

THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES IN BUILDING GOOD CHARACTER AMONG STUDENTS AT MA ASY SYIFA IN EAST BATURAJA DISTRICT, OKU REGENCY

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the role of religious activities in fostering students' moral character at MA Asy-Syifa, Baturaja Timur District, OKU Regency. The research employed a descriptive qualitative approach, using observation, in depth interviews, and documentation as data collection techniques. The findings reveal that religious activities regularly implemented such as congregational prayer, Qur'anic recitation, Islamic holiday commemorations, and leadership training significantly contribute to students' religious attitudes, discipline, and social ethics. These activities are implemented through habituation and role modeling approaches involving teachers, student religious organizations (BDI), and school leadership. Supporting factors include adequate infrastructure, high student enthusiasm, and teacher commitment. However, several obstacles remain, such as limited facilities, weak internal coordination, and low participation from some students. This study concludes that religious activities play a crucial role in developing students' moral character, but systemic reinforcement is needed to achieve optimal and sustainable outcomes.

Keywords: Islamic Education, Moral Character, Religious Activities, Student Development

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan peran kegiatan keagamaan dalam membina akhlakul karimah siswa di MA Asy-Syifa, Kecamatan Baturaja Timur, Kabupaten OKU. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kegiatan keagamaan yang dilaksanakan secara rutin seperti salat berjamaah, tadarus Al-Qur'an, peringatan hari besar Islam, serta pelatihan kepemimpinan Islami berperan penting dalam pembentukan sikap religius, disiplin, dan akhlak sosial siswa. Implementasi kegiatan keagamaan dilakukan melalui pendekatan pembiasaan dan keteladanan yang melibatkan guru, pengurus BDI, dan kepala sekolah. Faktor pendukung keberhasilan kegiatan ini meliputi sarana prasarana yang memadai, semangat siswa, serta komitmen tenaga pendidik. Adapun faktor penghambat antara lain terbatasnya fasilitas, kurangnya koordinasi internal, dan rendahnya partisipasi sebagian siswa. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kegiatan keagamaan di sekolah berperan signifikan dalam pembinaan akhlakul karimah, namun perlu penguatan sistemik agar hasilnya optimal dan berkelanjutan.

Kata kunci: *Akhlakul Karimah, Kegiatan Keagamaan, Pembinaan Siswa, Pendidikan Islam*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic religious education plays a strategic role in shaping the whole personality of students, not only in the cognitive dimension, but also in the affective and psychomotor aspects. The main objective of Islamic education is to shape insan kamil, or balanced human beings in terms of spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and social aspects (Azra, 2019; Al-Attas, 1991). Akhlakul karimah or noble character is a tangible manifestation of the success of Islamic education, which should be the foundation of students' character from an early age (Abdullah, 2012; Jalaluddin, 2014; Nata, 2016). However, in current educational practices, the challenges in moral development are increasingly complex. Phenomena such as a decline in students' respect for teachers, an increase in deviant behavior, and a weak awareness of worship are indicators that the affective dimension is often neglected in the formal education system (Kosim, 2008; Habanakah, 2011; Hasanah, 2017).

In the context of globalization, religious education has an important role as a filter of values. Advances in science and technology (IPTEK), if not balanced with the strengthening of spiritual and ethical values, can actually produce a generation that is intellectually intelligent but morally fragile (Poerwanti et al., 2012; Lickona, 1992). Therefore, religious education not only functions as an instrument for transmitting religious knowledge, but also as an agent of value transformation that instills morals in the real lives of students (Rahman & Habanakah, 2011; Arifin, 2018).

Islamic values-based character education can be systematically integrated through religious activities carried out in schools. Activities such as congregational prayers, recitation of the Qur'an, commemoration of Islamic holidays, and Islamic leadership training are part of the process of fostering good character. According to Supriyadi and Nuryanto (2020), programmed and consistent religious activities can increase students' religious attitudes and reduce negative behavior in the school environment (Mulyasa, 2014; Zuchdi, 2010).

Religious teachers have a central role in designing, implementing, and evaluating religious activities that are contextual and relevant to the conditions of the students. Not merely as conveyors of teaching materials, religious teachers act as role models who display moral integrity in their daily actions (Nata, 2016). Effective religious education must be applicable and able to bridge the concepts of Islamic teachings and their implementation in social reality (Yahya, 2012; Nurhayati, 2014).

