THE IMPORTANCE OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND MORAL EDUCATION IN BUILDING THE CHARACTER OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

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Abstract:
Religious education and Islamic morals have a very important role in shaping the religious character of elementary school (SD) children. This article examines the importance of religious education and Islamic morals as the main foundation in building religious character at an early age. Islamic religious education equips children with an understanding of religious values, introduces religious teachings, and forms a sense of obedience to God. Meanwhile, moral education helps children understand the difference between right and wrong, and develops good attitudes and empathy towards fellow humans and the environment. This article discusses various strategies and approaches that can be applied in integrating Islamic religious and moral education in the school environment. The role of teachers as role models and facilitators in helping children understand and apply religious and moral values is the main focus of this article. Apart from that, the importance of the role of parents and their cooperation in supporting religious character education at home and at school is also discussed in depth. The research method used in preparing this article is the literature study research method (Library Research) and includes qualitative research. By implementing effective Islamic religious and moral education, it is hoped that elementary school children can grow into individuals with strong religious character. They will be able to face situations and moral dilemmas with integrity and wisdom. Thus, this article emphasizes that religious education and Islamic morals in elementary schools have an important role in forming a young generation who are religious, have noble character, and are ready to become pillars of the nation who make positive contributions to society and the world.

Keywords:*Elementary School, Moral Education, Islamic Education, Religious Character.*

INTRODUCTION

Religious and moral education plays an important role in developing religious character in elementary school (SD) children. At this age, children are in a very critical phase of development and can accept various values and behaviors from the environment around them. Therefore, religious and moral education is a strong foundation in building a strong foundation of character in the future. Religious education for elementary school students aims to introduce them to religious teachings and beliefs held by society. Apart from that, religious education helps children understand the ethical and moral values contained in the teachings of that religion. Understanding religion in the context of religious character education will open the door for children to develop piety and gratitude to God in accordance with their religious beliefs.

Apart from religious education, moral education is also an important pillar for developing the religious character of elementary school students. The aim of moral

education is so that children can distinguish right from wrong and develop good attitudes and behavior in dealing with other people and the surrounding environment. Through moral education, children will be instilled with universal values such as honesty, tolerance, cooperation and compassion for others. Internalizing character principles in students is called character education. According to Wuryandani et al. (2019), these values have strong values that will encourage students to behave well and make it easy for them to interact with other people.

Religious character education is moral education which includes aspects of knowledge (cognitive), feelings (feelings) and actions (actions) which are all connected to values and norms. Three different ways can be used to promote character education: (1) incorporating character values into lesson materials, local content, and self-development activities; (2) increasing interaction between schools or madrasas, students' parents, and the community in cultivating or getting used to character values in the school environment; and (3) increasing cooperation between schools or madrasas, students' parents and the community.

Muchlas Samani and Hariyanto in their book entitled Character Education (2012: 19-20) state that the art of character education must include and take place in: First, Formal Education. Character education is provided in kindergarten/RA, SD/MI, SMP/MTS, SMA/MAK, and tertiary educational institutions through learning, curricular and extracurricular activities, and the formation of the culture of the teaching unit. Students, teachers and education personnel are the targets of formal education. Second, Non-Formal Education. Character education is taught in courses, equality education, literacy education, and other non-formal institutions through earning, curricular and extracurricular activities, institutional culture, and habits. Third, Informal Education. Character education is taught in the family by parents and adults in the family.

Islamic education contributes significantly to the formation of students' religious character. Actions based on certain beliefs are called religious perspectives. The way of thinking and acting, which is oriented by faith, will show a person's religious attitude (Kristiawan et al., 2016). By incorporating it into all levels of education, strengthening character education can be instilled in students (Kanji, 2021; Abidin, 2014; Ma'arif and Hamid, 2018).

The government is trying to realize character education through strengthening character education (PPK), which is part of the national mental revolution movement, which aims to improve the way people think, behave and act (Azwar, 2017). PKK is a continuation of past programs in response to the decline in the determination of the country's children. One of the goals of PPK is "21st century skills that students need to understand the advantages of the golden generation era in 2045: the nature of character, important education, 4C competencies (critical thinking and problem solving, creativity, communication skills, and the ability to work collaboratively" (Kemendikbud, 2017).

