

Teaching Religious Character Education in Pre-School in the Era of Pandemic

Mar'atussholihah Kuswandi¹, Arif Rohman², Disa Hediansah³

^{1,2,3}Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia

[1maratussholihahkuswandi.2019@student.uny.ac.id](mailto:maratussholihahkuswandi.2019@student.uny.ac.id)

[2arif_rohman@uny.ac.id](mailto:arif_rohman@uny.ac.id)

[3disa.hediansah@gmail.com](mailto:disa.hediansah@gmail.com)

Article History: Abstract:

Submitted:
12-07-2021

Accepted:
13-08-2021

Published:
05-09-2021

This study describes the learning process of religious-based character education at TK ABA Berbah, Sleman, during the Covid-19 pandemic. This study incorporates a qualitative research method with a descriptive case study approach. Findings suggest that the school implemented blended learning activities in which lessons are conducted online and offline. Habituation became a key activity during the offline session. The involvement of parents contributed to the success of learning during the pandemic, set an example, and monitor their kids at home. Blended learning provided an increase in the communication's intensity and the relationship between parents, children, and teachers so that teaching and learning religious-based character education can be conducted appropriately amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords: education; religious character; blended learning; the covid-19.

Introduction

It is undeniable that education cannot be separated from human life, as it is an integral development process. One function of education is to develop and shape the character of the nation's civilization. In the Indonesian context, it is in line with the article 3 Act No. 20 regarding the National Education System of Indonesia that education can develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe and fear God, have a noble character, knowledgeable, competent, creative, independent, skilled and responsible.

Education provides room for individuals to internalize cultural values that can form civilized manners and behaviors. In addition to that, education functions not only to transfer knowledge but also to cultivate and foster cultural and social values. In the case of character, education must be taught, educated, and instilled from an early age as it allows children to build, develop, and finally get accustomed to good behaviors.

According to Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, the characters possess psychological, moral, or ethical traits that can distinguish a person from another. In other words, a character is a person's personality, behaviors, and nature. According to Kurniawan¹, a character is the values reflected in human behaviors in interacting with God, oneself, others, and the larger environment. These are manifested in one's thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words, and actions which are based on norms, religion, law, culture, and customs. Meanwhile, the term "religious", according to Murniyati², includes the system of faith and consistent worship of God. This is in line with Hidayatullah³, who states that a person is

¹ S Kurniawan, *Pendidikan Karakter* (Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2016).

² Murniyati, "Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Religius Terhadap Anak Usia Dini," *Prosiding Seminar Nasional 20 Program Pascasarjana Universitas PGRI Palembang*, no. November (2017): 107-12.

³ M Furqon Hidayatullah, *Pendidikan Karakter: Membangun Peradaban Bangsa* (Semarang: Yuma Pustaka, 2010).

religious if he feels the need to be with his God and obeys his religion's teachings. Similarly, Azzet⁴ also asserts that religious-based character education is a person's thoughts, words, and actions based on religious values that are originated from his religious teachings. Based on the definitions above, it can be concluded that religious-based character education develops one's cultural values and national personality, which is in line with religious teachings in social life that result in having creativity and productivity.

Religious-based character education is part of the process of forming morals in children. It is understood that failure to instill it in early childhood will negatively impact the personality in the long term. Teaching and educating religious-based morals in early childhood can strategically form the characters and shape the mindset, which will benefit them positively. Psychologically, early childhood is considered the

golden age as it is very good at stimulating development and growth⁵. It is also a critical period starting from 0 to 6 years of age informing the kids' religious and moral characters⁶.

The purpose of character education is enshrined in the body of the 1945 Indonesian Constitution that states the government strives and implements the national education system to increase faith and piety in God as well as to have a noble character in educating the people. Based on these goals, education is required to facilitate and develop a conducive learning process, habituation, good examples, and activities in early childhood so that noble characters and intellect are well-formed. Thooyibah and Hery support this⁷ that

⁵ Yani Kusuma Astuti, "Pembelajaran Berbasis Pengalaman (Experiential Learning) Untuk Meningkatkan Keterampilan Berfikir Kritis Dan Aktivitas Mahasiswa," *Ejournal Unwir* 3, no. 3 (2016).

