



## Moral Education as a Foundation for the Formation of Students' Character

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**Abstract.** Moral education has a very important role in shaping the character of students. In the context of education, morals include moral and ethical values that form the basis of individual behavior and character. The main aim of moral education is to develop students' personalities who have integrity, civility and responsibility. The process of character formation through moral education involves various aspects, such as instilling the values of honesty, discipline, respect and social responsibility. Apart from that, moral education also plays a role in forming attitudes of tolerance and empathy towards others. Implementation of moral education in schools can be done through various methods, including integration in the curriculum, extracurricular activities, and example from educators. With good moral education, it is hoped that students will be able to face life's challenges with a positive and constructive attitude, and become members of society who contribute positively. Therefore, moral education must be a priority in the education system to create a generation with strong character and high morals.

**Keywords:** Moral Education, Leadership, Student Character.

### INTRODUCTION

The position of morals in human life has an important place both as individuals and as a society and nation. Because, the ups and downs, prosperity and destruction of a nation and society depend on its morals. If the morals are good, the inner and outer will be prosperous, but if the morals are bad, the inner and outer will be damaged. (Rahmat Djatmika, 1996:11). Therefore, the main program and basic struggle of all efforts is the development of noble morals. It must be instilled in all layers and levels of society from the top to the bottom. It is the morals of a nation that determine its attitude to life and behavior. As long as the nation still upholds the moral norms of morality firmly and well, so long will the nation be prosperous and happy.

Every educational concept and action is motivated by certain concepts about human nature. When interacting with a tool, for example, someone needs an understanding of that tool, such as its properties, construction and how it works. Likewise, when interacting with human individuals, educators should recognize and develop correct perceptions about their character. Therefore, the topic of human nature occupies an important position in the study of education, other sciences related to human behavior and moral aspects of individuals, as well as the study of society and social improvement. (Hery Noer dkk, 2003:115).

A strong identity can only be formed if we have and build a responsible character/character/soul which includes consistency, integrity and dedication, loyalty and commitment vertically (with the Creator, God Almighty) and horizontally (with others , society

and state and nation) (Soemarno, 2002:34). Character plays a very important and main role in determining attitudes and behavior. Therefore, we need to foster and develop it in stages, levels, continuously and sustainably (Soemarno, 2002:2).

Moral education is the soul of Islamic education and Islam has concluded that moral education is the soul of Islamic education to achieve true morals from education. But this does not mean that we do not prioritize physical education or reason or knowledge or other practical aspects, but what it means is that we provide aspects of moral education as well as other education. Children need physical strength, reason, knowledge and children also need education in morals, feelings, will, taste and personality.

Educational values should be implemented in everyday life so that children are moved to implement the necessary role models in life. Exemplary behavior will be successful when respected figures such as teachers/leaders provide examples that are worthy of emulation. So the aim of this writing is to find out the efforts of moral education in forming students.

## **THEORETICAL STUDY**

### **1. Formation of Students' Moral Education**

Islam places great importance on morals to create elements of strength and pious individuals so that they can share their share in raising their standard of living and obtain Allah's protection and approval behind their current life. The most appropriate tools for upholding character and improving behavior is the application of religious education. Because religion has a big influence on the soul, it can control the heart and awaken good elements, direct it to noble and important things and revive a frozen heart. (Sayid Sabiq, 1981:40-46).

The main formation is at a young age, so if a child is allowed to do something that is not good, and then it becomes a habit, it will be difficult to straighten it out. This means that high moral education must begin at home, in the family, from childhood and children must not be left without education, guidance and instructions, even from childhood they must be educated so that they are not accustomed to customs and customs. which is not good. If children are left alone, not paid attention to, not guided, they will develop bad habits, so it will be difficult to return them and force them to abandon these habits. (M. Athiyah Al-Abrasy, 1970:110-111).

Thus, al-Ghazali strongly recommends educating children and developing their character by means of exercises and habits that are appropriate to their mental development, even if it seems like it is forced, so that children can avoid being led astray. Because these

habits and training will form a certain attitude in the child which will gradually become clearer and stronger, eventually becoming unwavering because it has become part of his personality. After children become adults, it is hoped that they will have high awareness and deep understanding, so that what they think, choose, decide and do is based on their own conscience with a full sense of responsibility, not because of habit, training and coercion as when the child was still small.

The formation of students' moral education is an important aspect in the education system, especially in the context of Islamic education. Moral education aims to shape positive character and behavior in students so that they are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have good morals.

Moral education has a central role in building students' personalities. The moral values taught include honesty, responsibility, discipline, politeness and concern for others. Moral education helps students to understand and internalize moral values that can guide them in living their daily lives.

a. Methods for Forming Moral Education

Curriculum Integration: Moral education should be integrated into the school curriculum. Subjects such as Islamic Religious Education can be a medium for conveying moral values. Apart from that, moral values can also be integrated into other subjects such as Indonesian, history, and others.

