



Religious Character Education in Term of Moral Knowing: A Case Study at an Elementary School in Surakarta

Arum Susilowati*, Endang Fauziati, Fitri Puji Rahmawati, Laili Etika Rahmawati

Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author. E-mail: q200210010@student.ums.ac.id

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to find out and analyze: (1) how is the implementation of religious character education in term moral knowing students in classroom learning, (2) how is the implementation of religious character education in term moral knowing students into extracurricular programs, and (3) how is the implementation of religious character education in term moral knowing student in self-development programs at an elementary school in Surakarta. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach. Data collection techniques used were interviews, observations, and documentation studies. The primary data sources were obtained from the results of researcher's observations and interviews with school principals, teachers of the *Aqidah Akhlak* subject, classroom teachers and 31 students in class 4A at an Elementary school in Surakarta. While the secondary data was obtained by researchers from existing sources in the form of evidence, notes, and files. Data is analyzed by performing data reduction, data presentation, and data verification. The results of the research show that the implementation of religious character education in term moral knowing students in learning Fiqh, Arabic, *Aqidah Akhlak*, Al-Qur'an and Hadits, and Muhammadiyah. The implementation of religious character education in term moral knowing students into extracurricular programs is calligraphy, *tapak suci*, *hizbul wathan*, and *tahfidz Qur'an*. Furthermore, the implementation of religious character education in term moral knowing student in self-development programs is the habit of praying dhuha, Friday infaq, cultum, tadarus, Friday prayers, dhikr after prayers, memorizing verses of the Al-Qur'an, memorizing short hadits, and memorizing daily prayers. Globalization is one of the factors that influence the low religious character in elementary schools and then the development of religious character education in elementary schools must be a priority for students, so with this research students have been facilitated to be able to further develop their religious character education.

Keywords: religious character education, moral knowing, self-development

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Introduction

At the present time there is a lot of weakness in moral education that occurs in the world of education. Many students often play truant, cheat, cases of brawls and so on (Lickona, 2014). The father of American character education, a character educator from Cortland University, revealed that the nation is heading for destruction if it has ten signs of the times, which include increasing violence among adolescents, cultivating dishonesty, developing fanatical attitudes towards groups, lowering feelings of love for parents and teachers, blurring of good and bad morals, bad use of language, and self-destructive behaviour such as drug use, alcohol, and free time.

According to Lickona (2012), knowledge of moral values is insufficient to become a human being with character; moral values must be accompanied by moral character. This character has three components: information about morals (moral knowing), sentiments about morals (moral feeling), and moral behaviours (moral activities). Lickona (2014) states that schools that want to build character must provide a moral environment that emphasizes good values and puts them at the forefront. Respect and

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responsibility and the values that derive from these are values that schools can legitimately teach. Character education must engage all school stakeholders and pervade the school atmosphere and curriculum (Singh, 2019). Character education is more than a phrase or a course; it is a goal that is interwoven in daily school life, and as stakeholders, parents, teachers, and administrators should join this camp to help kids to exhibit those excellent values in their lives (Tsai & Agboola, 2012).

Currently, human behavior is very vulnerable to deviation, especially in today's youth. Today's youth morals and behavior can be said to be very much in decline among young people. In such a situation, it is necessary to carry out activities related to religion, social and culture to form character education values in individuals. Humans with intelligence and character (human beings) are humans who use their intellectual abilities optimally based on conscience (Minsih & Wulandari, 2012).

One of the efforts made to overcome this decline in morale is by instilling religious character education in students. These students' negative behavior events are interesting for research study material by linking them to the level of student religiosity. Religiosity is a religious commitment that can affect attitudes, tendencies and behavior. According to Jalaluddin in Rahmawati (2016) religion is derived from the Latin *religio*, whose basic word is *religare*, which means to bond. That is, religion, or religion in general, contains laws and duties that must be followed, all of which serve to bond and complete a person or group of people in their connection with God, other humans, and nature. Religiosity is characterised as the depth of one's knowledge, the strength of one's conviction, how thoroughly worship and laws are followed, and how deeply one appreciates the religion to which one clings. Religion may be determined by a Muslim's level of knowledge, belief, practise, and appreciation of Islam (Nashori & Mucharam, 2002).

Therefore, with this religious character education can shape students to have a good personality, true and useful both for themselves and others in accordance with the attitude of a Muslim. Then another impact arising from the lack of religious character of students will result in a tendency to dare to commit various violations, both at school and outside of school. The religious domain is very important to be developed in students to construct the words, thoughts, and actions of students which are endeavored to always be based on divine values and norms based on the teachings of the religion they adhere to.

