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Children's Education Methods Based on the Thoughts of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan

***Eri Setiawan**

UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta*

****Muhammad Singgih**

STAI Ma'arif Kalirejo Lampung Tengah**

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Revised: 2026-10-21
Accepted: 2026-10-21
correspondence: erisetiawan445@gmail.com

Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk menganalisis pemahaman dan praktik seorang pendidik dalam perspektif lima metode pendidikan anak Abdullah Nashih Ulwan. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan rancangan studi kasus pada seorang pendidik berinisial RY. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dan observasi kelas, kemudian dianalisis secara deskriptif berdasarkan kerangka Ulwan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan kesesuaian sejumlah praktik RY dengan kelima metode tersebut. Keteladanan terlihat ketika guru mencontohkan salam dan perilaku santun yang ditiru sebagian siswa. Nasihat disampaikan secara dialogis setelah keadaan siswa lebih tenang, sedangkan pembiasaan diwujudkan melalui pengulangan doa, kerapian, dan kebersihan, meskipun beberapa siswa masih memerlukan pengingat. Pengawasan dilakukan dengan memantau aktivitas belajar, interaksi antarsiswa, dan penggunaan perangkat di kelas. Hukuman diterapkan melalui konsekuensi nonfisik, penjelasan, dan ajakan memperbaiki kesalahan. Dalam perspektif Ulwan, temuan tersebut memperlihatkan keterkaitan antara pemberian contoh, bimbingan, pengulangan perilaku baik, perhatian terhadap anak, dan tindakan korektif sebagai bagian dari pendidikan akhlak. Namun, penerapannya dipengaruhi perbedaan respons siswa dan keterbatasan waktu pendampingan; pengaruh media digital hanya terungkap melalui penuturan pendidik. Temuan ini menunjukkan kesesuaian konseptual praktik yang diamati dengan pemikiran Ulwan, bukan bukti perubahan karakter jangka panjang. Penafsiran dibatasi oleh satu informan dan cakupan pengamatan di kelas.

Kata Kunci: *Pendidikan anak, Abdullah Nashih Ulwan, Metode pendidikan Islam.*

Abstract

This study was conducted to analyze an educator's understanding and practices through the lens of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's five methods of child education. A qualitative approach with a case study design was employed, focusing on an educator identified by the initials RY. Data were collected via semi-structured interviews and classroom observations, then analyzed descriptively based on Ulwan's framework. The findings indicate that several of RY's practices align with these five methods. Modeling (exemplification) is evident in the teacher's demonstration of greetings and polite behavior, which some students emulate. Advice is provided through dialogue once students have calmed down, while habituation is fostered through the repetition of prayers, the maintenance of sleepiness, and the practice of cleanliness—although some students still require reminders. Supervision is carried out by monitoring learning activities, student-to-student interactions, and the use of devices in the classroom. Disciplinary measures are applied through non-physical consequences, explanations, and encouragement to rectify mistakes. From Ulwan's perspective, these findings illustrate the interconnectedness of modeling, guidance, the reinforcement of positive behavior, attentiveness toward children, and corrective action as integral components of moral education. However, the implementation is influenced by variations in student responses and limitations in the time available for guidance; the impact of digital media is addressed only through the educator's own accounts. These findings demonstrate a conceptual alignment between the observed practices and Ulwan's educational

philosophy, rather than serving as evidence of long-term character transformation. The interpretation is limited by the reliance on a single informant and the scope of the classroom observation.
Keywords: *Children's education, Abdullah Nashih Ulwan, Islamic education methods* .

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of moral decadence among children and adolescents is currently a serious problem in the world of education (Syarif, 2025) . Various national reports indicate that cases of violence against children remain a serious problem in Indonesia (Wahyudi et al., 2023) . Data from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KPPPA) through the Online Information System for the Protection of Women and Children (SIMFONI-PPA) shows that the number of cases of child violence has remained high in the last five years (Yusuf et al., 2025) . On the other hand, survey results from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology and educational institutions show an increase in gadget use among elementary school-aged children, where most children spend hours using digital devices without parental supervision (Maryani & Hilalludin, 2025) . This condition indicates a decrease in the intensity of communication and value development between children and parents, which has an impact on weakening children's character and social responsibility. This problem demands the presence of a child education system that not only emphasizes academic aspects, but is also rooted in moral and spiritual values.

