

## The Formation of Children's Character through The Cultivation of Moral and Religious Values in Early Childhood

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### Abstract

*The formation of a person's character is determined in the treatment at an early age. The cultivation of moral and religious values needs to be instilled early on to get a character generation. The important thing that should get attention is the enhancement of moral and religious values in children. Qualitative description research is used in this study. To analyze children's character through observation, interviews, and communication with students, teachers, and parents. The study results show that children of early age (5-6 years) in Daarul Jannah Kindergarten show positive responses to the character of children in carrying out moral and religious values in the school and home environment and the future. It is expected that children have a strong personality and good character*

**Keywords:** *Early childhood, Character Building, Moral Values, Religion.*

### Abstrak

*Pembentukan karakter seseorang ditentukan pada perlakuan pada masa usia dini. Penanaman nilai-nilai moral dan agama perlu ditanamkan sejak dini untuk mendapatkan generasi berkarakter. Hal penting yang harus mendapatkan perhatian adalah penanaman nilai moral dan agama pada anak. Penelitian diskriptik analitik kualitatif digunakan dalam studi ini. Untuk menganalisa karakter anak diperoleh melalui observasi, wawancara dan komunikasi terhadap siswa, guru dan orang tua. Hasil dari penelitian menunjukkan anak usia Dini (5-6 tahun) di TK Daarul Jannah menunjukkan respon positif terhadap karakter anak dalam menjalankan nilai-nilai moral dan agama di lingkungan sekolah maupun rumah dan dimasa mendatang diharapkan anak memiliki kepribadian yang kokoh dan berkarakter baik.*

**Kata Kunci :** *Anak Usia Dini, Pembentukan Karakter, Nilai Moral, Agama.*

## INTRODUCTION

The golden age of children at an early age occurs only once in this phase of life. This phase is critical in determining children's development, both physically and psychologically. Children will grow optimally if a child is cared for in this phase, needs good nutrition, health, care, and education (Murdiono 2008).

Early childhood education contributes significantly to determining children's subsequent development because early childhood education is the foundation for children's personalities. To lay necessary abilities in developing moral and religious values, cognitive language, physical and social emotions.

Quality characters need to be formed and fostered from an early age. Early childhood is a critical period for character building. Early childhood character is influenced by two factors, namely internal and external. Early childhood has unique characteristics, both physically, psychologically, socially, morally, and so on. Character development in schools will be carried out smoothly if the teacher pays attention to several character development principles. Characters are developed through stages: knowing, acting, and habit. Several challenges are the main problems in character development in the global era (Rohman 2018).

The development of habits of correct behavior starts in the family. The family is the earliest and most effective place to teach various good habits that a child needs to have. Parents' success in guiding their children in overcoming personal conflicts at an early age will significantly determine their children's success in adulthood. In the family, parents' role needs to create a close emotional or psychological bond with their children (Prasanti and Fitriani 2018). Family is the closest environment to the child since the child is born. In this family, the children will get much experience to grow and develop for their future. In the family, parents can provide examples of behavior that will be imitated by children. Family is a significant place to teach moral values to children (Wuryandani 2010).

The school environment phase determines the character formation in early childhood apart from the family environment (Prasanti and Fitriani 2018). A study on the value of education obtained by students through school statistically has no significant effect on students' character building. However, partially, the value education variable obtained through school does not affect student character formation. Schools without

the presence of family, peers, and mass media are not significant. School results are still maintained because they were formally initiated, but it must also be remembered that students are also formed from the environment of family, peers, and the mass media (Wening 2012) so that the need for character learning studies is rooted in religious, moral values. Here the moral factor becomes the foundation or basis for building something excellent or ideal, and one of the primary obligations that educators and parents must carry out is to preserve and teach moral values to our children. The instilled moral values will become a character (noble morals), which is an essential foundation for forming a civilized and prosperous society to become a civilized society (Civilized Society). The state needs to adopt moral values that come from all religions' teachings because the core teachings of all religions are to form noble morals (Priest 2007; Masithoh 2019).

