



STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF PARENTS AS THE MAIN FOUNDATION FOR THE FORMATION OF MORALITY CHILDREN IN PLAKPAK VILLAGE

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Abstract: This community service activity aims to raise parental awareness of their role as the first agents of moral education in children. Conducted through an educational seminar in Plakpak Village, Pegantenan District, Pamekasan Regency, the program implemented a Participatory Action Research (PAR) model to explore and address issues surrounding moral decline among students. The seminar provided insights on parenting approaches, character education, and moral development in children. Results showed a strong interest from parents in understanding moral education and the importance of collaboration between families and educational institutions. Despite limited attendance, the activity succeeded in promoting constructive dialogue and awareness on parenting practices that support character development.

Keywords: Parental awareness, moral education, character development, community service, Plakpak Village

INTRODUCTION

Moral education in children is the main foundation in shaping the character of a quality generation of the nation. In technological advances and information disclosure, today's young generation faces great challenges that can disrupt their moral formation. Data from the results of the Reckitt Benckiser Indonesia survey (2023) revealed that 33% of adolescents in five major cities in Indonesia admitted to having had extramarital relationships, while data from the National Narcotics Agency (2008) showed that around 3.9% of adolescents became victims of drug abuse. In addition, various incidents of student violence and declining respect for teachers are also indications of the declining quality of the character of the younger generation (Adisaputera dkk., 2023).

The main factor of this problem is the lack of awareness of parents of their important role as the primary and first educators in the child's life. Many parents think that children's education is the responsibility of teachers at school (Ismail dkk., 2024). The family is the first and main place where children form moral values, social behavior, and discipline. Unfortunately, there are still many parenting patterns that do not support children's moral development, such as authoritarian approaches, a lack of communication, and the absence of role models in parental behavior. In the early stages of a child's life, the home is their first school, and the parents are their first teachers. Through daily interactions, children learn how to communicate, express emotions, resolve conflicts, and treat others. However, when parents are not fully engaged in this role, either due to lack of time, lack of knowledge, or even indifference, children often grow up without a strong moral compass (Brown dkk., 2015). They may look to other sources, such as peers, media, or the internet, for guidance, which do not always provide constructive or appropriate values.

Modern lifestyle pressures have also contributed to the weakening of parental involvement. In many households, both parents are working long hours, leaving limited time for direct interaction with their children. When they do return home, exhaustion often makes it difficult to engage in meaningful conversations or quality family time (Azad dkk., 2021). This absence of parental presence can create a void that children fill with external influences that are not always positive. As a result, children may develop attitudes and behaviors that are inconsistent with the values that parents wish to instill. Moreover, parenting styles that are too authoritarian, where rules are imposed rigidly without room for discussion or empathy, can lead to fear rather than respect. Children raised under such conditions may comply with rules only to avoid punishment, not because they understand the moral reasoning behind them. Conversely, overly permissive parenting, where there is little discipline or structure, can result in children lacking self-control and accountability. Both extremes hinder the development of sound moral judgment (Bahari, 2023).

Communication between parents and children is another critical aspect that is often neglected. Open, respectful dialogue allows children to express their thoughts and feelings while learning to understand others' perspectives. It also provides a platform for parents to guide and correct gently while affirming the child's worth (Ikhlasiah dkk., 2024). When this communication is missing, misunderstandings arise, emotional bonds weaken, and children may seek acceptance and validation from external sources, sometimes with harmful consequences. Another concern is the lack of good examples in parental behavior. Children are highly observant and tend to mimic the actions of adults, especially those closest to them. If parents exhibit negative behaviors, such as dishonesty, aggression, or disrespect, children will likely adopt the same. It is not enough for parents to teach moral lessons verbally; they must also live out those values consistently. Children learn far more from what they see their parents do than from what they are told.

To address this issue, there needs to be a concerted effort to re-educate parents about their vital role in shaping the next generation. Parenting education programs should be more widely accessible, both through community centers, religious institutions, and schools. These programs can equip parents with knowledge about child development, effective communication, emotional intelligence, and positive discipline strategies. More importantly, they can help parents become more aware of their influence and more intentional in their parenting. Schools also have a role to play in bridging the gap between home and school education. Teachers and school counselors should establish strong communication lines with parents, providing regular updates about the child's progress not just academically, but also

socially and behaviorally. When schools and parents work together as partners, children receive a more consistent message about the values and behaviors expected of them. Joint activities such as parenting workshops, family day events, and home visits can foster mutual trust and collaboration.