⁶ Murniyati, "Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Religius Terhadap Anak Usia Dini."

⁷ T Thooyibah and S Hery, "Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Anak Usia Dini Di TK Pertiwi II Gagaksipat Ngemplak Boyolali

⁴ Akmad M Azzet, *Urgensi Pendidikan Karakter Di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2011).

students must learn character education to form good behaviors and guide their growth. As a result, the aim of national education shows that character education should go hand-in-hand with religious education, in this case, Islam. Since TK ABA Berbah is a religious-based kindergarten, the level of relevance in terms of Islam is highly accurate to affect students' character development.

At TK ABA Berbah, religious-based character education is taught and instilled following its vision and mission: to produce an Islamic generation with independent, creative, and aspiring characters. This vision and mission become a guideline in educating religious-based character education that if it is deeply and intensely embedded, a child can independently grow as per his belief and prevent himself from non-religious influences.

Religious-based character education refers to the basic Islamic values⁸ which can

Tahun Ajaran 2016/2017" (IAIN Surakarta, 2017).

⁸ Heri Cahyono, "Pendidikan Karakter: Strategi Pendidikan Nilai

strengthen children's behaviors by Islam as shown in their daily activities.

The sources of values found in character education in Indonesia are inspired by religion, the national ideology called Pancasila, cultures, as well as the goals of national education, namely: (1) religion, (2) honesty, (3) tolerance, (4) discipline, (5) hard work, (6) creativity, (7) independence, (8) democracy, (9) curiosity, (10) enthusiasm, (11) nationalism, (12) respect, (13) friendliness, (14)) peace, (15) intelligence, (16) environmentalism, (17) altruism, and (18) responsibility⁹. These values become a guideline for schools in teaching character education.

The instances of religious actions that are usually taught at schools include greeting, praying, giving, being honest, respecting parents and teachers, being

Dalam Membentuk Karakter Religius," *Ri'ayah* 1, no. 2 (2016): 230-40.

⁹ Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Pusat Kurikulum and Perbukuan, *Pedoman Pelaksanaan Pendidikan Karakter* (Jakarta: Kemendiknas, 2011).

compassionate, clean, and maintaining health¹⁰. In addition, religious-based character education can be taught by introducing daily prayers, reciting and memorizing the Qur'an verses and hadiths, giving charity, and showing good qualities¹¹. These values are hoped to assist children in developing noble morals and behaviors that will be used in their community in the future.

Teaching religious-based character education can be developed by the teacher using a special strategy. Specific strategies must impact children so that children can receive character education learning well. According to Umar¹², the

right strategy will positively affect the implementation of religious-based character education for children. Here, the role of the teacher has a positive impact on character building per religious values that help them apply to daily life¹³.

The process of teaching and learning character education is carried out at kindergarten in a face-to-face setting. This direct learning process is important for early childhood because young learners need to learn by seeing and imitating their environment, including teachers¹⁴.

However, in the last few months, there have been changes in the learning system in Indonesia due to the spread of Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19). Circular

¹⁰ Murniyati, "Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Religius Terhadap Anak Usia Dini."

¹¹ M Najib and N. A Wiyani, "Strategic Management Process of Islamic Character Development of Early Children in Islamic Kindergarten," *Ta'dib: Journal of Islamic Education (Jurnal Pendidikan Islam)* 21, no. 2 (2016).

¹² N Umar, M Ismail, F Syawie, "Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Berbasis Moderasi Beragama Pada Jenjang Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini," *EDUKASI: Jurnal Penelitian Agama Dan Keagamaan* 19, no. 1 (2021): 105,

<https://doi.org/10.32729/edukasi.v19i1.798>.

¹³ Anis Wulandari et al., "Implementasi Sistemik Pendidikan Karakter Di Lembaga Pendidikan Islam," *Edukasia: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Islam* 14, no. 2 (2019): 463-82.

