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Islamic Religious Education Curriculum as a Vessel for Developing Islamic Character in the Modern Era

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ABSTRACT

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a vital role in shaping the Islamic character of students in the modern era. The PAI curriculum is designed to instill Islamic values that are relevant to contemporary challenges, helping to shape individuals with noble morals and integrity. This article discusses the implementation of the PAI curriculum in character building, the methods used, and the challenges faced in the context of modernization.

ABSTRAK

Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) memainkan peran vital dalam membentuk karakter Islami peserta didik di era modern. Kurikulum PAI dirancang untuk menanamkan nilai-nilai keislaman yang relevan dengan tantangan zaman, sehingga mampu membentuk individu yang berakhlak mulia dan berintegritas. Artikel ini membahas implementasi kurikulum PAI dalam pembinaan karakter Islami, metode yang digunakan, serta tantangan yang dihadapi dalam konteks modernisasi.

INTRODUCTION

In this modern era, technological developments and globalization affect various aspects of human life, including education. Rapid changes in lifestyle patterns and open access to information present new challenges for education, especially Islamic Religious Education (PAI). In this context, PAI has a strategic role in shaping Islamic character that can be a foundation for students to face the challenges of the times. As a value-based education system, the PAI curriculum must be designed so that it not only provides a theoretical understanding of Islamic teachings but is also able to build noble morals and spiritual values in everyday life (Nurazizah, et.al., 2020).

The current PAI curriculum is required to be more adaptive and innovative by utilizing technology as a learning medium and integrating Islamic values in various subjects (Suwandi & Widodo, 2021). This Islamic character education is believed to be able to be a filter in dealing with the negative impacts of globalization that can erode the moral values of the younger generation (Pakpahan & Habibah, 2021). However, the implementation of the PAI curriculum in the modern era is not without challenges. The influence of global culture that often conflicts with Islamic values, the lack of educator competence, and limited educational facilities are obstacles that must be overcome. In addition, the gap in access to technology in various regions is also a significant problem in the digital-based PAI learning process (Khoirin & Hamami, 2021). Therefore, efforts to revitalize the PAI curriculum through an integrative approach and based on character values are very necessary to ensure the formation of a generation with Islamic character that is relevant to the needs of the times (Mansir, 2020).

The Role of Islamic Religious Education Curriculum in the Formation of Islamic Character. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a very important role in the formation of Islamic character of students, especially in the modern era which is full of challenges and dynamics of globalization. The PAI curriculum does not only focus on the teaching aspect of religious theory, but also on character development in accordance with Islamic values that can be applied in everyday life. In this case, the PAI curriculum must be able to answer the needs of the younger generation who live in a fast-paced and information-filled environment, but still maintain Islamic morals and ethics.

Next, Integration of Islamic Values in the Curriculum. One way to form an Islamic character through Islamic Religious Education is to integrate Islamic values in all subjects taught. This is done by integrating religious concepts in a broader learning context, so that students not only know religion in theory, but can also apply these values in everyday life. In this case, values such as honesty, hard work, and justice must be part of the daily lives of students taught through various subjects, not just through Islamic Religious Education lessons themselves.

Contextual Learning for Character Building. The Islamic Religious Education curriculum in the modern era must use a contextual approach that can connect religious learning with real situations faced by students. Contextual learning allows students to understand and apply Islamic teachings in everyday life, such as in social relationships, work, and in dealing with problems that arise in society more easily. For example, when learning about the importance of maintaining trust in Islamic teachings, students can be given real examples of how to apply these values in their lives at school and at home (Nurhasanah, et.al., 2024). Utilization of Technology in Islamic Religious Education Learning. In the digital era, the utilization of technology in Islamic Religious Education learning is very important. With technology, teaching materials can be delivered more interestingly and effectively, and can reach students in various regions, even those with limited access to formal education. Learning through digital platforms and social media can also be used to strengthen Islamic character values, such as by creating content that teaches the importance of sharing knowledge, tolerance, and humility.

