



Building Moral and Religious Foundations in Children through Habitual Activities in Kindergarten

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation of religious and moral values in children through habit formation at IT Mina Kindergarten, Aceh Besar. The goal is to prepare children as future generations with good character by integrating these values into daily activities from an early age. Using a qualitative method, the research involved the school principal, the head of the religious department, and two teachers. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation. Results show that habit formation significantly contributes to instilling religious and moral values in children. The implementation includes three aspects: routine habits, spontaneous habits, and exemplary habits. Routine habits are daily practices embedded in the school schedule, spontaneous habits involve immediate responses to situations, and exemplary habits focus on role modeling by teachers and staff. Supporting factors include strong collaboration between teachers and parents, effective school leadership, teacher competence, and adequate facilities. Parental involvement in reinforcing these values at home is crucial for consistency. However, inconsistency in family behavior is a significant inhibiting factor. When family environments do not align with school teachings, children become confused, reducing the method's effectiveness.

Keywords: Moral and Religious Values; Habitual Activities for ECE; IT Mina Kindergarten.

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood according to National Association Education for Young Children (NAEYC) is a group of individuals in the age range of 0-8 years who are in the growth and development phase.¹ Early childhood growth and development is focused on physical, cognitive, social-emotional, language, religious and moral development, and balanced creativity, as the basis that most determines the formation of self in a child in the future.² One of the most important aspects of development for the AUD is moral development.³ Morality is a teaching about good and bad that is received and given by a person through deeds, attitudes, obligations, morals and noble ethics.⁴

Morality can be interpreted as a sensitivity in the form of thoughts, feelings, to existing principles and rules, besides that morality is also interpreted as a view of good and bad, right and wrong, and what a person can and cannot do. One of the methods that can be used in the process of moral recognition for children is the habituation method. According to Abdullah Nashi Ulwan in Zubaedi, the habituation method is a way or a practical effort that is carried out in the context of formation (coaching) and preparation for children.⁵ The habituation method can be defined as a way to create a certain habit or behavior for students. The habituation method is a way that is carried out in the formation of morals and spirituality that requires regular practice every day.⁶

The first education that parents must do is faith education. Parents must be able to educate and teach their children the basics of the faith, get them used to following the pillars of Islam, children are educated about faith in Allah SWT, faith in angels, faith in us-books, faith in the Messenger, and faith in the last day. He emphasized that educators and parents are obliged to cultivate faith education in the form of religion and morality in children from an early age, so that it is hoped that children will be able to grow into religious individuals, have

¹ Lydiah Nganga and others, 'Deconstructing the 2022 National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Standards: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Developmentally Appropriate Practices in Australia, Kenya and Nepal', *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 32.3 (2024), 696–719 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2024.2342352>>.

² Jirawon Tanwattana and Santiboon Toansakul, 'Setting the Goals for Early Childhood Development of Their Desirable Characteristics Standards and Their Creative Thinking Abilities on Physical, Emotional, And Social Developments' Specifications in The Child Development Centers (CDCs)', *Systematic Reviews in Pharmacy*, 11.11 (2020).

³ Misbahuddin Amin, Program Studi, and Pendidikan Agama, 'Kompetensi Guru Dalam Menanamkan Nilai-Nilai', 184–200.

⁴ Sudirman Sudirman, 'The Conception of Morality and Value Education In Islamic Education', *Jurnal Simki Pedagogia*, 6.1 (2023), 87–96 <<https://doi.org/10.29407/jsp.v6i1.221>>.

⁵ Abdullah Nashih Ulwan, *Tarbiyat Al-Aulad Fil Al-Islam I* (Cairo: Darussalam, 2008).

