

INTEGRATION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION WITH ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SUBJECTS BASED ON SCHOOL CULTURE

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37758/jat.v6i2.702>

Received: September 2023

Accepted: October 2023

Published: October 2023

Abstract :

Character education must be applied holistically in an educational institution, not only in the form of incidental activities utilizing cognitive learning or only through symbols. It is necessary to integrate holistic character values, one of which is in learning and through school culture. Strengthening character in elementary school students is not enough just with advice and lectures; it must be done systematically with the learning process and activities at school. The purpose of this study is to describe the integration of character in school culture-based Islamic Religious Education. This research design used a qualitative design with purposive sampling at SD Darul Amal Jampangkulon, Sukabumi Regency. Data collection techniques included interviews, observation, and documentation. The results showed that the integration of character education was carried out through habituation and internalization of character in Islamic religious education learning based on six pillars of character. The integration of character in Islamic education based on school culture has been proven to build better student character. This is evident from the results of the Sibanu questionnaire, which shows the progress of students' character development while in the family environment..

Keywords : *Character Building, Integrated, Islamic Religion Education Subject, Elementary School*

Abstrak :

Pendidikan karakter harus diterapkan secara holistik dalam sebuah lembaga pendidikan tidak bisa hanya dalam bentuk kegiatan-kegiatan insidental atau dengan cara pembelajaran yang bersifat kognitif atau hanya melalui simbol-simbol. Perlu adanya pengintegrasian nilai-nilai karakter yang holistik salah satunya adalah dalam pembelajaran dan melalui budaya sekolah. Penguatan karakter pada peserta didik di sekolah dasar tidak cukup hanya dengan nasihat dan ceramah tetapi harus dibuat secara tersistem dengan proses pembelajaran dan aktivitas di sekolah. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan tentang integrasi karakter dalam pembelajaran PAI berbasis budaya sekolah. Desain penelitian ini menggunakan desain kualitatif dengan purposive sampling di SD Darul Amal Jampangkulon Kabupaten Sukabumi. Teknik pengumpulan data dengan wawancara, observasi dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa integrasi pendidikan karakter dilakukan dengan pembiasaan dan internalisasi karakter pada pembelajaran PAI berdasarkan 6 pilar karakter. Integrasi pendidikan karakter dalam PAI berbasis budaya sekolah terbukti dapat membangun karakter peserta didik yang lebih baik. Hal ini terbukti dari hasil angket sibanu yang menunjukkan adanya progress perkembangan karakter peserta didik selama di lingkungan keluarga.

Kata Kunci: *Membangun Karakter, Integrasi, Mata Pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam, Sekolah Dasar*

INTRODUCTION

This research is motivated by the difficulty of applying character values to students in an educational institution. Among the causes of the lack of success in character education is that education still prioritizes academic grades as a benchmark for success, and character education has not been a priority. (Berkowitz & Bustamante, 2013), (Furkan, 2013). Williams' research mentions character problems, including teachers lacking the competence to teach morals and character. Character education will sacrifice other subjects, and character and morality come from divine values that will be difficult to teach in an increasingly secular world. (Williams, 2000), (Ismail, 2016). Current character education in some institutions is more likely to fulfill the standard of teaching obligations and pay less attention to other things such as success, evaluation models, and integrating character in education (Huston-Holm, 2010). Another problem with character education is that there is no evaluation model available to measure character achievement at the primary school level, and character education at school is not synchronized with education at home (Darmayanti & Wibowo, 2014).

Character education in educational institutions is increasingly challenged by the development of various social media platforms that are easily accessible to elementary school-age children. Currently, the development of the digital world has led to almost limitless socialization. On the one hand, the development of social media, which is currently very accessible to elementary school-age children, causes moral decline among schoolchildren. With the existence of social media, the morals of children and adolescents are difficult to control and increasingly lead to negative associations. Morals and character can be developed through education programs (Cloninger & Selvarajan, 2010; Shim, 2023).

