

Shaping Character Education: Exploring the 'Dansaa' Program's Management in Early Childhood Educational Institutions

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DOI: <http://doi.org/10.33650/al-tanzim.v7i3.6288>

Received: 10 April 2023; Received in Revised Form 2 June 2023, Accepted: 22 July 2023, Available online: 19 August 2023

Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the management of strengthening character education through the "Dansaa" program, which an institution has launched for early childhood at one of the early childhood education institutions in Situbondo Regency. This study uses a qualitative case study type approach. Data analysis techniques include data reduction, display, and descriptions or conclusions. Sources of informants were obtained from the school principal, two homeroom teachers, and two accompanying teachers. The research results show that this early childhood education institution first launched a superior program, "Dansaa," in shaping students' character. Secondly, the akhlakul karimah character management program packaged in the "Dansaa" program was carried out using program planning, implementation of the "Dansaa" program, and follow-up evaluation. The implications obtained in strengthening character education through the "Dansaa" program can instill good morals in early childhood with implemented program activities.

Keywords: *Learning Management, Character Education, "Dansaa" Program*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tentang manajemen penguatan pendidikan karakter melalui program "Dansaa" yang sudah dicanangkan oleh lembaga bagi anak usia dini pada salah satu lembaga pendidikan anak usia dini di Kabupaten Situbondo. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif jenis studi kasus. Teknik analisis data berupa reduksi data, display data, dan gambaran atau kesimpulan. Sumber informan diperoleh dari kepala sekolah, dua wali kelas dan dua guru pendamping. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa; pertama, lembaga pendidikan anak usia dini ini mencanangkan sebuah program unggulan "Dansaa" dalam membentuk karakter anak didik, kedua program manajemen karakter *akhlakul karimah* yang dikemas dalam program "Dansaa" dilakukan dengan cara perencanaan program, Implementasi program "Dansaa", Evaluasi tindak lanjut. Implikasi yang diperoleh dalam penguatan pendidikan karakter melalui program "Dansaa" mampu menanamkan *akhlakul karimah* terhadap anak usia dini dengan kegiatan-kegiatan terprogram yang diterapkan.

Kata Kunci: *Manajemen Pembelajaran, Pendidikan Karakter, Program "Dansaa"*

Please cite this article in APA style as:

Saepudin, Rozi, F. Qomariyah, S. N., Maghfiroh, A. S. (2023). Shaping Character Education: Exploring the 'Dansaa' Program's Management in Early Childhood Educational Institutions. *Al-Tanzim: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 7(3), 938-949.

INTRODUCTION

Management is a strategy to achieve a goal (Bibri et al., 2020; Ortega-Beltran, 2021; Singh et al., 2022). Management has nine essential tasks in achieving strategic management; mission formulation, internal condition analysis, assessing external environments, choice analysis, profit identification, long-term goal planning, developing long and annual goals, implementing choice strategies, and evaluation (Nurhadi, 2020; Fedushko et al., 2021). With programmatic management in a sequential manner, an institution can improve Raudlatul Athfal (RA) as an early childhood education institution and quality to optimize the program.

The world of education requires strategic management in setting strategies that are made and planned can be achieved. Through management, it is expected to realize a quality institution (Fuertes et al., 2020; Indarti et al., 2021). In the general community, the quality of education can be measured through graduation. Quality schools have knowledgeable graduates, skills, values, and a demonstrable attitude to compete (Madsen, 2020; Stanley et al., 2021). The function of education is to develop the ability and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to educate the nation's life, have faith, be devoted to God, be noble, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become a democratic and responsible citizen. To realize this goal, extra attention is needed to habituate the cultivation of character education at every primary education level (Zulela et al., 2022).