The role of the school is in shaping the personality and moral behavior of students, by instilling religious values to create religious people. Therefore, character education for students must start from an early age so that the nation's successors who have good morals are formed. Character education is not an education that merely transfers knowledge about something that is right or wrong. But they also must transfer values and make it a habit that is carried out continuously by students.

According to Sahlan (2010), building religious character may be accomplished through school principal rules, the execution of teaching and learning activities, extracurricular activities, culture, and behaviour that are carried out on a continual basis by all school members. So that the school's goal of building religious-based characteristics can be met. Some steps that may be taken to realise these activities include setting an example, creating a suitable environment, and playing an active part.

Sabar & Muhtar (2020) investigated the incorporation of religious elements into primary school activities. Firdaus et al. (2022) and Listya (2016) investigated religious character education implementation. The research of Permatasari & Sukartono (2022) then explores teachers' efforts to instill Islamic character characteristics in children. In addition, Rahmiyanti (2017), Firmansyah & Iksan (2021), and Arimbi & Minsih (2022) investigated character education through self-development and Islamic-based school culture. Anwar et al. (2020) investigated how vision and mission are manifested in elementary school regular programs and activities for character education pupils. In addition, Hambali and Yulianti (2018) and Munadi & Khuriyah (2023) investigated religious extracurriculars in relation to the establishment of children's religious character.

Based on the description above, it is necessary to conduct research on religious character education in term moral knowing for students. This theme was chosen because it has a broad reach in learning activities, especially in the religious character education of students at school. Character education is a way to form a good personality for humans. Lickona (2012) stated that character education is an effort to intentionally shape someone to understand ethical values. In this case, students become subjects and objects of character education. Students are consciously and systematically introduced to situations that require students to behave well. In character development according to Lickona (2012) it indicates in three aspects, namely moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. However, in this case the researcher will focus on one aspect of the framework, namely the moral knowing of students.

Moral knowing is a person's moral reasoning and ability to evaluate oneself by observing the surrounding environment, Lickona (2014). In terms of moral knowing, the teacher provides teaching that is oriented towards the formation of students (cognitive) knowledge.

In terms of moral knowing character education, researchers also focus on one of the most important character educations in supporting students, namely religious character, because basically it is important to develop the religiosity of students, especially in the present time. Globalization is one of the factors that influence the low religious character in elementary schools and then the development of religious character education in elementary schools must be a priority for students, so with this research students have been facilitated to be able to further develop their religious character education. The lack of religious character that is embedded in the minds of students will of course make the educational process not run optimally. Based on this description, this study aims to explain: (1) the implementation of religious character education in term moral knowing students in classroom learning, (2) the implementation of religious character education in term moral knowing students into extracurricular programs, and (3) the implementation of religious character education in term moral knowing student in self-development programs at an Elementary school in Surakarta.

Methods

The approach and type of research that the researcher uses is qualitative research with the type of case study research in which this research aims to discuss the implementation of religious character education in term moral knowing students in classroom learning, the implementation of religious character education in term moral knowing students in to extracurricular programs, and the implementation of religious character education in term moral knowing student in self-development programs at an Elementary school in Surakarta. The primary data sources were obtained from the results of observations of researchers and interviews with school principals, teachers of the *Aqidah Akhlak* subject, classroom teachers and 31 students in class 4 A at an elementary school in Kartasura. While the secondary data was obtained by researchers from existing sources in the form of evidence, notes and files. Data collection techniques used are interviews, observation, and documentation. The researcher's data validation technique uses an interactive analysis model, namely the steps of data reduction (data reduction), data display (presentation of data), and conclusion (conclusion).

Results and Discussion

The Implementation of Religious Character Education in term Moral Knowing Students in Classroom Learning

Religious character education in term moral knowing students through religious subjects in this school is divided into several sections, namely the learning of Fiqh, Arabic, *Aqidah Akhlak*, Al-Qur'an and Hadith, and Muhammadiyah. So, with religious lessons such as students get religious moral knowledge, namely increasing the value of the religiosity of students at school. Figure 1 shows the students taking part in the *Aqidah Akhlak* learning with the teacher who is writing his material in front of the class about faith in prophets and apostles. Then in Figure 2 it shows that students are participating in Muhammadiyah learning.



Figure 1. Students in the *Aqidah Akhlak* learning



Figure 2. Students in the Muhammadiyah learning.

It is also supported by interviews with the classroom teacher that religious subjects, such as memorizing brief surahs, daily prayers, and other activities in the learning process, might boost students' religiosity. Furthermore, providing them with learning like this in order to better understand students in terms of their religiosity and certainly provide benefits so that their knowledge broadens in learning this moral creed. Therefore, by getting the transfer of knowledge in learning Fiqh, Arabic, *Aqidah Akhlak*, Al-Qur'an and Hadith, and Muhammadiyah students can already develop the moral knowing in terms of the religiosity of students.

