

IMPLEMENTATION OF LOVE-BASED CHARACTER EDUCATION AT AULADUNA IT KINDERGARTEN, BENGKULU

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ABSTRACT

Character education at the Early Childhood Education (PAUD) level is the main foundation in the formation of children's personalities from the golden age . This study aims to describe the implementation of love- based character education at TK IT Auladuna Bengkulu, including the forms of activities , teacher strategies, and supporting and inhibiting factors in its implementation . This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method . Data were collected through observation , interviews with the principal , teachers, and parents , and documentation studies . The research subjects consisted of 2 class teachers , 1 principal , and 15 group B students . The results of the study indicate that love -based character education is implemented through the habituation of compassion , teacher role models , thematic learning with Islamic nuances , and strengthening the values of love for God, others , and the environment . This implementation has been proven to be able to improve children's social-emotional abilities , even though they are still faced with limited facilities and various family backgrounds . This study provides a practical contribution for PAUD teachers in designing love - based learning and theoretical contribution to the development of the concept of character education based on Islamic values in early childhood .

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education (PAUD) is a very strategic level of education in laying the foundation for the formation of human character (Anita, 2021). In the age period of 0-6 years, children are in the golden phase (golden age) which is characterized by very rapid brain development , so that all stimulation provided during this period will have a long -term influence on the development of the child's personality , morals, and socio-emotional (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019). Character education at an early age is not only oriented to the cognitive aspect alone , but rather emphasizes the instilling of good values such as honesty , compassion , responsibility , care , and independence that will become the foundation in the child's life in the future .

The current phenomenon in society shows a tendency towards a decline in character values in the younger generation , such as increased bullying behavior in the school environment , low empathy among others , and minimal concern for the surrounding environment (Hasanah & Deiniatur , 2020). These various problems often stem from parenting and education patterns that do not instill the values of love and compassion from an early age (Ministry of Education and Culture , 2020). Therefore , early childhood education institutions , especially those based on Islamic values , have an important role in instilling love - based character education as a preventive effort to form a generation with noble morals , full of compassion , and high social awareness .

Specifically , TK IT Auladuna Bengkulu as one of the Integrated Islamic- based PAUD institutions in Bengkulu City has attempted to integrate the values of love in its learning process, both love for Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala, love for the Prophet Muhammad, love for fellow human beings , as well as love for the environment and His creations (Kuswanto , 2025). However , in practice , the implementation of this love- based character education still faces various challenges , including differences in students ' family backgrounds which cause variations in the level of understanding and application of the value of love at home , limited learning time at school compared to children's time with their families , and the less than optimal consistency of the application of love- based learning strategies by all educators (Laili, 2024). This problem is important to be studied in depth in order to obtain a real picture of how love-based character education is implemented , what strategies are used by teachers , and what factors support or hinder the implementation process .

Several previous studies have examined topics relevant to this research . Previous research has shown that character education in early childhood can be effectively instilled through habituation , teacher role models , and meaningful play activities , and that religious values play an important role in the formation of children's morals from an early age (Lestari & Nuraeni , 2022). Other research also reveals that teacher role models and affection are one of the determining factors for the success of character instillation in children , where children will more easily internalize good values if they feel warmth and affection from their educators (Lickona , 1996). Furthermore , studies on the integration of Islamic values in early childhood learning show that a thematic approach based on love for God and others can significantly improve children's social -emotional abilities (Miles et al., 2014).

Although these studies have made important contributions to understanding character education in early childhood , there remains a research gap that has not been widely explored , namely a specific study of the concept of " love " as the main and comprehensive foundation of character education in integrated Islamic- based early childhood education institutions , especially those that encompass the dimensions of love for God, love for others , and love for the environment in an integrated learning implementation framework . Previous studies tend to discuss character education in general or focus on single values such as honesty or discipline , so there is not much discussion about how the value of love is used as the main umbrella (core value) that covers all aspects of character education in early childhood education institutions . Furthermore, local contexts such as TK IT Auladuna Bengkulu have also never been the object of similar research , so a more specific study is needed at that location (Megawati, 2021).

This research is important to conduct because it provides both theoretical and practical contributions (Nurbadi et al., 2018). Theoretically , this research is expected to enrich the scientific treasury in the field of early childhood education , especially related to the concept of love- based character education as an alternative approach in the formation of children 's morals

from an early age , and can be a reference for the development of character learning models based on Islamic values . Practically , the results of this study are expected to provide benefits for the principal and teachers of TK IT Auladuna Bengkulu in evaluating and optimizing the implementation strategy of love- based character education , providing input for parents in supporting the strengthening of love values in the family environment , and being a reference for other PAUD institutions that want to develop character education with a similar approach . Based on this description , the purpose of this study is to describe the implementation of love-based character education at TK IT Auladuna Bengkulu, identify the strategies used by teachers in instilling love values , and analyze the supporting and inhibiting factors faced in the implementation process (Mulyasa , 2018) .