Technological developments in this program will improve children's personality and life skills, thereby reducing the negative effects. Several schools have continuously implemented the above programs to meet school needs through adaptation training and other methods. to prepare Indonesian children for the golden generation, which will emerge in 2045, a century after Indonesia gained independence. That period was a huge challenge for the nation's next generation, with very large numbers making it possible to become the golden generation. How can we become the golden generation of our students? We educators are responsible for the answers. Replacing character as a spirit or priority that must be achieved can be started by re-preparing or changing Indonesian national education. National education coexists with academics which is reflected in their abilities.

New requirements, difficulties and demands can be met or overcome with the strong character and high competence brought by quality education. Therefore, apart from creating intelligence, developing student character is very important or essential in the public school system in Indonesia. It is said that because basically education aims to grow students' scientific potential and character. this has been based on different thoughts about schools and various regulations and guidelines with respect to

teaching.

Cultivating character is a habit of mind, heart, and action, which are interrelated. Character education is an effort to encourage students to acquire critical thinking skills, adhere to moral values in their lives, and have the courage to make moral decisions in the face of various difficulties. Character education is the process of internalizing or instilling positive values in students so that they have good character in accordance with the religious, cultural and philosophical values of their nation. Thus, character education is the process of transforming a person's life values to be developed in their personality so that they become unified in their behavior throughout life.

RESEARCH METHODS

The method used in this research is literature study, namely research that collects written sources related to the problem and research objectives. After collecting written sources, the next step is managing these sources. Literature study is used to look for relevant theoretical references, examine journals, books, research reports, magazines which are then used to identify religious character education in elementary schools. The review and writing decisions refer to John W Creswell, specifically: 1) start by identifying keywords, this is useful for reading material, 2) after the keywords are obtained, the next step is to search by focusing on diaries and books first, 3) evaluate references 4) think about the reference commitments obtained, 5) create a useful writing guide about how this exploration adds to the current writing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Islamic Religious Education

According to Hawi (2013), the aim of Islamic religious education is not only to fulfill intellectual needs. The aim is to provide understanding and application of religion in life and become a guide for life. The explanation above shows that the responsibility of Islamic religious education teachers is to educate children or students with the aim of providing Islamic religious values so that these values can be embedded in themselves through their behavior and personality in everyday life. Thus, Islamic religious education is intended to prepare students to believe, understand and practice Islamic teachings. This education is provided through guidance, instruction, or training designed to achieve predetermined goals (Alim, 2011).

Islamic religious education is an improvement in reasoning, words, behavior, knowledge, emotions, human relationships with this world, and how humans are able to utilize this world to achieve life goals and maintain them. A solid basic concept describes all these concepts in an integrative manner. In addition, the Islamic religion provides ideas about creeds, or habits, that must be believed in so that humans can develop feelings that encourage them to act in accordance with Islamic law.

Islamic religious education is defined as a conscious effort made by those responsible for educating, teaching, developing and directing children's potential so that they can function and play a role according to events. (Imam Mohtar, 2017). In the Islamic religious education process, the people involved, such as teachers and parents, have full awareness of the importance of their responsibility in guiding and developing children so that they can grow and develop in accordance with Islamic teachings. They actively play a role in guiding children to have a correct understanding of religion, develop the values of faith, noble morals, and bring blessings to their lives.

Apart from that, Islamic religious education also focuses on developing the potential of each individual child. Children's potential covers various aspects, such as intellectual, emotional and social. Through the Islamic religious education process, children are encouraged to develop this potential so that they can contribute According to Hawi (2013), the aim of Islamic religious education is not only to fulfill intellectual needs. The aim is to provide understanding and application of religion in life and become a guide for life. The explanation above shows that the responsibility of Islamic religious education teachers is to educate children or students with the aim of providing Islamic religious values so that these values can be embedded in themselves through

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Islamic religious education refers to the process of learning and teaching about Islamic teachings, religious values, and spiritual life which are directed towards children in a learning environment who have responsibilities, such as teachers, educators, parents and religious communities. The aim of Islamic religious education is to help children understand Islamic teachings in depth and apply them in everyday life.