From an Islamic perspective, children's education holds a crucial position (Hidayat, 2021) . The Qur'an emphasizes parents' responsibility in shaping their children's character, as outlined in Surah At-Tahrim, verse 6, and the story of Luqman al-Hakim in Surah Luqman, verses 13–19 (Zilpiani & Shodiq, 2022) . Children's education in Islam is not merely a process of transferring knowledge, but also fostering the soul, morals, and spirituality from an early age (Hadi et al., 2025) . The ultimate goal is the formation of a Muslim who is faithful, has noble character, and is responsible for himself and his environment.

One of the Islamic education figures whose thoughts are relevant in this context is Abdullah Nashih Ulwan (Nurhakim & Wasehudin, 2024) . In his monumental work, *Tarbiyatul Aulad fil Islam* , Ulwan offers a concept of children's education that touches on the dimensions of faith, morals, social, intellectual, and psychological (Aeni & Zaenudin, 2025) . Ulwan emphasizes the importance of the role of parents, the environment, and role models as the main means in shaping a child's personality (Lase et al., 2025) . Ulwan's thoughts are an important reference in both classical and contemporary Islamic education literature (Rosmidar et al., 2025) , because they offer a comprehensive approach that synergizes spiritual values and pedagogical methods.

Several previous studies have examined Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's thinking from various perspectives. Sari and Umurohmi examined Ulwan's concept of moral education and emphasized the importance of role models in shaping children's character (Sari & Umurohmi, 2025) . Asri and Prahara examined the application of Ulwan's educational values in modern Muslim families, but their research was descriptive in nature and did not delve into the methodological aspects of child education (Asri & Prahara, 2020) . Aini and Aliwan highlighted the relevance of Ulwan's thinking to character education in Islamic schools, but only emphasized the moral dimension without linking the intellectual and psychological aspects of children (Aini & Aliwan, 2025) . From these various studies, a research gap is apparent, namely that there are not many studies that systematically examine Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's child education methods from the various dimensions of value he offers, as well as their relevance to the context of modern Islamic education. Most previous research is partial and has not integrated a comprehensive conceptual analysis.

The selection of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan as the basis for this research is based on the uniqueness of his thinking in formulating child education methods that can be linked to everyday educational practices. These five methods provide a framework that can be used to analyze the actions of educators in guiding children's behavior, starting from providing examples, building positive habits, providing advice, conducting supervision, to providing corrective actions. This uniqueness is what makes Ulwan's thinking relevant to study in the current educational context, when educators face the challenges of character formation, differences in student behavior, and the influence of the environment and digital media. Thus, Ulwan's thinking was chosen not because it is considered superior to the thinking of other figures, but because the formulation of his methods is in accordance with the focus of the research which examines the understanding and practice of child education by an educator.

Based on this, this study aims to analyze educators' understanding and implementation of children's education methods according to Abdullah Nashih Ulwan through case studies, including principles, values, and approaches applied in everyday life. The novelty of this study lies in the presentation of educators' real experiences in applying Ulwan's concept in the context of modern education. Theoretically , this study enriches the treasury of Islamic education studies, while practically it can be a reference for educators and parents in forming children's characters based on Islamic values. Based on the background above, the formulation of the problem in this study is as follows: (1) How do educators understand the concept of children's education according to Abdullah Nashih Ulwan? (2) How are the

methods of role modeling, advice, habituation, supervision, and punishment applied in the practice of children's education in the cases studied?

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach that aims to deeply understand two research focuses, namely the understanding of parents or educators regarding the concept of child education according to Abdullah Nashih Ulwan and the application of the methods of role models, advice, habituation, supervision, and punishment in educational practices in the cases studied. Research data were obtained through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation as the main data collection techniques. Interviews were conducted semi-structured to explore the informants' understanding. The research subject was an informant who is an educator with the initials RY while observation was used to observe the actual behavior of parenting and the process of child education. Documentation such as activity notes, photos, or related archives were used to strengthen the findings. Data sources consist of primary data (parents/educators as informants and observed activities) and secondary data (Ulwan literature and supporting documents). Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman model which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, technical triangulation, and *member checking* to ensure that the findings correspond to actual conditions in the field.

RESEARCH RESULT

To answer the two research questions, the researcher conducted interviews and direct observations of RY's Islamic education practices within the school context. This data collection process allowed the researcher to observe how Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's Islamic education methods are implemented in learning activities and daily interactions within the school environment. The following section presents the research results based on systematic and in-depth field findings.

