or hinder the effectiveness of the method.

The objective of this study is to investigate how the khuruj fi sabilillah method contributes to the development of youth's religious character in a nonformal Islamic educational setting. Through a qualitative descriptive approach, the study seeks to provide theoretical and practical insights for educators, da'wah institutions, and policymakers concerned with moral and spiritual education in Indonesia and beyond.

In recent decades, the moral and spiritual development of Muslim youth has become an increasing concern amid the rising influence of globalization, Western secular values, and the weakening of traditional Islamic institutions. While a considerable number of studies have examined Islamic character education through formal institutions such as Islamic schools and pesantren (Yusof et al., 2017; Rahman, 2019), far fewer have addressed the role of nonformal, movement based religious education. Specifically, the practice of khuruj fi sabilillah as promoted by the Tablighi Jamaat a grassroots Islamic missionary movement has received limited empirical attention. Existing literature (Ahmed, 2018; Ali & Zainuddin, 2020) generally discusses the movement's goals or structures, but lacks focused analysis on how its methods such as bayan (lectures), musyawarah (deliberation), ta'lim, and nightly practices impact youth religious character development in a sustained and transformative way.

Moreover, most studies on the Tablighi Jamaat emphasize the group's historical evolution, outreach strategies, or sociopolitical implications (Rashid, 2014; Noor, 2020), rather than evaluating its pedagogical impact on young participants. There remains a significant research gap in understanding how immersive spiritual practices during khuruj affect daily religious behaviors such as prayer consistency, Qur'an recitation, and engagement in dhikr among Muslim youth. Furthermore, there is a lack of comparative studies that explore differences between active and inactive youth participants in the movement, particularly in the Indonesian context. This gap limits both academic understanding and policy development aimed at addressing youth moral decline through effective non formal religious methods.

This study offers a novel contribution by focusing specifically on the impact of khuruj fi sabilillah in shaping the religious character of Muslim youth in Padang, Indonesia. It uniquely investigates daily spiritual practices among both active and inactive participants, providing comparative insights into the effectiveness of the Tablighi Jamaat's methods. Through a qualitative descriptive approach, this research bridges the gap between anecdotal praise of khuruj's spiritual benefits and rigorous academic evaluation, offering both theoretical and practical implications for educators, da'wah practitioners, and policymakers seeking to strengthen youth moral education through non formal Islamic initiatives.

Table 1. Logical Structure of the Introduction Section

Component	Summary
Background of the Study	Moral and spiritual degradation among youth due to globalization, liberal lifestyles, weak religious adherence, and ineffective character development rooted in Islamic values.
Proposed Solution	Religious character education through <i>khuruj fi sabilillah</i> by Jamaah Tabligh a structured, immersive dakwah movement focusing on faith reinforcement and moral development.
Theological Foundation	Qur'anic verses (Ali-Imran: 104; Ash-Saff: 10–12) and hadiths highlighting the virtues of striving in the path of Allah as foundational for the <i>khuruj</i> methodology.
Research Urgency	<i>Khuruj</i> is seen as a "mobile madrasa" forming religious character through disciplined activities such as prayer, remembrance (dhikr), learning sessions (ta'lim), and daily practices.
Preliminary Observations	Field data show only 7 of 22 halaqah groups in Padang have submitted youth participation data indicating untapped potential and the need for structured youth engagement.
Research Questions	How does <i>khuruj</i> shape religious character in youth? What are its supporting and hindering factors? How do youth perceive it? How do active vs. inactive participants compare?
Objectives of the Study	To describe the <i>khuruj</i> process, identify key success factors, explore youth perceptions, and compare religious traits between active and non-active <i>khuruj</i> participants.