⁶ A Priyanto, 'Developing Creativity In Early Childhood Through Play Activities', *Journal. Uny. Ac. Id*, 2014.



morals, make Islam their religion, make the Prophet an example in living life in this world so that they can pursue the afterlife.⁷

The early years of childhood are crucial for the development of moral and religious foundations, as these formative stages set the groundwork for lifelong values and behaviors. Research has shown that habitual activities in early childhood education play a significant role in shaping these foundations.⁸ In many Islamic educational settings, the integration of religious practices and moral teachings through daily routines helps instill values such as respect, compassion, and discipline in young learners.⁹

At Mina Aceh Besar Integrated Islamic Kindergarten (TKIT), a structured approach to embedding religious and moral values into daily activities has been implemented. This includes practices such as congregational prayers, memorization of Quranic surahs and hadiths, reading iqra', and various additional activities like congregational Asar prayers and recitations. Such habitual practices are not only intended to foster spiritual growth but also to nurture social behaviors aligned with Islamic teachings.¹⁰

Previous studies have demonstrated that children exposed to consistent religious and moral practices in early education settings exhibit greater empathy, self-regulation, and ethical behavior compared to their peers.¹¹ The effectiveness of these practices relies on their regularity and the reinforcement of values through repetition and role modeling by educators and caregivers.¹² In light of these considerations, TKIT Mina Aceh Besar's approach to integrating religious and moral teachings through habitual activities provides a compelling case study for evaluating the impact of such methods on early childhood development. This research aims to explore how these practices contribute to the development of moral and religious foundations in children and their potential long-term benefits.

⁷ Ulwan.

⁸ P Harris, 'Moral Development in Young Children: The Role of Education and Environment', *Developmental Psychology Review*, 50.1 (2018), 89–101.

⁹ S El-Masri, 'Integrating Religious Practices into Early Childhood Education: A Case Study', *Islamic Education Journal*, 33.2 (2019), 45–58.

¹⁰ M Khan, 'Role of Islamic Teachings in Shaping Early Childhood Behavior', *Middle Eastern Journal of Education*, 28.4 (2020), 67–78.

¹¹ S Ahmed and R Khan, 'The Impact of Religious Education on Moral Development in Early Childhood', *Journal of Early Childhood Education*, 45.3 (2021), 123–35.

¹² J. Smith and L Jones, 'Habitual Learning and Its Impact on Child Development: An Empirical Study', *Early Learning Research Quarterly*, 54.1 (2022), 101–15.

Learning Outcomes of Religious Values and Ethics

Developmental Aspects	Age 5-6 Years
Religious Values and Ethics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Believing in God 2. Recognize and practice the religious teachings adhered to 3. Participate in maintaining personal hygiene, health, and safety 4. Respect for fellow human beings 5. Respecting and caring for nature 6. Showing a sense of gratitude to the creatures created by Allah 7. Behaving honestly, helpfully, politely, respectfully, sportsmanlike, etc. 8. Knowing religious holidays

Source: Permendikbud, 2022

The research conducted by Nurma and Sigit Purnama in 2022,¹³ titled "Instilling Religious and Moral Values in Early Childhood at Kindergarten Harapan Bunda Woyla Barat," employed a descriptive qualitative research method. The findings of their study indicate that the strategies used by teachers at Harapan Bunda Woyla Barat Kindergarten to instill religious and moral values in children were implemented through routine activities. These activities included greeting and shaking hands, playing together with mutual respect, reciting short surahs and daily prayers, participating in group meals, reading Iqro, and learning about creation alongside peers.

The similarity between this research and the current study lies in the focus on religious and moral values in early childhood. However, the key difference is that the previous research centered on exploring teachers' strategies for instilling moral values in young children, while the present study emphasizes the implementation of religious and moral values in early childhood education.

