

Morals in Action: Practicing Islamic Values through an Early Childhood Mini Project at RA Al-Huda Medan Helvetia

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Abstract

This study aims to illustrate how the mini project designed at RA Al-Huda Medan Helvetia can be an effective means of instilling and practicing Islamic moral values to early childhood. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data was collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study showed that mini projects such as making infaq boxes, sharing food, planting trees, and help-help simulations provide real space for children to apply values such as honesty, caring, cooperation, and responsibility. This activity, which is packaged in a fun and participatory way, is able to foster understanding and direct experience of the concept of Islamic morals. The role of teachers is very important as facilitators, supervisors, and role models. The mini-project proved to be an effective approach in experiential Islamic character education in early childhood.

Keywords: *Islamic Morality, Mini Projects, Early Childhood, Character Education*

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Introduction

Early childhood education (PAUD) has a very strategic role in shaping the basis of children's personality as a whole. Early childhood is a golden *age* that will not be repeated, where all aspects of children's development experience an extraordinary acceleration. Therefore, the cultivation of positive values, especially noble moral values, is very important to be done from an early age so that children grow up to be individuals with character, ethics, and spiritual intelligence.

In an Islamic perspective, moral education occupies a central position in all aspects of human development. The Prophet PBUH emphasized that one of the main purposes of his sending was to perfect noble morals, as in his words: "Indeed I was sent to perfect noble morals." (HR. Ahmad). This shows that the formation of morals is not only part of education, but is the core of the entire educational process in Islam. Therefore, values such as honesty, responsibility, helpfulness, compassion, patience, and respect for others must be introduced and practiced from an early age.

However, in practice in the field, moral education in early childhood education institutions is often still theoretical and verbalistic. Children are taught about the concepts of good and bad, but have not been given much space to experience them directly in real life. They are told that helping a friend is a good deed, but are not given opportunities or activities that encourage them to do so. This causes the learning of moral values to not be optimally internalized in children. In fact, at an early age, children learn most effectively through direct experience, example, and active involvement in meaningful activities.

Responding to these challenges, *the Project-Based Learning* (PjBL) approach is one of the solutions that can be used in improving the quality of early childhood moral education. This approach emphasizes the child's active involvement in completing real projects that are relevant to their lives. Through the mini-project, children not only learn cognitively, but also affectively and psychomotorly. Children are given the opportunity to think, collaborate, make decisions, solve issues, and most importantly, practicing Islamic values in a real and enjoyable context.

Mini-project activities in the context of early childhood education can be very simple but meaningful. For example, the project created a "Class Charity Box" that children took turns to collect infaq from friends and distribute it to those in need. Or the "Sharing Provisions" project, where children are invited to share food with their underprivileged friends. Projects like this can be a concrete means to cultivate empathy, responsibility, compassion, and sincerity—all of which are very noble Islamic moral values.

RA Al-Huda Medan Helvetia as one of the early childhood education institutions in the city of Medan has started to implement project-based activities in daily learning. Some activities are designed so that children not only learn the subject matter, but also experience the character education process firsthand. One form is the integration of Islamic values into mini projects such as making Islamic artworks, sharing healthy food, planting class plants as a form of gratitude for Allah's creation, and so on. Teachers play the role of facilitators who guide and set an example, so that children do not feel patronized but invited to process.

This mini-project activity, if well designed, can be a bridge between concepts and real actions in moral education. Through the project, children learn about the importance of goodwill, cooperation, and perseverance. They also practice expressing opinions, listening to others, and taking part in group activities. Islamic values are no longer just a memorization lesson, but part of their daily lives that they live and experience with their friends and teachers.

However, although this approach has great potential, there has not been much research that has specifically examined the effectiveness and implementation of the practice of Islamic values through mini-projects in RA, especially in local contexts such as in RA Al-Huda Medan Helvetia. Therefore, in-depth research is needed to see how this approach is applied,

the extent to which children are involved, what values are instilled, and their impact on early childhood moral development.

This research is important to be carried out in order to contribute to the development of Islamic education models that are more applicable and in accordance with the psychological development of early childhood. In addition, the results of this research are expected to provide inspiration and reference for PAUD teachers in designing Islamic value-based learning activities that are contextual, fun, and effective. Thus, moral education is no longer just a teaching, but a real action in children's daily lives, or as described in the title of this study.

Theoretical Studies

Morality is at the core of Islamic teachings that reflects the quality of one's behavior in relation to Allah, humans, and the environment. In the context of Islamic education, morals are not only taught cognitively, but must be practiced in daily life. The Prophet PBUH was sent to perfect morals (HR. Ahmad), which shows that character formation is the main goal in Islamic education.

Project-based learning is an approach that places children as active subjects in learning activities through real and meaningful projects. In the context of early childhood, mini-projects are simple forms of project-based learning that allow children to explore, collaborate, and express ideas while applying specific values. A mini-project can be a planting activity, making crafts, small businesses, or a simple social action.