Teacher Role Model: Teachers play an important role as role models for students. Good teacher behavior and attitudes will be an example for students to follow. Therefore, teachers must always maintain integrity and demonstrate behavior that is in accordance with the moral values being taught.

Conducive School Environment: A conducive and positive school environment is very influential in the formation of students' morals. Schools must create an atmosphere that supports the application of moral values, such as cleanliness, discipline and mutual respect.

Extracurricular Activities: Extracurricular activities such as scouting, social activities, and student organizations can be a means of developing moral values. Through this activity, students can learn to work together, appreciate differences, and contribute to social activities.

b. Challenges in Forming Moral Education

There are several challenges in forming moral education, such as the negative influence of social media and the environment outside the school. To overcome this

challenge, cooperation between schools, parents and the community is needed to support the process of forming students' morals.

## **2. Strategy for Developing Moral Values**

Religion is a source of moral values and at the same time an instrument and place for upholding morals itself. Many people do not carry out their obligations as religious people, which causes them to be unable to uphold moral values in their daily lives.

According to Syahrin Harahap, the philosophical basis for enforcing moral education should be religious assessment. Because it starts from the structure of thinking. First, that contemporary humans need ethical values derived from religion so that they are not trapped in destruction when they enter modernity. Every student must be equipped with two things:

1. The need to have correct knowledge about the values taught by one's religion as a social philosophy which is the driving force for happiness.
2. Knowledge of the conditions of the times and their demands, as well as distinguishing between things that emerge in science and deviant phenomena that cause damage and decline.

Second, there is concern about the mental shift of most members of society, including students, into a sensory mentality which causes them to fall from spiritual beings to material beings, their way of viewing right and wrong, virtuous or not virtuous, lawful or not determined by the senses, material and lust. Third, the belief that no matter how bad a student's mentality is, it can still be improved if character education can be carried out seriously and responsibly. Fourth, the belief that upholding morals is a prophetic tradition, because continuing the duties of the prophets improves human morals. Fifth, the belief that developing character education means instilling strength within a person. Because from a philosophical perspective it is known that a commendable attitude of character can be seen as strength. Therefore, it must be established on the basis of faith and piety. Sixth, upholding morals as a prophetic task is not just an individual or institutional task, but is a collective responsibility of all components of the nation. (Syahrin Harahap, 2000:238-240).

Efforts to apply morality in everyday life should be an inseparable part of the national education process and Islamic education, both in families, schools and society. In the family, parents' activities will be a role model for their sons and daughters. When at school, teachers besides delivering lessons also need to set good examples. Meanwhile, in society, character education is provided with advice and example, especially from community figures and leaders (M. Abdurrahman, 2003:28). Therefore, the implementation

of character education, especially teachers and academics, is required to have extensive mastery of religious knowledge and the ability to demonstrate exemplary, a human resource problem faced in internalization (appreciation), personalization, application in practice or implementation rather than lectures. and cramming of material.

The development of moral values in education is a very important process to shape the character and morals of students. These moral values include attitudes, behavior and actions that are in accordance with religious and social norms. The following are several strategies that can be applied in developing moral values:

1. Collaboration with parents: Moral education is not only the responsibility of the school, but also the family. Therefore, schools need to collaborate with parents through good communication and joint programs. Parents can be invited to be actively involved in school activities related to character formation.
2. Rewards and sanctions: A fair and consistent system of rewards and sanctions is also an important part of developing moral values. Awards are given to students who show good behavior, while educational sanctions are given to those who violate norms.
3. Personal approach: Understanding each student personally can help in developing moral values. Teachers must recognize the character of each student and provide guidance that suits their needs.

By implementing these strategies, it is hoped that moral values can be firmly embedded in students, so that they can grow into individuals with high character and morals.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research is a type of qualitative research. A qualitative approach is used to understand the phenomenon of moral education in the context of character formation of students. This research collects data from various literature studied, not limited to books, documentation materials or reports of previous research results or can be interpreted as research that uses data and information with the help of various materials contained in the literature. (Khairul Amri & Putera, 2024). It is hoped that this research method can provide a comprehensive picture of the role of moral education in shaping the character of students, as well as provide practical recommendations for improving moral education programs in schools.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **1. The Role of Moral Education in Developing Students**

Moral education plays a very important role in developing students. Morals, which are a set of moral and ethical values that determine a person's behavior, function as a foundation in forming the character and personality of students. Moral education does not only focus on cognitive aspects, but also on comprehensive affective and psychomotor aspects. In this context, the role of moral education in developing students can be explained through several important aspects.

One of the main roles of moral education is the formation of students' character and personality. Good character includes traits such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and concern for others. Through moral education, students are taught to understand and internalize these values in everyday life. The formation of strong character will help students to become individuals who are responsible and have high morals, who are able to face various challenges in life.