Parents' Understanding of the Concept of Children's Education According to Abdullah Nashih Ulwan

Based on the results of an interview with an informant with the initials RY, who acts as an educator, it is known that he has a fairly deep understanding of the concept of child education from an Islamic perspective. According to him, education does not only take place in the classroom, but also a process of forming morals, character, and good habits that must be instilled continuously. RY stated, " *Education is not just about teaching in school. Children must be guided in their morals, accustomed to good manners, and guided by example. Teachers and parents*

both have a role in that ." This statement shows that RY recognizes the importance of synergy between teachers and families as the initial center of character formation.

The informant also stated that he was familiar with Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's thinking through several Islamic education studies he had participated in. Although he was familiar with the five educational methods proposed by Ulwan: role modelling, advice, habituation, supervision, and educational punishment, RY admitted that he had not studied all of the figure's works in depth. He said, "*I've heard about Ulwan's concept from Islamic parenting studies. The point is that children learn from examples. Teachers must also be role models, not just give orders.*" This statement indicates that RY's understanding is more prominent in the aspect of role modelling, particularly regarding the importance of teachers as behavioral models for students. However, RY's explanation is not enough to demonstrate the depth of his understanding of Ulwan's overall educational method. This shows a difference between familiarity with Ulwan's educational concept and in-depth conceptual mastery. Thus, RY's understanding of Ulwan's thinking still needs to be further examined through the educational practices he applies in learning activities.

This understanding appears to align with practices observed during observations at the school. During learning activities, RY was seen encouraging students to greet each other, maintain politeness, tidy up after use, and conduct class activities in an orderly manner. RY's exemplary behavior was evident in the way she spoke in a gentle tone, demonstrated good behavior, and provided direct examples before asking students to imitate. Her communication style was two-way and guiding, demonstrating the practical application of advice and habituation methods in the school environment.

Overall, the interview and observation results indicate that RY possesses a holistic understanding of Islamic education, as described by Ulwan. This understanding is not merely theoretical but is reflected in his learning practices, attitudes, and daily classroom interactions. RY's integration of role models, habituation, and verbal guidance illustrates the practical and sustainable implementation of Islamic education in the school context.

Implementation of the Modeling, Advice, Habituation, Supervision, and Punishment Methods

Based on the results of interviews and observations, the application of the Islamic education method according to Abdullah Nashih Ulwan by informant RY as an educator appears quite consistent in learning activities at school. In terms of role models, RY strives to demonstrate attitudes and behaviors worthy of imitation by students. He maintains a polite manner of speaking, acts gently, and applies good manners in classroom interactions. RY said,

"*Children are quicker to imitate than to listen to theory. So I try to provide direct examples, such as greeting, speaking slowly, and being disciplined with time.*" Observations show that students imitate some of these actions, such as responding to greetings properly, tidying up tables after use, and following instructions more orderly. This pattern indicates that teacher role models are the main foundation in building student character according to Ulwan's view.

In terms of advice, RY provides guidance to students in a conducive and unhurried atmosphere. Advice is given when students make minor mistakes in class, during breaks, or during final reflection moments of learning. RY explains, "*If a child is emotional or noisy, I don't immediately advise them. I wait for the atmosphere to calm down first, then I talk to them nicely.*" The language used is simple, dialogical, and often accompanied by concrete examples for easy understanding. Observations show that RY's communication with students takes place in a gentle tone, making the moral message easier to accept.

The habituation method is also implemented through daily routines at school. RY gets students into the habit of greeting each other upon entering the classroom, tidying up their learning materials, praying before and after class, and maintaining a clean classroom environment. He said, "*Habits must be repeated every day. If someone forgets, I remind them gently, not scold them.*" Observations confirmed that most students have become accustomed to following these routines, such as preparing books before class or cleaning their desks independently. This habituation process shows that RY's method aligns with Ulwan's principle of the importance of repeating good deeds to instill character.

In terms of supervision, RY monitors students' activities both during class and when interacting with their peers. She oversees their use of learning tools, assignments, and digital activities if technology is used in the classroom. She explained, "*I always check their activities, what they're working on, who they're playing with, and how they interact in class.*" RY also establishes classroom rules regarding study time, break time, and limits on the use of school gadgets. Observations show that students follow this monitoring pattern, for example, adhering to the study schedule or reporting any difficulties.

Regarding punishment or discipline, RY emphasizes a non-physical, educational approach. When students break the rules, he imposes consequences such as reduced playtime, asking students to sit quietly for a moment, or asking students to correct their mistakes. RY explained, "*I give punishments so they understand the consequences. Violence is not allowed. After they calm down, I usually talk to them and ask why it happened.*" Observations support this; RY appears to manage violations with a patient and reflective approach without hurting or humiliating students.