Table 1 outlines the logical structure of the introduction section, emphasizing the progression from general context to specific research gaps and objectives. The structure begins with the identification of broad social religious phenomena namely, the challenges of religious character development among youth in urban Islamic communities. This is followed by a theoretical grounding that highlights the need for experiential and community based religious education, such as *Khuruj Fi Sabilillah*. The table then specifies the research gap: the lack of empirical studies examining the impact of *khuruj* on youth religiosity within Indonesian urban contexts. Finally, the introduction logically culminates in the formulation of research questions and objectives. This structured approach ensures that the introduction is coherent, argumentatively sound, and aligned with academic conventions for problem-based inquiry (Swales & Feak, 2021).

METHODS

This research utilizes a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design, grounded in ethnographic and phenomenological traditions. This approach is particularly appropriate for exploring lived religious experiences, meanings, and practices within the Jamaah Tabligh movement, especially through the *khuruj fi sabilillah* activity. The study focuses on how such spiritual practices contribute to the development of youth religious character in Padang City. Informants in this study include youth aged 16–30, both those actively involved in *khuruj* and those who are not, as well as organizational leaders such as the Amir, Syu'bah Pelma, and Syu'bah Data. Participants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling methods to ensure contextual relevance and experiential depth (Kaputra et al., 2022).

Data were collected through semi structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, allowing triangulation of perspectives and activities. Instruments used include interview guides, field notes, and observation sheets. The researcher acted as the primary instrument, a hallmark of qualitative inquiry (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To ensure rigorous analysis, data were coded and categorized thematically using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) model of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The process was supported by NVivo 12 software for systematic theme extraction (Kaputra et al., 2022). To enhance the credibility of the findings, techniques such as triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing were employed. Structured member checking procedures, as proposed by McKim (2023) and Kullman (2025), were used to validate interpretations directly with the informants, ensuring that the emerging insights accurately reflected their lived experiences.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study reveals that the Khuruj Fi Sabilillah method employed by the Jamaah Tabligh plays a crucial role in fostering the religious character of youth in Padang City. The religious formation process is evidenced by a consistent improvement in worship practices among youths actively involved in khuruj, particularly in terms of congregational prayers, Qur'an recitation, and structured remembrance (dhikr). Through experiential religious activities such as bayan (religious talks), musyawarah (consultations), jaulah (outreach visits), and ta'lim (learning circles), participants experienced increased spiritual discipline and heightened religious awareness. These findings are consistent with those of Ahmad and Omar (2021), who argue that religious character education becomes more effective when supported by immersive, practice-based spiritual engagement, rather than solely cognitive instruction.

Empirical data from this study suggest a clear behavioral distinction between active and nonactive participants. Youth who regularly engage in khuruj demonstrate stronger commitment to religious practices, while those uninvolved tend to exhibit inconsistent worship routines. This contrast was substantiated through interviews and field observations, which reflected more structured religious behavior among the active group. The success of this method is further supported by several intrinsic and extrinsic factors, including sincerity (ikhlas), personal sacrifice, and spiritual concern for others (fikir risau). Conversely, barriers such as lack of commitment, disobedience to the group leader (amir), and external social pressures were identified as obstacles to its broader success. Youth participants also expressed a strong perception of khuruj as a means of "spiritual recharging," helping them develop an afterlife oriented mindset and reinforcing their relationship with God. Nonetheless, some challenges emerged, including social stigma and familial rejection, which reflect the psychological and sociological tensions young participants often face. These findings resonate with those of Ali et al. (2022), who emphasize that youth involvement in spiritual outreach programs contributes significantly to religiosity development, although it frequently encounters resistance from surrounding social systems.

