

Expanding Avenues in Building Students' Character through Religious and Spiritual Development in Digital Era

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ABSTRACT

This study intends to advance character education, which is important in the digital age. The contemporary environment, where young people's behavior frequently demonstrates a moral crisis, makes strengthening character education extremely vital. Bullying and phubbing incidents are just two examples of the juvenile misbehavior that is rising. This study employs a descriptive qualitative methodology together with data analysis strategies based on literary studies, which are supposed to be able to communicate and comprehend the meaning that various persons or groups of people consider a problem to be. This is done in an effort to comprehend the phenomena that are emerging in society as a result of literary discoveries. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that religious education and religiosity of students can help them develop into people with good morals, who are responsible, and who behave in accordance with religiously instilled moral values. This will help them deal with a variety of situations in life and help them become good members of society.

Keywords: Character Education, Religious Understanding, Islamic Religious Education.

INTRODUCTION

Character is a very fundamental characteristic that sets humans apart from other species. Individually and socially resilient people are people with high morals and virtues. People with strong character (having good values and morals) are thought to be drastically damaged as time passes and technology advances.

The field of education has undergone substantial transformation as a result of technological and societal changes. Both positive and negative aspects of this transition are visible. In order to prepare for this, the government published Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2018 regarding Strengthening Character Education in Formal Education Units,

which contains articles on strengthening character education (PPK) from formal and informal schools.

According to Article 2, "PPK is carried out by applying Pancasila values in character education, particularly including religious values, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creative, independent, democratic, curiosity, national spirit, love of the motherland, appreciation for achievement, communicative, peace-loving, fond of reading, care for the environment, care for the social, and be responsible

Strengthening character education is extremely pertinent to the current environment, where young people's behavior frequently demonstrates a moral crisis, including the rising incidence of juvenile delinquency and incidences of bullying and phubbing (Siregar et al., 2022).

What's even more alarming is that this moral decay demonstrates that moral and religious teaching in schools has not had a substantial impact on character development. Demoralization happens as a result of religious and moral instruction that is restricted to literature that students must master without offering a comprehension of contemporary life. The job of a teacher as an educator and understanding in the educational process are linked.

The moral and ethical duties teachers have to their students are referred to as their "responsibility" in Islamic education. Along with imparting the necessary information and abilities, an Islamic educator is also responsible for forming the morals, character, and values of his pupils. The letter at-tahrim verse 6 of the Qur'an explains;

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَظٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

"O you who believe, protect yourselves and your families from the fires of hell whose fuel is human and stone, guardians of angels who are rough, harsh, and don't disobey Allah's commands for what He commands them and always do what order."

This verse encourages teachers in the context of Islamic education to give pupils advice and direction so that they might comprehend and obey Allah's laws and refrain from any faults or mistakes that could send them to hell. A respectable Muslim teacher must lead by example and offer sound advice in order for their students to mature into devout persons who uphold God's commands. (<https://www.detik.com/edu/detikpedia/d-5934188/al-quran-surat-at-tahrim-ayat-6-ungkap-bahan-bakar-neraka>)

The current generation of millennials needs educators as role models since they are capable of instructing and guiding them, have solid morals and character, and are highly qualified. In order to better understand the millennial generation, educators can use the following examples:

1. Good moral and ethical role models: A teacher needs to have moral values like honesty, fairness, responsibility, patience, and tolerance. An educator can help

students develop good character and morality by setting a good example for them and by having strong moral principles themselves.

2. Required knowledge and abilities: In order to instruct and mentor students, educators must also possess the knowledge and abilities required. This comprises the capacity to master a subject area, create efficient teaching strategies, and have successful communication and interaction with pupils.
3. Creativity and innovation are essential in educating and directing students because the current millennial age has a tendency to be more receptive and forward-thinking. This can be achieved by creating teaching strategies in the classroom.

The idea of educator responsibility in Islamic education implies that a teacher must have a strong sense of morality and ethics and be dedicated to giving high-quality instruction. A teacher must be able to identify each student's needs and potential, inspire them to learn, and help them form moral and ethical values.

