

Islamic Religious Education Teacher's Strategy in Forming Students' Religious Character

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Abstract: Character education values such as discipline, honesty and responsibility need strengthening in their implementation at this time. We can see this in how the youth behave. For example, many students violate school rules, do not do their assignments, cheat, or even skip classes for no reason. These things can apparently arise due to the loss of religious character in students. The aim of this study is to describe the strategies used by Islamic Religious Education teachers in shaping the religious character of students and their supporting and inhibiting factors. This method of research is qualitative research. This research uses a field research approach, namely from the process, if the activities at SMPN 3 pages in the Islamic Religious Education strategy program in Shaping Students' Religious Character. Researchers used purposive sampling techniques to select informants, and to collect data, researchers used observation, interviews, and documentation. For the data validity, researchers use triangulation and data analysis, which is then processed and arranged systematically so that it can be interpreted and produce something in the form of thoughts, theories, opinions, or even new ideas. The results showed that this strategy has not been fully successful because there are many obstacles. Almost everything is limited and not all programs can run efficiently.

Keywords: Teacher; strategy; religious character.

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INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of the moral decline of the nation's generation, including the nation's elite, often becomes an excuse for some people to criticize the institution of education. This is very reasonable because education actually has a very basic mission, namely to form a whole human being with noble morals as one of the main indicators, a generation of people with noble character is one of the profiles expected from the practice of national education (Parihar et al., n.d.; Review, 2013). The existence of the words noble character in the above formulation of the objectives of national education means that the Indonesian nation aspires for noble morals to be part of the national character. This is expected to be realized through a national education process that is carried out gradually and continuously. Moreover, the Indonesian nation with a Muslim majority is a separate supporting force for the realization of a society with morals based on Islamic values. This is because morality is an integral part of the structure of Islamic teachings (creed, Shariah and morality) (Al-Bar et al., n.d.; Educational & 2018, n.d.; Yasin et al., 2013).

Educational institutions continue to make efforts to improve student character education. Even though in reality the problem of moral education is not only the responsibility of educational institutions, it is hoped that the social and family environment will play a more important role in fostering ethical values (Althof & M. W., 2006). Even though students receive a character education curriculum, for example through civic

education, religious education, morals, and dogma, the problem of immorality is not reduced. Schools or madrasas have fulfilled the obligation to provide subjects of character, behavior, values, and religious education (Hamdani & Djaswidi, 2014). Character behaviors such as honesty, religiosity, trust, persistence, responsibility, and cooperation often encounter obstacles in their implementation.

The policies issued by the government can have a major impact on the learning process in schools where face-to-face implementation applies the precautionary principle because it relates to the health and safety of school residents so health protocols must be implemented strictly by the rules for limited face-to-face implementation. Of course, learning activities do not run as before, thus learning activities carried out by students and educators are assisted by using several applications that can support the process of learning activities, including applications: zoom, google classroom, WhatsApp, and other supporting applications (Abnisa et al., 2022; Endedijk & Bronkhorst, 2014; Firmansyah & Kardina, 2020).

Table 1. Data Presentation that Offline Learning Contributes to Character Building

Response Option	Percentage of Respondents
Strongly disagree	5%
Disagree	10%
Neutral	25%
Agree	40%
Strongly agree	20%

On the other hand, the implementation of limited or offline face-to-face learning is a solution but has a threat in the form of potential problems that can arise. The target to be achieved is how to maintain the competence of students. To maintain the competence of students, the learning target must be achieved. To achieve the learning target, it needs to be supported by several factors such as the readiness of facilities and infrastructure, how to properly convey learning material to students, and how to make students able to adapt to new habits if previously online schools at home now have to go back to school with new learning methods and must follow the health protocol. In addition to students, teachers need to adjust and manage offline learning activities well so that the target material is achieved and parents also need to give permission and support to their children in carrying out these offline learning activities. (Ode et al., 2021; Rienties et al., n.d.).