Religious and community leaders, too, can contribute by reinforcing family values through sermons, community discussions, and mentorship programs. These institutions often hold moral authority within communities and can be powerful allies in promoting family-based moral education (Ali dkk., 2021). They can emphasize the importance of the home environment in forming character and encourage parents to reflect on their behavior and commitment to their children's development. In the digital era, media also play a double-edged role. On one hand, the media can serve as a source of inspiration, providing educational content, parenting tips, and moral lessons. On the other hand, it can also expose children to negative influences such as violence, consumerism, and distorted social norms. Therefore, parents must take an active role in monitoring and guiding their children's media consumption. This includes co-watching programs, discussing messages portrayed in media, and setting reasonable boundaries for screen time.

Another effective strategy is involving children in family-based activities that promote values and togetherness, such as regular family meals, community service, or religious practices (Aziz & Harahap, 2022). These activities not only strengthen family bonds but also provide natural opportunities for moral teaching and modeling. Through shared experiences, children learn empathy, responsibility, and gratitude values that are difficult to teach in abstract ways. Ultimately, the moral development of children is a shared responsibility, but the role of parents remains the most central and enduring (Dacholfany dkk., 2023). While schools, peers, and society influence children, none can replace the foundation laid within the family. If parents abdicate this role, they risk leaving their children vulnerable to a world of conflicting values and moral confusion.

It is, therefore, imperative that efforts to improve children's moral education start from the home. Policymakers and educators must recognize the family as a critical partner in education and design programs that support parents in fulfilling their responsibilities. This includes policies that encourage work-life balance, promote family-friendly workplaces, and provide financial and social support for families in need. By strengthening the role of parents as the first and foremost educators, society can ensure that children grow up with the moral integrity, empathy, and resilience needed to face the challenges of life. The future of a nation is shaped by the values of its youth, and those values are first cultivated in the heart of every

home.

Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System clearly states that education aims to develop the potential of students to become human beings who have faith, piety, and noble character. Therefore, the active involvement of parents in children's education, especially in instilling moral values, is very important. But in reality, this involvement is still minimal, especially in rural areas. Plakpak Village, Pegantean District, Pamekasan Regency, is one of the villages that has quite strong social and religious potential. However, based on the results of observations and interviews with residents and community leaders, it was found that parents in this village still do not fully understand the importance of their role in shaping children's character. This service activity aims to increase this awareness through educational seminars and reflective dialogue between parents, community leaders, and academics.

METHOD

This activity adopts the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, which emphasizes collaborative efforts between researchers and the community through three main stages: research, action, and participation (Pahleviannur dkk., 2022). The process begins with problem identification, carried out through direct observation and intensive discussions with local community leaders. This initial step allows for a more accurate understanding of the real issues faced by the community, particularly related to the role of parents in children's education. An educational seminar was chosen as the primary action program and took place at the Plakpak Village Hall. This seminar involved active participation from various stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and community figures. The aim was to raise awareness of the essential role parents play as the first educators in a child's life, and to encourage a more synergistic relationship between families and schools.

Before the seminar, an initial survey was conducted to map the problems faced by families and the school environment, especially those that hinder moral and character development in children. The data obtained from this survey became the basis for designing relevant seminar materials and discussion themes. Coordination with village policymakers was a crucial part of the process to ensure the program aligned with local needs and had institutional support. Their involvement helped encourage wider participation and lend credibility to the initiative. The seminar was followed by Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), where participants could express their views, experiences, and suggestions in a more interactive setting. The entire program was then evaluated through participatory observation, allowing researchers to assess changes in awareness and behavior while also collecting feedback for program improvement. Through this collaborative and inclusive process, the activity aims not only to address

educational issues but also to empower communities in building a more supportive environment for children's development.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This community service activity was carried out in the form of an educational seminar and forum group discussion (FGD) on Saturday, August 17, 2024 at the Plakpak Village Hall, Pegantan District, Pamekasan Regency. The theme of the seminar was "The Role of Parents as the First Hand to Create Children's Morality". The main resource person for this activity was Mrs. Muhyatun, S.Sos., MA, Head of the BKPI Study Program IAI Al-Khairat Pamekasan.

The implementation of a moral education seminar for parents in Plakpak Village used a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, which emphasizes active community involvement in the research, action, and participation processes. The activity began with problem identification through direct observation and discussions with local community leaders, including religious leaders, village officials, and teachers. This process helped to understand the main issues faced by parents in educating their children, particularly in shaping their character and morality amid the ever-evolving social challenges. The seminar, held at the Plakpak Village Hall, aimed to build collective awareness of the primary role of families, especially parents, as the first and foremost educators in children's lives. Although the number of participants was not as high as expected, their participation was very active and enthusiastic. Many of them were unaware of the importance of their contribution in shaping their children's personalities at home. The discussions during the seminar forum developed dynamically, highlighting several central issues that serve as major obstacles to children's moral education, including parents' limited time due to work commitments, low literacy in positive parenting, the dominance of authoritarian approaches in educating children such as anger, shouting, and physical punishment, as well as a lack of understanding about the importance of collaboration between parents and schools.