A. The Role of Religious Education in Character Formation

According to the first President of the Republic of Indonesia, Soekarno, "Religion is an absolute element in nation and character building." The character of independence means nothing if it does not have a clear foundation. So, religion is the basis of character education. (Thomas Lickona, 1999 in Nasihatun, 2019) differentiates character education from religious education. A person's religious life is a relationship between them and their God. Character is not related to worship and prayer at school. If a society wants to live and work peacefully, basic values such as wisdom, respect for others, personal responsibility, a sense of shared destiny, and peaceful resolution of conflicts are examples of character values. Thomas Lickona's thinking is different from Islamic character education, which uses religion as a basis for implementing it.

Religious education has a very important role in forming individual character. Character is a collection of values, attitudes and behavior that are the basis for interacting with the environment and each other. The following is some discussion regarding the role of religious education in character formation: First, Understanding Religious Values: Religious education helps someone better understand the religious values they hold. This education helps them understand the principles of ethics, morals and religious teachings, which provide direction for their attitudes and behavior behavior in everyday life.

Second, Internalizing Religious Teachings: Religious education helps people internalize their religious teachings more deeply. This shows that religious values are not only applied mechanically or based on habit, but become an important part of a

person's character. Third, Cultivate Virtue and Morality: Religious education helps people cultivate virtue and morality by teaching them noble qualities such as honesty, compassion, patience, perseverance, and justice. Fourth, Development of Empathy and Social Justice: Religious education teaches the importance of empathy and social justice. People are educated to respect and help each other and strive to create a society of equality and justice. Fifth, Forming Spiritual Awareness: Religious education helps people develop spiritual awareness and build a relationship with God. This spiritual awareness becomes a strong foundation for building a firm, sincere character and a broader perspective on life. Sixth, Facing Challenges and Conflicts: Religious education also helps people face problems and conflicts in life. Religious values help people make wise and responsible choices and overcome life's trials and tribulations with patience and determination. Seventh, Forming Identity and Self: Religious education helps people build a strong identity and identity. Religion shapes a person's identity and perspective, giving him a strong foundation to face various situations and changes in his life.

2. Moral Education

The importance of moral education in elementary schools not only includes personality formation, but also has a broad impact on society. By teaching morals to children, we help create a generation that cares about each other and the environment, prioritizes the values of peace, and is able to face challenges and conflicts wisely.

Although primary school moral education plays an important role, there are also challenges in its implementation. Some of these challenges include ensuring consistent and effective teaching quality, adapting approaches to child diversity, and involving parents to support ethical learning at home.

Schooling is a deeply rooted process that begins in the mother's womb and continues for the rest of life. Education does not only provide information and skills, but more importantly, instilling values, training impulses, and encouraging the right attitudes and tendencies at a younger age. Thus, training is also a character improvement course.

In-depth qualities and Moral Teachings must be seen from different sides, especially from an external perspective and from within. From an external perspective, profound qualities oversee how to coexist with others, and from within regulate how to coexist with oneself. Ultimately, moral training is needed as well as control of social circumstances and basic methods for self-perfection. Most of us, including logicians as well as teachers and gurus, feel that two elements of deep quality help each other: what is really good for society is also really good for our children, and vice versa (Wren, 2008: 11). Therefore, the ethical management of children is used as one of the important goals of formal training. In addition, society has a high awareness that the environment and society play a very important role in helping children to know about the moral and social norms that structure human life.

The current decline in open mindfulness needs to be increased so that students' moral development can be better, because the local environment also plays an important role in this. To prevent this and develop it further, it is important to understand the side effects that lower self-confidence has on students. According to Lickona (2013:20) there are 10 signs of side effects of decreased self-confidence that need to be considered for improvement; 1) Brutality and demonstrations of chaos, 2) Robbery, 3) Cheating, 4) Neglect of correct principles, 5) Fights between students, 6) Narrow thinking, 7) Use of harsh language, 8) Untimely sexual development and its deviations, 9) Useless viewpoints, 10) Chronic drug use.

Considering the general development goals recorded in the GBHN and the institutional goals of schools as well as the goals of moral development provided at the school and school level, moral development in Indonesia can briefly be described as

follows: Meanwhile, Kirschenbaum (1995: 7) interprets values and moral education as not only use a single procedure, but must be carried out widely. As a result of Rukiyati's (2017) research, it was revealed that ethics teaching was truly planned. A single procedure in moral training is generally unreasonable, not to mention the intricacies of ins and outs of teaching. Providing models or modeling is also less interesting in its application, because it is difficult to determine who is most suitable to act, for example. The overarching terms used in moral training encompass different perspectives.

