

## Internalization of Spiritual Values through Character Education in Early Childhood at PAUD Ummul Habibah, Kelambir V Village, Hamparan Perak District, Deli Serdang Regency

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### ABSTRACT

Early childhood is considered a golden age, a period during which children should receive the best education, especially in Islamic education. This involves nurturing both the spirit and the body to strengthen the child's personality and faith during this critical developmental stage. Therefore, all parental efforts aim to provide education that shapes children into devout and virtuous individuals. *Taman Mengaji Penerus Umat* (TMPU) is a religious activity provided for the community, particularly for early childhood. This program helps children delve deeper into Islamic education by studying *Iqra*, practicing prayer rituals, receiving moral guidance, and engaging in regular charitable activities like *Sedekah Jumat*. These activities are routinely conducted at PAUD Ummul Habibah in Kelambir V Village, Medan. The religious activities aim to instill noble character (*akhlaqul karimah*), foster exemplary behavior, and encourage positive thinking aligned with Islamic teachings. Islamic education plays a vital role in shaping a child's future. The TMPU guidance activities greatly assist parents in educating their children, facilitated by educators competent in the field of Islamic education.

**Keywords:** Islamic Education Guidance, *Taman Mengaji Penerus Umat*, Early Childhood

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The meaning of education is not only to encourage children at school to gain knowledge but also to enable a child to grow and develop well through comprehensive education. Essentially, Early Childhood Education (ECE) is organized with the aim of facilitating holistic growth and development, emphasizing the development of all aspects of a child's personality. Therefore, ECE provides opportunities for children to maximize their personality and potential development.

As such, ECE institutions must offer various activities that foster the development of various aspects, such as cognitive, language, social, emotional, physical, and motor

skills. Institutionally, Early Childhood Education can also be defined as a form of education that focuses on laying the foundation for growth in areas such as motor coordination (both fine and gross), emotional intelligence, multiple intelligences, and spiritual intelligence. (Suyadi, et.al, 2015: 17)

In addition to the experiences provided at school, there must be a positive parenting style created within the family environment. The family is the first environment known to the child and serves as the foundation for the child's initial experiences before stepping into life outside the home (Munisa, 2020). Issues faced by young children need to be addressed to avoid childhood trauma that can affect their adult life. Especially concerning emotional problems, if a child is allowed to have tantrums from a young age and is never given therapy, they will find it difficult to control their emotions later in life. Such behavior typically occurs during the developmental stage of 18 months to 3 years old and can sometimes be observed in children aged 5 to 6 years (Lestari et al., 2021). A tantrum is a difficulty in children controlling their emotions, often caused by not achieving what they want, leading them to express frustration, anger, disappointment, and sadness for a prolonged period (Y. Ritonga & Ritonga, 2023)

After understanding the aspects above, we must also recognize that the provision of education for all children should be comprehensive. However, not all children can receive such fundamental education comprehensively. This consideration depends on the intelligence possessed by each child. As educators, it is essential to pay attention to and understand every child's development and growth, including motor development aspects. By doing so, it becomes possible to determine whether a child possesses multiple intelligences or not, based on their developmental and growth aspects. The scientific concept of Early Childhood Education (ECE) is isomorphic, meaning that the scientific framework of ECE is built from interdisciplinary fields, which is a combination of various disciplines these disciplines include psychology, physiology, sociology, child education, anthropology, humanities, health, nutrition, and neuroscience—the study of human brain development.

After understanding the explanation above, the education provided to early childhood must take into account each child's intelligence to determine the level of their understanding. Among the aspects of development and growth mentioned earlier, spiritual intelligence is the primary foundation that a child must possess. This is because spiritual intelligence encompasses other forms of intelligence such as emotional, social, physical, spiritual, and linguistic intelligence.

Considering its significance, spiritual intelligence is crucial for children, as it enables them to recognize their identity, understand what lies within them, acknowledge their Creator (Allah SWT), and appreciate all creations in the heavens and on earth. Thus, a child will develop a stronger sense of self if spiritual education

is prioritized in early childhood. Once spiritual intelligence is established, other forms of intelligence will follow, such as linguistic, emotional, and social intelligence.

However, for all these aspects to become a discipline for early childhood, educators must provide a concept of spiritual development that emphasizes these aspects. This concept should be expanded with explanations, examples, and teaching techniques. In line with this, other forms of intelligence in every early childhood individual will eventually be discovered. Learning for early childhood should be conducted gradually, starting from concrete to abstract and from simple to complex concepts. Teachers should present activities repeatedly while exploring different styles and techniques to keep children engaged and prevent boredom. (Munisa, 2020 : 32) Children have a natural curiosity about new things, and when they are able to do something, they tend to repeat it. For example, learning about Allah and all His creations, with the priority being to recognize all.