The Indonesian government has normatively emphasized the importance of religious values and noble character in the national education system. This is stated in Article 31 paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which states that national education must enhance faith, piety, and noble character in order to educate the nation.

This study focuses on the role of religious activities in fostering good character among students at MA Asy-Syifa, East Baturaja District, Ogan Komering Ulu (OKU) Regency. This institution is an Islamic-based school that organizes various religious activities as part of its student character building strategy. However, initial observations indicate signs of moral degradation, such as a lack of respect for teachers, truancy, and aggressive behavior. These symptoms require a deeper examination of the effectiveness of the religious activities that have been carried out. Thus, the main focus of this study is to describe in depth the role of religious activities in fostering good character among students at MA Asy-Syifa, as well as to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence the success of this development.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. A qualitative approach was chosen because it is considered the most appropriate for exploring complex social phenomena, namely the role of religious activities in fostering good character in students. Qualitative research aims to understand meaning, interpret social reality, and describe phenomena holistically in their natural context. As stated by Sukmadinata (2010), qualitative research seeks to explore in depth the experiences, views, beliefs, and actions of individuals or groups in their natural setting, with the researcher as the main instrument.

In this context, the research was conducted at MA Asy-Syifa, Baturaja Timur Subdistrict, Ogan Komering Ulu (OKU) Regency, which is an Islamic-based educational institution. The location was selected purposively, considering that the school consistently carries out religious activities designed to support student character building. In addition, indications of moral problems occurring in the school environment were a strong reason for making MA Asy-Syifa the object of study.

Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to directly observe the implementation of religious activities at school, including daily activities such as congregational prayers, recitation of the Qur'an, and other Islamic training. Interviews were conducted with the principal, Islamic Education teachers, religious activity supervisors, and several selected students to obtain in-depth information and diverse perspectives. Documentation was used to supplement field data through the analysis of documents such as activity schedules, evaluation records, attendance lists, and archives of religious programs that had been implemented.

To maintain data validity, source and method triangulation techniques were used. Sugiyono (2017) states that triangulation is a technique for checking data validity that utilizes something outside the data for the purpose of checking or comparing the data. Thus, the use of various data sources and collection techniques allows researchers to obtain a complete and in-depth understanding of the issues being studied.

Data analysis was conducted interactively through three stages as described by Miles and Huberman, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by sorting, selecting, and focusing on data deemed relevant to the research objectives. Data presentation was carried out in the form of descriptive narratives that described the process and dynamics of religious activities in shaping students' character. Meanwhile, conclusions are drawn inductively based on patterns, categories, and relationships between data elements that have been analyzed thoroughly.

This research is flexible and open to the dynamics of field data. The researcher conducted a data validation process through member checking, which is reconfirming the results of data interpretation with informants to ensure the accuracy and validity of the findings. In addition, the peer debriefing technique was also used by involving colleagues to critically review the data analysis and interpretation process, thereby reducing the researcher's subjective bias. Using this approach, the study is expected to provide an in-depth and authentic understanding of the contribution of religious activities to the development of students' good character, as well as to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence it in the context of Islamic education at the madrasah level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Religious Activities

The implementation of religious activities at MA Asy-Syifa in East Baturaja District is designed as an integral part of the formal curriculum and school culture. These activities are not limited to Islamic Religious Education lessons in the classroom, but also include various forms of daily and incidental religious activities that are carried out in a structured manner. Based on field data and documentation, these activities include congregational Dzuhur and Dhuha prayers, recitation of the Qur'an before teaching and learning activities, Islamic holidays (PHBI), Ramadan camps, and religious social activities such as social service and dakwah safaris.

These activities are managed collaboratively by Islamic Religious Education teachers, the Islamic Da'wah Council (BDI), and school management. The activity schedule is prepared regularly, with direct supervision from the supervising teacher. For example, daily recitation is carried out at the beginning of class, while congregational prayers are facilitated at the school mosque at a predetermined time. This shows that MA Asy-Syifa has tried to build a participatory and sustainable religious activity system.

The religious activities carried out are not only ritualistic but also contain educational and social elements. Activities such as young preacher training, Islamic lectures, and religious discussions become a medium for students to develop an understanding of Islamic values in a social context. According to Nurhayati (2014), activities such as these are effective means of internalizing moral values in students, as they provide concrete opportunities to practice what they have learned.