Additionally, a teacher needs to encourage students in understanding and upholding Islamic ideals in daily life by focusing on aspects of spirituality and religion in education. It is intended that Islamic education will generate generations who are of high caliber, have upright morals, and can make valuable contributions to society and the country by effectively implementing the idea of educator responsibility. Islam has various ideas regarding character development, some of which are;

1. In his work *Bidayatul Hidayah*, Imam Al-Ghazali outlines the paradigm for character education. This book explains the Imam Al-Ghazali model of character education, which emphasizes the importance of having a clear goal when learning and doing your duty as best you can. Additionally to engaging in social interactions with excellent ethics (Rohmah et al., 2021)
2. According to Al-Farabi, character education prioritizes the development of morals or morality in educational settings. According to Al-Farabi, knowledge is pure and can only be attained by those with high morals and a pure heart. According to Al-Farabi, a student must be aware of every variation in the potentials that other pupils possess throughout the educational process (Humaedah & Almubarak, 2021)

From the aforementioned issues, it can be inferred that one of the finest ways to develop the character of today's youth is through religious and spiritual education. This is supported by the observation that the only teaching that is ingrained in daily life, has a significant impact on variety, and contributes to the development of a person's whole personality (Marlina et al., 2023)

METHOD

Methods of library research are used in this work. In this instance, the researcher articulates and comprehends the meaning that various people or groups of people think a problem to be (Boud et al., 2016) There are a number of reasons why researchers choose to conduct literature studies in this study, including the following: a) Only literature research can provide answers to research questions; it is difficult to expect data from field research. b) Literature research is a distinct stage for carrying out an initial investigation to better comprehend novel phenomena that are currently emerging in society. c) Library information is still trustworthy and relevant for study.

According to the aforementioned arguments, it is clear that studies of literary works can be used to conduct contemporary study on character phenomena in order to better comprehend the phenomena that are currently surfacing in society.

Research Sources and Types of Research Data

Reference books, bulletin and magazine indexes, newspaper and tabloid indexes, document indexes, manuscript indexes, and other sources were employed as the research sources in this study.

This will help researchers choose the best data sources to employ. Textbooks, scholarly publications, statistical references, and reports on research findings in the form of theses, theses, and dissertations are a few data sources that might be used. Non-academic publications, including periodicals, newspapers, websites, the internet, project reports, and lecture notes, are some examples of data sources that can be used as support. In order to account for the research's findings, careful consideration must be given while choosing research sources.

Data Collection Techniques

Research data gathering methods employ methods for conducting literature studies (Mulyana, 2001). review of encyclopedias and findings from earlier, similar research projects carried out by other people. The objective is to establish a theoretical foundation for the issue being researched. In this study, researchers consulted a variety of literary works, as well as documentation (KEMDIKBUD Law, Curriculum, Books).

Analysis Data Techniques

This study employed qualitative data analysis methods, emphasizing a methodical justification of the findings of the investigation. According to Sugiyono, Miles & Huberman's qualitative data analysis method (2018: 246) There is a case can be made for the ongoing and interactive examination of qualitative data up until saturation. The three components of this data analysis technique are as follows:

1. Reducing data. The researcher assembled the literature needed to study the data by condensing it. Reading the abstract, introduction, methodology, and discussion before classifying the literature into designated categories is the first step in conducting literature research, which entails studying a wide range of literature for concepts, objectives, and conclusions.
2. Presenting data. A narrative compilation of the data collection produced from the reduction findings is used to convey the data, allowing conclusions and actions to be taken. Following that, the data is described using comments, graphs, or tables. After the information has been organized and cleaned up, a summary of the literature is created by comparing the data and looking for connections between the literature in the form of stories.
3. Drawing conclusions. The third phase is to form conclusions based on the outcomes of the interpretation of the plainly supplied data. In order to produce articles that are engaging and worth reading, it is vital to determine what is thought to be very important to examine or evaluate.