Character problems are one of the problems that have always been the concern of every nation, both in developed and developing countries (Cahyono, 2016). In this era, the Indonesian nation has big enemies, namely poverty, ignorance, corruption, lack of law enforcement, student brawls, pragmatism, and instant culture that are increasingly strengthening (Alfan & Jatningsih, 2019). The number of deviations and negative behaviors in our society must be observed together. These problems arise because of the fading of the nation's character values (Syarifah et al., 2021). Character is the values of human behavior related to God Almighty, oneself, fellow humans, the environment, and nationality manifested in thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words, and deeds based on religious norms, laws, manners, culture, and customs (Ahsanul Khaq, 2019)

Character is not just taught but must be instilled and grown through habituation. Character education for early childhood is intended to instill good values so that they can become habits when they grow up or at the next level of education (Cahyaningrum et al., 2017). By producing a generation with character, an institution has balanced the inequality of the times, which is now increasingly damaging the morals and behavior of the nation's next generation.

Strengthening Character Education is a continuation and revitalization of the national movement of character education that began in 2010. Strengthening character education or moral education during this period needs to be

implemented to overcome the current moral crisis sweeping this country (Maisaro et al., 2018). Character education should be instilled as early as possible in children. Especially education based on religion and morals. These two educations will be the foundation for children's lives. Early childhood education is instrumental in channeling children's talents and interests. In children's education at the age of didi, children can explore themselves and prepare for education and the next life that will be passed on to them (Hasanah & Munastiwi, 2019).

Because the phenomenon increases the problem of moral cases at the adolescent level yearly, it becomes a big PR for all parties. *Akhlakul Karima* character education until now has become one of the solutions that can be done to reduce the growth of mental conflict in children. Therefore, moral character education must be done as early as possible (Surya, 2017). One of the characteristics that must be instilled today is the character of *akhlakul karimah*, which is packaged in a program by producing an exemplary habituation program because it helps build children's awareness of the causality relationship, namely the existence of God as the creator and his relationship with his creation as a servant. In the context of the school curriculum, strengthening character education is needed to deliver students to become people who believe and fear God, have a noble character, are always orderly and disciplined based on existing regulations, have courtesy to teachers and parents, and care for their environment (Khotimah, 2016)

Here, the importance of character education is widely promoted to realize and instill character in the nation's solid/sturdy young generation. They hope they will not be shaken by the conditions of the age of both globalization and modernization that accompany momentary worldly pleasures and sacrifice future pleasures as a lasting future. In this case, educational institutions or madrasahs should be pioneers of awareness in cultivating character education. The development of the times from time to time causes many changes in life in society. Perceptions, situations, and conditions change with the times (Sobri, 2017). Morals influenced by association continuously erode moral character by following the flow of the times.

So the growth of character education is expected to be able to overcome problems that are not easily realized by this new phenomenon. This phenomenon requires special handling because early childhood growth and development must focus on laying the right foundations (Zamroni et al., 2021). Minimizing adverse impacts requires character management, especially in early childhood. Early childhood has a unique nature and requires stimulation and management in maturing its development (Sandrawita, 2019).

The problems that occur in the field, namely in RA At-Taqwa, are indicated by the decline in the moral character of students marked by the fading of the level of discipline, lack of care (indifferent to friends who need help), lack of interest in participating in religious activities, this is due to various factors, and the dominant trigger factor is the impact of strengthening less dominant examples and lack of proficiency in character cultivation.

To anticipate character inequality, countermeasures, and novelty are needed in stimulating character education for students. Institutional stakeholders strive to develop new management by involving RA At-Taqwa parents in character-building as early as possible through excellent programs. The excellent program is packaged in the "Dansaa" program (example and habituation), carried out by the playing method.

Therefore, this study refers to several previous studies that can be used as references and comparisons in research: Trimuliana & Dhieni (2019). Education is the most systematic and effective medium to strengthen the character-building of students. Therefore, character education should be a joint commitment of all parties in educational institutions and parents. The research conducted by Rosikum (2018) said the family environment contributed 83.0% to the formation of student character. The family has a vital role in the formation of *akhlakul karimah*. The family will shape the character of students and will affect their environment.

Furthermore, Syarifah et al. (2021) conveyed that parental involvement has a vital role in character education because it contributes to the provision of a safe and stable environment, intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussion, a good model of constructive social and educational values, and high aspirations related to personal fulfillment and good citizenship. Then Wahyuni & Putra (2020) revealed that there is cooperation between teachers and parents by being active in every meeting held by the school, fostering children through Islamic education, planting tawhid, holding outing class programs, getting used to praying dhuhr, gathering with students' families, activating communication books, being examples of positive habits for daily activities. This effort effectively forms students who are more mature and responsible for shaping Islamic character.