So far, a lot of research has been done on teacher strategies for shaping the character of students. Like the research conducted by Lubis & Murniyetti (2023), the religious characters of students has been well formed, which can be seen from the daily life of students in school where students are getting used to religious activities. The topic of this research is also about the teacher's strategy in shaping the religious character of students, it's just that what distinguishes it is that this strategy was applied during a pandemic, conditions like this are still quite new and it needs to be seen how the results of its implementation in schools (Futura & 2020, 2022; Islam & 2024,; Nisa' et al., 2021; Tandana et al., 2022.). Almost all learning in Indonesia uses limited face-to-face learning during the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak situation in Indonesia. Therefore, to add to the study in analyzing the strategies of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in shaping the religious character of students at SMPN 3 Pakem, Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta during the Pandemic Period. This analysis is expected to be able to provide results of an analysis of how Islamic

Religious Education teachers organize strategies to shape the religious character of students during a pandemic and their application in schools.

Previous studies have explored many teachers' efforts to improve religiosity through extracurricular activities and routine activities at school. As study conducted by Astriana et al., (2023) in which they carry out habituation with a schedule for *dhuha* prayers, reciting short surahs, and so on. Likewise, study conducted by Khairani & Rosyidi (2022) claimed that the extracurricular activities carried out are able to make students interested in habituation to perform religious activities.

Albeit similar studies are present, this research may believe quite reasonable to conduct considering the focus of the research, SMPN 3 Pakem has the problem of the difficulty of instilling religious character during the Covid-19 pandemic. These problems must certainly be solved, such as by increasing the intensity of guidance or habituating religious activities at school (Tarbiyah, 2021). SMP Negeri 3 Pakem is an educational unit located at Pojok, Harjobinanung, Kec. Pakem, Kab. Sleman, DI Yogyakarta, zip code 55582. In carrying out its activities, SMP Negeri 3 Pakem is under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Learning at SMP Negeri 3 Pakem is conducted during the day. In a week, learning is carried out for 6 days. SMP Negeri 3 Pakem has accreditation A, based on certificate 22.01/BAP-SM/TU/X/2015. Based on preliminary observations by the author regarding the formation of religious character in students, it is known that Pakem 3 Public Middle School is a devout school and implements good, routine, and structured religious systems and activities. Pakem 3 Public Middle School holds *taddarus* activities, and *Dhuha* prayers every day according to the schedule provided, namely at 09.30 and midday prayers when it is time.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design. This phenomenology essentially observes events that occur in real terms and is understood fundamentally and thoroughly (All Habsy, 2017). The author's presence at the research location is to increase the author's intensity in interacting with data sources to obtain more valid information about the research focus.

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 3 which is located at Jl. Harjobinangun, Corner, Hargobinangun, Pakem District, Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta. The reason for choosing SMPN 3 Pakem as the research location was based on the uniqueness of this school, where SMPN 3 Pakem is an educational institution that accommodates every potential that students have through the one student one work program. So that by creating students who are cultured and have character according to the expectations of the school, it is necessary to have a strategy for Islamic Religious Education teachers in forming the religious character of their students.

The informant determination technique that the authors used in this study was purposive sampling, this is because the research used was qualitative research. Purposive sampling is applicative rather than normative because it is flexible method that can be adapted to fit the specific needs and objectives of a particular research study, also the selection of participants is driven by practical considerations rather than adhering to rigid sampling rules (Sugiyono, 2009). These established criteria must be following the topic of the problem in the research. Someone who is used as an informant must be someone who is considered credible and able to answer research problems.

To collect all the data needed, both primary and secondary data, in this study the authors used the following data collection methods: (1) Interview Method; (2) Observation Method; (3) and Documentation Method. These three steps are the flow of analysis to make the data meaningful. All three are one unit and a process that is repeated interactively and is carried out during and after data collection.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study explores strategies, supporting factors, and inhibiting factors in the implementation of Islamic Religious Education teachers' strategies in shaping the religious character of students. The strategy of Islamic Religious Education teachers in shaping the religious character of students at SMPN 3 Pakem shows: (1) Instilling fear of Allah SWT; (2) Getting used to taddarus/reading the Qur'an before and after learning; (3) Through reading and writing Al-Qur'an extracurricular activities.

The success of the strategies implemented by PAI teachers cannot be separated from the approaches used, namely the religious approach and the individual approach. The religious approach is defined as an approach that seeks to cultivate religious attitudes contained in students which are reflected in words, actions, and appreciation in everyday life. (Nata, 2011).