¹⁴ R. A Larimore, "Preschool Science Education: A Vision for the Future," *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-020-01033-9>.

No. 4 of 2020 issued by the Minister of Education and Culture regarding the implementation of educational policies states that learning at all levels of education is no longer carried out in an in-person setting but online; this includes early childhood education. This policy has undeniably changed kindergarten's learning process, which has affected teachers' experience in delivering and teaching character education.

Such an unprecedented situation has become a challenge not only for teachers and educators but also parents. They may face various issues such as busy schedules, financial issues, and a lack of understanding of the materials taught by the teacher. Meanwhile, these are considered a serious issue because the stimulus of children's development and teaching and mentoring religious characters will be hampered¹⁵. For this reason, this study was conducted as it

¹⁵ Jauhatorur Rihlah, Ulufiyatul Kamilah, and Destita Shari, "Pendidikan Karakter Anak Usia Dini Di Masa Pandemi Covid-19," *PAUD Lectura Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* 4, no. 1 (2020): 53.

is related to the teaching of character education that is done indirectly because of the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in an ineffective learning process. Thus, the present research aims at finding out the strategies for teaching religious-based character education to children amid the pandemic.

Method

A qualitative research approach was employed in this study. It focuses on understanding social phenomena based on their holistic depiction¹⁶. The researchers applied the case study method as it helps in presenting in-depth descriptions and elaboration of research questions. Data gathered for the present research was from all TK ABA Berbah, including the principal, deputy principal, teachers, and students who agreed to be interviewed. Apart from the interview, observations were also conducted both online and offline during the teaching and learning process. Data

¹⁶ Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif & Kualitatif, R&B* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2012).

were analyzed by checking the observation and documentation, which led to validity checking. The triangulation method was also applied.

Results and Discussions

This religious-based character education can be measured when religious values are reflected in students' behaviors and personalities: to have faith and devotion to God and treat fellow humans and the environment well. The study found that amid the pandemic, there the religious-based character education can be taught to early childhood using the following strategies:

Habit and Example Shows in Shaping Students' Character

TK ABA Berbah applies the methods of habituation and showing exemplary behaviors in shaping religious character in children. This is suitable as it gives a sense of getting used to good deeds on a daily basis. Habituation is one method to form character, which is done through repetition of acting, thinking, and behaving in accordance

with the norms and values¹⁷. This is supported by Ahsanulhaq¹⁸, who states that repeated behavior is effective in educating children in building their character. Habits refer to activities done every day that are already embedded in children and thus can be effortlessly performed by them. Considering young children at this stage cannot to determine what is good and bad yet, these two methods are highly helpful in developing children's personalities, especially regarding Islamic teachings.

Implementing the habituation method at TK ABA Berbah is carried out by performing routine activities that are usually done every

¹⁷ L Magfiroh, E Desyanty, and R Rahma, "Pembentukan Karakter Disiplin Anak Usia Dini Melalui Metode Pembiasaan Di TK Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal 33 Kota Malang," *Jurnal Pendidikan Nonformal* 14, no. 1 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.17977/um041v14i1p54-67>.

¹⁸ M Ahsanulhaq, "Membentuk Karakter Religius Peserta Didik Melalui Metode Pembiasaan," *Jurnal RPakarsa Paedogogia* 2, no. 1 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.24176/jpp.v2i1.4312>.

day, such as (1) greeting teachers and friends when arriving at school and kissing the hands of parents and teachers; (2) reading and reciting the Qur'an by the kids; (3) carry out Duha prayer together; (4) memorizing the Qur'an verses before the main learning activities; and (5) memorizing daily prayers. These activities are conducted routinely to create a generation who is faithful and devoted to God and form their noble character as promoted in the national education. It is also found that habituation can be shaped thanks to the unexpected situation spontaneously. For example, when the teacher witnesses a child misbehaves and does something inappropriate, i.e., handing over something with his left hand, yelling at others, fights, etc., the teacher plays a role in reminding them and giving them sound advice.

