

Islamic Religious Education Teachers' Strategies in Optimizing the Harmonious Character of Students at MIS Al-Washliyah Medan Sunggal

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Abstract

This study was designed to identify: 1) the approaches used by Islamic religious teachers at MIS Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah Medan Sunggal to improve students' moral values, 2) the elements that support and hinder teachers' efforts in improving these moral values in the same school environment. This research was conducted at MIS Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah Medan Sunggal, from June to December 2023. This study was a field research. This study is a field research that applies qualitative methods, using a descriptive approach to produce data in the form of written and oral narratives. The research data sources are primary and secondary data and data collection techniques by conducting observations, interviews, and documentation. The research findings show that teachers at MIS Al-Washliyah implement various dynamic and engaging educational strategies, by integrating students in educational projects and using extracurricular activities, and also activating the participation of parents and the community in the educational process. This study found that a holistic and integrative approach to moral education, which focuses not only on knowledge transfer but also on the concrete practice of these values in everyday life, is key to optimizing students' character development. The implications of this research provide insights for educational practitioners, particularly in the context of religious education, regarding the importance of implementing comprehensive and participatory learning strategies in shaping moral education, a crucial aspect of character education.

Keywords: Strategy, Islamic Religious Education Teacher, Akhlakul Karimah.

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2nd International Conference on Islamic Community Studies (ICICS)

Theme: History of Malay Civilisation and Islamic Human Capacity and Halal Hub in the Globalization Era

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

Introduction

Education is a strategic place for moral formation, alongside family and community. Education is highly influential for all human beings, therefore, we are required to be able to implement education appropriately, as a form of accountability for our actions, namely guiding and educating.

Education is not only aimed at transferring knowledge, but also at transferring values that support the development and formation of students' personalities and characters. When we talk about morals, we are talking about the purpose of education, which is why so many experts argue that the purpose of education is moral development. However, moral development itself can be developed by the individual and is supported by the environment, education (school), and parents. Muhammad Athiyah al-Abrasyi, for example, stated that character and moral education are the soul and goal of Islamic education.

Optimizing morals through various educational institutions and various methods continues to be developed, as will eventually be developed through habituation methods. This demonstrates that morals do indeed need to be nurtured and optimized, and this development has proven to produce noble Muslim individuals who are obedient to Allah and His Messenger, respectful of their parents, and compassionate toward their fellow creatures. Conversely, if children's morals are not nurtured, problems will arise, such as delinquent children who constantly disrupt society.

The habituation method has a significant impact on the character formation of students at MIS Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah, because habituation is considered a very effective educational technique for children. Children first see, hear and socialize with their parents. In this case, educators become the best role models in the eyes of children. What is the behavior of parents will be imitated. We as educators should model good deeds to our students, if we model bad ones then our students will imitate bad ones but if we model good ones then our students will imitate good ones.

In accordance with the National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003 Article 3, the goal of National Education is to shape students into individuals who believe and fear God Almighty, have noble ethics, are healthy, educated, competent, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens. In Islamic religious education, the teacher's teaching strategy is not only aimed at increasing students' knowledge, but more importantly to foster noble character and positive attitudes and ways of thinking, which are beneficial not only in school but also in society more broadly.

A learning strategy is a blueprint encompassing a series of actions, utilizing specific methods and available resources to facilitate the educational process. This strategy is designed to achieve specific outcomes, meaning all decisions in strategic planning are directed toward achieving predetermined goals. Therefore, the implementation of effective learning strategies by Islamic religious education (PAI) teachers can significantly improve students' morals. Conversely, inappropriate or ineffective strategies can contribute to failure in Islamic education, particularly in fostering students' morals, especially if students have low levels of morals. This often occurs due to a failure to instill values and foster good morals.