Based on the National Family Planning Coordinating Board (BKKBN) data, the percentage of children who have had sex at the age of 11–14 reaches six percent. While at the age of 15–19 years, 74 percent of men and 59 percent of women claimed to have done this. According to BKKBN Chairman Hasto Wardoyo, this has been caused by promiscuity since childhood (Shanti, 2022).

Referring to BKKBN data as quoted by Damayanti in 2007, out of 100 teenagers, 5 of them have had pre-marital sex. In 2008, the results of a survey in 33 provinces showed that 63% had had premarital sex and 21% had had an abortion. The results of research conducted by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) with a sample of 4500 junior and senior high school students concluded that 62.75% of female students were no longer virgins. This research was conducted from January to June 2010 in schools in big cities (Ningrum, 2015).

In the aspect of child criminal cases, the KPAI handled 1885 cases in the first semester of 2018. 504 children became criminal offenders, ranging from drug offenders and stealing to immoral cases being the most common. In Children Against the Law cases, most children have entered the Specialized Juvenile Correctional Institution because they have stolen as much as 23.9 percent, drug cases as much as 17.8 percent, immoral cases as much as 13.2 percent, and others (Zhulaikah, 2022). In other cases, based on data from the Child Protection

Commission (*Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia*), 62.7% of junior high school adolescents in Indonesia are no longer virgins. There are also other results, such as 93.7 percent of junior and senior high school students having kissed, as many as 21.2% of junior high school teenagers admitting having had an abortion, and 97% of junior and senior high school teenagers having seen pornographic films. (Mashuri et al., 2021; Ristiani & Kurniawati, 2014; Upi, 2019).

The above explanation is not just a row of percentage numbers but shows the other side of their morals, far from the educational goals to be achieved. Of course, many factors cause children's morals to be bad. One of those responsible for moral problems is educational institutions. Character education takes a long time and is not only done by educational institutions but must be done together with parents (Rubini & Chaer, 2021). Educational institutions must innovate, collaborate, and improvise in integrating character values into students. It is not enough for students to get knowledge; their character must be instilled in learning at school so that they have good morals. Character education must be applied holistically in educational institutions and cannot only be in the form of incidental activities or learning that is cognitive or only through symbols. Therefore, it is necessary to integrate holistic character values, one of which is in learning and through school culture.

Good character and morals are not enough to be grown only with advice or religious lessons. character education is defined as a deliberate effort throughout the life of every school life to aid the development of the highest possible character or soul (Lubis et al., 2020; Zubaedi, 2012). Character education is both an age-old and growing discipline (Berkowitz & Hoppe, 2009). The cultivation of good character and moral values for students must be done early, including at the elementary school level. Changes in a person's behaviour depend on the environment, education obtained, habits in a situation, and so on. Based on this, when children are in elementary school is the right time to instill character or moral values so that when they grow up they are accustomed to behaving well and having good morals. The period before puberty is the right time to instill character values. If character or morals are instilled in adulthood, it will be very difficult to achieve. Thus, when children are at elementary school age, it is the right time and valuable time to instill character values.

Several factors cause the low character of students, both personal and social character. Character formation is determined by two factors; nature and nurture (Haryanto et al., 2023; Megawangi, 2009; Subamia, 2011). Environmental factors are very influential in changes in learner behaviour. When students live in a good environment, students will tend to be carried well as well as the opposite condition. The third factor is the education obtained. This is in line with the results of Birhan's research in 2021 stating that in elementary schools, character and moral education is generally carried out by "inserting" character content in subjects and the challenge of moral and character education is due to the failure of parents and teachers as role models for students (Birhan et al., 2021).

Among the efforts and approaches to overcome the above problems is to integrate character values in subjects as well as the integration of character values in the school culture and environment. Moral and character education needs to

be implemented that is oriented to the curriculum and subject areas (Schuitema et al., 2008). The habituation method (daily culture) is still considered an effective method for implementing religious and character education for children (Ruswandi, 2021).