The factor behind the process of forming the religious character of students lies in how the condition of the character of students at the junior high school level requires a strong and sturdy religious foundation so that activities and programs in the school are needed to support the formation of the religious character of students at SMPN 3 Pakem. The process of forming the religious character of a teacher, of course, requires a strategy in its application. There are several supporting factors encountered in implementing the strategy of Islamic Religious Education teachers in forming the religious character of students showing: (1) Teacher competence; (2) Student awareness; (3) Facilities and infrastructure. While the inhibiting factors encountered in implementing the Islamic Religious Education teacher's strategy in shaping the religious character of students show: (1) Lack of interest in extracurricular reading and writing of the Koran; (2) Students are dishonest; (3) students are more apathetic towards their surroundings; (4) Students who intentionally do not bring the Koran; (5) Covid-19 pandemic.

The results of the research above indicate that the activities of forming religious character in students have been carried out properly, routinely, and on schedule. There are more inhibiting factors when compared to supporting factors. Where it can be seen that teachers are still not firm in implementing existing activities in schools to support the religious character of their students. So many students still underestimate the urgency and benefits of the activities that have been determined at school. The existence of the Covid-19 pandemic is also very influential in the process of forming the religious character of students because not all activities can be carried out during the pandemic, so it is difficult for teachers to apply these strategies to support the religious character of students.

The term strategy comes from the Greek, namely strategy, strategy is a long plan to succeed in achieving an advantage. Likewise, the strategy is defined as an outline of the course of action to achieve the goals that have been set. In an organization, strategy is a set of views, stances, principles, and or norms set for (Yamin, 2013). So that it can be said that the strategy is part of the plan, stages, and series to achieve the desired goals, therefore the teacher needs to make a plan, and the stages to achieve these goals. In practice, the implementation of learning strategies will be carried out with learning

methods, from where it can be understood that this strategy is more indirect or carried out before learning activities take place, in contrast to the method carried out when the teacher is delivering learning material so that it is said to be live.

In Indonesian, there is the term *guru* besides the term *teacher* and *educator*. The last two terms are part of the most important task of a teacher, namely to teach and educate students at the same time. Even though the meaning of *teacher* and *ustadz* is the same, in practice, especially in Islamic schools, the term *teacher* is used in general. Meanwhile, the term *ustadz* is used to designate a special teacher, namely one who has deep knowledge and experience of religious teachings. In a broader discourse, the term *teacher* is not only limited to school institutions or college institutions. The term *teacher* is often associated with the term *nation* so it becomes the teacher of the nation.

The teacher is an educational staff who professionally and pedagogically has a big responsibility in the learning process toward educational success, especially for the success of his students in the future. Teachers are educational staff who provide several knowledge to students at school. The teacher must instill values and attitudes in students so that they have complete personalities. With the knowledge he has, the teacher guides students in developing their potential. The teacher is an adult who is responsible for assisting students in their physical and spiritual development so that they reach a level of maturity, can stand alone to meet their level of maturity, can stand alone to fulfill their duties as servants and caliphs of Allah on earth and are able as social beings and as creatures. independent life (Rukhayati, 2020).

Religious education is one of the materials that aim to improve the noble character and spiritual values in children. This shows that religious education has an important role in carrying out character education in schools. Therefore, religious education is one of the compulsory subjects in elementary, secondary, and tertiary schools. Education is a process of changing the identity of students to be more advanced. The values of education itself are a precise and accurate meaning and measure that affect the existence of education itself, among the values in national character education, which consists of several elements. Starting from kindergarten, schools to universities have an essential role in spreading positive character to the nation's culture. In this case, there is no denying the importance of character and culture, but what is far more critical is how we can develop the character itself for students. So schools must be able to organize religious education optimally by applying religious values in the school environment which is carried out by all teachers and students together and continuously. (Ainiyah, 2013).

According to Muhaimin (Rahman, 2012) Islamic religious education means efforts to educate the Islamic religion or Islamic teachings and their values so that they become one's outlook and attitude in life. The activity of educating the Islamic religion aims to help a person or group of students in instilling or developing Islamic teachings and their values to serve as their way of life. The purpose of Islamic religious education must be by the values of the teachings of Islamic religious education, namely to make humans fulfil their caliphate duties as the purpose of human creation. As stated by Munzir Hitami stated that the goals of Islamic religious education must include three things, namely: 1) first the goal is teleological, namely returning to God, 2) the second goal is aspirational, namely the happiness of the world to the hereafter, and 3) and the third goal is directive, namely to be a servant of God (Hitami, 2004).