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a qualitative approach with descriptive methods . This approach was chosen because it aims to describe and depict in depth the implementation of love- based character education at TK IT Auladuna Bengkulu as it is in the field , without manipulating the research variables (Nur Rahmah et al., 2024). Qualitative descriptive research allows researchers to obtain rich and contextual data regarding the processes, strategies, and dynamics that occur in the implementation of character education at the research location .

The population in this study was the entire academic community of TK IT Auladuna Bengkulu consisting of the principal , teachers, and students . Sampling was carried out using a purposive sampling technique , namely the selection of research subjects based on certain considerations and criteria relevant to the research objectives . The research subjects consisted of 1 principal , 2 class teachers of group B who were considered to best understand and implement love -based character education , and 15 group B students (aged 5-6 years) as behavioral observation subjects . In addition , the researcher also involved 5 parents of students as additional informants to obtain data regarding the sustainability of instilling the value of love in the family environment .

Data collection was conducted through three main techniques , namely observation , interviews, and documentation studies (Nurlaila , 2021). Observations were conducted directly and participatory to observe the learning process , teacher - child interactions , and habits that reflect the value of love in the school environment (Ramayanti , 2018). Semi- structured interviews were conducted with the principal , teachers, and parents to obtain information regarding the concept , strategies, and supporting and inhibiting factors for the implementation of love- based character education . Documentation studies were conducted by collecting supporting documents such as the curriculum , daily lesson plans (RPPH), activity photos , and child development records . The instruments used in this study included observation guidelines , interview guidelines , and documentation sheets that had been compiled based on indicators of love- based character education , namely love for Allah , love for the Prophet Muhammad, love for fellow human beings , and love for the environment (Rusli & Rusandi , 2021).

The research procedure was carried out through several stages . The first stage was the preparation stage , including the preparation of research instruments , obtaining permission from the school , and determining the research subjects . The second stage was the implementation stage , namely collecting data in the field through observations for approximately four weeks , interviews with key informants , and collecting supporting documents . The third stage was the data processing stage , which included transcription of interview results , data reduction , and data categorization based on the research focus . The

fourth stage was the analysis and conclusion stage , namely analyzing the reduced data to answer the research problem formulation , then drawing conclusions and compiling a research report .

Data analysis in this study uses an interactive analysis model developed by Miles and Huberman, which consists of three stages , namely data reduction , data presentation , and drawing conclusions / verification . Data reduction is done by selecting , focusing , and simplifying data obtained from the results of observations , interviews , and documentation according to the focus of the research . Data presentation is done in the form of descriptive narratives , tables , and diagrams to facilitate understanding of the research results . Drawing conclusions is done in stages based on patterns , themes , and relationships between data found during the research process . To maintain the validity of the data, researchers use source triangulation techniques and technical triangulation , namely comparing data obtained from various sources (principals , teachers, parents) and various techniques (observation , interviews , documentation) to obtain valid and accountable data .

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of observations , interviews , and documentation studies conducted for four weeks , data were obtained regarding the forms of activities , teacher strategies, and children's responses to the implementation of love- based character education . The results of interviews with the principal showed that the concept of love applied in TK IT Auladuna includes four dimensions , namely love for Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala, love for Rasulullah Shallallahu ' Alaihi Wasallam , love for fellow human beings (teachers, friends , and family) , and love for the environment and God 's creations . The results of observations for four weeks recorded the frequency of appearance of each dimension of love values in daily learning activities , which are summarized in the following table .

Table 1. Frequency of Implementation of the Love Value Dimension in Daily Learning (per Week)

No	Dimensions of Love Values	Form of Activity	Frequency / Week	Percentage
1	Love for God	Daily prayers , memorizing short letters , Dhuha prayer	5x	31%
2	Love for the Prophet Muhammad	The story of the Prophet's example , praying together	3x	19%
3	Love for others	Playing in groups , sharing food , helping each other	6x	38%
4	Love for the environment	Watering plants , throwing rubbish in its place	2x	12%
Total			16x	100%

The data in Table 1 shows that the value of love for others is the most frequently implemented dimension with a percentage of 38%, followed by love for Allah at 31%, love for the Prophet at 19%, and love for the environment at 12%. This shows that teachers provide a fairly large

portion of activities involving social interaction between children , such as group play , sharing food , and helping each other , as a means of instilling the value of love for others .

In addition to observational data , interviews with class teachers revealed that strategies used in implementing love- based character education include teacher role models , routine habits , Islamic -themed thematic learning , providing appreciation or positive reinforcement , and collaboration with parents through a liaison book . One teacher said that children more easily absorb the value of love if teachers first demonstrate a caring , gentle , and attentive attitude in interacting with them every day . Meanwhile , interviews with parents showed that most children began to show behavioral changes at home , such as saying kind words more often , being willing to share with siblings , and being more concerned about the environment around the house .