First, moral education must be complete, covering all issues related to values, from determining individual qualities to questions about morals as a whole. Second, the strategies used in moral training must also be far-reaching. This includes instilling (instilling) values, setting models, and preparing young people to be independent by educating and working with the direction of reliable moral independence and other basic abilities. Younger ages need to get traditional quality teaching from adults who care about them, especially relatives, teachers, and the community. They also need good examples from adults regarding honesty and individual happiness in everyday life. Additionally, they need to have open doors that encourage them to have independent thoughts and gain the ability to manage their own lives.

Third, moral education must occur throughout the teaching cycle, such as in the classroom, in extra-curricular training, during time spent directing and guiding, in grant functions, and in all parts of life. For example, this is reflected in activities carried out by students such as group study, use of teaching materials and writing points about virtues. Utilization of explanations of important values and moral difficulties, setting illustrations of not smoking, not being naughty, not cheating, being liberal, being fair, worshiping God's relatives, etc.

Fourth, moral training must occur through life in the public arena. Guardians, strict foundations, constabulary, police, local area associations, all need to take part in values education. The consistency of all groups in carrying out values training influences the ethical nature of younger people (Kirschenbaum, 1995: 9-10). In the context of an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world, moral education in elementary schools must develop and adapt to current needs. Therefore, it is hoped that children will grow up to be individuals with integrity, high values and an awareness of the importance of assuming responsibility as part of a wider society. 3. Character Education

Elementary School Character Education (SD) is an approach that aims to develop character and positive values in children from an early age. Character education does not only focus on academic aspects, but also aims to develop the moral, social and emotional aspects of students, making them individuals who are responsible, ethical and compassionate towards other people and their environment.

Elementary school is a critical period in a child's development, when the foundations of character and morals begin to form. Elementary school character education plays an important role in helping children develop good attitudes and behavior, such as honesty, respect, tolerance, cooperation and empathy. In addition, character education can help children overcome conflicts, solve problems, and develop positive interpersonal skills.

In elementary school character education, teachers act as role models and facilitators, guiding students to recognize and practice moral values in everyday life. Character learning can be integrated into all aspects of the curriculum and school activities, including lessons, extracurricular activities and social interactions in the school environment.

The importance of character education in elementary schools is also related to how these positive values help children face challenges and changes in an increasingly complex world. Supported by strong character education, children are expected to be able to make wise and responsible decisions, handle stress and conflict well, and develop harmonious relationships with other people.

Character education is a combination of two words, education and character, and according to Ki Hajar Dewantara, character education is the strength or effort to elevate reason, mind and morals so that they are in harmony with the surrounding

environment and nature (Dalimunthe, 2015). Trying to prepare the golden generation of 2045 who is always devout, national, strong and independent is the ideal of the Indonesian nation, but because of the social issues we have heard about Indonesian student brawls recently, efforts are needed to make this happen. How extensive the problems related to the world of education are. Another problem is the degradation of morals and etiquette in the current educational environment, such as cheating on exams, not listening to teachers' advice, not shaking hands when meeting the teacher, not saying hello when opening the door, not saying hello when meeting the teacher, speaking loudly when talking to parents, not praying immediately, etc. This shows that character education in schools and teachers, families and parents, the environment and society has not been successful.

To ensure that the golden generation of 2045 has a positive IESQ attitude, the golden generation of 2045 needs to have a mentality that is ready to compete with other developed countries (Manullang, 2013). Because strengthening character education is currently very weak, current problems must not be allowed to drag on. Children must be given character education from an early age so that they can regulate their cognitive, affective and psychomotor attitudes in the future (Shoimah, Sulthoni, & Soepriyanto, 2018). To create good people in the future who can help the country's progress . This degradation is greatly influenced by inappropriate actions; for example, the current school system focuses on intellect and pays little attention to morality. Schools currently focus heavily on character education through curriculum, enforcing discipline, and classroom management. This is demonstrated by an examination system that assesses students' cognitive scores without considering affective factors (Isbadrianingtyas, Hasanah, & Mudiono, 2016).

