

The Role of Teachers in Shaping the Character of The Love of Allah and His Messenger in RA Tsurayya Padang Sidempuan

Samriah Hayani Tanjung, Nanda Rahayu Agustia

Abstract

This study aims to find out the role of teachers in shaping the character of the love of Allah and His Messenger in early childhood at RA Tsurayya Padang Sidempuan. Religious character is one of the main goals of Islamic-based early childhood education, which needs to be instilled from an early age so that it becomes the basis of children's personality in the future. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with data collection techniques in the form of observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study show that teachers have a very important role, both as role models (uswah), facilitators, and motivators in instilling the value of love for Allah and the Messenger. Teachers use a habituation approach, telling the story of the prophet, singing religious songs, and instilling noble morals through daily activities. Children show positive responses, such as starting to say greetings, memorizing prayers, saying the name of the Prophet PBUH with love, and imitating manners in daily life. It can be concluded that the role of teachers is very central in shaping the character of the love of Allah and His Messenger, through a consistent, fun, and appropriate approach to the stages of early childhood development.

Keywords: The Role Of Teachers, Children's Character, Love Of Allah, Love Of The Apostle.

Samriah Hayani Tanjung

Early Childhood Islamic Education Study Program, Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi,
Indonesia

e-mail: samriahtanjung1@gmail.com

Nanda Rahayu Agustia

e-mail: nandarahayu@dosen.pancabudi.ac.id

International Conference Global Islamic Education: Cultivating Tolerance and
Interfaith Cooperation in A Multicultural (GIE), Theme: Strengthening Tolerance and Peace.

<https://proceeding.pancabudi.ac.id/index.php/GIE>

Introduction

Early childhood education is the initial foundation in the formation of children's character and spirituality. At this golden age (0–6 years), children experience rapid development both cognitively, affectively, and psychomotorly. (Nofianti, R. 2021). Therefore, Islamic education has a great responsibility to instill the basic values of faith and love for Allah SWT and His Messenger from an early age (Zuhairini et al., 2011).

In the Raudhatul Athfal (RA) environment, the role of teachers is not only as a teacher, but also as an educator, guide, and role model in shaping children's Islamic character. The cultivation of love for Allah and His Messenger is not only conveyed theoretically, but must also be instilled through habits, examples, and activities that touch the children's hearts such as praying together, listening to the stories of the Prophet, and practicing daily worship (Sauri, 2017). Teachers at RA are the main actors in designing a spiritual, fun, and meaningful learning atmosphere.

According to Al-Ghazali, education that is not based on love for Allah will produce spiritually dry people (Al-Ghazali, 2003). Therefore, strengthening the character of love for Allah and the Messenger is an essential part of moral education that needs to be instilled from an early age. Previous research has also stated that the school environment and the role of religious teachers can shape children's love for divine values (Fadilah, 2019).

RA Tsurayya in Padang Sidempuan City is one of the Islamic educational institutions that is committed to fostering children's religious character. However, there has not been much research that specifically raises how the strategy and practice of the role of teachers in shaping the character of love for Allah and the Prophet in the institution. Therefore, this study is important to explore how RA Tsurayya teachers apply monotheistic and prophetic values in the educational process, as well as how they impact the development of children's character.

Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type of research. This approach was chosen because it aims to deeply understand the process of education of the character of love of Allah and His Messenger carried out by teachers to students at RA Tsurayya Padang Sidempuan, based on the views of the participants and in the socio-religious context of the institution. The qualitative approach allows researchers to explore the meaning behind the actions, strategies, and interactions that teachers build in shaping the spiritual character of learners from an early age (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The subject of the study was the class teacher of RA Tsurayya Padang Sidempuan as the main informant, with the principal and parents of the students as supporting informants. The determination of informants is carried out purposively, namely by selecting individuals who best understand the process of education religious values, especially in forming the character of love for Allah and His Messenger (Sugiyono, 2019).

Data collection techniques were carried out through three main methods: participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observations were carried out to directly observe the learning process, teacher-child interaction, as well as routine activities such as daily prayer reading, listening to the Prophet's story, and habituating dhikr. The interview was conducted to explore the views of teachers and school principals regarding the strategy of forming the character of love for Allah and His Messenger, the method of conveying these values, and the challenges they faced in their implementation. Documentation in the form of activity photos, daily learning notes (RPPH), parent liaison books, and documentation of religious activities were used to strengthen the data from observations and interviews (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

The data obtained was analyzed using an interactive analysis model from Miles and Huberman, which included three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and

conclusion/verification. The analysis was carried out simultaneously during the research process, starting from data collection to the preparation of the final report. Data from the three collection techniques were then confirmed with each other to find patterns of meaning relevant to the focus of the study (Miles et al., 2014).