Also emphasized by Mawarni, Suwandi, and Supriyadi (2019), In addition to parental support, character education can also be provided in the educational environment through example. The example in the context of this study is, of course, the example of the principal and teachers in RA At-Taqwa school. The example of the school head and teachers is crucial because they are central figures in early childhood education in RA At-Taqwa, so all his actions and words become role models for all students. Example not only provides an example but also as a moral reinforcement for students in behaving and behaving (Muhsin, 2020)

From several descriptions, researchers say that character education can be stimulated by cooperation between parents and educators. The expected character will be created by establishing good cooperation between educators and parents. The focus of research on how to manage the Dansaa program (example and habituation) was conducted at RA At-Taqwa Besuki Situbondo.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses qualitative research methods; this research includes a case study approach that examines the state of an object in a natural way by conducting research that intends to describe the problem and analyze the

problem. The research location is RA At-Taqwa's early childhood education institution in Besuki Situbondo. Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, observations, and the collection of documents related to the research topic. The informant source was obtained from the principal, two homeroom teachers, and two accompanying teachers at RA At-Taqwa.

Furthermore, observations were made in four meetings to observe directly the proper management in overcoming (PKK) and strengthening character education through the "Dansaa" method (example and habituation). The latter analyzes documents that can confirm in research results. Data related to the research were collected, then data selection was carried out, the presentation of research data was carried out, and the final stage was drawing conclusions. Through the stages, researchers can analyze and conclude the research conducted.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results showed that; The management of strengthening character education (PPK) *akhlakul karimah* through the "DANSAA" program at RA At-Taqwa obtained the following results:

Planning

Based on internal meetings conducted by all institution stakeholders in discussing problems that occur in the institution, ideas and ideas emerge from various components that are members of the internal meeting. The idea that is sorted out in overcoming the inequality that is rolling is the management of strengthening character education which is expected to change the character patterns of students even though all components of the institution can benefit from strengthening character education to be programmed. The character education program is packaged in a school program, namely the Dansaa (exemplary and habituation) program.

As stated by the principal of RA At-Taqwa, with the character problems that befell the RA At-Taqwa institution, we tried to find solutions by deliberation with all stakeholders of the institution, in the deliberative activity, the planning of the "Dansaa" program (for example and habituation) was sparked. The agreed Dansaa program is then carefully planned, starting from program activity planning, implementation planning, financing planning, infrastructure planning, assignment planning, and evaluation planning.

Developing a new program requires planning or planning before being implemented to minimize failure (Rozi et al., 2022). Careful planning can provide convenience in its application, such as the "Dansaa" program that will be implemented in RA At-Taqwa. Designing an effective program or method

requires planning and analyzing needs to be able to operate activities (Basri & Rusdiana, 2015).

It was revealed by the homeroom teacher of group A that there is a planning stage; the principal and all components have planned the activities to be carried out in the "Dansaa" program. There are two program plans; First is role *mode*, an example implemented by the principal and teachers to be an example for students. Second, habituation programs are the gift program (furudul ainiyah movement), the 5S program (smile, greetings, greetings, politeness, and courtesy), and the ant operation program (momentarily picking up garbage).

Furthermore, the homeroom teacher of group B also explained that in Planning the implementation of the use of the "Dansaa" program, The principal, along with the ranks of teachers and foundations and related parties, make preparations, including sources of funding funds obtained from the self-help of teachers and guardians and then plan the facilities used in facilitating the "dance" program including habituation programs that require several supporting facilities. In the *Furudul ainiyah* habituation program, schools already have complete facilities such as prayer rooms, ablution places, prayer tools brought by students themselves, and iron to support the introduction of early *ngaji* for students. As for the ant operation habituation program, the planning of facilities and infrastructure includes; trash cans, brooms, jikrak, and mops.

The initial step in implementing a program is planning, which can project what actions will be carried out in an activity, namely by organizing and responding to the components of the activity so that the direction of the activity (objectives), the side of the activity (material), the way of delivering activities (methods and techniques), and how to measure it (evaluation) becomes explicit and systematic (Hanifah, 2018; Saleha et al., 2022). With program planning, applying activities in the field will be easier.