A. Character Formation Mechanism

This character comes from the Greek word Charasein, which means "to engrave". One of the main properties of carving is that it remains strong on the object it is engraved on and is not easily damaged or damaged by friction. Because the engraving will adhere to and become integrated with the object being carved, removing the engraving is the same as removing the engraved object. The mind is the most important part of character formation because it contains all the programs formed from life experiences. This program then forms beliefs, which in turn can shape thought patterns and behavior. If the program is cultivated according to universal principles, its behavior will operate in harmony with the laws of nature, which will ultimately result in tranquility and happiness. On the contrary, suffering and damage will be caused by programs that do not follow universal legal principles. To achieve happiness for oneself, the mind must be well guarded and receive serious attention. According to Joseph Murphy, a single mind within the human body has unique characteristics. The conscious mind (conscious) is called the objective mind and the subconscious mind (subconscious) is called the subjective mind to differentiate their properties. Lower thoughts Physical consciousness is located in the medulla oblongata, which is formed when the baby is still in the womb. The conscious mind is physically located in the cortex of the brain, which functions as the logical and analytical part, and influences 12% of the brain's abilities. As a result, the baby will cry and calm down when he sees his mother's heartbeat. The subconscious mind does not behave negatively and attractively.

B. Principles of Character Education

To achieve effective character education, the quality standards for character education suggest eleven standards, namely:

1. Promote basic moral standards as a basis for teaching character;
2. Get to know the person as a whole, combining contemplation, sentiment, and behavior;
3. Utilize sharp, proactive, and powerful ways to handle character building;
4. Building a caring school local area; especially
5. Provide an open door for students to demonstrate acceptable behavior.
6. It has the inclusion of significant and testing educational programs that value all

students, shape their personalities, and help them.

7. Trying to develop students' self-inspiration.

8. Make the entire school staff an ethical local area that shares responsibilities related to teaching character and adheres to similar fundamental qualities.

9. In building one's training program, there is broad assistance and mutual moral initiative. A. Involve family and other people as accomplices in character building efforts. K. Assess the character of the school, the duties of school staff as character educators, and the appearance of positive people in students' lives. School character teaching projects can be created based on these standards. Especially the case of the Prophet Muhammad. about instilling pure intentions and ethical qualities that are used as reasons to build character training in schools. Among the standards are the following: a. Middle: he speaks clearly and concisely, without words to distract him, so straight forward. B. Not too fast, so that the child has enough opportunity to understand what he is talking about. C. Redundancy: he usually completes three repetitions of each sentence to make his sentences noteworthy. D. Provide direct similarities. e. Focusing on the diversity of children so that they gain a variety of understanding and are not fixated on just one piece of information, and inspires them to continue learning without getting tired. F. Focus on three moral goals: mental, close to home, and motor. G. Focus on child development and improvement young. H. Develop children's creativity by getting clarification on some pressing issues and asking for children's reactions. I. Connect with young people, the local area, etc. j. Practically, this means that the Prophet gave jobs directly to young people who had the ability.

C. Basic Characteristics of Character Education

According to Foerster, character education consists of four main characteristics:

a. An internal order in which every action is assessed based on a hierarchy of values. Values form the basis for every action

b. Coherence that makes someone dare to stick to their principles and not be easily influenced by new situations or afraid of risks. Coherence is essential to building trust in one another and can destroy someone's credibility.

c. Autonomy, where a person internalizes rules into their own personal values. This can be seen through the assessment of personal decisions made without being influenced by pressure from other parties.

d. Loyalty and steadfastness Loyalty is the basis of respect for chosen commitments, and steadfastness is a person's endurance to want what is considered good.