Another relevant study, conducted by Salasiah in 2021, titled "Instilling Religious and Moral Values in Early Childhood Through Routine Activities," also utilized a descriptive

¹³ Nurma and Sigit Purnama, 'Penanaman Nilai Agama Dan Moral Pada Anak Usia Dini Di TK Harapan Bunda Woyla Barat', *Yaa Bunayya: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 6.1 (2022), 53–62.



qualitative research method.¹⁴ The results of Salasiah's research show that the cultivation of religious and moral values in early childhood was based on the Qur'an and Hadith, tailored to the developmental stages, characteristics, and abilities of the students. The similarity between Salasiah's research and the current study is the shared focus on the development of religious and moral values in early childhood. However, the key difference is that Salasiah's research concentrated on the cultivation of these values through routine activities, while the present study focuses more broadly on the overall implementation of religious and moral values in early childhood education

METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research approach with the primary objective of describing the implementation of religious and moral values in children. The research examines the realities observed in the field and correlates them with various theoretical frameworks, establishing a direct connection to the issues under investigation. The study utilizes both primary and secondary data sources.¹⁵

1. Primary data sources are those that provide firsthand information directly to the researcher.¹⁶ These sources are obtained from original materials such as interviews and opinion polls conducted with individuals or groups.¹⁷ In this study, the primary data sources include the principal, the head of religious affairs, and two teachers at IT Kindergarten Mina Aceh Besar, located in Cadek Village, Baitussalam District, Aceh Besar Regency.
2. Secondary data sources, on the other hand, are derived from documents, photographs, video recordings, and other related materials.¹⁸ In this research, secondary data sources include supporting documents, photographs, and journals that provide additional information about the school and its practices. These sources complement the primary data and help to enrich the overall understanding of the implementation of religious and moral values in the educational setting.

¹⁴ Salasiah Salasiah, 'Penanaman Nilai-Nilai Agama Dan Moral Pada Anak Usia Dini Melalui Kegiatan Rutinitas', *E-CHIEF Journal*, 1.1 (2021), 12 <<https://doi.org/10.20527/e-chief.v1i1.3372>>.

¹⁵ Arikunto Suharsimi, *Prosedur Penelitian Suatu Pendekatan Praktik* (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 2006).

¹⁶ Abdurrahmad Fathoni, *Metode Dan Teknik Penelitian Penyusunan Skripsi* (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 2011).

¹⁷ Sugiyono, *Metode Campuran* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2015).

¹⁸ Sugiyono, *Quantitative Qualitative and R and D Research Methods* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Description of Research Results

Based on research conducted from August 24 to September 4, 2023, which aimed to examine the implementation of religious and moral values in children through the habituation method at IT Kindergarten Mina Aceh Besar, the findings were notably positive. This is evidenced by the daily habits instilled in all students, particularly those in Group B, aged 5-6 years. These practices include the daily implementation of congregational prayers, such as Dhuha and obligatory prayers, the memorization of short surahs and hadiths, Iqra' reading, and additional afternoon classes starting at 3 p.m., which involve congregational Asr prayers followed by reinforcement of Iqra' lessons.

The kindergarten places significant emphasis on the habituation method as a cornerstone approach to ensure that children internalize their religious duties as beings created by Allah SWT. Beyond prayer and recitation activities, the school also promotes behaviors such as respect for elders, mutual love and support, and the practice of saying "sorry," "thank you," and "excuse me" appropriately. Additional activities include reciting Asmaul Husna, Murajaah of Hadith and short surahs, and infaq (charitable giving). Male students are even given the opportunity to lead prayers as imams.

All activities implemented at IT Kindergarten Mina Aceh Besar were followed and executed effectively by the students. The habituation of religious and moral values at the kindergarten aims to nurture children into individuals with strong faith, morals, and ethical principles, providing them with a solid foundation for their future lives. Educators at the school emphasize that religion and morality are fundamental aspects that must be deeply embedded in children to strengthen their spiritual and moral potential, enabling them to live a balanced life in both this world and the hereafter. These findings were corroborated through interviews conducted by the researcher with two classroom teachers specializing in worship and independence centers, as well as with the principal of the kindergarten. The results of this study are as follows:

1. Implementation of Religious and Moral Values in Children Through Habituation Methods

The development of religious and moral values in early childhood is a fundamental effort aimed at enhancing and nurturing children's knowledge and skills.¹⁹ This endeavor is

