The Role of Character Education in Islamic Religious Education

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Abstract: Human beings are noble creatures, even more noble than angels. Character education is crucial to be instilled from an early age in order to develop a character that aligns with religious teachings. This research aims to analyze and explore the role of character education in the context of Islamic religious education. The main focus is to understand how character education can strengthen Islamic values within an individual. Therefore, based on research using a qualitative method with a literature review approach, the results indicate that character education plays a significantly important role in reinforcing Islamic religious education.

Keywords: Character; Education; Religion

Abstrak: Manusia merupakan makhluk yang mulia, bahkan lebih mulia daripada malaikat. Pendidikan karakter sangat penting ditanamkan sejak awal supaya mendapatkan karakter yang sesuai dengan syariat agama. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis serta mengeksplorasi peran pendidikan karakter dalam konteks pendidikan agama Islam. Fokus utamanya adalah untuk mengetahui bagaimana pendidikan karakter dapat memperkuat nilai-nilai Islam dalam diri seseorang. Maka dari itu, berdasarkan penelitian dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kepustakaan ini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendidikan karakter memiliki peran yang sangat signifikan dalam memperkuat pendidikan Agama Islam.

Kata Kunci: Karakter, Pendidikan, Agama

A. Introduction

Character education needs to be studied for shaping individuals into more civilized, moral, ethical, and well-mannered beings, with behavior that aligns with

Islamic teachings. Especially in the context of Islamic religious education, it must be based on the Quran and Hadith in terms of ethics. This is important because character education plays a key role in shaping an individual's personality. Meanwhile, Islamic religious education contains essential moral and ethical values for the daily lives of Muslims.

This study focuses on the real conditions faced in the implementation of Islamic religious education, such as the challenges of integrating character values into the religious curriculum and the difficulties in teaching and instilling these values in each individual. Thus, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding and offer more effective solutions regarding the role of character education in Islamic religious education.

Character education, literally, involves the transformation or formation of one's nature, behavior, and personality according to set standards. Essentially, character education is an effort to support children's spiritual and emotional growth from their nature toward a more advanced human civilization. Moreover, character education encourages and instills good habits in daily life so that students can understand, explain, and develop care, empathy, and commitment to practicing these habits wisely every day. In this way, character education equips each individual with noble morals, ethics, and the ability to instill good character in their life.

In an effort to achieve national educational goals, the Indonesian government has initiated the "National Culture and Character Education Movement" since 2010. This movement aims to develop children's emotional intelligence through systematic and continuous implementation. One aspect emphasized in character education is honesty, with the hope of producing a future generation with strong moral values to address societal disparities. Education is seen as a conscious effort to shape students' attitudes according to prevailing norms, positioning schools as institutions that prepare children academically and morally for society. The importance of education is also reflected in its role in improving human quality through instilling moral values such as ethics, which cannot be separated from family, school, and community environments.

Today's youth have lost their moral standards due to the negative impacts of globalization. Values such as honesty, respect, courtesy, and other noble qualities seem

to have become foreign to them. Among students, various harmful behaviors occur, such as bullying, free sex, brawls that result in casualties, extortion, skipping school, promiscuity, and drug abuse.

Islamic religious education plays a crucial role in enhancing students' understanding of Islamic teachings. This is especially important in shaping the religious character or morals of students, as the subject contains high moral and ethical values. Islamic religious education in schools is vital for students to gain a better understanding of Islamic principles. Additionally, this education aims to develop faith, understanding, appreciation, and application of Islamic principles.

Character building can be achieved through Islamic religious education in both formal and non-formal educational settings. Character education is a learning process integrated into all student activities, both in school and in the community, through habituation, exemplary actions, and continuous practice not merely through material that is memorized temporarily and cannot be fully evaluated.

B. Method

The research method used in this study is descriptive qualitative with a library research approach. This approach involves utilizing library resources such as books, journals, and other written documents. According to Sutrisno Hadi (1990), it is called library research because the data or materials needed to complete the research are sourced from libraries, including books, encyclopedias, dictionaries, journals, documents, magazines, and others.