Early childhood learns most effectively through hands-on experience. When moral values such as honesty, caring, and responsibility are inserted in a real project, children not only understand the meaning of these words, but also experience them in real life. Habituation that is done consistently and fun will strengthen the child's character.

Research Methods

The research used in this study is qualitative research that provides descriptive information in written or oral narratives about the people and behaviors observed. In this study, the author examines the phenomenon that occurs in RA Al-Huda Medan Helvetia to obtain the truth of information based on the theoretical framework of the questions asked scientifically. The research approach used is a descriptive approach which are field-based in natural conditions taken from written or oral narratives as well as the behavior of the people observed consisting of principals, teachers and students.

Research and Discussion Results

This research was conducted to examine how Islamic values—especially moral values—are instilled and practiced by early childhood through a mini-project approach at RA Al-Huda Medan Helvetia. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data collection was carried out through observation of learning activities, interviews with teachers and principals, and documentation of various project activities that have been implemented.

The results of the study show that RA Al-Huda actively implements mini-project activities as part of an integrative and thematic learning strategy. The mini-project is designed not only to hone children's motor and cognitive skills, but also specifically geared towards fostering Islamic moral values in children's daily lives.

Some examples of mini-projects observed include:

1. "Kindness Infaq Box" Project. The children and teachers make infaq boxes from used materials, decorate them, and place them in the classroom. Every day the child is asked to bring change to put in the box. The funds collected are then used to buy snacks and

distributed to friends around the school in need. From this activity, children learn the value of generosity, caring for others, and liking sharing.

2. "Moral Tree" Project. Children plant small tree seedlings in pots labeled as "honest", "patient", "grateful", and "forgiving". For one week, they take care of the tree while the teacher explains the meaning of these values through stories or simple practices in class. This project encourages an understanding of moral and spiritual values through living and growing symbols.
3. "Saleh Children's Charity Day" project. The children prepare small packages (containing food or stationery) to be donated to orphans who come to school. Children are invited to wrap, decorate, and hand over the aid themselves. This activity fosters a sense of empathy and caresocial, as well as the awareness to do good.
4. "True Friends" Project. Children are asked to work in pairs for a few days, help each other put on shoes, tidy up cutlery, and pray for each other. The teacher gives a moral star every time the child shows a helping attitude or saying nice to his partner. The project instills the values of Islamic friendship, responsibility, and cooperation.

Through these various projects, children at RA Al-Huda not only know what noble morals are, but are also invited to experience and live these values in a tangible form that they can understand according to their age development. The results of this study confirm that the mini project-based learning approach is an effective method in early childhood character education, especially in instilling Islamic moral values.

Early childhood is at a stage of concrete operational development, where they are more likely to understand abstract concepts if they are manifested through direct experience and tangible symbols. In the mini project carried out at RA Al-Huda, children are not only told what honesty, caring, or patience is, but are also invited to practice these values through fun, collaborative, and meaningful activities.

This is in line with Jean Piaget's theory that the early childhood learning process involves active interaction with the environment. In mini-projects, children build meaning and knowledge through direct involvement. This approach also reinforces Lev Vygotsky's theory of the importance of social roles in children's cognitive development—children learn through cooperation, discussion, and guidance from adults (teachers).

In the context of Islamic education, this mini-project activity is a tangible form of internalizing moral values. The Prophet Muhammad PBUH has exemplified that morality is something that is practiced in action, not only taught through speech. So when children do the act of sharing, helping friends, or conveying greetings with a smile, they are undergoing authentic moral education.

The role of teachers is very strategic in the successful implementation of this mini project. Teachers at RA Al-Huda are not only the director of activities, but also as an exemplary model that inserts Islamic values in every stage of activities. The teacher also ensures that reflection is always carried out after the project, so that children do not only do activities, but also understand the values contained in them.

Thus, the mini-project becomes an integrated approach between thematic learning, hands-on experience, and Islamic character building. This activity not only provides knowledge, but also shapes children's attitudes, habits, and behaviors that reflect noble morals.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Conclusion

This study shows that the use of mini projects at RA Al-Huda Medan Helvetia is an effective means in instilling and practicing Islamic moral values to early childhood. Through concrete, fun, and cooperation-oriented activities, children not only learn to recognize values

such as honesty, empathy, and responsibility, but also experience them directly in their daily activities.

Teachers play an important role in designing and guiding such projects to be appropriate for the child's age and abilities. The example of the teacher, a positive learning atmosphere, and reflection after the activity help strengthen children's understanding of Islamic values.

Suggestion

From the results of this study, it is suggested that the mini project model continues to be developed in learning in RA, especially in moral education. Teachers need to be trained to be able to design projects that are appropriate and have high educational value. In addition, the role of parents is also important in supporting and continuing the moral values that have been instilled in schools through joint project activities at home.

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