Formation and guidance need to be done from an early age to produce a generation with quality characters. Early childhood is a critical period for character building. Failure to cultivate character at an early age will form a problematic personality in adulthood. From an early age, children need to be cared for and educated with religious, moral values such as family values and virtue so that children grow up to be healthy children and have good character. From an early age, children must be warned and prevented from behaving and having lousy character. They have a strong foundation for their future lives (Megawangi, 2004).

Based on observations in Daarul Jannah Kindergarten, the development of religious, moral values, children are still as expected. The research objective is to collect data on educators' reasons to carry out activities of "Developing religious moral values" in early childhood to determine educators' success in carrying out these activities and policies that support educators to carry out these activities and make the critical analysis.

Some of the main goals of early childhood moral and religious education are to help children learn and interact with others, care for others, support friends, show kindness, and demonstrate skills and other character traits. The need to include character development in the early childhood curriculum to complement developmentally appropriate practices and meet state and national standards is emphasized.

Techniques for integrating character development include developmental disciplines and positive guidance, individual planning, game-based learning, successful experiences, making choices, setting boundaries, a collaborative environment, and modeling. Early childhood teacher educators are asked to build these lessons into the curriculum to prepare effectively to incorporate moral and religious education into the classroom for their future (Masithoh 2019; Murdiono 2008).

The results of the research are expected to be useful for children to provide motivation and training in the form of behavioral attitudes (religious, moral values through daily refraction and for teachers to overcome obstacles and solve solutions, namely cooperation between educators and parents of students, and for school results of this research can be used as useful information for TK Daarul Jannah.

## RESEARCH METHODS

Quantitative methods are used in this study. The study analyzes the phenomena experienced by the subjects of the study. The phenomena analyzed consist of aspects of moral values and religious practice of children through character learning. The study by digging information in depth from the point of view of educators, parents of students and direct observation of phenomena from students (Saputra 2014).

This study's subjects were children, parents, educators, and leaders of TK Daarul Jannah, East Pontianak. The research instruments that will be used are observation, interview, and documentation. Observation is the activity of seeing unique/exciting phenomena to be the focus of research. Interviews are used to extract more in-depth information about the focus of the research. Moreover, documentation is to collect explanatory evidence regarding the focus of the research.

## RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Research Result*

#### *1. Inculcating Moral and Religious Values in Early Childhood Daarul Jannah*

From the results of research on the improvement of moral and religious values of early childhood through classroom learning taught by educators, it shows a significant increase in children's understanding of changes in children's moral values and religious practice both in the school and home environment. Children can socialize by following what the educator has taught.

From the results of extracting information from the Kindergarten Principal, it was found that the Daarul Jannah school had a School Vision and Mission, namely "Preparing the Muslim generation as the next generation of the nation's children who have faith and piety (IMTAQ) as the main basis for the development of modern science and technology (IPTEK). . The mission of Daarul Jannah Kindergarten is to organize education programs and improve the quality of education which is always rooted in the religious value system and national education, carry out habitual behavior and speak good words in daily activities so that they become noble children. To achieve this goal, Darul Jannah Kindergarten has an early childhood potential development program designed in such a way as to adopt a character-based holistic curriculum. "The program is the same as other kindergartens, only maybe we put more emphasis on developing children's potential from an early age which we designed in such a way by adopting a holistic character-based curriculum so that children are not just playing but directed at achieving optimal development".

From extracting in-depth information from educators, that character education in children implanted in children is designed through a structured method as a safe answer to educators "We are educators and headmasters of kindergarten schools have participated in the character education DIKLAT for 14 days centered in Depok-Jakarta Indonesia Heritage. Foundation (IHF) The nation's seed seedling foundation was initiated by Mrs. Ratna Megawangi, from which we obtained program designs, curricula, and books to support character learning". Character education is not just teaching what is right and what is wrong. More than that, character education instills habits (habituation) about what is right so that children

understand (cognitive) about what is right and wrong, able to feel (affective) good grades, and used to do it (psychomotor).

