

The Role of Teachers in Building Children's Discipline Character at RA Al Rizky Padang Sidempuan

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Abstract

This research aims to reveal the role of teachers in instilling discipline values in early childhood at RA Al Rizky Padang Sidempuan. The approach used is qualitative with a naturalistic method, where data is collected through direct observation techniques, in-depth interviews, and documentation of activities. The research subjects consisted of school principals and a number of teachers who were actively involved in learning activities. The findings of the study show that teachers play an important role in shaping children's disciplinary behavior through example, continuous habituation, and approaches that are in accordance with the characteristics of child development. Teachers create a fun and communicative learning atmosphere, so that children are able to absorb and apply discipline values naturally. Disciplined behaviors such as arriving on time, following class rules, and maintaining neatness began to form as a result of the character education process carried out by the teacher. The conclusion of this study is that the success of instilling discipline is highly determined by the teacher's ability to build positive relationships with children, convey values through real examples, and create a conducive learning environment. Therefore, it is important for educational institutions to increase the capacity of teachers in the field of character education so that the formation of children's morals and personalities can run optimally from an early age.

Keywords: Teacher Role, Early Childhood, Discipline Values, Character Education, Learning Environment.

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Introduction

Character education is one of the important pillars in shaping children's personality and morals from an early age. According to Harahap et al (2023), character education is not only obtained through educational institutions such as schools but also through the family environment and the culture or tribe that is followed. Early childhood education institutions such as Raudhatul Athfal (RA) have a strategic role in instilling character values, including disciplinary values which are the foundation in forming responsible and orderly attitudes.

According to Widya et al (2023), it is important to build character from an early age because in principle, children born from their mother's womb are in a state of fitrah, or if it is likened to a white paper whose writing can be filled with good writings or bad writings. The child receives each stroke where it will be directed.

Teachers as the spearhead in the learning process have a very important role in instilling these values in students. The main task of teachers as facilitators is to motivate students, provide learning materials, encourage students to find teaching materials, guide students in the learning process, and use punishment rewards as an educational tool (Munisa et. al, 2019)

According to Musfah (2017), character education in educational institutions is not only a matter of knowledge, but also habituation and example instilled by teachers in daily activities. This shows that teachers are not only in charge of delivering subject matter, but also become a model of behavior for their students. Children tend to imitate and emulate teachers' behavior, including in terms of discipline.

Discipline is a structure set by adults for a child's life that is designed to allow him to adjust to the real world happily and effectively, discipline enforced by parents and educators is the foundation for the development of children's self-discipline later (Utami, Siregar, & Suzuki, 2024).

Utami, Munisa, and Harahap (2020) Children's discipline needs to be formed from an early age, so that they can face their future lives. Currently, we witness many of us both directly and through the media about acts of violence, harassment and other criminal acts. In addition, nowadays there are also many who think that children now lack discipline and cannot show good character.

Instilling disciplined character in early childhood is very important because at this stage children are in the golden age of development, where character formation will be easier and more effective (Isjoni, 2016). Discipline that is instilled from an early age will form good habits that are carried over to adult children. In this context, the role of teachers in directing, guiding, and providing positive reinforcement is very necessary.

As stated by Subroto (2020), teachers who are able to implement character-based learning strategies will be more successful in shaping students disciplined. These strategies include example, habituation, proportionate reward and punishment, and empathetic communication.

RA Al Rizky Padang Sidempuan as one of the early childhood education institutions is expected to be able to become a conducive place in character formation, especially disciplined character. Therefore, it is important to research and understand how the role of teachers in RA in developing children's discipline characters, both through learning methods, social interactions, and habituation patterns in the school environment.

With this research, it is hoped that it can contribute to the development of an applicable and relevant character education model in early childhood education institutions, as well as increase teachers' awareness of their moral responsibility as educators and character builders of the nation's next generation.