Strengthening Character through Character Education Programs. The Islamic Religious Education curriculum in schools can also be strengthened with more intensive character education programs. This program can be in the form of extracurricular activities that involve students in social activities or community service based on Islamic values. This program aims to shape the character of students who are not only academically smart, but also have good character, such as empathy, concern for others, and discipline. As expressed by Poetri Leharia Pakpahan and Umi Habibah, the integration of character education in the Islamic Religious Education curriculum is very important to create a generation that is not only smart, but also has noble character. Challenges in the Implementation of the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum. However, the implementation of an effective Islamic Religious Education curriculum in the formation of Islamic character faces several major challenges.

One of them is the influence of globalization and technology which are not always in line with Islamic values. Information spread on the internet and social media often has a negative influence on the character of the younger generation. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education teachers need to have the ability to filter information that is in accordance with Islamic values and provide proper understanding to students so that they are not influenced by things that can damage their character (Syafaatunnisa & Nurulhaq, 2023). Competence of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Shaping Character. The competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers greatly influences the success of the formation of Islamic character. Islamic Religious Education teachers must have a good understanding of Islamic teachings and be able to teach them in an interesting way that is relevant to the conditions of the times. Teachers must also be able to be role models for students in everyday life, not only in teaching but also in acting in accordance with the values taught.

METHOD

This study uses a library research method, which focuses on collecting data from written sources that are relevant to the topic of discussion, namely the role of the PAI curriculum in the formation of Islamic character in the modern era. This type of research is descriptive qualitative, where researchers will collect, review, and analyze various literature, books, journal articles, and documents related to the implementation of the PAI curriculum and the formation of Islamic character. The main data sources in this study are scientific journals, books, and articles published in the last four years, which focus on the PAI curriculum, character education, and challenges and solutions in facing the modern era. The type of data used is secondary data, in the form of information obtained from various library sources available in libraries, online journal databases, and other academic publications.

For data analysis, the researcher used the content analysis method, which was carried out by reading, organizing, and interpreting various information obtained from library sources. This analysis aims to draw relevant conclusions about how the Islamic Religious Education curriculum can play a role in shaping the Islamic character of students amidst the development of the times. The findings from the results of this analysis will be presented descriptively and linked to the concepts of Islamic character education in the literature that has been collected. The Role of the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum in Shaping Islamic Character the Islamic Religious Education curriculum has a strategic role in aligning formal education with Islamic values. The content of Islamic values in the Islamic Religious Education curriculum, such as faith, piety, justice, compassion, honesty, discipline, responsibility, and tolerance, are integrated into learning objectives, competencies, learning themes, and topics discussed. These values are the foundation for the formation of a strong Islamic character.

Furthermore, content analysis of the collected literature shows that Islamic Religious Education has a significant role in shaping Islamic character, including the introduction of Islamic values, the development of ethics and morals, social awareness, communication skills, discipline, responsibility, and respect for differences. The content of Islamic values in the Islamic Religious Education curriculum provides Islamic ethical and moral guidelines to Muslim individuals (Salisah, et.al., 2024). In addition, Islamic Religious Education helps develop good social, ethical, and moral awareness, as well as increase students' responsibility and discipline. Through the content of Islamic values, Islamic Religious Education also provides a solid foundation of faith, strengthens Muslim identity, and increases students' spiritual awareness.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Concrete Implementation of Islamic Religious Education Influences Development

Islamic Character of Students at School Level PAI is one of the branches of education that focuses on teaching the concept of spirituality and a divine approach based on two main laws, namely the Quran and Hadith. According to Saputra, PAI is a field of education that teaches students about religion in matters related to good morals, the correct way to worship, and fiqh as a creature of Allah SWT and his servant. Meanwhile, Muhammad Fadhil al Jamaly in Sukatin et al. argues about Islamic education as an effort to bring students to live based on a noble life and quality morals which in the process, is expected to form a much better character for students in their potential for reason, feelings, and actions. The emphasis on this character base is in line with Lubis and Yusri who want practice as the basis for PAI learning so that it is not only theoretical.

