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Shaping Students' Islamic Character: The Role of Teachers in Practicing Religious Values

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ABSTRACT

The research that we do is very much describing the strategies faced by Islamic religious education teachers in internalizing the values of Islamic religious education to students at school. strategies that arise due to rapid developments in the field of information and technology (IT) so that the reverse flow of information exchange becomes inevitable, even many cultures that must be filtered first because they are not in accordance with the values of Islamic education. This paper also describes how the teacher's strategy in internalizing the values of Islamic religious education to students. There are three aspects included in the values of Islamic education, namely: moral values (morals to God, morals to others and morals to oneself), the value of belief (faith in God and His messenger), and the value of worship (ghairu mahdah). The strategies carried out in internalizing the values of Islamic religious education include several stages, namely the value transformation stage, the value transaction stage, and the internalization stage.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian yang kami lakukan ini sangat mendeskripsikan tentang strategi yang dihadapi oleh guru pendidikan agama Islam dalam menginternalisasikan nilai-nilai pendidikan agama Islam kepada peserta didik di sekolah. strategi yang muncul diakibatkan karena perkembangan yang pesat dalam bidang informasi dan teknologi (IT) sehingga arus balik pertukaran informasi menjadi tidak terelakkan, bahkan banyak budaya-budaya yang mesti disaring terlebih dahulu disebabkan karena tidak sesuai dengan nilai-nilai pendidikan Islam. Tulisan ini juga menggambarkan bagaimana strategi guru dalam menginternalisasikan nilai-nilai pendidikan agama Islam kepada peserta didik. Terdapat tiga aspek yang termasuk dalam nilai-nilai pendidikan Islam, yaitu: nilai akhlak (akhlak kepada Allah, akhlak kepada sesama dan akhlak kepada diri sendiri), nilai akidah (keimanan kepada Allah dan rasul-Nya), dan nilai ibadah (ghairu mahdah). Adapun strategi- strategi yang dilakukan dalam menginternalisasikan nilai-nilai pendidikan agama Islam meliputi beberapa tahapan, yakni tahap transformasi nilai, tahap transaksi nilai, dan tahap transinternalisasi.

PRELIMINARY

The development of the world of education, especially in Indonesia, increasingly demands renewal and improvement of quality not only in academic aspects, but also in the formation of student character. The recent phenomenon shows that education is not enough to only teach knowledge and technical skills but must also focus on the development of morals and character. Various social events that reflect low morality among the younger generation, such as increasing cases of violence between students, juvenile delinquency, to impolite behavior in public spaces, inspire us to reflect on the role of education in forming Islamic character.

In this context, religious education has a very important role. One way to form Islamic character in students is through the role of teachers in teaching religious values consistently. Learning Islamic religious education is the formation of personality character in students which is reflected in their behavior and mindset in everyday life (Ali, 2022). Values such as honesty, discipline, gratitude, helping each other, and empathy for others are the basis for building a person who is not only intellectually intelligent but also morally noble. Teachers, as educators, have a very big responsibility in instilling these values in students' daily lives.

This phenomenon of lack of character formation is clearly visible in several incidents that arise in the social life of society. In the school environment, student behavior that pays less attention to ethics and religious norms is sometimes more often found. This can be seen from problems such as lack of respect for teachers and fellow friends, low sense of responsibility for tasks, and indifference to cleanliness and the surrounding environment. Therefore, the formation of Islamic character through religious education is very relevant to improve these conditions.

Teachers, as those at the forefront of education, have a very central role in providing real examples and integrating religious values into learning. In many ways, students see teachers as role models to be emulated. Therefore, in addition to being teachers of subject matter, teachers must also be able to be role models in terms of morals and ethics. In this case, the role of teachers as moral guides who teach not only religious knowledge but also the application of these values in everyday life is very important. The importance of the role of an Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher in forming the Islamic character of students, therefore, good, and professional Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers are needed so that they can produce and shape a generation with good character as well (Haniyyah, 2021).