Research Methods

The method used in this study is the qualitative method, where this method is the result of research that is not obtained through statistical procedures (Suharsimi Arikunto, 2010). Qualitative research methods are also called naturalistic research methods, because research is carried out in natural conditions (Lexy J. Moleong, 2016). Here the researcher acts as the main data collector of the discussed being studied. This presence is also to meet the requirements that must be met in qualitative research. The researcher chose the research location, namely at RA Al Rizky Padang Sidempuan. The data source was obtained from the information of the principal and teachers. The researcher used observation, interview and documentation techniques. The researcher acts as an observer who produces data from the results of observations and completeness of the data. Meanwhile, interviews and documentation were addressed to the principal of RA Al Rizky Padang Sidempuan to obtain a clear source of data

Results and discussion

4.1 Research Results

This research was carried out at RA Al Rizky Padang Sidempuan using a qualitative approach that is naturalistic. In this approach, Researchers play a direct role in the field to observe and understand in depth how the role of teachers in shaping disciplinary character in early childhood. Data collection was carried out through three main techniques, namely participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation of activities. Information sources are obtained from school principals and teachers who are actively involved in the implementation of education and the formation of children's character in the institution.

The results of observations show that the process of forming discipline in children is carried out in a structured and consistent manner through daily activities that take place at school. Teachers are seen actively directing children's behavior from the time they arrive at school until the time they return home. When the children come, they are greeted with warmth and directed to join the morning line and prayer together. This activity is the initial moment that forms the routine and discipline of time. The teacher patiently gave directions and gave direct examples of how to be orderly and respect the rules. The discipline attitude that began to form can be seen from the habits of children who began to arrive on time, store their belongings in a predetermined place, and show regularity in carrying out learning and playing activities.

Not only that, teachers also encourage children to follow the established procedures, such as washing their hands before eating, tidying up game equipment after use, and sitting orderly when listening to stories or learning materials. Teachers are a real example that children imitate. Every discipline behavior shown by the teacher will be easier for children to accept and imitate because at an early age, the child's learning process is highly dependent on observation and imitation of the adult figures around him.

Based on the results of interviews conducted with the principal and several teachers, information was obtained that the formation of discipline character cannot be done instantly. This process takes time, patience, and the right approach. Teachers realize that they not only have academic responsibilities, but also serve as character builders. Teachers revealed that the approach they use in fostering discipline is a humanist and educational approach. They try to understand the characteristics of each child and adjust the method coaching based on the child's age, maturity level, and family background.

In the implementation of discipline coaching, teachers use more forms of habituation that are carried out repeatedly, as well as providing direct examples or examples. Teachers also use praise and appreciation as a form of positive reinforcement for the good behavior shown by children. On the other hand, when a child violates the rules, the teacher gives a reprimand that is guided, not punitive or embarrassing. This is intended so that children can understand their

mistakes and correct their behavior without feeling pressured. Teachers also build good communication with children to create a sense of security and comfort. Children who feel valued and heard tend to be more cooperative and easy to direct.

In addition to observations and interviews, documentation of activities is also a source of data that strengthens research results. The documentation includes records of children's daily activities, recordings of photographs during learning and play activities, and reports on the development of children's behavior. This documentation data shows that disciplinary values have been integrated in all aspects of school activities. An orderly daily schedule, a consistent learning routine, and simple rules that are carried out together are effective means to instill discipline. Activities such as morning prayer, queuing while playing, tidying up stationery, and group work are part of the habituation that forms a pattern of regular behavior in children.

From the overall data obtained, it can be concluded that teachers have a very vital role in building the character of early childhood discipline. The teacher not only acts as a teacher of the subject matter, but also becomes a role model who provides a real example of the expected behavior. The example shown by teachers in terms of discipline, such as arriving on time, speaking politely, respecting rules, and being consistent, have a great impact on the formation of children's behavior. Children learn not from theory, but from what they see and experience every day in the school environment.

The process of forming this discipline is not carried out rigidly or forcefully, but through a fun and meaningful approach. Teachers use Learning strategies designed to suit the characteristics of early childhood, namely learning through concrete experiences, play, stories, and social interactions. Teachers also pay attention to the emotional aspect of children in every approach taken, so that children feel valued and motivated to follow the rules without feeling forced. This is proof that character formation is not only related to external behavior, but also involves the process of internalizing values in children.

The results of this study confirm that the success of discipline formation in early childhood is highly dependent on the active role and quality of interaction between teachers and children. RA Al Rizky Padang Sidempuan has implemented relevant and effective strategies in shaping children's discipline, through the integration of character values into all learning activities and daily life at school. With a consistent, warm, and educational approach, children show positive behavioral development, particularly in terms of order, responsibility, and adherence to rules.

