

Strengthening Character Education through Management of Religious Habits Program for Students

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Abstract

Character education is an important part of Islamic education to shape students with noble character. One of the efforts undertaken by madrasas is through a religious habituation program that is implemented continuously. This study aims to describe the strengthening of character education through the management of the religious habituation program for students at MTs Al Ikhlas Cibalong Tasikmalaya. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model which includes data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results show that the management of the religious habituation program is carried out through structured planning, organization, implementation, and evaluation. The religious habituation program is realized through activities such as tadarus Al-Qur'an, joint prayers, congregational prayers, and other religious activities supported by the Islamic boarding school environment. The program has a positive impact on the formation of religious character, discipline, responsibility, and politeness in students. Thus, the religious habituation program is an effective means of strengthening the character education of students at MTs Al Ikhlas Cibalong Tasikmalaya.

Keywords: Character Education, Religious Habits, Students.

Abstrak

Pendidikan karakter merupakan bagian penting dari pendidikan Islam untuk membentuk siswa yang memiliki akhlak mulia. Salah satu upaya yang dilakukan oleh madrasah adalah melalui program pembiasaan keagamaan yang dilaksanakan secara berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan penguatan pendidikan karakter melalui pengelolaan program pembiasaan keagamaan bagi siswa di MTs Al Ikhlas Cibalong Tasikmalaya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus. Data diperoleh melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña yang mencakup kondensasi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pengelolaan program pembiasaan keagamaan dilakukan melalui perencanaan, pengorganisasian, pelaksanaan, dan evaluasi yang terstruktur. Program pembiasaan keagamaan diwujudkan melalui kegiatan seperti tadarus Al-Qur'an, doa bersama, salat berjemaah, dan kegiatan keagamaan lainnya yang didukung oleh lingkungan pesantren. Program ini memberikan dampak positif terhadap pembentukan karakter religius, kedisiplinan, tanggung jawab, dan kesantunan pada siswa. Dengan demikian, program pembiasaan keagamaan merupakan sarana yang efektif untuk memperkuat pendidikan karakter siswa di MTs Al Ikhlas Cibalong Tasikmalaya.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Karakter, Pembiasaan Keagamaan, Siswa.

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INTRODUCTION

Character education is an important aspect in the educational process, especially in Islamic educational institutions (A. Amiruddin, 2024). Education aims not only to develop students' intellectual abilities but also to shape their personalities, attitudes, and behaviors in accordance with religious values and social norms. Amidst the increasingly rapid development of science and technology, the various

moral and social challenges faced by students are increasingly complex. This situation demands that educational institutions focus not only on academic achievement but also on character development.

Madrasah as an Islamic educational institution has the responsibility to instill religious values that can become the foundation for forming the character of students (Afif & Suamong, 2021). One effort that can be made is through a religious habituation program. Religious habituation is an activity carried out routinely and continuously to instill religious values in students' daily lives (Fatimah, 2021). Through religious habits, students are expected to be able to develop religious character, discipline, responsibility, honesty, and good social attitudes.

The success of a religious habituation program is inseparable from the management carried out by the madrasah. A program that is well-planned, consistently implemented, and continuously evaluated will have a more optimal impact on strengthening students' character education (Aisyah, 2018). On the other hand, programs that are not managed systematically have the potential to fail to achieve their stated goals.

In addition, strengthening character education through religious habituation programs is becoming increasingly important because character cannot be formed instantly through the delivery of learning materials alone (A. Syafi' et al., 2024). Character is formed through a continuous process of habituation so that the instilled values become part of students' daily behavior. In the context of Islamic education, religious habituation aims not only to increase students' religious understanding but also to shape attitudes and behaviors that reflect Islamic values in their personal and social lives (M. F. Amiruddin, 2018). Therefore, implementing a religious habituation program requires the commitment and involvement of all members of the madrasa community so that the goal of character building can be optimally achieved.

On the other hand, the success of a religious habituation program is measured not only by the implementation of various religious activities, but also by the changes in students' behavior evident in their daily lives. Students are expected to not only be able to perform religious services regularly, but also to demonstrate discipline, responsibility, honesty, social awareness, and good morals (Hakim, 2022). To achieve these goals, effective management is required so that each designed program can run according to its stated objectives. Through proper management, religious habituation programs can be an effective means of strengthening the character education of students in the madrasah environment.

MTs Al Ikhlas Cibalong Tasikmalaya is an Islamic educational institution that organizes various religious habituation activities as part of its efforts to strengthen students' character. These activities include congregational prayer, reading the Quran, praying before and after lessons, and various other routine religious activities. These programs are part of the madrasah culture, which is expected to shape students' character in accordance with Islamic values.