The Implementation of Religious Character Education in term Moral Knowing Students into Extracurricular Programs

There are several extracurriculars that support increasing the value of the religiosity of students at this school, namely calligraphy, tapak suci, *hizbul wathan* and tahfidz Qur'an. The principal states that religious extracurriculars that are here are such as holy sites, *hizbul wathan*, calligraphy, and *tahfidz Qur'an*. Students are expected to be able to maximize their religious character with existing extracurriculars, namely being able to further increase their faith, establish brotherhood among themselves, get a good environment, and many other benefits.

It is supported by the explanation from the classroom teacher of class 4A that it is true that in developing the character of our students we also support them in terms of their extracurriculars, because we do not only educate them in the classroom but also outside the classroom, namely participating in extracurriculars that they enjoy or enjoy. The students of class 4A also add that they joined the tapak suci extracurricular because they really like martial arts.

In addition to academic matters, students' religious character education is also supported by non-academic, namely through extracurriculars in this school. With this extracurricular, it is easier for to develop the religious character education in term moral knowing of students.

The Implementation of Religious Character Education in term Moral Knowing Students in Self-development Programs

There are several self-development programs in this school or what is usually called Islamic habituation, which is always carried out by this school, namely the habituation of dhuha prayer, Friday infaq, cultum, tadarus, Friday prayer, dhikr after prayer, memorizing verses of the Koran, memorizing short hadiths and memorizing daily prayers. Figure 3.1 shows students getting ready to carry out the dhuhur prayer in congregation. Then in Figure 3.2 it shows that the students were guided by the ustadz to dhikr and pray respectively. And continued with the cult by the ustadz.



Figure 3.1 Students getting ready to carry out the dhuhur prayer



Figure 3.2 Students dhikr and prayer

With the data above, it is also reinforced by interviews with the principal, that in the morning, children are immediately directed to pray dhuha in congregation in the hall on the 3rd floor, as well as congregational dhuhur prayers and ashar prayers, children have been accustomed every day like this. This is very important for schools, especially Islamic schools, to teach the habit of worship from an early age to students so that this Islamic habituation will increase obedience to Allah and His Messenger, so that later when they grow up, they will always remember it, wherever they are, and of course educate students to have good character or charity.

The principal really prioritize the character education of students' religiosity here, such as in the morning there is murajaah, memorization of prayers, then the implementation of dhuha prayers. And when at noon students pray dhuhur in congregation and when before returning home from school they

also pray ashar in congregation here, at the ashar prayer there is usually a cult of grade 5 or 6 students in turn, and specifically for grade 1 and 2 students they pray in class with their respective homeroom teachers and the readings are also arranged so that students memorize and fluently in reading their prayers.

With the Islamic habituation that is always done by this school such as dhuha prayers, tadarus, cult and others it has become a routine here, so we have educated students from as early as possible to accept all Islamic habits and they have begun to familiarize themselves with it.

From the results of these observations and interviews, with this Islamic habituation students are based on basic good things, namely starting in the morning with *murajaah*, memorizing prayers, carrying out dhuha prayers in congregation, thinking and cults. So that students have inculcated habits that stick every day carried out at the school. The following table details the results of the above research.

Table 1. Implementation of Religious Character Education in term Moral Knowing

No	Religious Character Education in term Moral Knowing Students	Result
1	Religious character education in term moral knowing students in classroom learning.	In the learning Fiqh, Arabic, <i>Aqidah Akhlak</i> , Al-Qur'an and Hadits, and Muhammadiyah.
2	Religious character education in term moral knowing students into extracurricular programs.	Calligraphy, <i>tapak suci</i> , <i>hizbul wathan</i> and <i>tahfidz Qur'an</i> .
3	Religious character education in term moral knowing students in self-development programs.	The habit of praying dhuha, Friday infaq, cultum, tadarus, Friday prayers, dhikr after prayers, memorizing verses of the Al-Qur'an, memorizing short hadits and memorizing daily prayers.

The implementation of religious character education in term moral knowing at an elementary school in Kartasura has been well implemented through intracurricular, extracurricular and self-development activities. Basically, religious education in schools will always be in the spotlight, especially by parents who really hope that all students will become good and obedient students of religion, have sufficient knowledge and understanding of religion and be able to apply the knowledge they have in everyday life. The results will be discussed in the following section.