D. Character Education Strategies and Models

To implement character education in schools, three important things must be considered: principles, procedures and practices (Brooks and Goole, Mubarak, 2009:12 in Nasihatun, 2019). The principle is that the principles taught must be applied in the curriculum so that every student at school understands these principles and can apply them in real life. The method for implementing character education consists of three stages: moral knowledge or moral understanding, moral love or moral understanding, and moral action or understanding to do. By using the internalization model of character education, it can occur: 1) Tadzkirah is a model given to students to consistently cultivate, maintain and grow a sense of faith that has been inspired by Allah SWT. This is manifested in pious deeds framed by sincere worship, which results in an open mood and joy in the decision of Allah SWT. The next model is through example, guidance, direction, encouragement, zakiyah (self-cleaning), and supervision. Individuals, organizations and the surrounding environment greatly influence strategies and models for implementing character education. External factors support the implementation of character education along with greater encouragement from individuals to implement it. When character education is implemented simultaneously in an organization, this will form an organizational culture that is beneficial for all parties. One quite successful approach to implementing character education is the three M's, namely: 1) starting from yourself, 2) starting from the smallest, and

3) start right now. This strategy was used by Abdullah Gymnastiar, a ulama figure who

founded the Daruttauhid Bandung educational institution. This shows that the role that individuals play in internalizing character values is very important and very important. Character internalization must be adapted to the situation in the field, as well as with strong motivation from within the individual. In contrast to the post-bomber generation or the pre-millennial generation, the millennial generation's character is critical and curious. For this reason, the traits instilled must be appropriate to the difficulties faced by the millennial generation. According to BSNP (2010), the structure of the millennial generation consists of the following abilities: (a) Determining reasoning and critical thinking abilities, the ability to think fundamentally, horizontally and fundamentally, especially as far as critical thinking; (b) Ability to convey and collaborate (correspondence and joint venture capabilities), the ability to communicate and collaborate in real terms with different groups; furthermore (c) Capacity to think fundamentally and collaborate (decisive reasoning and joint effort ability can think fundamentally, side by side and fundamentally, especially with regard to critical thinking; Capacity to convey and collaborate (correspondence and cooperation skills), ready to provide and collaborate successfully with different encounters; (e) Imaginative and inventive capacity (capacity for creativity and progress), ready to foster innovation to provide a different creative leap forward; data and correspondence innovation, ready to actually use data and correspondence innovation (h) Data and media education capabilities to be able to understand and utilize various types of correspondence media to convey different thoughts, help various groups, and collaborate with people. The models and procedures used to provide character values and cognitive knowledge must be adapted to current circumstances and started as soon as possible. related to the following statement from the Prophet's friend, Sayyidina Ali bin Abi Talib: "Do not force your children according to your education, because in fact they were created for an era that is not your era. Mold the soil while it is still wet and plant wood while it is still soft" . (Shaykh Fadlullah, 1998:153).

This also means character must be instilled from an early age. Early childhood education is like clay, easy to shape. Youth is also known as the "golden age", which is the golden age for cognitive and emotional progress. Children at an early age have a very strong ability to remember and capture knowledge, which allows them to learn whatever their learning sources provide.

CONCLUSION

Character education from an Islamic perspective is a system of behavior required in the Islamic religion as stated in the teachings of the Koran and Hadith. The components of moral education include: knowledge, attitudes and behavior.

If character education values are combined with religious principles or religiosity, character education will be more internalized. As a result, the values to be taught must be included in the school curriculum so that every student in the school has a strong understanding of these values and has the ability to apply them in real life. Three stages can be used as a strategy for implementing character education: Moral Knowledge/Moral Learning, Moral Feelings/Moral Learning, and Moral Action/Action Learning.

The role of teachers as role models and facilitators is very influential in helping children understand and apply religious and moral values in everyday life. The integration of Islamic religious and moral education in the school environment is also very important in shaping the religious character of elementary school children.

Teachers provide examples and help children understand and apply religious and moral principles in everyday life. The role of parents and collaboration with them is also very important to support religious character education at home and at school. It is very important to face and overcome the challenges that arise in implementing Islamic religious and moral education in elementary schools. In creating an effective character education strategy, several things that must be considered include curriculum limitations, the social environment, and the influence of media and technology. The use of religious stories, values-based approaches, and active participation of society and

school communities can help overcome this problem.

It is hoped that through effective Islamic religious and moral education, elementary school children will grow into individuals who have strong religious character and are able to face situations and moral dilemmas with integrity and wisdom. In this way, this education will produce a young generation who is religious, has noble character, and contributes positively to society and the world. Islamic religious and moral education in secondary schools is a solid foundation in shaping children's personalities as the nation's successors in facing the challenges of an ever-evolving era. With awareness of the importance of religious and moral education, society is expected to be able to guide and inspire children to grow into religious, virtuous people and able to make positive contributions to human civilization.

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