Based on the results of preliminary studies conducted at Darul Amal Elementary School, it is known that strengthening character education is carried out in a separate structured manner and has separate rules from classroom learning, although technically it cannot be separated from other activities at school. This school is a well-known private school in the community and is known to be good both in terms of the education process and in terms of the quality of graduates. Therefore, this school has received a fairly good appreciation from the community not only in terms of service but in fact, the community chooses to send to this school because of the demands or considerations of the quality of the behaviour of students who graduate from this school.

Referring to the explanation above, this study aims to describe the integration of Islamic character education in school culture-based Islamic Religious Education subjects at SD Darul Amal Jampangkulon, Sukabumi Regency, and how the implications for the development of student character.

Various previous studies on character education in elementary schools like Sugiri research's 2019 (Sugiri, 2019). Research on strengthening character is related to student discipline including research by Eka Khristiyana Purnama in 2014 (Purnama, 2014), Research conducted by Rohinah, in 2014 with regard to "Multicultural-Based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Learning Model as an Effort to Cultivate Character in Elementary School Students of *Sanggar Anak Alam (Salam)* Nitiprayan Kasihan Bantul Yogyakarta" in 2017 (Rohinah, 2017). Andi Prastowo's research in 2018 on Character Education in Elementary Schools and Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Based on Empowering the Subconscious Mind (Prastowo, 2018) and the results of research conducted by Murniyetti et al, in 2016 with the research title "Patterns of Implementation of Character Education for Elementary School Students" (Murniyetti et al., 2016).

Referring to the results of previous studies that have been stated above and their relation to the research plan to be carried out by researchers, it can be concluded that the focus or theme of the research to be carried out by researchers has never been carried out by previous researchers. The targeted novelty of this research is to produce ideas in the form of integrating Islamic character values into school culture-based PAI learning for primary education levels.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research design uses a naturalistic qualitative approach. Qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observed behavior. Qualitative research uses a scientific setting where researchers collect data from research participants who are the subject of the research (Creswell, 2015). The reason researchers use this approach is to analyze a process, reality, and social

relationships in this case regarding the integration of character education in PAI learning. According to Miller, the orientation of qualitative researchers is to describe or analyze the process through which social reality is constructed and the social relationships through which people relate to or are connected to one another.

The research sampling technique used purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is used to access the knowledgeable, namely those who have in-depth knowledge of the research topic, and because it is based on their role, expertise, or experience (Cohen et al., 2018). So, the research sample is only key informants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014), the Head of SD Darul Amal, 4th, 5th, and 6th-grade Islamic Religious Education teachers, and Administrative Staff.

This research procedure begins with analyzing problems, literature review, identifying problems, collecting data on the object of research, processing data, analyzing data and making conclusions. The collection techniques were interview, observation, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted using data reduction, data display, and verification techniques.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The background of character education at SD Darul Amal is due to the demands of parents who want to strengthen good behaviours in schools based on Islamic values. The majority of parents at SD Darul Amal are workers in private and government institutions such as nurses, police officers, civil servants, hospital workers, and midwives, up to 90%. Others are farmers and non-company laborers. This was conveyed by Mrs. Mela Sundari as the principle that:

"The parents of our students are 90% workers who are dominated by health for now so like hospital employees, health canters, doctors, nurses to midwives are the most. Most of the 90% are workers, so they only meet in the afternoon or maybe at night and there is no time to evaluate education, character, and so on to check the learning or condition of children or children to tell stories is difficult to do because of time constraints".

The schools have a great influence on children's development beyond academics. With accessibility to children, schools have the opportunity to help children develop positive character traits (João Lopes Célia Oliveira & Gable, 2013). Character education at SD Darul Amal was initially adopted from character education at the Indonesia Heritage Foundation (IHF) in Depok, West Java. Various studies have examined character education at IHF (Karimah et al., 2022); (Yuliana & Fahri, 2020). This shows that IHF has an advantage in terms of character education implementation. With this advantage, SD Darul Amal then adopted and modified the character education model from IHF to be implemented at SD Darul Amal.

According to Ms. Mela Sundari:

"We only take the modification method. Knowing, feeling, acting. usually knowing first feeling, acting. After that, we modify it by adding Quranic verses related to it, ..."