The validity of the data is maintained by using triangulation of sources and techniques, namely comparing data from observations, interviews, and documentation, and involving various informants to obtain consistent and valid data. In addition, member checking is also carried out by asking for confirmation from the informant regarding the results of the initial findings so that there are no misinterpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

With this approach, it is hoped that the research can provide a complete picture of the role of teachers in shaping the character of the love of Allah and His Messenger in RA Tsurayya, as well as reveal contextual and applicable Islamic education strategies in the early childhood education environment.

Research Results and Discussion

4.1 Research Results

This research aims to explore in depth how the role of teachers in instilling the values of love for Allah and His Messenger in the early childhood education environment, especially at RA Tsurayya Padang Sidempuan. Data collection was carried out through direct observation of the learning process in the classroom, in-depth interviews with teachers and principals, and documentation of children's daily activities. The main focus of this research is on the interaction between teachers and children in the context of religious character formation.

4.1.1 Teachers as Examples (Uswah Hasanah)

The results of the observation show that teachers play a major role as role models in the formation of children's religious character. Teachers not only deliver material verbally, but also display religious attitudes and behaviors consistently inside and outside the classroom. Examples:

- a) The teacher always begins the activity with greetings and prayers together, which are followed by the children with enthusiasm.
- b) In delivering the material, the teacher often mentions the names of Allah and the Prophet PBUH spontaneously and lovingly, such as "Let's learn for Allah" or "The Prophet PBUH likes polite children".
- c) Teachers also exhibit gentle, loving, patient, and affectionate behaviors, which make children feel comfortable and mimic these attitudes in their daily interactions.

Most children seem to start imitating teachers' habits, such as kissing hands when entering class, greeting teachers and friends, and praying before eating and studying without having to be reminded.

4.1.2 Teachers as Facilitators of Religious Activities

Teachers actively design learning activities that support the strengthening of the values of love for Allah and His Messenger. This activity is adjusted to the child's age development, so that it is concrete, fun, and easy to understand. These activities include:

- a) Tell the story of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, focusing on stories that show the compassion, patience, and kindness of the Prophet. Children listen enthusiastically and often retell the story to their friends.
- b) Singing Islamic songs, such as the song Asmaul Husna, the song "Ya Rasul Salam Alaika", and the song "Love Allah and the Prophet". These songs are taught with a cheerful rhythm and accompanied by hand movements, so they are easy to memorize and enjoy.
- c) Memorize short prayers and greetings, which are done regularly every day.
- d) Hold simple practical activities, such as sharing food, lending toys, and helping friends, which are associated with the example of the Prophet.

Teachers also provide a classroom environment that supports religious learning, such as the existence of an Islamic corner containing prophet story books, calligraphy drawings, as well as prayer and Asmaul Husna teaching aids. This conducive environment strengthens habituation and makes it easier for children to get to know Islamic values visually and emotionally.

4.1.3 Teachers as Motivators and Character Enhancers

Teachers act as a source of spiritual motivation for children. Motivation is done verbally and non-verbally:

- a) Give praise when the child mentions the name of Allah or the Prophet PBUH.
- b) Give simple rewards, such as star stickers, smiles, or hugs when your child shows religious gestures such as greeting the teacher with a greeting, helping a friend, or praying solemnly.
- c) Teachers also often convey motivation in simple language, such as: *"Children who are diligent in prayer are loved by Allah, like the Prophet Muhammad PBUH who always prays five times"*.

This motivation forms an emotional connection between the child and the religious values that are being instilled. Children feel proud and appreciated when they are able to display behavior that reflects love for Allah and the Messenger.

4.1.4 Children's Behavior Responses and Changes

From the results of observations carried out for three consecutive weeks, significant developments in children's behavior can be seen:

- a) 80% of children are used to saying greetings when entering and leaving class.
- b) 75% of children memorize prayers before eating and sleeping, and can pronounce the name of the Prophet PBUH fluently.
- c) Most children begin to show interest in the story of the prophet and often repeat the story while playing.
- d) Children also show initiative to help friends, be polite to teachers, and mention the name of Allah in everyday speeches such as "MasyaAllah" and "Alhamdulillah".

This change in behavior does not happen instantly, but through a continuous habituation process, supported by the right learning strategies and a strong emotional approach from the teacher.

4.1.5 Success Supporting Factors

Some of the factors that strengthen the success of teachers in shaping the character of the love of Allah and His Messenger in RA Tsurayya include:

- a) The curriculum is Islamic and supports the learning of religious characters.
- b) The compactness and consistency of the teachers in applying religious values in all classes.
- c) The involvement of parents, who are also invited to work together to continue religious habituation at home.
- d) The physical and social environment of the school that supports Islamic learning, including classroom decorations, religious activity schedules, and religious school culture.