In this case, it is important to pay attention to the implementation of Islamic Religious Education teachings in daily learning. Implementation according to Nurdin Usman in Mamanto, Sumampow and Undap focuses on actions, actions, activities, or a system that is structured and planned to achieve goals. Meanwhile, Syaokani is of the opinion that implementation is a series of activities aimed at a group that is expected to provide the desired results. This leads to the conclusion that implementation is all structured and planned efforts in realizing a program until the desired goals and results are achieved. The implementation of Islamic Religious Education in

learning is intended to pay attention to morals and attitudes that can later form students' Islamic character. According to Priska, programmed, spontaneous and exemplary activities can be a way to form character. Character is a person's innate personality that is a characteristic that is reflected in behavior, speech, and ideas. In general, character is associated with morals, personality, and a person's character.

According to the author, character is a distinctive characteristic possessed by each person with different actions according to thoughts, words and behavior based on certain situations. Character itself according to Darma is an accumulation of traits and personalities that are apparent from students' daily behavior. Character is also not something that is formed since birth, but rather the influence of the environment around where it develops. Meanwhile, Wahyuni and Putra provide a definition of Islamic character as an identity that is seen in a person's behavior based on dynamic Islamic norms in accordance with the sources of Islamic teachings. Based on an interview conducted at the Darul Ikhlas Islamic Boarding School, the resource person, Mr. Kyai Abdul Rahman, stated that character education is one of the most important components of human formation.

Humans naturally have their own innate characters. However, this character can change as a result of the surrounding environment. The resource person explained how the process of socializing, making friends, and learning can be the main cause of the formation or change of human character. Because of the changeable character, there is an opportunity to carry out character transformation through moral guidance based on Islamic religious education. In this case, the resource person gave an example where a student who has an angry nature can be changed into a patient one through learning Islamic religious beliefs. The implementation of Islamic religious education according to the resource person is formed in a structured and spontaneous manner. The implementation of structured education means that teaching is carried out in stages and adjusted to the needs of students who have been programmed. However, sometimes the implementation of Islamic religious education can change students' characters spontaneously.

In the social environment, students can spontaneously receive an awareness of the need to change their character and attitude. It can also be caused by a sense of shame over their character that is difficult to accept by their environment, so that students themselves want to make changes to be accepted by their environment. The resource person responded that this in Islamic teachings is guidance which is a gift from Allah SWT. Islamic religious education as explained through its definition, is a teaching that has the aim so that students have a closeness to their own religion. This can trigger the emergence of spiritual feelings which according to the resource person have an important role in making character changes. A good character should obey the rules of the Islamic boarding school which have gone through much consideration in its establishment. The resource person said that a good character is formed from the accumulation of disciplinary efforts that are tried to be instilled in students through Islamic boarding school teaching programs that are based on Islamic religious provisions. In addition, an emphasis is given on the figure of a perfect character which motivates students to continue to make efforts to improve their character and attitude.

The main figure is of course the prophet Muhammad SAW. He is undoubtedly a figure with the best character and is a good example for students to emulate. The implementation of Islamic religious education according to the resource person will be realized well through effective teaching methods. The effectiveness of this teaching method can trigger the growth of Islamic character in students according to expectations. First, what is important is that apart from providing teaching in theoretical material, teachers must also implement teaching through role models. Teachers have an obligation to provide good examples of role models that can be imitated directly by their students. The moral values possessed by teachers must be high so that students can hold on to the theories that have been conveyed. In addition, a teacher has a spiritual obligation to pray for students. This is one of the components of success in the implementation of Islamic Religious Education in forming students' Islamic character. In a

structured manner, Islamic religious teaching must be arranged according to the level of students and carried out in stages. For example, teaching at the basic level cannot be given peak material directly.

Education from this family that helps shape the character of preschool students. Therefore, students who come from families that have good teachings and succeed in creating a pre-school environment that forms good morals, when put into Islamic boarding schools, will show rapid changes in character in accordance with the teaching. Thus, the conclusion obtained is that character education is one of the most important components of human formation. Because of the character that can change, there is an opportunity to carry out character transformation through moral guidance based on Islamic religious education. The implementation of Islamic religious education according to the informant is formed in a structured and spontaneous manner. Religious education is a teaching that aims for students to have a closeness to their own religion so that it triggers the emergence of spiritual feelings or spirituality plays an important role in making character changes. Spirituality comes from the heart, and teachers or educators must succeed in creating bonds with students through spiritual advice and guidance. Good character should obey the rules based on Islamic teachings. In addition, it is necessary to emphasize the perfect character figure that motivates students to continue to make efforts to improve their character and attitude, namely the prophet Muhammad SAW. The implementation of Islamic religious education is delivered through an approach stage with the teacher as the main driver.

