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Islamic Values-Based Character Education: Integration of Learning, Religious Activities, and Social Interaction in Madrasah

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Abstract:
Character education based on Islamic values is an effort to form students who not only have academic knowledge, but also show behavior in accordance with moral values and religious teachings. This study aims to analyze the integration of Islamic values in the formation of students' character through learning, religious activities, and social interaction at MA Bahrul Ulum. The research uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach to understand the experience of teachers and students in implementing Islamic values in the madrasah environment. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, then analyzed qualitatively through the process of interpretation of field findings. The results of the study show that character education based on Islamic values is carried out through three interrelated aspects. First, the integration of the values of honesty, discipline, and responsibility in learning through teaching materials, group discussions, questions and answers, direct practice, and teacher examples. Second, the habituation of religious values through religious and extracurricular activities, such as congregational prayers, recitation, tausiyah, scouting, and religious-based social activities. Third, strengthening character through social interaction between students, teachers, and peers that provides space for the development of empathy, tolerance, care, togetherness, and responsibility towards others. These findings show that character formation in madrasas does not only take place through the delivery of learning materials, but also through habituation of religious practices and daily social experiences. Thus, the integration of these three aspects is an important part of seeking to internalize Islamic values in student behavior in the madrasah environment.

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INTRODUCTION

The quality of human resources is not only seen from the mastery of science and technology, but also in terms of character or behavior. To create superior and characterful human resources, a good education system is needed (Puspa et al., 2023). Education as an organized pattern in the context of developing and perfecting all human potential, both moral, intellectual, physical, and personality is expected to be used by the community in order to gather all activities to achieve their life goals (Alvizar, 2023). Understanding religion and character has always received attention at every level of education, from preschool to college.

Based on Presidential Regulation Number 87 of 2017 concerning Strengthening Character Education (PPK) which regulates the goals of character development which includes various values in shaping the personality of students (Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia, 2017). These values include religiosity, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, and democratic attitude. In addition, PPK also emphasizes the importance of curiosity, affection, respect, communication skills, the spirit of peace love and humor as elements that support the formation of good character. Therefore, strengthening character through education is expected to give birth to individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have positive attitudes and behaviors in social and national life (Antari & De Liska, 2020).

Character education in Indonesia now carries a new spirit full of optimism with the aim of building a dignified and superior national character. In this case, the concept of character education must be oriented in a clear direction, considering that good character will give birth to a positive example for society. Muslich (2022: 126), through his book "Character Education: Answering the Challenges of Multidimensional Crises" states that a person's character can be formed through an educational process that instills noble moral values. Conversely, if a person is exposed to bad examples, he or she has the potential to adopt bad habits and reprehensible morals.

The problem of moral crisis among teenagers is currently increasingly worrying. The phenomenon of juvenile delinquency in school, such as lack of respect for others, cheating behavior, truancy, brawls, promiscuity, and various other deviant behaviors, are indications that the morality of the nation's next generation is damaged that cannot be considered trivial. Some of the factors that affect the deterioration of the morals of the young generation are the rapid development of technology, declining quality of faith, environmental influence, loss of honesty, lack of sense of responsibility, inability to think long-term, and low level of discipline (Wahyudi, 2020; Yulizha et al., 2023; Hudi et al., 2024).

One of the efforts that can be made by teachers in schools to overcome this problem is to develop Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning that instills an understanding of moral values in students. This approach focuses on cognitively recognizing values that allow students to understand and appreciate Islamic religious values more deeply. Schools have an important role in instilling and developing positive values, so that they can help students build good character and ethics.

As an implementation of these goals, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) requires the right strategies and methods to ensure that educational activities can be achieved

based on their goals (Kasiari et al., 2023). Although a positive construct in the Islamic religious education curriculum has been established, the success rate is largely determined by the use of appropriate methods and strategies for transmitting subject matter. (Wahyuni & Fitriana, 2021). The approach used is the spearhead of the success of the desired learning goals and achievements.

Strategies to strengthen students' character through the values of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at MA. Bahrul Ulum is applied with an integrated approach in every aspect of learning. Through the researcher's observation on December 1-5, 2024, educators at the school prioritize understanding of Islamic religious values, such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility which are then manifested in students' daily behavior as a form of positive character. In addition, Islamic Religious Education at MA. Bahrul Ulum aims to produce a generation that is superior, has noble character, and is ready to face the challenges of the times.