With carefully managed planning, the implemented "Dansaa" program can provide new colors and cultures in the school environment so that schools can get several benefits, namely as a strengthening of character that is starting to fade, as school branding, and as a quality improvement for the school.

Role Model Excellence

In the planning, an internal meeting was discussed about procuring the "dance" program. This resulted in a consensus that all school components had agreed to synergize in supporting the school program by making all components into role *model* aspects that students could exemplify. The head becomes an example for his subordinates, and the teacher becomes the primary role model for students.

To ensure that the organization runs dynamically, a leader must have specific values that can be exemplary. Similarly, a conducive school environment system must have teachers who have exemplary values (Fahrrurozi et al., 2022). The role model figure must be implemented can be applied to young, and can be clearly understood by subordinates and children. Examples of specific values or examples that can be used as role *models* for example, a leader must have

integrity, attitude, trust, and sincerity in carrying out his duties as well as teachers to become an exemplary teacher figure who is admired and imitated (Widodo, 2019) The main goal is to run the best for the organization, subordinates, and protégés.

The exemplary characteristics instilled include discipline, honesty, obedience, order, courtesy, and courtesy. In the educational process, cultivating exemplary character can have significant implications for people who exemplify these attitudes. Discipline in education is also essential to maintain the atmosphere of the teaching and learning process and make the personality of students who obey and obey the rules or norms that apply both in the school environment and the community (Makurius et al., 2020).

Based on an interview with one of the accompanying teachers, group A said; If an educational organization wants subordinates to be disciplined, honest, hard-working, and punctual, then the leader must be able to show subordinates the nature of the discipline, hard work and be more able to respect time. The principal of RA At-Taqwa also carries out this character to form subordinates to have a character so that solid teamwork is formed in cultivating moral character so that all teachers apply the application of character culture to form the character of *akhlakul karimah* in RA At-Taqwa.

Furthermore, the informant from one of the group B teacher assistants said that all components in RA At-Taqwa must be role *models*, at least in morals, ways of thinking, ways of acting, honesty, and firmness. In principle, the *role model* must be an extraordinary human person who must work more than talk a lot. With such a character, the school environment will indirectly form by itself.

The main characteristics of a good *role model* are having a strong character, someone who has high discipline, commitment, honesty, integrity, credibility, and care, and the characteristics of a servant. In a broader scope, people who deserve to be called *role models* are when they can think, use and manifest in the form of what behavior they have to be given to others or their subordinates (Badriyah, 2021).

Role modeling in the context of management of strengthening character education (PPK) *akhlakul karimah* through the "Dansaa" program at RA at-taqwa, namely by imitating or exemplifying the example exemplified by all stakeholders of the institution ranging from the principal, teachers, and all employees in the school environment so that students can appreciate their lives.

Habit Forming

This Habit Forming model can stimulate students to understand and practice their understanding of the subject matter and solve problems found during the learning process (Samaria & Fuadi, 2022). *Habit forming* is a learning model that applies habituation to students continuously and programmatically. Through this habituation, they eventually become able and accustomed, just like discipline, where discipline will be embedded in students if applied continuously.

As an informant, the principal said that the habituation carried out at RA At-Taqwa refers to three critical points: the habituation of 5S culture (smile,

greetings, greetings, politeness, and courtesy). The second point is the habituation of the Uefa program (*furudul ainiyah* movement). The third point is controlling the ant operation program (momentarily picking up garbage). These three points are continuously carried out in institutions to form individuals with moral character and love the environment.

Also emphasized by group A mentoring teachers, 5S cultural habituation (smiles, greetings, greetings, politeness, and courtesy) is applied by the principal and teachers starting from morning greeting at the school gate and at the stage of implementing teaching and learning activities. Furthermore, the *furudul ainiyah* movement is carried out on a scheduled basis with the guidance of a coordinator whom the principal has appointed, the Uefa program schedule (*furudul ainiyah* movement can be seen in Table 1.1).