It can be seen that the values of religious character are integrated into the learning process at TK ABA by establishing relevant daily routines. According to

Kadir¹⁹, such a character-oriented learning process not only functions to transfer knowledge but also allows children to understand and internalize what they are learning, which will be helpful when they grow up. In a similar tone, Ulya²⁰ asserts that good habits positively impact character building as it lasts until they get older. This is why the role of teachers and parents are tremendously crucial in developing good habits in children, particularly religious-based through showing exemplary model and behaviors which are often referred as *Uswah* in the Islamic term.

Uswah in education is a way of educating and giving examples to children by behaving well under the norms or religious teachings they adhere to so that children can imitate every word, deed, or way of thinking. It is in line with

¹⁹ A Kadir, *Konsep Pembelajaran Kontekstual Di Sekolah* (Din. Ilmu, 2013).

²⁰ K Ulya, "Pelaksanaan Metode Pembiasaan Di Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini Bina Generasi Tembilahan Kota," *ASATIZA: Jurnal Pendidikan* 1, no. 1 (2020).

Nurchaili²¹, who states that the implementation of character education in schools is best done through the modeling approach and presenting *Uswah* shown by the teacher. In other words, forming a character requires a figure to follow, imitate, and look up to as a model for children. The model figures that the children often see are the teacher and their parents. The closer they are to the model, the easier it is for them to copy good behaviors and effectively expose religious education. In other words, children need a real example - not a mere theory or fantasy. Hadiwinarto in Mayasarokh²² put forward human behavior is obtained from model observation by observing other people. This way, new ideas, manners, and attitudes are formed.

The models who are frequently around the

children and seen by them are parents and teachers. Teachers are important in shaping the children's character as they stay with them for over three to four hours. For this reason, TK ABA Berbah emphasizes the teachers' performance and characters first so that children can "automatically" follow them. In addition, the school requests the parents play their role at home so that what is taught at school is hope to synchronize with what is taught at home. Both teachers and parents should collaborate to embody the goals of national education and the school's vision and mission that aims at generating generations with noble character.

Blended Learning as the Approach during Pandemic

Abdullah states that blended learning is combining face-to-face or conventional learning with online learning. It is chosen as a medium for delivering material between teachers and children during the pandemic. It is done using messaging platforms which are familiar in the community. Even though a

²¹ Nurchaili, "Membentuk Karakter Siswa Melalui Keteladanan Guru," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan* 26, no. 3 (2010).

²² M Mayasarokh, "Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Pada Anak Usia Dini Di Kelompok Bermain Rabbani Kabupaten Kuningan" (Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, 2017).

policy from the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) of the Republic of Indonesia encourages the implementation of an online learning process, schools have preferred to use the blended learning model. This is because early childhood schools require face-to-face learning activities to achieve learning objectives.

The blended learning model is interesting for students because they can explore knowledge and seek as much information as possible on the internet, which is not boring and can build their critical thinking. Lau & Yuen²³ argues that the use of ICT in learning can support the development of various aspects of student knowledge, change teacher-centered learning to student-centered, provide various facilities for students to study anywhere and anytime. In addition, integrating digital technologies, including video

conferencing, mobile applications, and virtual reality, can provide new ways to engage students in the management of digital learning environments. In addition, integrating digital technology can also increase the interest of learners²⁴. The data also suggests that the intensity and frequency of communication that took place between students and teachers, as well as students and parents, improved. This is said to be an added value in the active learning process²⁵. In addition, scientific communication skills and ICT literacy are an important part of 21st-century learning. 21st-century transitional learning is particularly relevant to scientific communication skills and ICT literacy²⁶.

²³ W. W. Lau and A. H. Yuen, "Developing and Validating of a Perceived ICT Literacy Scale for Junior Secondary School Students: Pedagogical and Educational Contributions," *Computers & Education* 78 (2014): 1-9.

²⁴ Y. F. Lay, "Integrating Environmental Education and ICT," *EURASIA Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education* 15, no. 5 (2019).