Based on the author's initial observations, the religious habituation program at MTs Al Ikhlas Cibalong Tasikmalaya has been running and has become a routine activity. However, the program's success is inseparable from the planning, organization, implementation, and evaluation processes

carried out by the madrasah. Therefore, a more in-depth study is needed to determine how the management of character education strengthening through the religious habituation program is implemented at the madrasah.

This research is crucial because strengthening character education is a key need in today's education system. Furthermore, the results are expected to provide insight into the management practices of the religious habituation program implemented at MTs Al Ikhlas Cibalong Tasikmalaya. This can serve as evaluation and development material for Islamic educational institutions in improving the quality of student character education.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method at MTs Al Ikhlas Cibalong Tasikmalaya. Research data were obtained through observations of the implementation of religious habituation programs, such as congregational prayer, Quran recitation, group prayer, and other religious activities. In addition, the researcher conducted interviews with the madrasah principal, the vice principal for student affairs, teachers, and students to obtain information regarding the management of strengthening character education through religious habituation programs. Research data were also strengthened by a documentary study of work programs, activity schedules, madrasah regulations, and other documents related to the research focus (Moleong, 2014).

Data analysis was carried out using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model which includes data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Sugiyono, 2023). Data condensation is carried out by selecting, focusing, and grouping data from observations, interviews, and documentation related to the planning, organization, implementation, and evaluation of the religious habituation program (Sopwandin, 2023). Next, the collected data is presented in the form of descriptive descriptions so that the relationships between the data can be clearly understood. The final stage is drawing conclusions and verification by interpreting the research findings and comparing them with data obtained from various sources to produce credible conclusions regarding the management of strengthening character education through a religious habituation program at MTs Al Ikhlas Cibalong Tasikmalaya.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Planning a Religious Habituation Program in Strengthening Character Education

Based on an interview with Cici Rismawati, an educational staff member at MTs Al Ikhlas Cibalong Tasikmalaya, it was discovered that the religious habituation program is one of the school's flagship programs in strengthening students' character education. The program was designed at the beginning of the school year through a meeting involving the principal, teachers, and the Islamic boarding school. The meeting discussed the program's objectives, the types of activities to be implemented, the implementation schedule, and the teachers responsible for each activity.

Program planning is carried out taking into account the conditions of the madrasah within the Islamic boarding school environment. This environment is seen as having great potential to support the development of students' religious character. Therefore, various religious activities that have become part of the Islamic boarding school culture are integrated into the madrasah program so that their implementation can be sustainable and mutually supportive.

Based on the results of the documentation study, the planned religious habituation program includes Quranic recitation before class, prayer practice before and after class, congregational prayer, and moral development in daily life. These programs are designed not only to improve students' religious abilities but also to develop character traits of discipline, responsibility, courtesy, and religiousness.

These findings indicate that MTs Al Ikhlas has implemented a planning function as the initial step in implementing a religious habituation program. This is relevant to the theory (Terry, 1968), which states that planning (*planning*) is the process of determining objectives and establishing the actions necessary to achieve those objectives. Through careful planning, each program has a clear direction so that its implementation can be carried out in a structured manner (Sopwandin et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the findings of this study align with Mulyasa's opinion that character education requires systematic planning to integrate character values into all educational activities. With planning undertaken from the beginning of the school year, the religious habituation program at MTs Al Ikhlas has a strong foundation in supporting the development of student character.

Organizing a Religious Habituation Program in Strengthening Character Education

Based on the research results, the organization of the religious habituation program was carried out by dividing tasks and responsibilities among all teachers according to their respective fields and competencies. The madrasah principal acted as the primary person in charge, overseeing the entire program, while the teachers were tasked with guiding and overseeing the implementation of activities in the field.

During the Quran recitation program, Mr. Ade was appointed as the person in charge. He was tasked with guiding the recitation every morning through the mosque's loudspeaker located on the Islamic boarding school grounds. Additionally, Mr. Aji, Mr. Asep, and Mr. Ade, as teachers and ustaz, played a role in providing religious guidance, supervision, and role models for students during the religious habituation activities.

Observations showed that each teacher was actively involved in assisting students throughout the activities. Teachers served not only as supervisors but also as role models in carrying out various religious activities. The involvement of all teachers demonstrated strong collaboration in supporting the success of the character education strengthening program.