The purpose of writing this article is to explore more deeply how teachers can practice religious values to shape Islamic character in students. It is hoped that this article can provide a clearer picture of the importance of integrating religious education in shaping students' character and how the role of teachers as role models can support the achievement of these goals. Thus, it is hoped that the formation of students' Islamic character can have a positive impact on their social life in the future. This is done by families, schools, universities, and communities through education (Akbar & Azani, 2024).

In addition, this article also aims to encourage more schools to implement religious values consistently in every aspect of learning activities. Not only in the classroom, but also in extracurricular activities and the school environment. The formation of a strong Islamic character must be based on collaboration between schools, teachers, and parents, as well as all elements of society.

The formation of Islamic character should also not be separated from the daily lives of students. Therefore, this article will review how the practice of religious values carried out by teachers in schools can be reflected in student behavior outside the school environment (Salisah, et.al., 2024). It is hoped that with the formation of good Islamic character, students will not only become successful individuals in academics, but also be able to face the challenges of life with full morals and wisdom. Various studies and literature support the importance of the role of Islamic religious education in shaping the character of students in the digital era.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type, which aims to describe the role of teachers in practicing religious values in the formation of Islamic character in students (Hidayah & Khiyarunnas, 2024). The qualitative approach was chosen because it is more appropriate for understanding complex social phenomena, such as the interaction between teachers and students in the character education process. In this study, data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation to obtain in-depth information about how teachers implement religious values in learning and activities at school.

Observation techniques were used to directly observe learning activities taking place in the classroom as well as interactions between teachers and students related to the formation of Islamic character. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with teachers, principals, and parents of students to explore their views on the role of teachers in forming Islamic character and the challenges faced in implementing character education in schools. These interviews also aimed to gain a broader perspective on parental involvement in supporting the formation of children's character at home.

The collected data were then analyzed descriptively by organizing information based on themes relevant to the research objectives. The results of this analysis are expected to provide a clearer understanding of the effectiveness of Islamic character education practices implemented by teachers and the extent to which the school environment and cooperation between teachers and parents contribute to the formation of student character. This study is also expected to provide recommendations for the development of more effective educational strategies in forming students' Islamic character in the future.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The results and discussions that we get are that education should be a place to create, shape and foster students into intellectual people, have a spiritual soul and noble character. Therefore, the task of educators today is not only to share or transfer knowledge to students but more importantly, educators must provide good examples that students can imitate in the future. In seeing the phenomena that occur in the surrounding environment, the author observes that juvenile delinquency that occurs today is the fruit of globalization and modernization. Globalization and modernization bring humans to interact with each other without any demarcation lines that indicate humans are connected to each other. A small object called a smartphone that is supported by an internet network has many uses, not only as a means of communication, searching for information, but entertainment with various game features is also some of the uses of smartphones.

Based on observations, interviews, and documentation conducted at school, this study found several key findings regarding the role of teachers in the formation of students' Islamic character. The following are the main results found in the study: first, the Role of Teachers in the Formation of Islamic Character. In the context of character education, education is carried out to educate students to become *ihsan* human beings who do good with actions based on piety to God Almighty (Radhiyah, et.al., 2023). Teachers have a very central role in forming students' Islamic character. In addition to teaching knowledge, teachers are also responsible for instilling religious values through exemplary behavior and integrative learning (Mulyadi, 2024).

During the observation, it was seen that teachers actively instilled noble moral values in students, such as honesty, humility, responsibility, and compassion. The instillation of these values was carried out through an integrated approach in learning activities and daily interactions. Teachers often inserted moral messages into the lesson materials, for example by using short stories that teach the importance of honesty and responsibility in Indonesian language lessons or by discussing verses of the Qur'an and Hadith related to commendable morals in Islamic religious lessons.