The character education model at IHF was then developed to be implemented in the classroom, especially in the parts of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral acting and in evaluating the achievement of character development. Moral

knowing is knowledge about morality, while moral feeling is the sense of morality and moral action is moral actions. Moral knowing is an important thing to be taught (Hindun, 2014). Moral and ethical education is an indispensable element in the character-building of every human being (Nieuważny et al., 2021). Formal educational institutions have an important role in implementing moral education to students, namely with the hidden curriculum (García-Moriyón et al., 2020); (Apple & King, 2014). One form of hidden curriculum is integration in subjects and through habituation. Habituation is included in the hidden curriculum but is effective in building student character.

Internalization of character through habituation in the classroom is presented as in the table below.

Table 1: Character Internalization in the Classroom

| Aspect | Description |
|---------------|--|
| Moral Knowing | Internalization of Qur'anic verses and hadith relevant to the character theme is carried out daily and weekly. Relevant Qur'anic verses and hadiths are memorized by students according to the character theme. The selected Qur'an and Hadith are short ones. |
| Moral Feeling | Motivating to have an attitude of empathy, sympathy, humility, and confidence in various matters, especially at school. |
| Moral Acting | The development of moral feeling is carried out through watching together in the form of videos of Islamic stories such as the stories of prophets, prophets' companions, stories of righteous people, and fable fiction stories by relevant character themes. |
| Evaluasi | Evaluation is carried out through a questionnaire given to parents every 2 weeks to ensure that character habituation at school is carried out in the family environment as a habit. Further evaluation is developed based on applications that can be accessed by parents on Android devices. |

The environment is very influential on the formation of student's behavior both when students are at school and when in the family or community environment. Character education cannot be done by only teaching theories arguments or advice, but character building must be carried out from all aspects including the environment or school culture. Teachers' beliefs about teaching character values are pivotal in cultivating students' character (Muzakkir & Razak, 2022). Therefore, there needs to be habituation at school so that character can be familiarized at home. According to Williams, Russell T character education is ethical education plus, which involves aspects of knowledge (cognitive), feelings (feeling), and action (action) (Megawangi, 2004)

Thus, character education can be interpreted as an effort that is designed systematically and continuously to shape the personality of students to have knowledge, feelings, and actions based on noble norms that apply in society.

The cultivation of character values is not enough just by being taught through memorization or understanding verses, hadiths, or character theories. Character cultivation needs habituation in everyday life. Habituation is something that is deliberately done repeatedly so that something can become a person's habit, because the core method is continuous experience, and is very effective for strengthening memorization and instilling religious attitudes (Tafsir, 2004); (Sari, 2017).

Among the efforts that can be made to in still character values in students

since elementary school age is by integrating character values in subjects as well as integrating character values in the school culture and environment. Moral and character education needs to be implemented that is oriented to the curriculum and subject areas (Schuitema et al., 2008). Indeed, character education should be integrated into all subjects (Ahsanulhaq, 2019). However, sometimes the realization is that religious subjects are considered the most relevant subjects in integrating character education.

In addition to habituation, character strengthening is carried out through Islamic religious education learning in the classroom. As a result of interviews and observations, the steps of integrating character education in Islamic Religion Education subjects are as follows:

Table 2: Character Integration Steps in Islamic Religion Education Subjects

| Steps | Description |
|--------|--|
| Step 1 | Condition students in a position ready to learn and ensure students are comfortable in the classroom. |
| Step 2 | Ask the students about the things they have done before going to school. |
| Step 3 | Provide stimulus to students by asking questions about previous lessons, singing, quizzes, or others. Providing stimulus is done so that students are in a state of enthusiasm and cheerfulness. |
| Step 4 | Checking the progress of memorizing short Qur'anic letters. This is to ensure that the verses that have been memorized on the previous day have been memorized. |
| Step 5 | Learners are divided into 2 groups of 15-20 learners and accompanied by the teacher. |
| Step 6 | Conduct simulations or examples in behaviour or demonstrations by the Islamic Religion Education learning theme |
| Step 7 | Use of audio-visual media and image media in learning. Students watch shows such as the story of the Prophet's Companions or cartoons that show the value of good character behaviour. |
| Step 8 | Monitoring character development through questionnaires and the Sibanu application. This questionnaire is a form of cross-checking the achievement of character development at school and where students live. |