The findings are relevant to the theory (Subekti, 2022), which explains that organizing (*organizing*) is the process of dividing tasks, authority, and responsibility to achieve organizational

goals effectively. The organization carried out by MTs Al Ikhlas shows a clear division of tasks so that each personnel understands their respective roles in program implementation.

This opinion is strengthened by (Sagala, 2016), which states that organization in educational institutions aims to create good coordination between personnel so that all programs can run effectively and efficiently. With a clear division of tasks, the implementation of the religious habituation program at MTs Al Ikhlas can take place in a focused and sustainable manner.

Implementation of the Religious Habituation Program in Strengthening Character Education

Based on observations, the religious habituation program is implemented daily before learning begins. One characteristic activity at the madrasah is Quran recitation, held at 7:00 a.m. WIB. Mr. Ade leads the program through the mosque's loudspeaker, allowing all students to follow along simultaneously from their respective classrooms.

Throughout the activity, the teacher in the classroom assists and supervises the students. The tadarus (recitation) activities are carried out in an orderly manner and have become a part of the students' daily routine. After the tadarus activity is completed, the learning process continues according to the schedule established by the madrasah.

In addition to Quranic recitation, students are also encouraged to pray before and after lessons, respect teachers, maintain a clean environment, and participate in various religious activities organized by madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools. These activities serve as a means of developing religious character on an ongoing basis.

Based on interviews with teachers, the religious habituation program has had a positive impact on student behavior. Students have become more disciplined in attending madrasah, are more accustomed to reading the Quran, and demonstrate greater politeness toward teachers and peers. This demonstrates that the program's implementation not only impacts religious aspects but also overall character development.

The findings of this study are relevant to the theory (Lickona, 2012), which states that character is formed through continuous practice so that the values taught become part of an individual's behavior. The habit of reading the Quran every morning is a form of character education implemented through direct and repeated experience.

This finding is also in accordance with the opinion of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan in (Haryanti & Romli, 2021), which explains that the habituation method is one of the most effective Islamic educational methods in shaping students' morals. Regular religious activities will help students internalize Islamic values in their daily lives.

Furthermore, the presence of MTs Al Ikhlas within an Islamic boarding school (pesantren) is a crucial supporting factor. The religious environment of the Islamic boarding school provides a conducive atmosphere for students to engage in various religious activities. This aligns with environmental education theory, which states that the environment plays a crucial role in shaping students' attitudes, behavior, and character.

Evaluation of the Religious Habituation Program in Strengthening Character Education

Based on interviews with the principal and teachers, the religious habituation program is evaluated periodically through direct observation of student engagement in each activity. Teachers monitor student attendance, discipline, and commitment to *tadarus* (Islamic recitation) and other religious activities.

In addition to daily observations, evaluations are also conducted through periodic teacher meetings. These meetings discuss progress on program implementation, challenges encountered, and steps needed to increase program effectiveness. Evaluations are conducted as a form of continuous improvement of the program's implementation.

Evaluation results showed that the majority of students were participating well in the religious habituation program. However, some students still needed further guidance regarding discipline and participation in religious activities. Therefore, teachers continued to provide ongoing support and guidance.

These findings indicate that MTs Al Ikhlas has implemented an evaluation function as part of program management. This is relevant to the theory (Rahman, 2021), which states that supervision or evaluation (*controlling*) is the process of measuring the implementation of activities and comparing them with established objectives. Through evaluation, educational institutions can determine the level of success of the programs they implement.

This opinion is strengthened by (Arikunto, 2016), which explains that evaluation is the process of gathering information to determine the success of a program and to provide the basis for decision-making for future program improvements. Therefore, the evaluation conducted by MTs Al Ikhlas plays a crucial role in maintaining the sustainability and quality of the religious habituation program as a means of strengthening students' character education.

CONCLUSION

The process of strengthening character education through the management of religious habituation programs at MTs Al Ikhlas Cibalong Tasikmalaya is implemented through structured planning and organization stages. Planning is carried out through meetings involving the madrasah principal, teachers, and Islamic boarding school officials to establish various religious programs that support student character development. Furthermore, organization is carried out through a clear division of tasks and responsibilities among all teachers so that each activity can be carried out effectively, directed, and sustainably in accordance with predetermined objectives.

The program is implemented through Quranic recitation, communal prayer, congregational prayer, and various other religious activities, conducted routinely and supported by a religious Islamic boarding school environment. These activities have a positive impact on the development of religious character, discipline, responsibility, and politeness in students. To maintain the sustainability and quality of the program, periodic evaluations are conducted through direct observation and evaluation

meetings so that any obstacles that arise can be immediately addressed and the religious habituation program can continue to be developed as a means of strengthening students' character education.

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