¹⁹ Fadhillah Khorid, Lilif Mualifatu Muhammad, *Pendidikan Karakter Anak Usia Dini* (Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2013); Jalaludin, *Psikologi Keagamaan* (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2010).



essential in preparing children to become individuals who are both religiously observant and morally upright.²⁰ Recognizing the importance of this, the principal and teachers at IT Kindergarten Mina Aceh Besar place a strong emphasis on fostering religious and moral values in their students. They implement the habituation method through activities that are carefully programmed and conducted in a regular, continuous, and spontaneous manner. The habituation methods are carried out as follows:

a) Regular Habituation

Routine habituation refers to systematically planned and scheduled activities implemented by the school to instill consistent habits in students.²¹ This form of habituation is exemplified by daily practices that teachers engage in with the students.²² At IT Kindergarten Mina Aceh Besar, routine habituation includes activities such as performing ablution, followed by the Dhuha prayer in the hall, which is then accompanied by dhikr (remembrance of Allah) after the prayer. Students recite Ayat al-Kursi, review short surahs, and Hadith, recite the Asmaul Husna, and conclude with a closing prayer before proceeding to their classrooms.

In the classroom, children are taught to read Iqra' and participate in infaq (charitable giving). On Wednesdays, students return to the hall to perform the obligatory prayer together under the guidance of Ustadz Ikhsan, while on other days, they perform the obligatory prayer in class, supervised by their class teacher. Based on interviews with respondents, including the school principal, worship center teachers, and independence center teachers, it can be concluded that the routine activities implemented for students at IT Kindergarten Mina Aceh Besar encompass ablution, Dhuha prayer, obligatory prayer, Iqra' reading, infaq, recitation of daily prayers, Ayat al-Kursi, Asmaul Husna, and review of Hadith and short surahs. These activities are consistently carried out as part of the children's self-development program.

²⁰ Qory Ismawaty, 'Pengembangan Nilai Moral Anak Usia Dini Melalui Metode Pembiasaan Di RA Al-Jabbar Kota Batam', *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Early Childhood Education*, 2.2 (2017), 199–206.

²¹ Abdul Mudjib, *Pendidikan Karakter Melalui Pembiasaan Salat Jamaah* (NEM, 2022).

²² Mulianah Khaironi, 'Pendidikan Moral Pada Anak Usia Dini', *Jurnal Golden Age*, 1.01 (2017), 1 <<https://doi.org/10.29408/goldenage.v1i01.479>>.

b) Spontaneous Habituation

Spontaneous Habituation is an unscheduled habituation in a special event.²³ Spontaneous habituation can also be interpreted as an activity that can be done without being limited by time, place, and space. Spontaneous habituation aims to get children used to being polite and polite.²⁴ The spontaneous habits applied at Kindergarten are big such as: saying and answering greetings, shaking hands with parents and teachers, socializing well with friends, loving each other, saying sorry, please and thank you, and maintaining personal and environmental hygiene.

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted with Mrs. EF from the worship center and Mrs. NL from the independence center, it can be concluded that the spontaneous habits applied at Kindergarten IT Mina are answering and giving greetings, shaking hands with parents and teachers, saying excuses, sorry, please and thank you, knocking on the door when entering the room, respecting friends when studying or playing, help each other, love each other politely and politely to teachers and friends, love plants and animals, give appreciation to children when doing good and give reprimands to children when making mistakes. In addition, there are several spontaneous activities that are implemented in order to maintain personal and environmental hygiene such as routinely washing hands, brushing teeth, shampooing, cutting nails, cleaning ears, and covering the nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing.

c) Exemplary Habituation

Exemplary habituation is a method employed by teachers to instill good habits in children,²⁵ both during and outside the learning process, by consistently providing positive examples.²⁶ At Kindergarten IT Mina Aceh Besar, this approach is evident as teachers model respectful and gentle communication, displaying polite behavior towards both children and their colleagues. Additionally, teachers reinforce exemplary habits through storytelling and by reminding children of moral teachings through hadiths.