Overall, teachers at RA Al Rizky are not only imparters of knowledge, but also shapers of children's personalities and characters. In the context of early childhood learning, teachers are central figures who are able to instill basic life values, including discipline, which are important foundations in children's growth and development in the future. Therefore, success in forming disciplinary character in early childhood cannot be separated from the quality of leadership, example, patience, and sensitivity of teachers in carrying out their roles comprehensively.

Discussion

The findings of this study clearly show that teachers have a very vital position in the process of forming disciplinary character in early childhood. Teachers not only carry out their functions as informants or facilitators of academic learning, but also as shapers of children's values and personalities. In the context of early childhood education, teachers act as the main figures who influence the formation of children's social and emotional behaviors, including in terms of instilling disciplinary values. The role of teachers is so broad that the success of character education is highly dependent on the quality of interaction between teachers and students.

At RA Al Rizky Padang Sidempuan, teachers implement character-based learning that is

integrated into daily activities. They actively and consistently instill good habits in children through routine activities such as welcoming children in the morning, leading prayers together, guiding children to tidy up toys, and directing them in following daily rules and schedules. The cultivation of discipline values is carried out not through coercive or punishing means, but through example and habituation. Teachers give direct examples of how to be orderly, respect time, and follow rules, so that children learn through observation and imitation, according to their age developmental stages.

This study also shows that the habituation process applied by teachers has a significant influence on shaping children's discipline behavior. Simple habits such as queuing, keeping things in the right place, or calmly following instructions, when done repeatedly in a pleasant atmosphere, can develop into long-term patterns of behavior. Teachers create a learning atmosphere that is not only structured but also child-friendly, so that the process of internalizing discipline values can take place naturally and effectively.

A positive interpersonal relationship between teacher and child was also found to be a key factor in the successful formation of discipline. Children who feel emotionally close to teachers tend to be more directional and more obedient to given rules. Teachers at RA Al Rizky Padang Sidempuan show the ability to build closeness through warm, patient communication, and respect for children's feelings. They are not only directing, but also willing to listen, understand, and provide space for children to learn from mistakes without feeling afraid or depressed.

In addition, early childhood is a very strategic period of development in character formation. At this age, children are in a golden age where their brains develop very quickly and are responsive to stimuli from the surrounding environment. Therefore, instilling discipline values that are carried out appropriately, consistently, and through an approach that is appropriate to the child's world will have a significant long-term impact on children's personality and morals in the future.

These findings have important implications for early childhood education institutions in general. Teachers need to be equipped with competencies that are not only academic, but also pedagogical and psychological, in order to be able to understand the needs of children comprehensively. Educational institutions should also create an environment that supports the character building process, by developing systematic habituation programs, designing structured activity schedules, and creating a school culture that values moral values such as discipline, responsibility, and cooperation.

Overall, this study emphasizes that teachers' success in shaping disciplinary character depends on the extent to which they can be good role models, build effective communication with children, and implement fun, communicative, and child-centered learning strategies. The formation of discipline is not just a matter of obeying the rules, but about building children's awareness and self-responsibility towards these rules, which will be carried over to a higher level of education and social life in the future.

Conclusion

The results of the research carried out at RA Al Rizky Padang Sidempuan show that teachers have a very central position in the process of forming disciplinary character in early childhood. Teachers not only carry out their functions as teachers of subject matter, but also act as role models who provide direct examples of disciplined behavior, such as orderly attitudes, obedience to rules, and responsibility in carrying out daily activities in the school environment.

The process of character formation is carried out through structured activities and habituation that is carried out repeatedly. Teachers also provide reinforcement in the form of praise or appreciation for children's behavior in accordance with discipline values. Children

show positive development in disciplined behavior thanks to the teacher's consistent, patient, and communicative approach. The interpersonal relationship established between teachers and students creates a pleasant learning atmosphere and encourages children to accept and apply these values in daily life. Thus, teachers play a role not only in the development of academic abilities, but also as agents of character formation from an early age. This research emphasizes the importance of teachers' awareness and competence in instilling moral values, especially discipline, as part of their professional and ethical responsibilities in educating the next generation.

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