Children are naturally connected to new experiences, and when they understand and can do something, they tend to repeat it. For instance, recognizing their own body as a creation of Allah SWT involves understanding its functions, maintaining it well, and appreciating its significance. Similarly, other creations of Allah, such as animals and plants, must be preserved and cared for to ensure their sustainability. All of this can be instilled through education in learning institutions.

Therefore, educators must develop concepts and techniques for each learning session to enable comprehensive development. This approach ensures that children clearly understand the lessons provided, allowing these lessons to become foundational knowledge as they grow and develop into adulthood.

Having explored references and read books related to spiritual intelligence, the author has developed a keen interest in using this topic as the basis for a thesis. The thesis will be further expanded based on research findings, the author's thoughts, and related literature.

Through an extensive examination of references and a deep engagement with literature on spiritual intelligence, the author has cultivated a strong interest in exploring this topic as the foundation for their thesis. This scholarly work will be enriched by the author's critical insights, informed by comprehensive research findings and an analysis of relevant literature, creating a well-rounded and thought-provoking study.

The concept of spiritual development will serve as a central focus in early childhood education. The author plans to conduct research and direct field observations to assess how educators develop spiritual intelligence in children using varied concepts. This will help determine the extent to which children grasp spiritual education, how effectively educators develop it, and how well educators master the relevant developmental concepts.

## 2. METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research method, focusing on answering research questions related to how an event or experience occurs and then analyzing it in depth to uncover emerging patterns. The steps in descriptive qualitative research include formulating the problem, selecting data, choosing data collection techniques, and drawing conclusions. This research aims to describe the ability of Islamic Religious Education teachers in using learning media at MAN 2 Model Medan.

The research was conducted at MAN 2 Model Medan from October 1, 2024, to December 1, 2024. The data sources for this study are the school principal, teachers, and students, who will be interviewed regarding the topics outlined in this research. The data collection techniques employed include observation, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis process involves reduction, presentation, and verification techniques.

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to explore how the internalization of spiritual values is carried out through character education in early childhood education at PAUD Ummul Habibah, Kelambir V Village, Hamparan Perak District, Deli Serdang Regency. Based on observations, interviews with educators, and document studies, the research findings reveal the following:

### A. Implementation of Spiritual Values

The internalization of spiritual values during early childhood is of paramount importance, as this stage represents a foundational period for character and personality development. Children are naturally impressionable, making it an ideal time to instill essential values that will shape their moral compass and guide their actions throughout life. Spiritual values such as faith in God, honesty, gratitude, and patience serve as a moral framework, fostering resilience and ethical behavior.

By embedding these principles early, children develop a strong sense of right and wrong, compassion for others, and the ability to face challenges with a positive mindset. These values not only prepare them to navigate life's complexities but also help them build meaningful relationships and contribute positively to their communities. Early spiritual education acts as a cornerstone for cultivating well-rounded individuals with a firm ethical foundation

## B. Character Education Methods

The methods employed for character education in early childhood are designed to be practical, engaging, and deeply rooted in fostering moral and spiritual growth. At PAUD Ummul Habibah, these methods emphasize the integration of Islamic values through approaches that are both developmentally appropriate and impactful.

Key strategies include habitual practices and teacher role modeling, where children learn by observing and emulating positive behaviors consistently demonstrated by their educators. This daily reinforcement of values such as honesty, patience, and gratitude creates a nurturing environment where virtues become second nature to the children.

Storytelling and play activities further enrich the process by transforming abstract concepts into relatable, engaging narratives and games. These activities make lessons on morals and spirituality more accessible and memorable for young learners.

Teachers also utilize learning aids, such as Islamic storybooks, educational videos, and interactive games, to provide a multisensory experience that deepens understanding. By blending structure with creativity, these methods ensure that character education is not only effective but also enjoyable, fostering a lifelong appreciation for spiritual and moral values.

## C. Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is a cornerstone of successful character education, as it bridges the gap between school and home, ensuring that children receive consistent guidance and support in their moral and spiritual development. At PAUD Ummul Habibah, parents play an active role through various collaborative initiatives that align educational practices in both environments. Regular communication between teachers and parents establishes a shared understanding of the values being taught, enabling families to reinforce these lessons at home. Parenting programs, workshops, and the provision of Islamic parenting guidebooks further equip parents with practical tools and strategies to nurture spiritual values in daily life.

This partnership creates a cohesive and supportive framework where children experience a seamless integration of values across their social environments. When parents actively engage in their child's character education, they not only strengthen the impact of the school's efforts but also model commitment

and consistency in living out these values, fostering a holistic and enduring foundation for the child's moral growth.