Students' lack of understanding of religious education material often occurs because teachers fail to implement effective teaching strategies, resulting in suboptimal teaching and learning. Conversely, if teachers use appropriate teaching techniques when delivering material, students are more likely to understand and be able to implement what is taught comprehensively. In the context of school education, learning activities are a fundamental aspect; the successful achievement of educational goals depends heavily on how students experience and absorb the learning process.

From observations, researchers identified various strategies used by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers to improve students' morals. These strategies include instilling habits such as disposing of trash properly, greeting, shaking hands, reciting prayers before and after lessons, and performing the Dhuha prayer in congregation. At MIS Al-Wahliyah Medan

Sunggal, the methods used by teachers include providing rewards and punishments, as well as motivating and supporting students. Madrasahs are recognized as formal educational institutions with a structured organizational structure and learning schedule, and have established levels of education for a specific period.

Likewise, MIS Al-Washliyah is a formal educational institution that strives to prioritize morality. Numerous steps have been taken to advance the madrasah, including the practice of disposing of trash properly, routinely greeting and shaking hands, and the practice of reciting prayers before and after lessons, as well as performing the Dhuha prayer in congregation .

Triggered by this phenomenon, researchers felt compelled to conduct a study on "Teacher Strategies in Improving Student Morals at MI Al-Jami'yatul Washliyah Medan Sunggal." This research is expected to reveal and explore in depth how the habituation method is used to shape student morals at the madrasah, which can later be used as an example by other educational institutions in need.

Theoretical Review

A. Understanding Strategy

The word 'strategy' is derived from the Greek 'strategos', which is a combination of 'stratos', meaning army, and 'ego', meaning leader. Strategy has a basic framework for reaching specific targets and, at its core, is a tool for achieving a goal. Strategy is the art of utilizing an organization's skills and resources to achieve goals through effective interaction with the environment under optimal conditions.

Strategy, which means the science of war in the context of strategy learning, is a person's ability to think, solve problems, and make decisions. This means that the learning process will encourage students to think uniquely, enabling them to analyze and solve problems while making decisions.

According to M. Arifin in his book on educational science, the process of moral development requires careful planning to effectively achieve the goals. Therefore, a specific strategic approach is essential in developing the morals of school youth, taking into account the specific circumstances and conditions of each individual, as well as ways to avoid potential obstacles and disruptions in the process.

B. Islamic Education Teacher

According to WJS. Poerda Warminta, Islamic Religious Education teachers are highly educated individuals with the noble goal of educating Indonesian children to become useful individuals. Their knowledge must be applied immediately, and they must possess effective teaching skills. Zakiah Darajat stated that teachers are professionals whose expertise is unquestionable, thanks to the extensive experience they have in their fields. People who work as teachers must serve the community without recognition, maintaining a good name for the preservation and maintenance of the quality of education in Indonesia. Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the world of education must provide education to the Indonesian people by prioritizing service to Indonesian citizens and prioritizing good quality education for children in the world of education.

The Indonesian education system emphasizes adaptive Islamic values . Teachers bear significant responsibilities both in this world and the hereafter, as they influence future generations. The expectation for education in Indonesia is to achieve optimal performance and produce satisfactory outcomes. Islamic religious teachers must possess a deep understanding of the Islamic fundamentals they teach their students and provide persuasive perspectives so that students can fully appreciate the material presented during class.

C. Optimizing Morals

Etymologically, 'akhlak' is the plural form of 'khuluq', which means character, behavior, or habits. Akhlak is often compared to morality and politeness. Khuluq represents a person's inner

character, and its physical manifestations include facial expressions and body movements. In Greek, *khuluq* is equivalent to the word 'ethicos', from which the word 'ethics' derives.

According to the Al-Munjid dictionary, '*khuluq*' is defined as character, disposition, behavior, or basic nature. Meanwhile, '*akhlaq*' is defined as the science that studies human behavior, aiming to judge actions as good or bad based on social norms and ethics.