First, religious character education in term moral knowing students in learning is divided into several parts, namely learning Fiqh, Arabic, *Aqidah Akhlak*, Al-Qur'an, and Hadith, and Muhammadiyah. Second, religious character education in term moral knowing students in extracurriculars namely calligraphy, *tapak suci*, *hizbul wathan* and *tahfidz Qur'an*. Third, religious character education in term moral knowing students in self-development programs or usually referred to as Islamic habituation, which is always carried out by this school, namely the habituation of dhuha prayer, Friday infaq, cultum, tadarus, Friday prayer, dhikr bada prayer, memorizing verses of the Koran, memorizing short hadiths, and memorizing daily prayers.

As described above, the management of religious character education and moral knowing of students can be carried out through internal and external school strategies. The school's internal strategy can be divided into teaching and learning activities in class, extracurricular activities, and self-development programs.

In school, students need formal institutions and sessions to gain moral knowing, including their religious values. Then many contributing factors affect moral qualities among students. So, this is in line with the opinion of Hasanah (2013) the method of instilling character values in schools as forms of instilling character values can be through: (1) teaching, (2) example, (3) habituation, (4) motivation, and (5) rule enforcement.

This is in line with the results of research from Susanto (2022) strengthening Islamic religious education through integrated intra-curricular activities in learning activities in the initial, core, and

closing activities. This research is in line with this research, namely when learning is carried out at the beginning, core, and closing of learning, namely memorizing short surahs, daily prayers and others.

Then the teacher also supports the education of religious moral character knowing students in extracurriculars, namely calligraphy, *tapak suci*, *hizbul wathan* and *tahfidz Qur'an*. This is in line with previous research conducted by Nahdia, et al. (2023), namely religious extracurricular programs including religious amaliyah, living hadith, tahsin and tahfizh. However, there is a slight difference with this study, in that at this school the researcher found that in the *tapak suci* and *hizbul wathan* extracurriculars, they taught a lot about religious values that can be applied in the daily life of students such as forming a strong personality physically (physically) and spiritually (faith and morals).

The teacher is expected to be able to play a central role and make himself a role model for all school environments, including in cultivating students' religious character education. Asmaun and Anggah (2012) believe that nurturing character education is an early approach of educating children to anticipate changes in the order of life that begin to lead to moral degeneration. This approach is emphasised more as a culture, so that students may make character education a way of thinking, doing, and behaving in school and society.

Furthermore, it is also in line with research from Silkyanti (2019) showing the culture of a religious school at Muhammadiyah 17 Elementary School Semarang every day includes a culture of smiles, greetings, greetings, courtesy, and manners or 5S, praying together, memorizing, TPQ, dhuha prayers and midday prayers. Methods or steps in forming character through example and habituation. This is also in line with this research, namely the inculcation of religious character through Islamic habituation activities through student self-development, which is always carried out by this school, namely, among others, the habit of praying dhuha, Friday infaq, cultum, tadarus, Friday prayers, dhikr bada prayers, memorizing verses of Al-Quran, memorizing short hadiths, and memorizing daily prayers. As for the slight difference with previous research, with this research there are new findings that can be sampled or obtained through this research, such as memorizing verses of the Koran, memorizing short hadiths, and memorizing daily prayers.

In the implementation of religious character education in term moral knowing students at school, the habituation of students to good behavior needs to be supported by the exemplary teacher and principal and all elements within the school. Regarding the teacher, the teacher's role is very necessary to educate, guide, and encourage. The teacher is also a conduit of knowledge, mover, and adviser. This is in accordance with the opinion of Hamalik (2008) the role of the teacher as a role model, namely the teacher is expected to be able to provide a good example for students so that students can emulate it. This opinion is in accordance with the role of the teacher in research with the results of the teacher providing religious moral knowledge in the learning process in the classroom, in extracurricular programs and in student self-development programs.

The results of the research above show that the role of the teacher at an elementary school in Kartasura has been running in accordance with the institution's vision of creating a generation, one of which is a noble generation by familiarizing students with maximum religious character.

Conclusion

The decline in morals and morals is influenced by various things, especially the advancement of technology which is increasingly rapid and free. In such a situation, it is necessary to carry out activities related to religious education to shape the values of religious character education in students. This religious character education can be developed and integrated in the learning process, in extracurricular programs and self-development programs in schools. The results of the study concluded that: (1) the implementation of religious character education in term moral knowing students in the learning process in class is integrated into learning Fiqh, Arabic, *Aqidah Akhlak*, Al-Qur'an and Hadith, and Muhammadiyah, (2) the implementation of religious character education in term moral knowing students is integrated into extracurricular programs such as calligraphy, *tapak suci*, *hizbul wathan* and *tahfidz Qur'an*, and (3) the implementation of religious character education in term moral knowing students is integrated into self-development programs for students such as the habit of praying dhuha, Friday infaq, cultum, tadarus, Friday prayers, dhikr after prayers, memorizing verses of the Qur'an, memorizing short hadiths, and memorizing daily prayers at an elementary school in Surakarta.

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