In addition to the discussion forum, in-depth interviews with community leaders revealed that many parents still believe that children's education is entirely the responsibility of the school. When children's performance declines, teachers or educational institutions are often blamed, rather than parenting approaches at home. However, local community leaders stated that local cultural values actually strongly support the formation of children's morals and religion. However, the influence of social media and modernization has shifted educational authority from the home to the external environment, causing families to lose their central role in shaping children's character. The results of the discussions and evaluations of this activity revealed several important findings. One of them is the lack of involvement of fathers in child-

rearing. Many children do not receive enough attention or time from their fathers, due to work factors or cultural norms that place the responsibility of child-rearing entirely on mothers. Additionally, unstructured parenting patterns have become a separate issue. Most parents are not accustomed to systematically integrating moral values into their daily parenting practices. Nevertheless, positive outcomes are beginning to emerge. This activity has fostered collective awareness among participants. Some parents have even initiated the formation of regular discussion groups on parenting patterns and character education at the village level.

The seminar also succeeded in opening up a space for honest and reflective dialogue between parents and educators. Participants began to understand that character education is not enough if it is only done in schools, but must also be cultivated in the family environment. This understanding has led to a number of important implications for the development of moral education for children in the future. One of the implications that has emerged is the importance of further training on parenting and effective communication within the family. Parents need ongoing and in-depth training on how to educate and communicate effectively with their children. This training aims not only to improve understanding of good parenting, but also to support children's emotional and social development. The parenting patterns needed may include approaches such as positive discipline, emotional support, and instilling important life values. Meanwhile, effective communication means that parents are able to interact with their children openly, with understanding, and without confrontation, thereby creating healthy and supportive relationships within the family. This further training is becoming increasingly important as the challenges of parenting continue to evolve with the changing times. Therefore, parents need to continuously hone their skills so that they can guide and educate their children optimally in accordance with the needs of the times.

In addition to training, the involvement of religious and community leaders is also needed to support the sustainability of moral education at the village level. Sustainable moral education requires the active participation of religious leaders such as imams, ustaz, or other religious leaders. These figures have a strong influence in shaping the understanding and application of moral values in society. Similarly, community leaders, such as village heads, traditional leaders, or other respected figures, play a role in mobilizing and uniting residents to jointly support the strengthening of moral education for children in their environment. The sustainability of moral education in villages cannot depend solely on formal educational institutions, but must be strengthened through cross-sectoral collaboration between religion, culture, and the community. With the involvement of religious and community leaders, the moral values taught to children can be more easily accepted and practiced in their daily lives

in their respective environments.

Another equally important implication is the periodic presence of universities or higher education institutions to provide guidance and evaluation of parenting practices at the grassroots level. Parenting at the grassroots or local community level is usually closer to local cultural values and customs. This approach allows children's education to be tailored to the characteristics and needs of each community. Campuses can act as facilitators, resource persons, and researchers who accompany communities in understanding, designing, and evaluating contextual and sustainable parenting strategies. This approach reinforces the importance of community-based education, where educational institutions are not only confined to classrooms but are actively present in the community, helping to create an environment conducive to children's growth and development. Effective moral and character education does not only come from a good curriculum, but also from healthy and value-filled relationships within the family and community. Overall, this seminar serves as a strategic starting point in building collective awareness and a new culture in educating children. From this event, it is evident that when parents are given space to engage in dialogue and understand their roles fully, they develop enthusiasm and initiative to improve parenting practices and collaborate with schools and the community. Therefore, similar programs should continue to be developed with a participatory approach that empowers communities directly, so that children's moral education is no longer the responsibility of a single party but becomes a sustainable collective movement.

CONCLUSIONS

Community service through educational seminars in Plakpak Village shows that increasing parents' awareness of their role in children's moral education is crucial and has a significant impact on children's development. Parents, as the first party responsible for shaping the character and morality of children, have a very large role in determining the direction of their children's lives. Therefore, actively involving parents in the process of moral education is a must, so that moral values can be properly embedded and practiced in daily life. This seminar also emphasized that education to parents about the importance of good parenting and effective communication in the family is very necessary. With better knowledge of how to educate and interact with children, parents can be more effective in carrying out their duties. In addition, the involvement of religious and community leaders is also very influential in supporting the sustainability of moral education at the village level, because they have a great influence in shaping the norms and values accepted by the local community. However, to ensure that this awareness can be realized sustainably, further educational programs are needed. Similar programs that are sustainable will strengthen community understanding and provide the

necessary support so that parents can continue to improve their ability to educate their children. Thus, awareness of the role of parents in moral education will be more firmly embedded, which in turn will contribute to the creation of a better and more cultured generation.

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