The word '*akhlaq*' is the plural of '*khilqun*' or '*khuluqun*', both of which have similar meanings to '*akhlaq*' as explained previously. '*Khuluq*' is usually used to refer to good character, while in other contexts '*akhlaq*' is used to denote customs or habits. In the context of hadith, the word '*khuluq*' often refers to good character, and the same applies to the use of the word '*akhlaq*' in other hadith. Therefore, both '*akhlaq*' and '*khuluq*' in language refer to good character, custom, temperament, *muru'ah*, or traits that have become habits .

In this context, '*akhlaq*' refers to everyday behavior. Building noble morals involves practicing trustworthy and honest deeds, which include communicating with intelligence and honesty. Such behavior requires each individual to behave uprightly, with sincerity and kindness in all actions, while avoiding traits such as *riya* (showing off), arrogance, *fakhsya* (indecent behavior), *fases* (corruption), and *mungkar* (forbiddenness). The application of these values can bring about collective well-being, peace, tranquility, and an overall improvement in the quality of life.

The meaning of morals according to Imam Al-Ghazali in the book *Ihya' Ulumuddin* :

The creation is an expression of the soul , a firm and generous soul , from which the soul is able to act with ease and without need for thought or deliberation

Meaning: *Khuluk*, or morals, is the desire or character inherent in the soul, which allows actions to arise naturally and easily, without requiring deep consideration or thought

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach in field research. Qualitative methods, rooted in postpositivism, are used to observe objects in their natural state (as opposed to experimental). In this method, the researcher acts as the primary instrument in sampling, using purposive and snowball techniques for data collection and triangulation in data analysis. The results of this qualitative method tend to prioritize in-depth understanding rather than broad generalizations . The main data source for this study involved the Principal of MIS Al-Wahsliyah Medan, who was a key subject in providing accurate information. In addition, data from teachers also greatly contributed to the process of collecting information relevant to the research results, and finally from students. Data collection methods used in this study include observation, interviews, documentation, and field notes. The data analysis techniques applied include data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or data verification .

Results And Discussion

Based on the results of interviews with the principal and teachers at the Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah Medan Sunggal Private Elementary School (MIS) , the following is a description of the research results:

Results

1. Use of Varied Learning Methods: teachers at MIS Al-Washliyah Medan Sunggal apply a variety of educational techniques that actively involve students, including discussions, lectures, and simulations, to instill the values of *akhlaqul karimah* .
2. Implementation of Project-Based Learning: Through project-based learning, students are invited to apply the values of noble character in daily activities, such as cooperation, honesty, and empathy towards others.

3. Extracurricular Activities: Extracurricular activities such as scouting, social activities, and religious clubs serve to strengthen the understanding and practice of good morals outside the classroom.
4. Parental and Community Involvement: The school actively involves parents and the surrounding community in educational activities to create an environment that supports the development of students' noble character.

Discussion

Based on the research results that the researcher has previously described at the Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah Medan Sunggal Private Elementary School (MIS), the researcher will describe the following discussion about this research:

1. Effectiveness of Learning Methods: Variations in learning methods have proven effective in increasing students' interest and understanding of moral values. Interactive and applicable methods make it easier for students to internalize these values.
2. Project-Based Learning: Through this approach, students learn not only theory but also hands-on practice. This is crucial in character education, as morals are not only taught but also practiced.
3. The Role of Extracurricular Activities: Extracurricular activities provide more space for students to develop and demonstrate good morals. Through these activities, they learn about responsibility, leadership, and cooperation.
4. Synergy with Parents and the Community: This involvement demonstrates that moral education is not solely the responsibility of the school, but also of parents and the community. This creates a consistent and supportive environment for the moral development of students.

Overall, the strategies implemented by teachers at MIS Al-Washliyah Medan Sunggal to optimize students' moral character demonstrate a holistic approach, involving not only in-class learning processes but also out-of-class activities and community involvement. The key to the strategy's success is the integration of moral values into all aspects of education, thus creating an environment conducive to student character development .

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