4.2 Discussion

Based on the results of the research, it can be seen that teachers have a very significant role in shaping the character of love for Allah and His Messenger in early childhood at RA Tsurayya Padang Sidempuan. This role is carried out in its entirety, starting from providing examples, facilitating learning activities that are loaded with religious values, to motivating and strengthening children's positive attitudes and behaviors.

The example of the teacher is the main foundation in the process of forming religious character. Early childhood is not yet able to understand abstract concepts in their entirety, so they learn more through concrete examples that are seen and imitated. In this context, teachers play the role of the main figure whose behavior is observed and emulated by children every

day. When teachers get used to saying greetings, praying before and after studying, and mentioning the names of Allah and the Prophet PBUH in daily conversations, children tend to follow naturally. As expressed by Zakiah Daradjat, at an early age children are not able to think abstractly maturely, so the education of religious values must be realized through real actions that can be seen and imitated (Daradjat, 2009).

In addition to being an example, teachers also act as facilitators who create a learning environment conducive to the growth of religious character. Teachers at RA Tsurayya design activities that are interesting and appropriate for the child's age, such as telling the story of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, singing religious songs with the theme of love for Allah and the Prophet, and making various visual aids such as prayer boards and calligraphy. All of this is designed to build the child's emotional closeness to Islamic values. This is in line with the view of Yuliani Nurani Sujiono (2012) who emphasizes that early childhood education needs to be based on the principle of "playing while learning", so that the values conveyed are easier to understand and accept by children.

Teachers also act as motivators who provide positive reinforcement when children show behavior that is in accordance with Islamic values. For example, when a child says an unsolicited greeting or helps his friend, the teacher gives him a compliment, a hug, or a small gift such as a star sticker. Actions like this make a positive impression and reinforce the child's tendency to repeat the behavior. Siti Aisyah and colleagues (2007) emphasized that the emotional involvement of teachers in strengthening will help build positive habits gradually in children.

What is interesting about the findings of this study is that the process of forming the character of love for Allah and the Messenger does not only occur at the cognitive level, such as memorizing prayers or knowing the names of Allah, but also on the affective and psychomotor aspects. Children began to show a respectful attitude when mentioning the name of the Prophet PBUH, being gentle and sharing with friends, and showing interest in stories about the Prophet. This indicates that character education carried out by teachers has touched all aspects of children's development: thoughts, feelings, and actions. (Ismaraidha, I. 2016)

Ideal character education in early childhood should include integration between aspects of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Thus, the role of teachers is not only limited to delivering material, but also builds spiritual and emotional experiences that are able to leave a deep impression in children. (Widya, R., Siregar, B., & Rozana, S. 2020)

From this description, it appears that the success of teachers in forming the character of love for Allah and His Messenger is greatly influenced by a consistent approach, the use of methods that are in accordance with children's development, and a warm and fun learning atmosphere. Teachers are not only teachers, but also guides, companions, and role models who provide direction in the process of growing and developing children's religious character from an early age.

Conclusion

Based on the results of research conducted at RA Tsurayya Padang Sidempuan, it can be concluded that teachers have a very important and strategic role in shaping the character of love for Allah and His Messenger in early childhood. This role is carried out through three main aspects, namely:

1. As an example (*uswah hasanah*), teachers become role models in displaying religious behaviors imitated by children. The teacher's consistency in saying greetings, praying, mentioning the names of Allah and the Prophet PBUH, and showing polite morals has a direct influence on children's behavior.
2. As facilitators, teachers create a learning environment that is religious, fun, and appropriate to the child's developmental stage. Activities such as telling the story of the

prophet, singing Islamic songs, memorizing daily prayers, and using visual media help children know and love Allah and His Messenger in a concrete and meaningful way.

3. As a motivator, teachers provide positive reinforcement to children's behavior that reflects Islamic values. Emotional support such as praise, appreciation, and verbal reinforcement has been shown to strengthen religious habits and foster intrinsic motivation in children.

The character of love for Allah and the Messenger that is instilled from an early age has been proven to begin to shape children's attitudes and habits in daily life, both in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Children begin to get used to praying, show respect for teachers and friends, and show interest in the story and morals of the Prophet PBUH.

Thus, it can be concluded that the role of teachers in shaping religious character in early childhood is not only important, but also very much determines the direction of children's spiritual and moral development in the future. This character formation needs to be carried out consistently, collaboratively with parents, and adjusted to the child's growth and development stages.

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