Based on previous studies on the value of character and Islamic religious education, it focuses more on the importance of religious education as the basis for the formation of students' character. Some studies such as Maherah (2020), Imamah et al. (2021), and Jannah (2023), revealed that Islamic religious education has an important role in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors, especially in instilling moral values taken from Islamic teachings, such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility. The research examines how religious materials can shape students' character, as well as how the social and family environment influences character formation.

The current research emphasizes more on practical approaches and implementation strategies in teaching. This research focuses on how the right learning strategies and methods can optimize the strengthening of students' character in schools, especially at the high school level. In addition, the current research emphasizes more on teaching techniques that can directly shape and strengthen students' character through classroom learning activities, extracurricular activities, and social interactions in schools. This shows a shift from theoretical studies to practical implementation in developing students' character through Islamic religious education values.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a phenomenological approach to understand how students and teachers in MA. Bahrul Ulum lives and implements character strengthening through the values of Islamic Religious Education. The phenomenological approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the meaning contained in the interaction between student behavior and religious teaching in the context of schools (Wiranata, 2024: 20). The data used consists of primary and secondary data.

Primary data was obtained directly through interviews and observations of students and teachers, while secondary data was obtained through literature studies from various books, journals, and articles that were in accordance with the focus of the research. Data analysis was carried out with a qualitative approach, which prioritizes logical and inductive thinking methods, by comparing, interpreting, and drawing

conclusions based on facts found in the field (Waruwu, 2023). The qualitative method aims to explore an understanding of the strategy of strengthening students' character through the values of Islamic Religious Education at MA. Bahrul Ulum

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Character education has urgency in the process of forming quality students, where one of the approaches is carried out by teachers in MA. Bahrul Ulum is with learning activities in the classroom, through extracurricular activities, and social interaction in schools.

1. Learning Activities in the Classroom

   The urgency of learning in the classroom as one of the foundations in the formation of students' character, especially in the context of schools that integrate Islamic religious education. The learning process aims not only to achieve academic achievements, but also to instill and internalize the values of Islamic religious education and spirituality that are integrated in the teachings of Islam. In line with the view of constructivist theory put forward by Piaget quoted by Su'udi (2022: 16), effective learning will be achieved when students are able to build knowledge through direct experience and active interaction with the surrounding environment. In the context of Islamic religious education, various activities such as discussions on Islamic teachings, the practice of joint prayer, and the study of morals, have an important role in introducing and absorbing moral values that can be applied in daily life.

   Mr. Rosi as a PAI teacher at MA. Bahrul Ulum emphasized that character strengthening through Islamic religious education can be achieved through the application of various learning strategies that emphasize the active participation of students. In this case, learning activities based on Islamic values, such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility, can be integrated through methods that involve direct interaction, such as group discussions, question and answer sessions, and hands-on practice in class. Learning activities not only provide opportunities for students to explore Islamic teachings, but also allow them to internalize these values in their daily lives.

   Research conducted by Shodikun et al. (2023), hinting that character strengthening through Islamic religious education can be achieved through the application of various learning strategies that emphasize students' active participation. Learning activities based on Islamic values, such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility, can be integrated through methods that involve direct interaction, such as group discussions, question and answer sessions, and hands-on classroom practice.

   The social learning theory put forward by Bandura in Pohan (2022: 67), provides a basis for the implementation of character strengthening strategies in the school environment. Bandura's social learning emphasizes that students do not only gain knowledge through teaching materials, but also through observation and imitation of the behavior shown by teachers and peers. In Islamic religious

education, the role of teachers as role models is very important, because teachers can illustrate religious teachings with positive attitudes and actions. Learning activities that are designed to provide real examples, such as the implementation of joint prayers, social activities in the form of helping others, or other activities that illustrate Islamic values, can be a means to strengthen students' understanding of religious teachings. According to Rahman, students who sit in the MA class. Bahrul Ulum through research interviews, that through direct experience and observation of positive behavior, students not only gain knowledge, but are also directed to imitate and apply Islamic religious values in daily life.

In a study conducted by Kamila (2023), it was found that through Islamic religious education as a strengthening of students' character, it will have more impact when integrated in various aspects of student interaction in the academic environment which is not only limited to religious subjects. At MA. Bahrul Ulum, the implementation of character strengthening strategies is carried out by involving Islamic values in each subject taught, as well as through extracurricular activities designed to support the development of students' character. Through these activities, students not only gain an understanding of the teachings of Islam, but also internalize the moral and spiritual values contained in religion.

2. Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities at MA. Bahrul Ulum applies the basis of religion in the process of strengthening students' character. These activities provide opportunities for students to develop their potential outside of formal lesson hours which are usually more focused on cognitive and academic aspects. As explained by Dewey in the theory of social education, education should not only be oriented towards the achievement of academic knowledge, but also on the formation of character and the development of students' social skills (Yuliani, 2020: 191). Extracurricular activities carried out at MA. Bahrul Ulum by integrating Islamic religious values, such as recitation, scouting, and religion-based social service, has positive value in strengthening students' attitudes and behaviors that are in line with the teachings of Islam. According to Mr. Riswandi, a teacher at MA. Bahrul Ulum, these activities not only form a better student personality, but also strengthen awareness of the importance of living a life in accordance with Islamic moral and spiritual teachings.

Intaniati, a student of grade XI MA. Bahrul Ulum revealed that extracurricular activities that integrate Islamic values have an impact on strengthening students' character. Religious-based extracurricular activities, such as taklim assembly, congregational prayers, and tausiyah (briefing) by teachers, call on students to practice the teachings of Islam in daily life, both in moral and social aspects.

Mr. Supriadi, a teacher at MA. Bahrul Ulum emphasized that activities such as the commemoration of Islamic holidays or competitions based on Islamic teachings not only play a role in strengthening the relationship between students, but also in increasing their sense of togetherness, concern, and religious awareness. At MA. Bahrul Ulum has a great opportunity to utilize various extracurricular activities as a means to strengthen students' character through the

cultivation of Islamic religious educational values. By involving students in activities that contain Islamic values, students can deepen the moral principles applied in daily life, as well as be able to apply them in social interaction of the community.

3. Social Interaction in School

Social interaction in the MA environment. Bahrul Ulum contains noble values in the process of developing students' character, especially in the context of Islamic religious education. Based on Bandura's social learning theory, a person is greatly influenced by interactions with others, especially with teachers and peers (Abdullah, 2019). Islamic religious values taught in schools will be easier to accept and internalize by students if they can be applied in daily social interactions. Mr. Rahman emphasized through research interviews, that through the social interaction that takes place at MA. Bahrul Ulum, students not only gain a theoretical understanding of the teachings of Islam, but can also apply moral principles in daily life.

Positive social interaction between students, both in the classroom and outside the classroom, has a presence in the process of character formation through Islamic religious education (Mawardi et al., 2024). Social interaction is not only limited to activities that take place in the classroom, but also involves various other social activities, such as group work, extracurricular activities and religious activities held at school. At MA. Bahrul Ulum, through social interactions that are intertwined on various occasions, students have the opportunity to apply Islamic religious values in their social life. This includes the development of empathy, tolerance, and a sense of responsibility towards others.

Research by Dalimunthe (2023), also emphasized that social interaction based on Islamic religious values can strengthen students' positive attitudes towards others, as well as encourage students to practice religious teachings in daily life. According to Mr. Rahman, in social interaction in schools, teachers are facilitators who provide examples and guide students in applying Islamic values in social interactions. Therefore, in MA. Bahrul Ulum, strengthening character through Islamic religious education values is carried out through the formation of positive social interactions by prioritizing religious teachings as a guideline in social relations between students

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that strategies for strengthening students' character through Islamic Religious Education values at MA Bahrul Ulum are implemented in an integrated manner through classroom learning, religious and extracurricular activities, and social interactions within the school environment. In the learning process, Islamic values such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility are instilled through learning materials, group discussions, question-and-answer sessions, direct practice, and teacher role modelling. Learning is not solely directed toward academic achievement but also toward instilling moral values and developing students' behavior in accordance with Islamic teachings.

Character strengthening is also carried out through religious and extracurricular activities, such as congregational prayers, religious study sessions, tausiyah (Islamic religious advice), scouting, Islamic holiday commemorations, and religion-based social activities. These activities provide students with opportunities to practice religious teachings and develop moral and spiritual awareness. Furthermore, social interactions among students, teachers, and peers provide opportunities to apply Islamic values in everyday life, particularly in developing empathy, tolerance, compassion, solidarity, and responsibility toward others.

Therefore, strengthening students' character through Islamic Religious Education values cannot be achieved solely through the theoretical delivery of religious knowledge but must also be supported by role modelling, habituation, and authentic social experiences. The integration of classroom learning, religious and extracurricular activities, and social interactions constitutes a set of complementary elements in the process of character formation at MA Bahrul Ulum. The consistent and continuous implementation of these strategies is expected to help students internalize Islamic values and reflect them in their daily attitudes and behavior.

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