Table 2. Comparison of Religious Character Between Active and Inactive Youth Participants in Khuruj Fi Sabilillah

Religious Practice	Active Participants	Inactive Participants
Congregational Prayer	Performed regularly and on time	Performed occasionally, often late or irregular
Qur'an Recitation	Daily with consistent time and reflection	Infrequent or limited to specific occasions
Dhikr (Remembrance of God)	Performed with structure and guided schedule	Spontaneous and inconsistent
Night Worship (Qiyam)	Practiced consistently during and after <i>khuruj</i>	Rarely practiced or only during religious events
Religious Knowledge Seeking	Actively attends <i>ta'lim</i> and religious discussions	Rarely involved in structured religious learning
Spiritual Mindset	Afterlife oriented, God conscious daily behavior	Present focused, with minimal religious reflection

The data in Table 1 highlight a notable difference in religious behavior between youth who actively participate in Khuruj Fi Sabilillah and those who do not. Active participants demonstrated a more consistent and structured engagement in core religious practices such as congregational prayer, Qur'an recitation, and remembrance (dhikr). For instance, the regularity of congregational prayer among these youth is not only a product of habit but also a result of the immersive routines practiced during khuruj, which emphasizes punctuality, discipline, and collective worship. This structured form of spiritual training aligns with the findings of Ahmad

and Omar (2021), who assert that religious character formation is significantly enhanced when education is grounded in repetitive ritual practice and group accountability.

Furthermore, Qur'an recitation among active youth is performed daily and with reflective understanding, indicating a higher level of spiritual internalization. Meanwhile, dhikr and night worship are also observed more frequently, suggesting that participants have incorporated additional devotional acts beyond the obligatory pillars of Islam. These practices are indicative of spiritual habituation, a concept emphasized by Ali et al. (2022), where sustained spiritual activity leads to increased religiosity and a more devout lifestyle.

In contrast, youth who are not active in khuruj show sporadic engagement with religious rituals. Their worship tends to be irregular, and Qur'an recitation is often limited to ceremonial or school related occasions. Similarly, their involvement in religious knowledge seeking activities, such as ta'lim, is minimal, which suggests a lack of structured religious mentorship. This confirms previous concerns raised by Aziz and Rahim (2023) about the challenges faced by youth in maintaining spiritual consistency in the absence of community based religious reinforcement.

Another critical dimension captured in the table is the contrast in spiritual mindset. Active participants exhibit a strong awareness of the afterlife and a God centered worldview. This mindset shift is one of the intended outcomes of Khuruj Fi Sabilillah, where youth are repeatedly reminded of death, accountability, and the temporal nature of worldly life. Conversely, inactive participants often exhibit a more present focused attitude, with little attention to metaphysical goals, which reflects the broader secularization trend observed among urban youth (Rahman et al., 2024).

While the findings clearly show the positive impact of khuruj, they also point to challenges. For example, maintaining consistency after the khuruj period ends is difficult without strong personal motivation or community support. Moreover, the transformative effect of the method is largely dependent on repeated participation and sustained post khuruj practices (Khan & Ibrahim, 2021). Therefore, for long-term success, reinforcement mechanisms such as amal maqami the continuation of practices at home and in local mosques must be institutionalized.

Table 3. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Khuruj Fi Sabilillah in Developing Youth Religious Character

Category	Factors	Explanation
Supporting	Sincere intention (<i>Ikhlās</i>)	Youth motivated by the desire to gain Allah's pleasure and increase spiritual quality.
	Sacrifice of time and wealth	Willingness to leave worldly affairs (e.g., studies, work) temporarily for spiritual purposes.
	Concern for others (<i>Fikir Risau</i>)	Sense of responsibility for spreading Islamic values among peers and communities.
	Structured religious routine	Daily engagement in <i>ta'lim</i> , <i>bayān</i> , <i>musyawarah</i> , and congregational prayer during <i>khuruj</i> .
	Peer support and religious camaraderie	Solidarity among <i>khuruj</i> participants enhances motivation and accountability.
Inhibiting	Lack of personal commitment	Some participants struggle to maintain practices after returning home (<i>amal maqami</i>).
	Disobedience to group leader (<i>Amir</i>)	Resistance to guidance reduces discipline and weakens collective outcomes.
	Social stigma and misunderstanding	Being labeled as "fanatic" or "extreme" by family or society discourages some youths.
	Environmental distractions (technolog, peers)	Secular environments interfere with consistency in worship and religious mindset.