²³ Diah Asmawati, Ikhwani Aziz, and Wijaya Adi, 'Fostering Noble Morals Through Example and Habituation (Case Study at TPA At-Thusuniah)', *Assyfa Journal of Islamic Studies*, 02.1 (2024), 1–10; Aris Priyanto, 'Pengembangan Kreativitas Pada Anak Usia Dini Melalui Aktivitas Bermain', *Journal.Uny.Ac.Id*, 02, 2014.

²⁴ Muthmainnah and Herawati, 'Pembelajaran PAI Berbasis Adab Kontekstual', *Pionir: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 10.1 (2021), 92–106.

²⁵ Mhd Habibu Rahman, Rita Kencana, and Nur Faizah, *Pengembangan Nilai Moral Dan Agama Anak Usia Dini: Panduan Bagi Orang Tua, Guru, Mahasiswa, Dan Praktisi PAUD* (Edu Publisher, 2020).

²⁶ Susilo Setiadi, *Pedoman Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* (Jakarta: Bee Media Pustaka, 2016).



From the interviews conducted, it can be concluded that the teachers at Kindergarten IT Mina Aceh Besar serve as role models for their students by consistently using kind words, demonstrating polite behavior towards others, and actively participating in religious and moral activities alongside the children. They also exemplify the importance of cleanliness by maintaining a clean and orderly classroom environment. This approach aligns with the teacher's role as a guide, mentor, and model, helping to foster children's awareness and encourage them to engage in positive behavior

2. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Implementing Religious and Moral Values in Children

The implementation of religious and moral values in children is influenced by various supporting and inhibiting factors. Supporting factors include a conducive environment at home and school, positive role models from parents and teachers, and consistent reinforcement of these values through daily activities and interactions.²⁷ When children observe and engage in practices that align with religious and moral teachings, they are more likely to internalize these values.²⁸ On the other hand, inhibiting factors may consist of inconsistent messaging, lack of reinforcement, exposure to conflicting values through media or peer influence, and a lack of support from the surrounding environment.²⁹ These factors can create confusion and hinder the effective instillation of religious and moral values in children.³⁰

CONCLUSION

Based on the formulation of the problem and the findings of the research, it can be concluded that the implementation of religious and moral values in children at IT Kindergarten Mina Aceh Besar through the habituation method can be effectively carried out across three key aspects: routine habituation, spontaneous habituation, and planned habituation. The

²⁷ Novia Safitri, 'Penanaman Nilai-Nilai Moral Dan Agama Anak Usia Dini Di TK Gomerlang Bandar Lampung', *Skripsi. UIN Lampung*, 2019 <<http://repository.radenintan.ac.id/8372/1/SKRIPSI.pdf>>.

²⁸ Mustopa Yusup, 'Peran Kepala Sekolah Sebagai Pemimpin Pemelajaran', *Manajer Pendidikan: Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen Pendidikan Program Pascasarjana*, 9.1 (2015), 95–100 <<https://doi.org/10.33369/mapen.v9i1.1103>>.

²⁹ Darajat Zakiyah, *Psikiatri Keagamaan* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 2005).

³⁰ Anne Suryani and A. Bukhori Muslim, 'Religious Tolerance at School and Democratic Education', 2024, pp. 81–99 <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-1616-6_5>.

success of this implementation is supported by several factors, including strong leadership from the school principal, the competence of teachers who are committed to fostering the development of religious and moral values, and the availability of comprehensive facilities and infrastructure.

However, the process is hindered by challenges such as families that lack the time to reinforce the religious and moral education received by children at school, and the busy schedules of parents, which often prevent them from consistently accompanying their children in their learning activities. In light of these findings, it is recommended that schools continue to enhance the competencies of their teachers to ensure that the implementation of religious and moral education in children continues to evolve and improve. Additionally, parents are encouraged to take an active role in evaluating and supporting their children's moral and religious development. Future research should aim to address the limitations of previous studies, thereby contributing to the enhancement of student character education quality in the coming years.

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