Regarding supporting factors, RY stated that the school's religious environment, support from fellow teachers, and religious activities such as morning prayers and the promotion of faith and piety were very helpful in implementing Islamic educational methods. He said, "*The school already has a culture of greetings, prayers, and good habits, so I just have to continue and strengthen them.*" Another supporting factor is the students' generally cooperative and easy-to-direct character.

However, the implementation of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's educational method in schools also faces several obstacles. Based on interviews, RY explained that the use of digital devices and the shows children access is one of the challenges in shaping student behavior. Furthermore, differences in character and interaction patterns between students mean that the guidance process does not always proceed in the same way. RY stated, "*Nowadays, children are quickly influenced by what they watch on their phones. Some have difficulty focusing or easily imitate bad things. That's the challenge.*" This statement indicates that RY faces variations in student responses, especially in the ability to maintain attention and follow directions during learning. However, the influence of digital media on student behavior is still based on RY's experience and narrative, so it cannot be confirmed as a cause-and-effect relationship. Another obstacle is the limited learning time, which prevents educators from always providing comprehensive guidance to each student. These findings indicate that the implementation of Ulwan's educational method does not occur under uniform conditions, but is influenced by student characteristics, social environment, and limited guidance during the learning process.

Overall, the results of interviews and observations indicate that RY successfully integrated Ulwan's five educational methods—exemplary behavior, advice, habituation, supervision, and punishment—into daily learning activities and interactions at school. This implementation is reflected through direct classroom practice and consistent teacher behavior in educating students. These findings demonstrate that RY not only understands the concepts of Islamic education theoretically but is also able to apply them practically and sustainably in the context of formal education.

DISCUSSION

Based on the research findings presented, the following section will discuss in depth the understanding and application of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's concept of child education. This discussion aims to analyze how the five Islamic educational methods—exemplary behavior, advice, habituation, supervision, and educational discipline—are applied in the context of modern learning, as well as their implications for student character development.

Furthermore, the discussion will consider the limitations of the research to provide a more comprehensive and relevant perspective.

Parents' Understanding of the Concept of Children's Education According to Abdullah Nashih Ulwan

Research findings indicate that RY understands children's education as a process of moral formation and habituation of good behavior in everyday life. This understanding aligns with the thinking of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan, who emphasized the importance of role models, advice, habituation, supervision, and educational punishment as methods of educating children. However, this alignment does not indicate that RY has mastered Ulwan's thoughts in depth, considering that his knowledge is mostly obtained through the Islamic education studies he has attended. According to Zahra et al., Islamic education (ta'dib) does not only aim to transfer knowledge, but also to shape adab through examples and the continuous instillation of values (Zahra et al., 2024) . This is reflected in RY's statement that education is not only a cognitive activity in the classroom, but also the formation of good morals and habits.

RY's application of the role model method is also relevant to Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's thinking and modern moral education theory. Ulwan places role models (*uswah hasanah*) as the most important method in children's education, and Albert Bandura's social-cognitive theory in Lestari and Jf, emphasizes that children learn primarily through the process of modeling or imitating significant figures (Lestari & Jf, 2025) . RY's practice of being mindful of speech, demonstrating polite behavior, and demonstrating first before asking students to imitate, shows consistency with both theories. Observations showing students imitating greeting and polite habits reinforce that role models are a dominant factor in character formation in the classroom.

In addition to being an example, RY's application of advice and habituation is in line with the habituation-based character development approach proposed by Supiyardi et al., emphasizing that character grows through three stages: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action, which can only be formed through habituation and repetition in a supportive environment (Supiyardi et al., 2024) . RY's strategy of providing advice with gentle language, choosing the right time, and establishing greeting and neatness routines is a form of *moral action* that strengthens the habituation of values.

RY's methods of supervision and educational discipline are also in line with the *positive discipline approach* recommended in modern education. According to Rozikin and Iswatiningsih, effective discipline is not through physical punishment, but through

explanation, dialogue, and logical consequences (Rozikin & Iswatiningsih, 2025) . RY's gentle guidance, warnings without anger, and creation of classroom rules that are collectively adhered to demonstrate the implementation of positive discipline that aligns with both Islamic educational principles and modern disciplinary theory.