The learning process has a major role in character building (Zubaidi, 2011). Character strengthening at SD Darul Amal is carried out in various ways such as daily habituation at school and home, integration into Islamic Religion Education subjects, and daily activities at school. Good character is not formed automatically; it is developed over time through a sustained process of teaching, example, learning and practice (Pala, 2011). Character education carried out in formal institutions is an important thing to do to be able to change the deviant behaviour of students. The implementation of character education in schools must begin with the school community itself, especially teachers as educators.

For character education to run effectively and on target, there needs to be a design in the implementation of character education in schools. Among the designs of character education are classroom-based design and school culture-based design (Koesoema, 2009). Character integration in Islamic Religion Education subjects is a strengthening effort with a class-based design. Religious education has been proven to contribute to strengthening students' character and ethics (Metcalf & Moulin-Stožek, 2021).

The integration of character is done through the process of habituation or school culture such as praying *duha* in congregation, memorizing short letters from the Qur'an, and recitation activities. Character education is introduced and

taught to students for 5 days (Monday-Friday) according to the theme or pillar of character education that has been determined, and changes in the pillars of character education are adjusted to the development and success of the previous theme or pillar.

An example of the integration of themes or pillars in learning in grade 4 is as follows:

Table 3: Pillars Integration In Learning and Teaching

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Indicator | Saying an apology when doing something wrong Saying please when you need help. Saying thank you when getting help or something |
| Method | Knowing-Reasoning-Feeling |
| Activity Stage 1 | The teacher explains the 3 magic words that can make people who hear them feel comfortable, happy, and not offended. Discuss why we should use the 3 magic words Example: Answers to the questions a. Make people happy b. Strengthen the bond of friendship c. Saying thank you to people shows how to be grateful. d. Saying please makes others feel more valued and needed. e. Apologizing can improve relationships with others. Explain the function of the 3 magic words: Sorry, please, and Thank you. a. Apologize when doing wrong. b. Ask for help when you need help. c. Saying thank you when getting help or something. The teacher conveys hadiths about character values such as forgiveness, helping, and gratitude. |
| Activity Stage 2 | The teacher briefly repeats the activities in the first stage Students listen to the story about 3 Magic words Students answer the questions in the story The teacher gives affirmations about the 3 magic words: "If you do something wrong, say sorry..." (SORRY) "If you need help say please..." (HELP) "If you get a gift say thank you" "If you want to pass say excuse me" |
| Activity Stage 3 | The teacher briefly repeats the activity from the previous meeting The teacher plays a video about 3 magic words Students watch the video about 3 magic words Students answer questions posed by the teacher after watching the video The teacher and students conclude about 3 magic words |
| Activity Stage 4 | The teacher briefly repeats the activity from the previous meeting The teacher practices the use of 3 magic words Students are asked to take turns practicing the 3 magic words The teacher and students discuss the benefits of the 3 magic words The teacher and students reflect on the 3 magic words |

Character evaluation at SD Darul Amal is not carried out after learning but is carried out continuously through observation of students' behaviour at school. The assessment is conducted daily and at the end of each semester with the output being the character report card. To facilitate this, the school makes digital-based character measurements with an application called Sibanu. In this application, parents choose the answers according to what they are. An example of measuring character achievement is shown in the Figure 2.

In developing the ability of character values, it is also necessary to cooperate

with the role of parents in carrying out the habituation that has been carried out at school. The role of parents is very useful for children in strengthening character. To fulfill this, the assessment is carried out with a questionnaire given to parents as a measuring tool for the implementation of character in everyday life. Giving questionnaires through the Sibanu application does not fully run well. There are still many parents who fill out the Sibanu questionnaire randomly without according to what it is. This still happens around 50% of parents are honest and 50% fill in carelessly. This is as expressed by the principal:

"In our opinion, this questionnaire has not been fully effective, sir, because there are still many parents who fill in arbitrarily without what they are. This may be due to laziness or embarrassment if the assessment is not good. Whereas we want honesty so that the character measurement is truly accurate".