Implementation of Religious Activities in Fostering Good Character in Students

The implementation of religious activities in fostering good character in students at MA Asy-Syifa takes place through an approach of habituation (accustoming) and exemplary behavior. Habituation is carried out by consistently applying worship routines, such as accustoming students to recite prayers together before starting lessons, greeting each other with salam, and performing congregational prayers in the school environment. These activities are designed so that students not only learn Islamic values in theory, but also experience and practice them in their daily lives.

The cultivation of good character is also carried out through the example set by teachers and mentors. Religious teachers become central figures who not only convey material but also provide concrete examples of how noble character is manifested in social interactions, both among students and with teachers. This is in line with Jalaluddin's (2012) view that moral education in Islam must be practical and include spiritual, social, and behavioral dimensions.

Some students who are active in religious activities show positive changes in terms of discipline, responsibility, and concern for others. They are more aware of prayer times, are polite to teachers, and care about environmental cleanliness. Religious activities have also been proven to increase students' empathy for others, especially through religious social activities such as providing assistance to orphans and distributing takjil (food to break the fast) during Ramadan. This study supports Abidin's (2014) opinion that noble character will not grow only through theory, but through habituation, repetition, and direct practice in students' real lives. This is where religious activities play a role as a means of internalizing values, bridging the gap between teaching and behavior.

Supporting and Hindering Factors in the Implementation of Religious Activities in Fostering Students' Akhlakul Karimah

The successful implementation of religious activities in fostering students' good character at MA Asy-Syifa cannot be separated from a number of supporting factors that are structural, cultural, and personal in nature. First, the availability of adequate religious facilities and infrastructure, such as a school mosque, a room for reciting the Quran, and audio-visual equipment for lectures, are important elements that support the smooth running of activities. Second, school management that supports religious values also plays a role in providing policy direction that is conducive to student character building.

In addition, the enthusiasm and excitement of students in participating in religious activities becomes an internal force that strengthens the effectiveness of the program. The active involvement of religious teachers and the commitment of the principal in overseeing the implementation of religious programs are also key factors that cannot be ignored. As stated by Rahman and Habanakah (2011), the synergy between institutional structures and spiritual values in schools is an important foundation for the success of moral education.

On the other hand, there are also a number of inhibiting factors that affect the implementation of religious activities. One of them is the limited coordination between units implementing religious activities, so that some programs are still running sectorally and have not been optimally integrated. Limited facilities, such as the number of rooms that are not proportional to the number of students during activities, are also technical obstacles that are often encountered. In addition, there are still some students who are less responsive to religious activities, either because of their family background or a social environment that is not supportive.

These conditions show that the success of the *akhlakul karimah* guidance program through religious activities is greatly influenced by both internal and external factors. Therefore, continuous efforts are needed to strengthen the management system for religious activities, improve teacher training in character building, and build strong partnerships between schools, families, and the surrounding community.

Some students who are active in religious activities show positive changes in terms of discipline, responsibility, and concern for others. They are more aware of prayer times, are polite to teachers, and care about environmental cleanliness. Religious activities have also been proven to increase students' empathy towards others, especially through religious social activities such as providing assistance to orphans and distributing *takjil* (food to break the fast) during Ramadan. This is in line with Mulyasa's (2014) view that character building through religious activities is more effective because it directly touches the affective aspects of students. This study supports Abidin's (2014) opinion that noble character will not grow only through theory, but through habituation, repetition, and direct practice in students' real lives. This is where religious activities play a role as a means of internalizing values, bridging the gap between teaching and behavior (Zuchdi, 2010).

CONCLUSION

This study shows that religious activities carried out systematically at MA Asy-Syifa contribute significantly to the development of students' good character. The implementation of religious activities includes routine activities such as congregational prayers, recitation of the Qur'an, commemoration of Islamic holidays, and socio-religious activities that actively involve students. These activities not only shape the religious culture in the school environment but also encourage the development of politeness, discipline, responsibility, and social awareness among students. The implementation of religious activities as a medium for character building is carried out through an approach of habituation and exemplification. Religious teachers act as role models and facilitators in instilling Islamic moral values in a contextual manner. As a result, most students show positive behavioral changes in terms of worship and social interaction. However, the effectiveness of these activities is still influenced by a number of supporting and inhibiting factors. Supporting factors include the availability of infrastructure, religious school management, and student enthusiasm and teacher commitment. Meanwhile, the obstacles faced include limited facilities, suboptimal internal coordination, and a lack of participation from some students. Thus, optimizing religious activities as a strategy for

character building requires strengthening educational management, synergy across school elements, and the active involvement of families and the community in shaping the character of a Muslim generation with noble character.

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