Overall, the research findings indicate that RY's educational practices strongly align with Ulwan's theory and are supported by contemporary educational theories such as Bandura's modeling theory, Lickona's character education, and *positive discipline* . This demonstrates that the implementation of Islamic education in schools is not only based on traditional values but can also be integrated with modern pedagogical approaches, thus creating a more effective, holistic, and relevant educational process to meet the needs of today's students.

Implementation of the Modeling, Advice, Habituation, Supervision, and Punishment Methods

The results of the study indicate that RY's application of Islamic education methods as an educator aligns with Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's concept and is also in line with contemporary educational theory. In terms of exemplary behavior, RY's actions demonstrate that teachers function as *moral models* for students. This is not only in line with Ulwan's theory which places exemplary behavior as the foundation of character education (Ritonga et al., 2024) , but also in accordance with modern educational views such as Albert Bandura's *social learning theory* which states that children learn primarily through the process of imitating figures who are considered significant (Wisudaningsih et al., 2025) . When RY maintains his speech, is gentle, and provides examples of greetings and neatness, these practices directly shape student behavior through *modeling mechanisms* .

The advice provided by RY also demonstrates a dialogical learning approach. According to Ulwan, advice delivered gently and at the right time is more effective in touching a child's heart. This aligns with modern pedagogical communication theories, such as the concept of *restorative communication* , which emphasizes the importance of reflective and empathetic conversations in building students' moral awareness (Maulana & Ndawa, 2025) . RY's approach to waiting for a calm atmosphere before advising reflects pedagogical practices that are appropriate for children's social-emotional development.

In terms of habituation, RY's repeated routines such as greetings, prayers, neatness, and cleanliness demonstrate the application of the school culture-based character building theory , which is widely used in modern character education. This theory states that positive habits are formed through consistent repetition and a supportive learning environment (Lubis et al.,

2025) . RY's habituation aligns with Ulwan's view that repeated good deeds will be internalized into character.

RY's implementation of supervision aligns with the *classroom management concept* proposed by Sulistiyawati and Jannah, which states that teachers need to ensure a conducive classroom atmosphere through active monitoring and routine management (Sulistiyawati & Jannah, 2025) . From Ulwan's perspective, supervision is an effort to maintain children's behavior within the correct value corridor. RY's practice of monitoring student interactions, checking media use, and organizing learning schedules demonstrates a balance between control and guidance, as recommended in both Islamic and modern educational theories.

The punishment or discipline aspects applied by RY show alignment with the positive discipline approach , namely a form of non-physical consequences that aim to educate, not punish (Ernawati et al., 2024) . Ulwan emphasized that punishment should not hurt children, but rather help them understand the moral consequences of their actions (Utari & Albina, 2024) . RY's approach, which encourages students to reflect after calming down, also aligns with the *restorative discipline approach* now widely implemented in modern schools to build student responsibility.

Supporting factors such as the school's religious culture, support from fellow teachers, and religious activities indicate that the successful implementation of the Ulwan method is strongly influenced by a conducive school ecosystem. This is in line with the *ecological systems theory* of Simanjuntak et al., which emphasizes that children's moral development cannot be separated from the microenvironment in which they live (Simanjuntak et al., 2025) . Meanwhile, obstacles such as the influence of gadgets, differences in student character, and time constraints align with contemporary educational challenges widely discussed in modern character education research. The strong influence of digital media on children's behavior is a global issue that requires habituation strategies, digital literacy, and more adaptive supervision.

Overall, this discussion demonstrates that RY's practice of implementing Islamic educational methods is not only consistent with the thinking of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan, but also strongly aligns with modern educational theories related to social learning, character education, classroom management, and pedagogical communication. This confirms that Islamic educational methods are relevant and applicable in today's school context through a systematic and sustainable approach.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's concept of child education can be effectively applied in modern learning processes. Child education emphasizes not only intellectual aspects but also the formation of morals, character, and good habits through Ulwan's five Islamic educational methods: role modeling, advice, habituation, supervision, and educational discipline. The application of these methods demonstrates the relevance of Islamic educational principles in today's educational context and can consistently shape students' behavior and character. This study has two main limitations. First, the research subjects were limited, so the findings cannot be generalized to other schools or educational contexts. Second, observations were only conducted in a classroom context, so the dynamics of education outside the classroom or students' social interactions were not fully depicted. For further research, it is recommended to involve more informants, including teachers, parents, and students, so that a more comprehensive picture of the application of Islamic educational methods can be obtained. In addition, research should expand the scope of observations, not only limited to in-class activities, but also include students' social interactions and activities outside the classroom, so that the implementation of Islamic education can be seen comprehensively.

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