²⁵ M Bond, "Flipped Learning and Parent Engagement in Secondary Schools: A Shouth Australian Case Study," *British Journal of Educational Technology* 50, no. 3 (2019).

²⁶ Azhar, "Online Learning amid the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study of the State Islamic University of Mataram," *Nadwa:*

Blended learning applied at TK ABA Berbah includes 80% of online learning and 20% of conventional learning adjusted to their needs and learning readiness. In addition, the data obtained from blended learning applied at TK ABA Berbah suggest an increase in the optimality of learning activities in terms of theoretical, practical, and technical learning. It is proven that teaching religious-based character education is effective and able to increase the awareness and independence of students in terms of actualization and implementation. This result can be seen in the daily activity reports that are done regularly and periodically. The activities referred to are: 1) Being disciplined in congregational prayer five times a day and obligatory prayer *Duha*; 2) Memorizing the Qur'an and Hadiths; 3) Demonstrating the action of caring towards family and social environment that can

boost emotional bonding and harmony. In addition, independent learning to increase knowledge is also encouraged. It is carried out by giving the assignments provided on students' worksheets known as LKS.

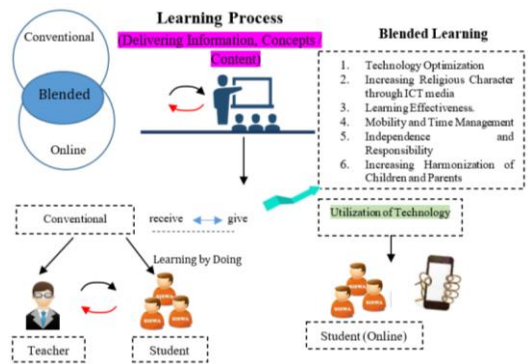


Figure 1.
Schematic of the blended learning process

The study results show that, by using and implementing the blended learning model, there is an increase in the quality of learning in various aspects. *First*, it covers the affective element. A sense of responsibility, independence, and personal awareness is instilled through this daily routine activity and worship, which can be observed directly by the parents and teachers as reported on the online platform. *Second*, the

cognitive aspect is part of the learning quality achieved where students can explore knowledge on the internet and train themselves to complete the assignments given by the teacher regularly. Finally, the psychomotor aspect refers to students' sensitivity and desire in completing a project and showing their interest in learning by doing, such as helping parents with chores at home. As a result, students can learn more without limitation of space and time and strengthen the emotional relationship between students and their parents, which coincides with formal education.

There are several challenges faced in implementing the blended learning model. It includes technical issues such as practical learning that requires tech tools and media equipment. This, in most cases, is found unfamiliar by the parents to supervise and assist with.

Conclusion

Religious-based character education is important in forming students' good personalities and characters,

preventing the moral issues they may face through educational institutions. Early Childhood Education and Development (PAUD) institution, one of which is TK ABA part of, provides solutions to issues faced in teaching character education amid pandemic. The solution to form a personality with a noble character is by integrating the values of religious character through establishing routines and spontaneous activities. This can be done using blended learning and showing good examples by teachers and parents. Implementing religious-based character education through blended learning can provide emotional bonding between children and parents, encourage children to be active in learning, build independence and a sense of children's responsibility towards the assignment given by the teacher. Through blended learning, efforts to educate religious characters are more effectively applied when the collaboration between teachers and parents is synchronized.