The educators carry out the learning application through three stages consisting of knowing, feeling, and acting. Knowing is the provision of knowledge to children about moral and religious values (through the media of images, character pillar books available). Feeling explores aspects of children's feelings that include conscience, empathy, self-confidence, and love of truth. Acting is children doing from knowledge obtained by religious, moral values.

Character learning by educators is not only done alone but through collaboration with parents. "This character education is the formation of children's attitudes and behavior. It must be done continuously in daily habituation. Education is first and foremost family, so there is a common goal between school and family.

## 2. Characteristics of Students Based on Gender

The research was conducted at the Daarul Jannah Early Childhood Education (PAUD) school, East Pontianak Subdistrict, Pontianak City, with the target of 32 student respondents with the majority of the female sex (62.5%). The description of the types of students by gender can be seen in table 1.

Table 1 Description of Daarul Jannah students by gender

Gender	The number of students	Percentage (%)
Male	12	37,5
Female	20	62,5
Amount	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary data

### 1. Description of students' answers

Based on Daarul Jannah PAUD School students' research through questionnaires and observation sheets, the descriptive analysis for student character data can be seen in the image below.

Table 2. Percentage of Student Character Daarul Jannah

Value Interval	The number of students	Percentage	Information
43-49	19	59,37	Very good
37-42	10	32,25	Good
31-36	3	9,37	Not good

Source: Primary data

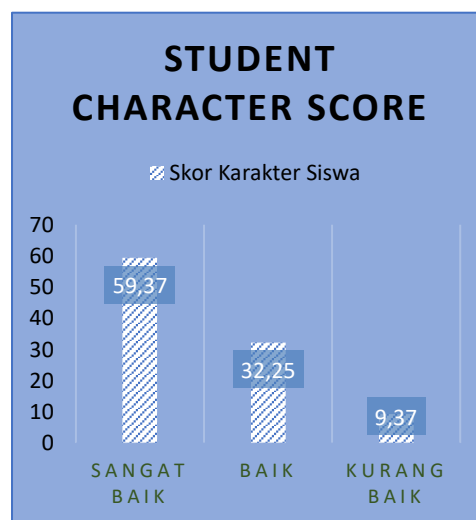


Figure 1. Histogram of Character Percentage

From the histogram data of PAUD Daarul Jannah students' character distribution, there is a 43-49 value interval for 19 students, at a percentage of 59.37% with the very good category. There is a value interval of 37-42 for 10 students, at a percentage of 32.25% with a good category. There is an interval value of 31-36 for 3 students, at a percentage of 9.37% with a low category.

## DISCUSSION

Moral and religious education is one of the main things in the world of education in realizing a nation's progress in the future. Education not only equips students with a set of knowledge to become more cognitively intelligent but also shapes the character and character of students into noble character and character. Education only prioritizes aspects of cognitive knowledge and ignores character, and spiritual development will give birth to generations that can tear down a nation's civilization. Religious education will be more effective when it is given at an early age. Therefore, religious education in PAUD institutions is one of the most critical aspects of PAUD

schools' learning process. Because students in PAUD units have a unique character both in terms of mental and intellectual development in line with their physical development, religious education in PAUD primarily emphasizes instilling religious values / morality, not on the form of teaching. The inculcation of religious values in early childhood is an effort to teach the central teachings of a religion which are expected to become guidelines in behavior (Saputra 2014).

character education is not just teaching what is right and what is wrong, more than that, character education instills habits (habituation) about what is good so that children understand (cognitive) about what is right and wrong, able to feel (affective) good grades and used to do it (psychomotor). Character education can be taught and exemplary from parents / caregivers by giving sincere love and affection (Permono 2003). From the literature review it is known that the family environment is the main place for a child to get education. Fathers and mothers in the family become the first educators in the development process of the child's life (Jailani 2014; Akilasari, Risyak, and Sabdaningtyas 2015).