The analysis presented in Table 2 reveals both facilitating and constraining elements that influence the effectiveness of the Khuruj Fi Sabilillah method in shaping the religious character of youth. Among the most significant supporting factors is the element of ikhlas (sincere intention). Youth who join khuruj are driven by a strong desire to seek the pleasure of Allah, which serves as a fundamental spiritual motivator. This corresponds with the findings of Ahmad and Omar (2021), who argued that spiritual transformation is more sustainable when it is rooted in intrinsic motivation rather than external rewards. Furthermore, the act of willingly sacrificing time and wealth for the sake of faith leaving behind academic or occupational responsibilities reflects a deep level of commitment and prioritization of spiritual goals over worldly gains, a concept echoed in Khan and Ibrahim (2021).

Another crucial enabling factor is the presence of fikir risau, or spiritual concern for others. This fosters a collective sense of duty among participants to engage in dakwah and support the moral development of peers. Such collective consciousness is vital in reinforcing both individual and group religious identity, as discussed by Ali et al. (2022). Additionally, the structured routine embedded in khuruj, including activities like bayan (lectures), ta'lim (religious study), and musyawarah (consultation), reinforces habit formation and internalization of religious norms. Participants are not only taught religious teachings but are habituated into daily practice, aligning with the theory of spiritual habituation (Rahman et al., 2024). Lastly, the peer support system that develops during khuruj creates an environment of religious camaraderie. This social reinforcement acts as a protective buffer against demotivation, providing a platform for youth to encourage one another and hold each other accountable.

Despite these strengths, the findings also highlight several inhibiting factors. The most recurring challenge is the lack of personal commitment after returning from khuruj. Without proper follow up or consistent amal maqami (post khuruj spiritual routines), many youths struggle to maintain the spiritual discipline they acquired. This echoes Aziz and Rahim's (2023) concern regarding the sustainability of faith-based interventions that lack institutional continuity. Additionally, some participants exhibit resistance to guidance from the group leader (amir), undermining group cohesion and spiritual discipline. This disobedience may stem from generational or personal autonomy tensions and reflects a broader issue of youth authority resistance.

Social stigma also plays a major role in limiting khuruj's wider impact. Participants are sometimes labeled as "extremists" or "fanatics" by uninformed community members or even by their families. This misunderstanding not only affects youth morale but also limits wider societal acceptance of the khuruj methodology. As noted by Rahman et al. (2024), societal secularization and the rise of individualistic culture among urban youth contribute to skepticism toward group based religious movements. Finally, environmental distractions such as technology overuse, peer influence, and secular entertainment culture disrupt the consistency of worship and the reinforcement of a God conscious worldview. These challenges highlight the need for supportive ecosystems beyond the khuruj program such as school involvement, parental engagement, and mosque-based mentoring to sustain spiritual development in the long term.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Khuruj Fi Sabilillah method, as practiced by Jamaah Tabligh, has a transformative impact on the religious character formation of Muslim youth in Padang City. The method facilitates the internalization of key Islamic practices, including congregational prayer, Qur'an recitation, structured dhikr, and night worship, through immersive, non formal spiritual routines. The findings reveal a significant difference in religious discipline between youth who are actively involved in khuruj and those who are not, suggesting that experiential da'wah based education can effectively supplement formal religious instruction.

Supporting factors such as sincere intention (ikhlas), personal sacrifice, peer support, and structured routines play a critical role in sustaining spiritual transformation. At the same time, the research highlights inhibiting factors, including lack of post khuruj commitment, disobedience to group leaders (amir), social stigma, and modern distractions. These insights contribute theoretically to the discourse on non formal Islamic pedagogy and offer practical implications for da'wah organizations, Islamic educators, and policymakers. Future research is

encouraged to explore long term retention of spiritual habits post khuruj and to develop models that integrate khuruj activities with school-based and mosque based religious education frameworks.

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