#### D. Evaluation and Measurement

Evaluating and measuring the effectiveness of character education methods is essential to ensure that children are developing in alignment with the intended spiritual and moral values. At PAUD Ummul Habibah, evaluation is conducted through a combination of observational assessments, documented progress tracking, and reflective practices.

Observations are key to understanding how children are applying the lessons they learn. Teachers closely monitor and take note of children's behavior, interactions, and responses during various activities, looking for signs of positive character development such as acts of kindness, honesty, and respect. This real-time assessment allows for adjustments in teaching strategies to better support children's growth.

Documentation involves recording children's progress over time, capturing milestones such as their ability to memorize daily prayers and short verses from the Qur'an, as well as their improvements in social behavior and attitudes. This tracking ensures that growth is measurable and provides valuable insights into which areas may need additional focus.

Reflective practices involve the teachers reviewing and reflecting on daily activities and their impact on children's development. By engaging in regular reflections, educators can assess the effectiveness of their teaching methods and make necessary modifications to enhance the learning experience.

Through these methods, PAUD Ummul Habibah successfully measures the progress of each child, confirming that they are not only acquiring knowledge but embodying spiritual and moral values that will serve as a strong foundation for their future.

### *Discussion:*

#### A. The Importance of Internalizing Spiritual Values in Early Childhood

Internalizing spiritual values at an early age is crucial as this period is a critical phase in shaping children's character and personality. Children equipped with spiritual values early on tend to develop a strong moral foundation to face future life challenges.

The statement emphasizes the importance of instilling spiritual values in children at an early age. This is because early childhood is a key stage for the development of character and personality. During this period, children are highly impressionable, and their experiences and teachings can have a lasting impact on how they view themselves and the world around them.

When children are introduced to spiritual values—such as empathy, kindness, honesty, and respect—they begin to build an internal compass that helps guide their actions and decisions. This early moral foundation prepares them to face challenges later in life with resilience and a sense of purpose. Essentially, children who grow up with strong spiritual and ethical principles are better equipped to navigate complex situations, make thoughtful choices, and interact positively with others as they mature.

#### B. Effectiveness of the Applied Methods

The approach of habitual practices and role modeling is highly effective in instilling spiritual values. Children imitate the consistent behavior of teachers who demonstrate these values in daily life. Additionally, storytelling and play activities facilitate children's understanding of abstract concepts such as patience and gratitude. (Nofianti, 2019)

The approach of habitual practices and role modeling is particularly powerful in nurturing spiritual values in children. This method is effective because children naturally learn by observing and mimicking those around them. When teachers consistently embody spiritual values—such as kindness, honesty, or compassion—children absorb these behaviors and integrate them into their own lives. It's not just about what is said but about what is demonstrated. Children are keen observers and are influenced by the everyday actions of adults they trust and look up to.

Furthermore, storytelling and play activities enrich this learning process by making abstract values like patience and gratitude more tangible. Through stories, children are transported into scenarios where characters face challenges, make decisions, and experience consequences, helping them to understand the importance of these values in real life. Play, on the other hand,

encourages them to practice these concepts in a hands-on way, whether through cooperative games that build empathy or imaginative scenarios that foster an appreciation for what they have. Together, these practices create an immersive and engaging environment where spiritual values are not only taught but lived and experienced

#### C. Parental Involvement as a Key to Success

The parenting programs organized by PAUD Ummul Habibah play a vital role in strengthening the synergy between school and home education. Children who receive support from their parents tend to absorb spiritual values more quickly. The parenting programs organized by PAUD Ummul Habibah are instrumental in fostering a strong connection between school and home education. These programs create an environment where parents and educators work together seamlessly to support the child's growth. When parents actively engage and participate in their child's learning process, children are more likely to absorb essential values, including spiritual teachings, with greater ease and depth. This collaborative approach not only enhances the child's educational experience but also nurtures a well-rounded development that balances academic learning with moral and spiritual growth.

#### D. Challenges and Solutions

The main challenge is maintaining the consistency of spiritual value habits at home, especially for families with limited awareness of character education. The solution lies in increasing the frequency of parenting programs and providing training for parents.

The primary challenge families face is maintaining consistency in spiritual and value-based habits at home. This issue becomes even more pronounced for households with limited awareness or understanding of character education. The key to overcoming this challenge lies in actively boosting the frequency of parenting programs and offering specialized training sessions for parents. These initiatives would empower parents with the knowledge and tools they need to instill and uphold spiritual and moral values effectively within the family environment. By doing so, families can create a more cohesive, value-driven home that fosters character development in children and reinforces positive habits



#### 4. CONCLUSION

The internalization of spiritual values through character education at PAUD Ummul Habibah has been successfully implemented through habitual practices, role modeling, and collaboration between teachers and parents. Children have shown positive development in moral and spiritual aspects, which serves as a vital foundation for character building in the future.

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