On Time Checklist Pembiasaan Harian

Indikator Disiplin:
 1. Memahami konsep tepat waktu sebagai wujud kedisiplinan
 2. Menyelesaikan tugas rutinnnya tepat waktu

وكان ابن عمر، يقول: إذا أمنت فلا تلتظر الصباح، وإذا أمنت فلا تلتظر المساء، وخذ من صحتك لمرضك، ومن خبتك لمؤتلك. (رواه البخاري)
 "Jika engkau berada di sore hari jangan menunggu datangnya pagi, dan jika engkau berada pada pagi hari jangan menunggu datangnya sore". (H.R. Bukhari)

| No. | Pembiasaan Pilar | Aksi | Keterangan |
|-----|---|--|----------------------|
| 1 | Mematikan lampu yang tidak terpakai | <input type="radio"/> YA <input type="radio"/> TIDAK | <input type="text"/> |
| 2 | Menjemur handuk setelah dipakai | <input type="radio"/> YA <input type="radio"/> TIDAK | <input type="text"/> |
| 3 | Membaca buku setiap hari minimal 10 menit | <input type="radio"/> YA <input type="radio"/> TIDAK | <input type="text"/> |

Figure 1: Screenshot Example of Sibanu

Some parents do not fully care about their children's character development for various reasons. Parents have a very important role in character education at home. Some parents cannot be honest about their children's character development. There is often a discrepancy between the results of the questionnaire and the results of random interviews with students. This was revealed by Mrs. F, the fourth-grade Islamic Religion Education teacher in her interview:

"Sometimes parents fill out the Sibanu questionnaire not by the reality. For example, the results of the questionnaire stated that children read books at home, but after being confirmed to the students it turned out that this was not the case, he claimed that on that day he did not read books at home."

Character education can be carried out well if supported by the role of parents and society. Children's attitudes and behaviour are influenced by the efforts made by parents (Jannah & Umam, 2021). Families need to create a family environment that contains educational values as a foundation for providing children with provisions in their lives (Jailani, 2014). Parents are the figures for the development of children's behavior (Hikmatullah & Fachmi, 2020). Therefore, parents' behavior will be imitated by their children. Exemplary parents and teachers are necessary for children because something that parents do tends to be followed by children. Birhan stated that among the obstacles to character

education is that parents and teachers have not been able to fully serve as role models for students (Birhan et al., 2021). In fact, teacher exemplary is the right approach to character education in schools.

Character education in primary schools is an important component of education that can have a lasting impact on students' personal and social development. Research in this area helps understand the best methods for integrating character values into the curriculum and student learning experiences. The results of this study can be used as a reference for other educational institutions to be able to adopt the integration model of character education in PAI subjects in elementary schools. With the integration of character education in PAI subjects, there are two advantages: namely teaching religion, morals, and character at the same time. Moral character and religious education have a very deep meaning because they will teach students the values (Croitoru & Munteanu, 2014).

CONCLUSION

The integration of character education at SD Darul Amal is carried out through the habituation of *duha* prayer in congregation, recitation, memorizing the Qur'an and Hadith, and watching videos and reflecting on the videos. In the habituation process, the Qur'anic verse or hadith is internalized by each character pillar. Character integration in learning is carried out through the insertion of the content of the 6 pillars of character, each pillar has different content based on the class. Each pillar consists of several stages of character habituation activities for daily life. The integration of character education in school culture-based Islamic Religion Education learning is proven to build better student characters. This is evident from the results of the Sibanu questionnaire which shows the progress of students' character development while in the family environment.

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Acknowledgments

Thanks are extended to:

- a. Directorate of Research, Technology and Community Service of the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture.
- b. Institute for Research and Community Service of Universitas Islam Nusantara Bandung

Sponsorship:

This research is funded by the Directorate of Research, Technology and Community Service of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, Funding Year 2023