The importance of character and its instillation in the souls of children was clearly and emphatically demonstrated by the Prophet as mentioned in the previous discussion, specifically in his words: "There is nothing that parents give to their children that is most valuable except good character." And also "Glorify your children and teach them noble character" (M. Athiyah al-Abrasy, 1996:83). This great attention to character development is because it produces an open heart. An open heart produces good habits and good habits produce commendable morals (M. Nur Hafizh, 1998:180).

Moral education plays a role in developing positive attitudes and behavior in students. Attitudes such as cooperation, tolerance, and empathy are very important in social interactions. By having positive attitudes and behavior, students will be able to establish harmonious relationships with other people, both in the school environment and in society. Moral education also helps students to avoid negative behavior such as lying, cheating and violence.

Discipline is an important aspect of moral education. Through moral education, students are taught to comply with applicable rules and norms, both at school and in society. Discipline includes aspects such as punctuality, compliance with regulations, and responsibility for assigned tasks. By having good discipline, students will more easily achieve success in academics and personal life.

Moral education also plays a role in fostering a sense of social responsibility in students. A sense of social responsibility is an awareness of the obligation to contribute

positively to society. Students who have a sense of social responsibility will care more about the surrounding environment and are willing to be involved in activities that are beneficial to society. This will help them become good citizens and contribute to the development of society.

In the context of Islamic education, moral education has a very important role in strengthening religious values. Religious values such as piety, sincerity and obedience to Allah SWT are an integral part of moral education. Through moral education, students are taught to practice religious teachings in their daily lives, so that they can become individuals who believe and are devout.

Moral education is an essential element in developing students. Through moral education, students are not only equipped with academic knowledge, but also with moral values that will shape their character and personality. By having good morals, students will be able to become individuals who are responsible, disciplined and have high morals, who are ready to face various challenges in life. Therefore, moral education must be a priority in the education system, to ensure the formation of a generation of high quality and noble morals.

## **2. Moral Education Efforts in Shaping Students' Character**

Forming character must start when the baby is in the womb because genetically babies can "inherit" the traits and attitudes of their parents (descendants and ancestors) in form, as well as talents, intelligence and temperament, through education, experience and life journey.

Forming character must be done continuously, sustainably and sustainably at any social level. For this reason, as parents, it is an obligation to educate their children with good things, starting from infancy, toddlerhood, through adolescence until the end of life, efforts to shape character must be continued.

Moral education is an important aspect in shaping the character and personality of students. In the context of education, morals are not just norms and ethics that are taught, but also include the cultivation of moral values that are able to guide students in living their daily lives. Moral education plays an important role in forming good character, so that students are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have noble personalities.

One of the main efforts in moral education is through the example set by teachers and parents. Teachers as educators in schools have a crucial role in instilling moral values in students. This can be done by providing examples of good behavior, such as honesty, discipline and a sense of responsibility. Teachers who are able to demonstrate good morals

will become role models for students, so that they are encouraged to imitate and apply these values in their lives.

Apart from that, moral learning can also be done through a curriculum that is integrated with moral values. Subjects such as Religious Education, Citizenship Education, and Character Education are effective means for conveying moral material. In this subject, students are invited to understand and discuss moral values, and are given the opportunity to apply them in the form of real activities, such as social service, religious activities, and projects that promote cooperation and tolerance.

A conducive school environment also plays an important role in moral education. Schools that create a positive culture, such as mutual respect, tolerance and cooperation, will help students internalize moral values. Extracurricular activities that focus on character development, such as scouts, student organizations, and social activity clubs, can be effective media in instilling moral values.

Parents also have a big responsibility in their children's moral education. Moral education should start at home, where parents set an example and teach moral values from an early age. Good communication between schools and parents will strengthen the moral education process, thereby creating positive synergy in the formation of children's character.

Overall, moral education efforts to shape the character of students require cooperation between teachers, schools and parents. By providing good role models, developing a curriculum that is integrated with moral values, creating a conducive school environment, and involving the active role of parents, it is hoped that students can grow into individuals with noble character and are able to make positive contributions to society.

## **CONCLUSION**

Moral education does not only focus on teaching moral norms and values, but also on forming a strong character, which reflects a personality with integrity and responsibility. Moral education functions as a moral compass that guides students in facing various life situations. With good morals, students are able to make correct and fair decisions, and are able to differentiate between good and bad. This is very important in forming a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also wise in behavior. The process of moral education must start from an early age, both in the family, school and community. The family is the first and main place where moral values are taught and instilled. The role of parents as role models is very important in instilling moral values in their children. In schools, teachers have a crucial



role in providing examples of good behavior and integrating moral education in the curriculum. Society also plays a role in creating an environment conducive to the development of good morals. In the context of Islamic education, moral education is an integral part of learning. The teachings of the Islamic religion place great emphasis on the importance of noble morals as part of faith. The hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW states, "Indeed, I was sent to perfect noble morals." This shows that good morals are the main goal of religious teaching. Overall, moral education is the key to forming students with character, responsibility and high morals. Without good moral education, the knowledge gained will not be of maximum benefit. Therefore, moral education must be a priority in the education system to create a generation that is not only smart, but also has noble morals.

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