In addition, teachers routinely invite students to perform congregational prayers, both at midday prayer time and during the implementation of sunnah prayers. Before and after prayers, teachers provide short sermons that emphasize the importance of maintaining relationships with Allah (*hablum minallah*) and relationships with fellow human beings (*hablum minannas*). On the other hand, the habit of reading daily prayers is also a focus of teachers in forming students' Islamic character. Every activity at school begins and ends with a joint prayer, where teachers not only guide students in memorizing the prayers but also explain their meaning and wisdom so that students can practice these values in their daily lives.

Second, Cooperation Between Teachers and Parents. Cooperation between teachers and parents greatly supports the formation of Islamic character in students. If students always receive guidance from their parents, then even without being forced, the students will obey the teacher, do the assignments given, respect friends and so on (Siregar, 2020). The results of interviews with parents showed that they strongly support the efforts made by teachers in teaching religious values. Parents admit that the religious education received by their children at school is greatly strengthened by religious practices at home, such as performing prayers, reading the Qur'an, and behaving well according to Islamic teachings. Parents also try to maintain good communication with teachers to monitor their children's development in terms of character formation.

In addition, parents also play an active role in creating a conducive environment to support the learning of religious values. They recognize the importance of consistency between education at school and at home so that children can more easily understand and practice Islamic teachings. Some parents even adopt the teaching methods used by teachers at school, such as telling inspiring stories from the Prophet Muhammad SAW to their children before bed or inviting children to discuss the importance of

honesty and responsibility. This collaboration not only strengthens the formation of Islamic character in children, but also creates a harmonious relationship between schools and families in educating a generation with noble morals.

Third, Challenges in the Implementation of Islamic Character Education. Despite strong efforts from teachers and parents in forming Islamic character, several challenges arise in its implementation. One of the main challenges is the diversity of family backgrounds and religions of students, which affects the way students accept and practice religious values. Some students come from families that are less intensive in educating their children in terms of religion, thus requiring a more intensive approach and longer time. In addition, not all students have the same motivation to apply Islamic values, which requires teachers to be more creative and patient in teaching these values.

To overcome the challenges faced, several recommendations can be implemented. First, improving training programs for Islamic religious education teachers so that they can develop more innovative learning methods. Second, support from schools and parents needs to be increased to ensure the success of educational programs, as well as to provide students with access to additional materials relevant to Islamic values (Salam, et.al., 2024).

Fourth, Supportive School Environment. This study also shows that an Islamic school environment plays an important role in supporting the formation of students' Islamic character. Religious habits such as congregational prayer, Al-Quran recitation, and dhikr together are routine activities that help students form religious activities (Anggara, 2024). Schools that create a religious atmosphere through routine activities such as congregational prayer, religious studies, and learning Islamic morals help students to internalize religious values more easily. Several extracurricular activities based on religion, such as Al-Quran and Hadith studies, also help strengthen students' Islamic character. Teachers and principals strive to create a supportive environment, both through a curriculum that integrates Islamic values and through activities that focus on the formation of noble morals.

In addition to the habituation of religious activities, social relationships between students and interactions with teachers also play a role in the formation of Islamic character. Teachers are not only educators, but also role models for students in demonstrating Islamic attitudes, such as speaking softly, being fair, and prioritizing compassion in dealing with various situations. This helps students understand the importance of noble morals not only in an individual context but also in social life. Students are encouraged to respect each other, work together, and help each other through various activities such as community service, sharing with friends in need, and social programs that involve the entire school community.

On the other hand, school facility support also plays an important role in creating a supportive Islamic environment. A comfortable prayer room, a Quran reading corner, and the provision of teaching materials based on Islamic values are means that support student habituation. The principal and teachers together ensure that every corner of the school reflects Islamic values, for example by installing posters with quotes from Quran and Hadith and holding religious competitions such as memorizing the Quran or the call to prayer. The combination of habituation, role models, and support for these facilities form an effective synergy to instill a strong Islamic character in students, so that these values can continue to be embedded in their lives outside the school environment.