Research Instrument

The researcher uses the documentation approach to look at written materials including books, scientific journals, theses, dissertations, and research findings from theses, among others. The research tool is an analysis table that serves as a study guide for a document. In the analysis table, as shown in the table below, there is a special role.

Table 1. Literature Research Instruments

Aspect	Indicator	Sub-Indicator
Character Education Theories	Character Education	a. School climate b. School curriculum c. The learning process at school
Islamic education	Religious Understanding	a. The dimensions of belief or ideology b. The ritualistic dimension c. The experiential dimension d. Consequence dimension
The Role of Teachers in Islamic Religious Education	Islamic religious education and the role of the teacher in character development	a. Demonstrating b. Processing c. Mediators and facilitators d. Evaluating

		e. Administering d. personality role
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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Character education theory

Character Education

Dr. Marimba states that character education is a process of character development that strives to create people with good personalities in accordance with the moral and ethical principles that are fostered in society (Marimba, 1989: 19). There are three main components to character education, there are:

1. Moral education: This entails teaching moral and ethical principles including integrity, self-control, responsibility, compassion, and tolerance. The goal of moral education is to create honorable and decent people.
2. Religious education entails teaching students about moral principles and principles of religion, such as faith, piety, sincerity, and variety. Religion and moral virtue are to be developed through education.
3. Social education entails teaching students about civic duties and rights, as well as interpersonal interactions and social relationships. Social pedagogy aims to develop personalities who are responsible for and concerned with their social environment.

As a result, character education must be comprehensive and incorporated into all facets of life, including those in society and at school. Teachers, parents, and society all play a significant part in character education and the development of good character. Therefore, character education needs to be a fundamental component of both formal and informal learning and must be applied consistently and continuously over an extended period of time.

a.Character Education in School Climate

Since schools are official educational institutions and play a significant role in students' character development, character education must take place in a school setting. Schools have a duty to help students reach their potential on all fronts academically and personally as an established educational institution.

The Indonesian dictionary defines "character" as having a psychological nature, morality, or other qualities that set a person apart from others. A person is seen as a person or character in the eyes of Ki Hadjar Dewantara. He asserts that character is a concoction of ideas, emotions, and volitional actions that produce energy (Ridwan, 2020).

The implementation of character education in an elementary school setting is known to occur both within and outside of the classroom. through organizing the process of learning and its application, character building is implemented during learning. Specifically, character development outside of the classroom.

extracurricular activities and school culture implementation. It is important for teachers to become familiar with the dominant student culture at their schools. Each instructor ought to be able to use simple-to-learn techniques to evaluate the character scores of their students. (Prabandari, 2020).

According to the aforementioned theory, it can be deduced that character education must be practiced in a school environment in order to: develop students' moral character, promote a positive outlook, enhance the quality of instruction, create a secure and welcoming learning environment, and increase student compliance.

Character Education in the School Curriculum

In relation to the program for autonomous learning, character education has been incorporated into the school curriculum. One of them is the instructor setting a good example for students by incorporating moral principles into lesson planning (Nurdiana Sari et al., 2023).

Islam also teaches that every Muslim can regulate their emotions and manage them effectively, which will result in excellent morals. Because of this, character education is crucial for fostering children's emotional intelligence (Muzdalifah et al., 2022).

There are several ways to incorporate character education into the curriculum, including: a) creating learning programs that reflect character qualities including honesty, discipline, responsibility, caring, and tolerance. Every topic must incorporate this learning method, and it must be done consistently. b) Using teaching strategies that are appropriate for each student's needs, such as collaborative learning (Marlina, et al, 2022). Reflective Learning and Project Learning, This teaching strategy aids in the character development of the students. c) Create extracurricular activities, such as social, athletic, and creative pursuits, that can aid kids in the development of good character. These extracurricular activities must be implemented consistently and connected with educational programs. d) Character development in schools receives direct support from parents and the community. e) a setting that is secure, cozy, and accommodating of students. favorable character development is aided by a favorable school climate.