Factors Influencing the Success or Failure of the Implementation of Islamic Religious Education in Forming Students' Islamic Character

Islamic Religious Education teachers are positioned to make students have spiritual intelligence, to realize the vision of Islamic religious education. Personality is formed because it is based on piety and faith in Allah SWT. The achievement of the vision of good morals in students and good character is reflected in the values of everyday life (Langit, 2024). According to Sa'diyah, teachers have an important role in controlling the conditions and atmosphere of the classroom to obtain a variety of learning strategies. This learning strategy is the basic measure in implementing Islamic Religious Education into the formation of the desired character or morals. The implementation of Islamic religious education can fail. Joseph Zins as quoted by Muslich in Musayyidi and Rudi, stated that the factors causing student failure, especially those related to behavior, are caused by factors such as lack of self-confidence, difficulty in socializing or working together, difficulty in concentrating, and lack of empathy and inadequate communication skills. In further research, it is necessary to realize that there is a big difference between the teaching system of Islamic boarding schools and public schools.

Each student has different absorption power. "The brain may be the same, but the power of thought is different". Therefore, rather than calling it a failure, it is more appropriate to call it a slower form of absorption. In this case, the resource person said that the role of the teacher is important at this point. Teachers or instructors must be patient and must not feel bored or fed up, because there are no students who deserve to be labeled stupid or smart, there are only fast or slow. In this case, if necessary, teachers can provide a special approach and learning methods that prioritize the psychological side of students, such as teaching carefully and intelligently to adjust the different abilities of students, besides that it is also necessary to teach with gentleness and affection so that the figure of the teacher or instructor can get a good position in the hearts of students. Meanwhile, the success in implementing Islamic-based education in the formation of students' Islamic character is certainly the same as the explanation of the concept of failure that is misinterpreted, because everything depends on each person's power of thought.

In addition, other factors can include the student's original environment. Characters other than those originating from within the student's own natural personality are also formed from the influence of their environment. In this case, the resource person emphasized the importance of maintaining students' relationships. This is a challenge in implementing Islamic

Religious Education in public schools. Public schools clearly do not have such a straightforward opportunity. This leads to the final formulation that the factors that cause failure in the application of Islamic religious education are the lack of patience from teachers and the giving of conclusions to the label of failure too early. The process is not always the same for everyone, so failure can become success by prioritizing the patience of teachers or instructors in fostering their students.

Discussion

The Concept of Islamic Character Education in the PAI Curriculum

Where it is explained in the Al-Qur'an that is relevant to the development of Islamic character in the context of Islamic religious education (PAI) is in Surah Luqman verse 17:

أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ ۗ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ

Meaning: "O my son, establish prayer, command (humans) to do what is right, prevent (them) from doing wrong, and be patient with what happens to you. Indeed, this is an important matter."

Explanation: This verse teaches the importance of the values of responsibility, patience, and social sensitivity, which are important components in fostering Islamic character in the modern era. Islamic character education is a learning approach that not only teaches theoretical religious knowledge but also instills spiritual, moral, and social values that become guidelines for students' lives. In the value-based Islamic Religious Education curriculum, the integration of Islamic values is carried out through a holistic approach that includes: (a) Spiritual Aspect: Instilling faith through teaching aqidah, worship, and prayer. This process aims to build a strong relationship between students and Allah SWT. (b) Intellectual Aspect: Developing students' understanding of Islamic teachings through reason-based learning, for example understanding the wisdom behind the command to worship or Islamic law. (c) Social Aspect: Implementation of Islamic values in everyday life, such as cooperation, social concern, and a sense of responsibility towards others. The process of forming Islamic character is important to face the challenges of globalization, where moral values are often eroded by the influence of foreign cultures that are not in line with Islamic principles.