Sixth, High Awareness of Teachers in Teaching Character Education. Teachers in this school have a high awareness of the importance of forming Islamic character. They actively apply Islamic values in every aspect of learning and strive to be role models for students. Based on interviews with teachers, they realize that Islamic character is more than just teaching religion, but also includes the development of deep morals and ethics. They use various methods to teach Islamic values, such as telling stories about the Prophet Muhammad SAW, giving examples through their personal behavior, and linking religious values in every lesson taught.

Overall, the results of the study indicate that the role of teachers in shaping students' Islamic character is very important and needs to be supported by cooperation between teachers and parents. Although there are challenges to be faced, especially related to the diverse backgrounds of students, consistent efforts and close cooperation between teachers, parents, and schools can create an environment that supports the development of students' Islamic character.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the formation of Islamic character in students is greatly influenced by the active role of teachers, cooperation with parents, and a supportive school environment. In this case, the approach taken by teachers in integrating religious values into daily learning shows the importance of role models shown by educators. This is in line with the concept of education in Islam which not only prioritizes teaching science, but also forms good morals in accordance with religious teachings. Teachers as central figures have a great responsibility in guiding students to have noble characters, as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad SAW. As explained by Sayyid Sabiq in Fiqh Sunnah, an educator must be able to provide examples through real actions in everyday life, because good examples will be more easily accepted and followed by students.

In addition, the results of this study also show that cooperation between teachers and parents has a significant impact on shaping students' Islamic character. Parents who support religious education at home and actively communicate with the school strengthen character-building efforts carried out by teachers at school. Islamic character education cannot be realized only in the classroom; parental involvement is essential so that the religious values received by students can be practiced consistently in everyday life, both at school and at home. This cooperation creates a synergy that supports the development of children's morals and ethics.

However, the biggest challenge faced in implementing Islamic character education is the diversity of students' religious and family backgrounds. Although many students have backgrounds that support religious education, there are still some students who come from families with less deep religious backgrounds or do not prioritize religious education. This requires a more flexible and patient approach from teachers to ensure that each student receives character education that is in accordance with their level of understanding and acceptance of religious values. In facing this challenge, teachers must be more creative in delivering material that is not only based on religious theory, but also related to students' daily lives. Teachers must be able to integrate moral values into each lesson and create situations that allow students to feel the importance of applying these values in a broader context.

A supportive school environment also plays an important role in the formation of students' Islamic character. Schools that create an Islamic atmosphere, either through religious activities such as congregational prayer, religious studies, or through school policies that prioritize moral values, have a positive impact on the formation of students' character. This conducive environment allows students to feel connected to religious values and strengthens the teachings received at school. In addition, with the existence of extracurricular activities based on religion such as studying the Qur'an, Hadith, and social activities that support Islamic character, students can more easily internalize these values.

Overall, the formation of Islamic character in students requires a holistic and sustainable approach, where the roles of teachers, parents, and the school environment support and collaborate with each other. Although existing challenges, especially related to the diversity of student backgrounds, remain obstacles, an inclusive and compassionate approach from teachers and the active involvement of parents and the school environment can strengthen students' Islamic character. Through role models, good communication, and learning that integrates religious values in everyday life, Islamic character education can be achieved more effectively.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the interviews that have been conducted, it can be concluded that teachers have a very important role in shaping students' Islamic character through role models and learning that integrates religious values in everyday life. In addition, close cooperation between teachers and parents is a key factor in supporting the formation of students' Islamic character. Through education carried out in schools and support provided at home, students can more easily internalize and apply religious values in their lives. A supportive school environment also plays a significant role in strengthening students' Islamic character.

However, challenges in implementing Islamic character education remain, especially related to the diversity of students' religious and family backgrounds. Therefore, a more flexible and creative approach is needed from teachers in dealing with these differences, so that each student can accept and practice religious values well. With the synergy between teachers, parents, and the school environment, as well as an inclusive and adaptive approach, Islamic character education can be achieved optimally, creating a

generation that is not only academically intelligent, but also has noble morals in accordance with Islamic teachings.

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