Discussion

Islamic education

Religious Understanding

The dimensions of belief or ideology

Religious education is a form of instruction that can help students reach their greatest potential (Gufron et al., 2020). Because a person's ideological views on religion will affect his perspective and attitude in daily life, the belief/ideological

factor is crucial. A person's understanding and application of the teachings of the religion to which they belong will likewise be impacted by this component.

In Islam, the belief/ideological component comprises the conviction that Allah exists, that serving Him is the point of life, that there is an afterlife, and that Muslims should uphold certain moral principles. The way a person understands Islam ideologically affects his or her beliefs and behaviors in daily life, including how they relate to others, conduct themselves in public, and perform their religious duties (Suharyadi, 2001).

The ritualistic dimension

In the context of religion, the ritual dimension refers to the practices for worship or rituals that are prescribed by that faith. This dimension contains several customs or ceremonies that a believer is required to follow, such as fasting, prayer, holiday celebrations, etc. This aspect of ritual is crucial to religion since it is thought to be a means of approaching God and receiving His grace (Syauket, 2021).

The experiential dimension

The experience component is crucial to comprehending religion since it can help a person grasp and appreciate his or her religion's teachings more deeply. These encounters increase one's religious belief and motivate one to follow that religion's precepts more closely (Sندی Aristya, 2021).

d. Consequence dimension

The impact of religious practices on the environment must also be taken into account in order to comprehend the scope of religious implications. Religion must be able to benefit the environment and prevent environmental harm or deterioration (W, 2022).

The Role of the Teacher in Islamic Religious Education

The lack of character education during the pandemic is anticipated to be filled by character education, which is rapidly being adopted in schools. This implies that an Islamic educator can have a role in developing his pupils' character in a variety of ways, such as:

1. **Demonstrating by imparting Islamic ideals:** A teacher must be aware of and live by Islamic values in order to inspire students to do the same. Through appropriate examples and instruction, values such as honesty, tolerance, sincerity, and hard effort can be taught (Mujiono et al., 2022).
2. **Managing, employing suitable teaching strategies:** To assist pupils in forming moral character, a teacher must employ suitable teaching strategies. Students can benefit from using effective teaching strategies (Araini & Cendana, 2022).
3. **Facilitators and mediators, Building trusting relationships:** It's important for teachers to establish trusting relationships with their students so that they can

discuss and interact with them freely. As a result, instructors are better able to comprehend each student's requirements and potential in order to help them grow into positive individuals (Rahmawati et al., 2021).

4. Evaluating, teachers can make sure that Islamic religious instruction benefits students the most and aids them in developing the required skills and goals by conducting ongoing assessments. Teachers also need to offer helpful criticism and assist students in realizing their potential. For pupils to keep learning and honing their talents, feedback can serve as inspiration and encouragement (Jumiatmoko, 2018).
5. Administrator, When handling administrative duties, teachers must make sure that the learning process goes smoothly, effectively, and benefits pupils to the fullest extent possible. Teachers may assist establish a positive learning atmosphere and encourage students to achieve well in their studies by performing administrative responsibilities well (Munawir et al., 2022)

Planning, carrying out, and assessing learning programs are all included in learning program management. Effective lesson planning is a must for teachers, as is the provision of materials like textbooks and presentation aids that enhance learning. In order to raise the standard of learning, teachers must also be able to assess the results of student learning and make adjustments to instructional strategies.

The importance of personality and serving as a positive role model

To encourage pupils to behave well and uphold moral principles, educators must set a good example in their daily lives. Students can quickly replicate an educator's behavior and attitudes, therefore the latter must be mindful of both his words and deeds.

On the basis of the aforementioned facts, it can be said that religious instruction and student religiosity can help students develop into morally upright, responsible, and ethically upright people who behave in accordance with religious moral values. They will be better able to handle life's challenges and become respectable members of society as a result.

CONCLUSION

Schools must make sure that all parts of character education, such as moral education, religious education, and social education, are included in the learning programs created before integrating character education into the school curriculum. Furthermore, character education programs must be implemented regularly and continually so that children can internalize the moral principles they have taught. The habituation of religion and religiosity in character building through teachers is

thought to be able to mitigate the harmful impacts of technology in the current digital age

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