C. Results and Discussion

The results and discussion of this research are based on the agreed-upon research objective, namely the "Role of Character Education in Islamic Religious Education." The explanation is as follows:

Concept of Character Education

In Islam, character education is considered an essential part of shaping a Muslim's personality. For centuries, this issue has been a central concern in Islam, having been recognized for 15 centuries. Islamic teachings establish character education as a primary

goal to be followed. In a hadith narrated by Imam Malik, the Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam stated that his mission was to improve human morality.

The concept of character education has existed since the time of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), who was tasked with perfecting the character of his followers, as commanded by Allah. The substance of character in Islam aligns with the concept of "akhlaq" (morals), both of which address human deeds and behavior. Al-Ghazali explained that "akhlaq" is an attitude ingrained in the soul that results in actions without much thought. Suwito stated that "akhlaq" is also known as the science of behavior or conduct, as it helps us understand the virtues of the soul and how to purify impure souls. Character reflects values seen in behavior that demonstrates goodness, positive actions, and positive impacts on the environment, formed through thoughts, feelings, physical actions, and the beliefs of individuals or groups.

Methods of Character Education

Character education should start from the basic principles of human nature, referred to as "fitrah." Every individual is born with their own "fitrah," including intellect, desires (body), heart, and spirit. Islamic religious education aims to improve society's development, both as individuals and as members of society. Islam views education as a crucial element in humanizing people. Children are born with innate purity and potential that can be developed, and if they are raised in an environment rich in Islamic guidance, they will internalize the Islamic way of life and norms. Conversely, the lack of such guidance can lead to opposite outcomes.

There are several methods of character education that can be used to achieve these goals, including:

1) **Exemplary Method**: Using positive examples through words and actions to guide students, a method successfully used by the Prophet in his mission.

2) **Habituation Method**: Instilling good habits in behavior, skills, abilities, and thought patterns consistently. Once habits are established, they are easier to execute.

3) **Advice Method**: Providing explanations of truth and benefits to avoid harm and direct individuals toward happiness and benefits. Stories from the Quran and the life of the Prophet are often used to illustrate the values taught.

4) **Motivation and Intimidation Method**: Using motivation through the promise of happiness and love, and "tarhib" as a warning against wrongdoing. The use of persuasive language is critical in this method.

5) **Persuasion Method**: Convincing students of the teachings using logic and reason, encouraging them to use their intellect to distinguish right from wrong.

6) **Storytelling Method**: Using stories from the past to teach moral values. These stories can raise awareness, inspire, and impart the desired values to students.

Each method has its own advantages and approach to shaping students' character and personality. In the context of Islamic education, the application of these methods can enhance the understanding and practice of Islamic teachings in a comprehensive and planned manner.

The Impact of Character Education in Islamic Religious Education

Based on relevant data, the impact of Islamic religious education in shaping religious character in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 is a complex issue in daily life. In this context, the role of teachers in direct interaction with students during the teaching and learning process becomes even more critical. Several character education strategies applied include: 1) Exemplary actions; 2) Learning; 3) Empowerment and cultural development; 4) Reinforcement; and 5) Evaluation. The integration of character education in religious education is crucial.

Education in Islam emphasizes the importance of ethics or character as a central focus. This is evident from the hadith of the Prophet that emphasizes teaching goodness and raising children. Islamic education recognizes that humans have the natural potential to do good, to cause harm, and to possess spiritual aspects. Islamic education includes knowledge, ethics, and beliefs, addressing all of an individual's potential through a holistic approach. Ethical principles such as wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice underscore the importance of controlling desires. Islam emphasizes the importance of education in shaping children's morals, as a foundation for their other potential. Character formation in children is the primary goal of education in Islam, with a focus on drawing closer to Allah as the ultimate measure of human perfection. This highlights the significance of character education in creating a dignified and respected society.

D. Conclusion

The importance of character education in Islam for shaping a Muslim's personality is heavily emphasized, as conveyed by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). This concept has existed since the time of the Prophet as a central part of Islamic teachings. Character education focuses not only on actions and behavior but also on spiritual values and human nature. Character education methods in Islam include exemplary actions, habituation, advice, motivation, persuasion, and storytelling. The role of character education is vital in shaping religious character in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, where teachers' roles in the learning process are crucial. Integrating character education into Islamic religious education is essential for shaping a generation with noble and religious morals, in line with holistic Islamic principles.

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