The Role of Teachers as Primary Role Models

Islamic Religious Education teachers not only act as teachers but also as role models in the formation of students' Islamic character. Teacher behavior that reflects Islamic morals is a concrete example that is easy for students to imitate. Strategies Implemented by Teachers in Character Formation: (1) Role Model (Uswah Hasanah): Teachers demonstrate noble morals such as telling the truth, keeping trust, and being fair to all students. This is in accordance with the principle of the Prophet Muhammad SAW as "uswatun hasanah" (a good role model). (2) Habituation (Habitualization): Teachers guide students to get used to doing good things, such as saying hello, praying before starting activities, and performing prayers on time. (3) Islamic Motivation: Teachers provide advice and encouragement to students to understand the wisdom behind the Islamic values taught (Sobri, 2021).

According to the author, the role of teachers is very important in guiding and providing examples to each of their students, so teachers must reflect how they act because wherever the teacher is, he remains a teacher, as a role model for his students, can be a motivator, an inspiration in the form of amanah, fatonah, honesty. This study shows that students find it easier to understand and internalize Islamic values if they see the real practices of their teachers.

Use of Innovative Learning Methods

Islamic Religious Education learning based on values emphasizes the use of active, participatory, and contextual methods. These methods create a learning atmosphere that is fun, relevant, and meaningful for students. Examples of Innovative Methods: (1) Case Study: The

teacher presents a real case, such as a moral dilemma or everyday life situation, for students to analyze. For example, how to respond to a friend who asks for help but in the wrong way. (2) Simulation: The teacher invites students to practice Islamic values through role-playing, such as group work simulations that emphasize responsibility and honesty. (3) Project-Based Learning: Students are invited to create social projects, such as mosque cleaning programs or fundraising, to apply the values of social concern in real life. The use of this method not only increases students' understanding of Islamic values but also helps them apply these values in everyday life.

School Environment that Supports Character Formation

An Islamic school environment provides an atmosphere that supports the consistent implementation of Islamic values. Several important factors that must be considered in creating a supportive environment are: (1) Religious Culture: Routine activities such as tadarus Al-Qur'an, congregational prayer, and joint prayer create a strong religious nuance. (2) Supporting Facilities: The availability of a mosque or prayer room, an Islamic library, and a comfortable study room support the learning process. School Rules Based on Islamic Values: For example, rules about dressing modestly, maintaining cleanliness, and prohibitions on committing reprehensible acts such as cheating or lying. With a supportive environment, students find it easier to internalize Islamic values because they practice them in their daily lives, not just during Islamic Religious Education lessons.

Holistic Evaluation of Character Formation

Evaluation of learning in a value-based Islamic Religious Education curriculum must include three main aspects: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. Implementation of Holistic Evaluation: (1) Cognitive Aspect: Assessment of students' understanding of the concept of Islamic values, such as the importance of honesty, discipline, and responsibility. (2) Affective Aspect: Observation of students' attitudes during the learning process, such as concern for friends or responsibility in completing assignments. (3) Psychomotor Aspect: Evaluation of students' actual practices in religious activities, such as punctuality in performing congregational prayers or participation in social activities (Putra, et.al., 2024).

With this we conclude that cognitive aspects, affective aspects, psychomotor aspects are very influential in the process of student learning development to study at school, actually the implementation expected by students is more improved and changed in the cognitive part but without affective and psychomotor factors students are also not said to be successful in studying, so all three are very important in students. This value-based evaluation provides a more comprehensive picture of the success of the formation of students' Islamic character, not only from academic results but also from changes in their attitudes and behavior.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that Islamic character education in the Islamic Religious Education curriculum aims to form a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also has strong faith and noble morals. This process is carried out through a holistic approach involving spiritual, intellectual, and social aspects. Teachers act as the main role models who provide real examples of Islamic morals through role models, habits, and motivation. Innovative learning methods such as case studies, simulations, and project-based learning help students understand and apply Islamic values in everyday life. A supportive school environment, with a religious culture and adequate facilities, also strengthens the internalization of Islamic values. Holistic evaluation that includes cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects is an important step to measure the success of the formation of students' Islamic character as a whole. With this approach, Islamic Religious Education not only provides religious knowledge but also forms the character of students who are able to face global challenges with Islamic values as a guideline for life.

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