Finally, the habit of cleaning up that is programmed in ant operations (momentarily picking up garbage) is carried out every day after teaching and learning activities are completed. Teachers guide students to collect garbage that accidentally comes from the trash can; RA At-Taqwa has implemented a clean culture for a long time by refracting students to throw garbage in its place. However, sometimes there is just some garbage scattered due to crushing wind and so on, so the idea of "ant operation" emerged to encourage students to clean the school environment.

Table 1. GEFA RA At-Taqwa Program Schedule

No	Day/time	Activities	Coordinator
1	Monday 06.30-07.00	Reading Tartila	Homeroom Teacher
2	Tuesday 06.30-07.00 07.00-07.30	Reading Tartila Recitation of surah al-qur'an jus 30	Homeroom Teacher
3	Wednesday 06.30-07.00 07.00-07.30	Reading Tartila Recitation of hadiths	Homeroom Teacher
4	Thursday 06.30-07.00 07.00-07.30	Reading Tartila Daily recitation of prayers	Homeroom Teacher
5	Friday 06.30-07.00	The practice of ablution and prayer	Homeroom Teacher
6	Saturday 06.30-07.00	Recitation of Asma'ul Husna	Homeroom Teacher

Based on Table 1, the GEFA program (*furudul ainiyah* movement) is applied every day continuously in RA At-Taqwa in shaping the personality of students into Islamic characters as early as possible in the application of the homeroom GEFA program to become coordinators who are fully responsible for the development of students.

Habit forming implemented through three crucial points can cover the habituation of moral charisma that is starting to fade. These habituations stimulate the character development of students simply and on target because students directly practice in everyday life.

Follow-up Evaluation

The last step in monitoring the success of a program by conducting an evaluation is that all institutional stakeholders, especially school principals, are responsible for completing the program by seeing whether the program that has been implemented is successful or requires improvement (Zamroni et al., 2021). follow-up evaluation is carried out for efforts to make improvements or maximize (Rozi et al., 2022) This follow-up evaluation can be said to be a stage of improvement in making decisions using a set of measurement results and referring to the goals that have been set, namely strengthening the character education of students which is applied through the "dansaa" program.

The principal said that the evaluation activity involved RA and all institution stakeholders; this was carried out to improve program implementation techniques or increase competition with the components involved, such as teachers or employees. This evaluation is carried out not to drop but to correct deficiencies or errors to achieve the *desired feedback* results optimally.

The group B teacher confirmed that if we found inequality, we reported it to the principal regarding the inequality that interfered with running the "dance" program. Then the principal conducted a review and observed directly in the field. After the indication of inequality, the principal immediately took action by conducting a meeting between school components and finding the best solution through deliberation and consensus.

Assessing a program's efficiency and effectiveness in an activity is crucial to take follow-up corrective actions. Follow-up evaluation becomes essential feedback and information for evaluators to overcome existing shortcomings; this can be used as a reference for further decision-making so that the program produces maximum results.

Based on interviews with several informants, the follow-up evaluation was not solely to provide improvements and improvements with various agreed solutions. With this evaluation, the heralded and cultured "dance" program will be better prepared to regenerate the culture of moral character in RA At-Taqwa Besuki Situbondo, which will later become a unique branding image for the public so that the public is more trusting and lured to participate in school progress.

CONCLUSION

In forming *akhlakul karimah* character, an effort is needed that requires a continuous process; the character can be polished with support from the outside and inner environments. Proper stimulation to form characters is done as early as possible so children can absorb and cultivate these characters. Management of strengthening moral character education through the "dansaa" program at RA At-Taqwa away is the right choice because students are classified early. The "Dansaa" program (example and habituation) is packaged with examples of human resource role models in schools and habit forming that is cultivated continuously so that it can mold the character of students to be better seen in the behavior implemented by students both in the school environment and in the home environment. A successful program at one institution does not mean that

it will also succeed in other institutions. Therefore researchers hope that there will be a regeneration of research that will explore the character of *akhlakul karimah* so that it can enrich references in growing and developing the character of *akhlakul karimah*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researcher would like to thank all parties who have helped with the smooth running of this research so that it can be published in a nationally reputable journal. The researcher would like to thank the foundation's chairman, the head of the RA At-Taqwa school, and all the teachers who have helped complete this research.

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