Based on the research objectives that have been formulated , the research findings are presented in three parts , namely : (1) forms of implementation of love -based character education , (2) teacher strategies in instilling the value of love , and (3) supporting and inhibiting factors for implementation. Forms of implementation of love -based character education . The implementation of love- based character education in TK IT Auladuna Bengkulu is carried out through daily routine activities , thematic activities , and special habituation activities . Daily routine activities include welcoming children with a smile and a warm hug , praying together before and after learning , and praying Dhuha in congregation . Thematic activities are designed by integrating the value of love into the learning theme , for example the theme " My Family " is associated with the value of love for parents and siblings , while the theme "Nature Around Me" is associated with the value of love for the environment and God's creations . Special habituation activities include sharing activities (alms) every Friday , visits to orphanages , and activities of planting and caring for plants together .

Teacher strategies in instilling the value of love . Teachers apply several main strategies , namely modeling , where teachers become concrete examples in behaving with compassion ; habituation , namely repeating positive behavior consistently every day ; providing positive reinforcement , in the form of praise , star stickers , or verbal appreciation when children show behavior that reflects the value of love ; and storytelling or conveying exemplary stories of the Prophet and Islamic stories that are full of values of compassion . These strategies are applied in an integrated manner in daily learning activities , not as stand - alone subjects .

Supporting and inhibiting factors . Supporting factors for the implementation of love - based character education include the commitment of the principal and teachers in making the value of love a core value of the school , a conducive and religious school environment , and support from most parents who also apply similar values at home . The inhibiting factors found include the limited number of educators compared to the number of children , variations in family backgrounds that cause not all children to receive consistent reinforcement of the value of love at home , and limited supporting facilities such as learning media with a love theme and Islamic story books , which are still limited in number .

RESULTS

Based on the results of data analysis , several important findings can be concluded as answers to the research objectives . First , the implementation of love- based character education in TK IT Auladuna Bengkulu has been implemented in an integrated manner in four dimensions , namely love for Allah, love for the Prophet, love for others , and love for the environment , with

the largest portion in the dimension of love for others . Second , the main strategies used by teachers are role models , habituation , positive reinforcement , and storytelling, which are consistently applied in daily learning activities and thematic activities . Third , the implementation of love -based character education has a positive impact on children's social-emotional development , which can be seen from changes in children's behavior both at school and at home , although the success of this implementation is still influenced by supporting and inhibiting factors in the form of the availability of human resources , learning facilities , and family support .

The findings of this study are relevant to the theory of moral development which emphasizes the importance of role models and the environment in the formation of children's character . Social learning theory explains that children learn to behave through the process of imitation (modelling) of the behaviour of adults around them , so that the teacher's example in showing affectionate attitudes is a key factor in the successful internalization of the value of love in children . In addition , the findings regarding habituation as a primary strategy are also in line with the theory of habit formation , which emphasizes that behaviour that is repeated consistently over a certain period of time will be internalized to become part of an individual's character . The concept of love as the foundation of character education in this study is also in line with the view in Islamic education , which places love for Allah and His Messenger as the main basis (principle) of all morals and behaviour of a Muslim , so that instilling the value of love from an early age is very strategic in forming the foundation of children's faith and morals .

The results of this study strengthen the findings of previous studies which stated that role models and habits are the most effective strategies in instilling character in early childhood . This study is also in line with previous studies which found that the integration of religious values in PAUD learning can improve children 's social - emotional abilities . However , this study provides a new emphasis compared to previous studies , namely the use of the concept of " love " as the main umbrella (core value) that covers all aspects of character education , covering four dimensions that are systematically integrated in learning activities . This is different from previous studies which generally discuss character values partially , such as discipline , honesty , or independence separately , so this study complements and broadens the perspective on how one core value can become a comprehensive foundation for character education in integrated Islamic - based PAUD institutions .

The findings of this study have several important implications . Theoretically , this study strengthens and enriches the study of religious- based character education in early childhood , particularly by placing the concept of love as a conceptual framework that can unite various character values in a holistic approach . Practically , for teachers, the results of this study can be a reference in designing more structured and integrated learning activities in instilling the value of love for Allah , the Prophet Muhammad, others , and the environment in a balanced manner , especially to increase the portion of activities in the dimension of love for the environment which is still relatively low . For school principals and institutional managers , these findings can be the basis for formulating curriculum development policies and teacher training related to love - based character education . For parents , the results of this study emphasize the importance of collaboration between schools and families in strengthening the instillation of the value of love consistently , both at school and at home .

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussions that have been described, it can be concluded that the implementation of love-based character education in TK IT Auladuna Bengkulu is implemented in an integrated manner through four dimensions of values, namely love for Allah, love for the Prophet, love for others, and love for the environment, which are manifested in daily routine activities, thematic activities, and special habituation activities. The strategies used by teachers include role models, habituation, positive reinforcement, and storytelling, which are consistently applied in the learning process. The implementation of this love-based character education has a positive impact on children's social-emotional development, both in the school environment and at home. However, the success of this implementation is still faced with several inhibiting factors, such as limited teaching staff, variations in family backgrounds, and limited learning facilities. Therefore, collaborative efforts are needed between schools, teachers, and parents to continue to strengthen and optimize the implementation of love-based character education in order to shape a generation of children, early age who have noble morals, are full of compassion, and care for others and their surroundings. Further research is recommended to examine the implementation of love-based character education in other PAUD institutions with a longer research period and a wider number of subjects.

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