In this study, the authors used character learning as an effort to improve moral and religious values through conditioning the family environment or parenting styles as well as the school environment or learning at school. Learning through increasing knowledge about morals (Moral Knowing) is essential for morals to be taught to children that make children get knowledge up to good moral recognition. All that needs to be taught to children so that children get used to having good character. Good character consists of knowing goodness (Knowing the Good), loving-kindness (Loving the Good), and wanting goodness (Desires the Good) (Saputra 2014; Prasanti and Fitriani 2018).

Kindergarten educator Daarul Jannah used the available pillar of character pictures about right and wrong actions. The method of conversation and question and answer is an activity that aims to instill in children the development of the ability of moral and religious values. The formation of behavior must be developed through habituation, which is carried out continuously. This aspect is somewhat different from the aspects of physical/motoric development, language, cognitive because these aspects are included in the material for the development of necessary abilities of early childhood.

There are differences between moral development and religious values with social, emotional, and independence aspects. The aspect of developing moral and religious values is an activity that aims to increase children's devotion to God Almighty and foster children's attitudes to lay the foundation of children to become good citizens. Meanwhile, the social, emotional, and independent aspects are intended to foster children to control their emotions naturally and interact well with each other and with adults and help themselves in life skills.

What is done at Daarul Jannah Kindergarten is to instill the development of the ability of moral and religious values through habituation, which is carried out continuously, which aims at forming children's attitudes. Hence, the school tries to collaborate with students' parents so that the habituation is not only carried out in the school environment. However, also at home (family environment), the family is the first and foremost place where children are educated and raised.

The form of cooperation between Daarul Jannah Kindergarten and parents in guiding their children is based on a questionnaire on the enduring character values taught at school. Aiming to find out how children behave at home, with the hope that parents can also direct what the school is trying to do so that there is a similarity in educating children between the school and at home, then after changing the questionnaire character material is collected again by the Daarul Jannah Kindergarten, as an evaluation material according to the predetermined time provisions and then proceed to the next questionnaire.

Educators carry out developing the capacity for moral and religious values at TK Daarul Jannah by finding three interrelated parts. The first part is moral knowing. This knowledge is an important thing that is taught to children to gain knowledge of good moral knowing. The second part is a feeling that is based on moral (moral feeling). This aspect of feeling must be prioritized for children because this aspect of feeling includes conscience, self-confidence, empathy, love, and truth and can also control oneself to be a humble person. The third part is moral behavior (moral action), a moral knowledge that is manifested in real action. Moral actions result from moral knowledge and feelings. This stage also includes a person's competence, desire, and habits to do right (Saputra 2014; Prasanti and Fitriani 2018).

On the walls of Daarul Jannah Kindergarten class, there are also pictures under which an inscription explains the pictures convey moral messages. This is in line with Brian Combourn's (1988) opinion regarding immersion: children are immersed in a state, environment, and conditions filled with conversation and writing.

The activities of developing the ability of values and spiritual abilities at TK Daarul Jannah Kindergarten in group A, in theory, are not much different from group B. The difference in group A is not too emphasized on practical activities, considering that it is according to the child's developmental stages.

In general, Daarul Jannah Kindergarten has good and focused activities. These activities have been structured in such a way and in line with theories in the scope of developing moral and religious values so that the possibility of achieving the expected results is very large, namely instilling correct and good behavior in line with the vision and mission of the school, namely preparing generations Muslims as the successor of the nation's children. They have faith and piety as the main basis for modern science and technology (IPTEK).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the implementation of planned and programmed character learning increases the practice of children's moral and religious values in school and family socialization. This success is inseparable from the cooperation between schools and parents of students in cultivating children's moral and religious values when the children are at home. Several suggestions need to be considered in developing moral and religious values in Daarul Jannah Kindergarten, it is better if cooperation with passive parents is better. To develop moral and religious values in kindergarten, it must be adjusted appropriately to the child development level and carried out in an integrated manner with other development activities.

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