Therefore, regardless of the subject matter, the formulation of the goals of Islamic religious education must include these three things, namely that students become people

who can use knowledge and skills to always return to God, and become people who can use their knowledge and skills to achieve happiness in this world and the hereafter, and with the breadth of his knowledge can make him an obedient and righteous person, so that if all of them are owned by students, the end point is to make students become perfect human beings. (Frimayanti, 2017).

For almost two years, the school was quiet because there was no face-to-face learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Learning activities were replaced by distance learning until the government's policy of face-to-face learning emerged. The government's policy on face-to-face learning during the Covid-19 pandemic was taken into consideration because of the many obstacles students and teachers had to face in the implementation of online learning.

Various problems occurred during the implementation of distance learning, so the quality of education in Indonesia was considered to be lower compared to other countries during the Covid-19 pandemic. For this reason, the government has begun to set a strategy so that face-to-face learning is limited, which will be opened from July 2021 with the provision that all education staff have been vaccinated and learning is carried out by limiting meeting hours as well as the implementation of strict health protocols. In this case, students are divided into study groups or scheduled based on shifts to limit the number of students in a room. This face-to-face implementation applies the precautionary principle because it involves the health and safety of school members, so the health protocol must be implemented strictly according to the rules for limited face-to-face implementation. Therefore, the health protocol must be implemented strictly according to the rules for restricted in-person implementation, which include the following: rotation system and capacity of 50% of the normal student population; approval of students' parents; application of strict health protocols; immunization of educational staff; and availability of facilities and infrastructure to support the implementation of the health protocol. (Onde et al., 2021).

Based on the circular of the Office of Education and Culture No. 420/04/60728 regarding the implementation of face-to-face learning for the school year 2021/2022. Schools under the Ministry of Education and Culture are allowed to implement face-to-face learning under the following conditions: (1) access for all classes from grade I to grade III; (2) 1 hour lesson; (3) one 15-minute break, students remain in the classroom; (4) one room for a maximum of 16 students; (5) if there are more than 16 students, a shift is made the next day; and (6) the distance between students' seats is at least 1 meter (Nissa & A., n.d.).

The preparation of the teachers is also important, because if the teachers have difficulties in managing the offline learning activities, it can lead to the learning outcomes not being achieved during the offline learning. In addition, the readiness of student teachers who have previously been in online schools and who have not adapted to the new habits of offline schools is also a potential cause of problems. A lot of parents have not allowed their children to participate in face-to-face learning activities at school because they are still worried that it will be very risky if the students are allowed to take part in offline classes under the current conditions. (Tanuwijaya & Tambunan, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The strategy of the Islamic Religious Education teacher in shaping the religious character of students at SMPN 3 Pakem during the pandemic was categorized as good. This can be seen from: (1) instilling fear of Allah SWT; (2) Getting used to taddarus/reading the

Qur'an before and after learning; (3) Through reading and writing Al-Qur'an extracurricular activities. The supporting factors encountered in the implementation of the Islamic Religious Education teacher's strategy in shaping the religious character of students at SMPN 3 Pakem are related to (1) Teacher competence; (2) Student awareness; (3) Facilities and infrastructure. While the inhibiting factors encountered in implementing the Islamic Religious Education teacher's strategy in shaping the religious character of students show: (1) Lack of interest in extracurricular reading and writing of the Koran; (2) Students are dishonest; (3) students are more apathetic towards their surroundings; (4) Students who intentionally do not bring the Koran; (5) Covid-19 pandemic.

Based on the research findings, the suggestions put forward for teachers are to be even more assertive in dealing with students' indiscipline in complying with rules and policies that exist in schools so that students have a deterrent effect if they make mistakes. To students, to be more creative and enthusiastic in studying religion which has been facilitated by the school. To parents of students, to set an example as parents should always keep reminding their children at home to perform prayers and other acts of worship wherever and whenever.

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