References

- Ahsanul Khaq, M. "Membentuk Karakter Religius Peserta Didik Melalui Metode Pembiasaan." *Jurnal RPaekarsa Paedogogia* 2, no. 1 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.24176/jpp.v2i1.4312>.
- Astuti, Yani Kusuma. "Pembelajaran Berbasis Pengalaman (Experiential Learning) Untuk Meningkatkan Keterampilan Berfikir Kritis Dan Aktivitas Mahasiswa." *Ejournal Unwir* 3, no. 3 (2016).
- Azhar. "Online Learning amid the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study of the State Islamic University of Mataram." *Nadwa: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam (Islamic Journal of Education)* 14, no. 2 (2020): 270. <https://doi.org/10.21580/nw.2020.14.2.6639>.
- Azzet, Akmad M. *Urgensi Pendidikan Karakter Di Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2011.
- Bond, M. "Flipped Learning and Parent Engagement in Secondary Schools: A Shouth Australian Case Study." *British Journal of Educational Technology* 50, no. 3 (2019).
- Cahyono, Heri. "Pendidikan Karakter: Strategi Pendidikan Nilai Dalam Membentuk Karakter Religius." *Ri'ayah* 1, no. 2 (2016): 230–40.
- Hidayatullah, M Furqon. *Pendidikan Karakter: Membangun Peradaban Bangsa*. Semarang: Yuma Pustaka, 2010.
- Kadir, A. *Konsep Pembelajaran Kontekstual Di Sekolah*. Din. Ilmu, 2013.
- Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Pusat Kurikulum, and Perbukuan. *Pedoman Pelaksanaan Pendidikan Karakter*. Jakarta: Kemendiknas, 2011.
- Kurniawan, S. *Pendidikan Karakter*. Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2016.
- Larimore, R. A. "Preschool Science Education: A Vision for the Future." *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-020-01033-9>.
- Lau, W. W., and A. H. Yuen. "Developing and Validating of a Perceived ICT Literacy Scale for Junior Secondary School Students: Pedagogical and Educational Contributions." *Computers & Education* 78 (2014): 1–9.
- Lay, Y. F. "Integrating Environmental Education and ICT." *EURASIA Journal of*

- Mathematics, Science and Technology Education* 15, no. 5 (2019).
- Magfiroh, L, E Desyanty, and R Rahma. "Pembentukan Karakter Disiplin Anak Usia Dini Melalui Metode Pembiasaan Di TK Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal 33 Kota Malang." *Jurnal Pendidikan Nonformal* 14, no. 1 (2019).
<https://doi.org/10.17977/um041v14i1p54-67>.
- Mayasarokh, M. "Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Pada Anak Usia Dini Di Kelompok Bermain Rabbani Kabupaten Kuningan." Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, 2017.
- Murniyati. "Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Religius Terhadap Anak Usia Dini." *Prosiding Seminar Nasional 20 Program Pascasarjana Universitas PGRI Palembang*, no. November (2017): 107-12.
- Najib, M, and N. A Wiyani. "Strategic Management Process of Islamic Character Development of Early Children in Islamic Kindergarten." *Ta'dib: Journal of Islamic Education (Jurnal Pendidikan Islam)* 21, no. 2 (2016).
- Nurchaili. "Membentuk Karakter Siswa Melalui Keteladanan Guru." *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan* 26, no. 3 (2010).
- Rihlah, Jauhatorur, Ulufiyatul Kamilah, and Destita Shari. "Pendidikan Karakter Anak Usia Dini Di Masa Pandemi Covid-19." *PAUD Lectura Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* 4, no. 1 (2020): 53.
- Sugiyono. *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif & Kualitatif, R&B*. Bandung: Alfabeta, 2012.
- Thoyyibah, T, and S Hery. "Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Anak Usia Dini Di TK Pertiwi II Gagaksipat Ngemplak Boyolali Tahun Ajaran 2016/2017." IAIN Surakarta, 2017.
- Ulya, K. "Pelaksanaan Metode Pembiasaan Di Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini Bina Generasi Tembilahan Kota." *ASATIZA: Jurnal Pendidikan* 1, no. 1 (2020).
- Umar, M Ismail, F Syawie, N. "Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Berbasis Moderasi Beragama Pada Jenjang Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini." *EDUKASI: Jurnal Penelitian Agama Dan Keagamaan* 19, no. 1 (2021): 105.
<https://doi.org/10.3272>

9/edukasi.v19i1.798.

Wulandari, Anis, Jawa Tengah, Zakiyuddin Baidhawiy, and Jawa Tengah. "Implementasi Sistemik Pendidikan Karakter Di Lembaga Pendidikan Islam." *Edukasia: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Islam* 14, no. 2 (2019): 463-82.

