Internalization of Religious Values for Elementary-Age Children in Integrated Islamic Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

Elementary-age children are the "reflection of Indonesia" of the future. This age phase is the generation of Indonesian human resources (HR) at the golden age of 1 century of independence. Not only intellectually, but children of primary age are also expected to have skills and character, including religious values. This paper aims to analyze the internalization of religious values for elementary-age children with a research background at an Islamic elementary school at Biak Muli Kutacane, Aceh Tenggara. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. The data were collected by using interviews, observation and documentation techniques. Furthermore, data analysis was carried out using data reduction techniques, data display and drawing conclusions. The data validity test used the triangulation technique. The results of this study indicate that the internalization of religious values for elementary-age children at Islamic elementary school is classified into 3 (three) parts, namely Tahfiz Alquran, Clothing, and Religious.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Technological sophistication and ease of access to information are real impacts of scientific progress in the era of globalization (Lestari, 2018; Killacky et al., 2002: 763-775). All kinds of technological sophistication is a fundamental part of the changes that occur in the era of globalization, innovative information exchange systems, clothing, and also acculturation of cultures between nations (Ngafifi, 2014; Holroyd, 2022: 18-31). These various changes are hereinafter referred to as the era of the world without borders (Asmawi, 2018; Sparke, 2017: 51-72).

Ideally, the world’s progress in science and technology (IPTEK) aligns with increasing faith and piety in humans (Sebba & Luke, 2019: 435-442; Hidayat, 2018). The same thing was also concluded by Najili (2017), that increasing one’s thinking and reasoning power in innovating something to be of value will increase human awareness and faith in Allah swt. However, Surachman (2014) explains that the reality in society is that the progress of science and technology is not in line with the
improvement of human religious quality. Because the orientation of human life in the era of globalization prioritizes luxury and personal pleasure rather than the formation of noble character for generations.

According to Assingkily & Miswar (2020), in the educational process, the basic age phase for each child becomes an important period (time dimension) in shaping the child’s character (personality). This is the basic reason for parents and educators to optimize the internalization of religious values as the main provision in the child’s personality. This effort is intended to give birth to a generation of people who are not only "literate" about changes and technological sophistication but also a generation with character (morals).

Integrated Islamic Elementary School (SDIT), a form of polarization of educational institutions in Indonesia, characterizes Islamic educational institutions balanced between general insight and religious character building in children. As shown by SDIT Ali Mahfuzd in initial observations, researchers found that this school prioritizes inculcating religious characteristics in children. This is reflected in the superior learning program of Tahfidz al-Qur’an, uniforms worn by students at school, and routine worship.

Responding to the concept of the importance of character, especially religious values in children, is like a foundation that must be strong from an early age. For this reason, the family environment and educational institutions are also an environment that requires inculcating religious values elementary-aged children (Gkloumpou & Germanos, 2018: 61-75; Kosim, 2012). The internalization of religious values in children in primary education institutions at the MI/SD level is variously applied by institutional managers (school/madrasah leaders) (Widyantingsih, 2014; Brambilla et al., 2013: 486-498), this can be influenced by ideology, orientation, and goals of educational institutions.

Indeed, academic studies on the internalization of religious values in children have been studied from various perspectives. These include discussing aspects of the phenomenon of value actualization in schools, the process of internalizing socio-religious values in SLB (Hasna, 2020), aspects of principal managerial skills (Saputra, 2020), strategies for internalizing values for children (Munif, 2017), internalizing religious values through learning Civics and Pancasila (Hendra, 2019) and strategies for internalizing religious values in universities (Murdiono, 2010).

Based on the preceding analysis of the literature, it is clear that this is not the first time that the topic of the internalisation of religious values has been investigated. Similarly, the absorption of religious values from components of routine programmes and comprehensive activities in the elementary school environment is a "empty space" for discussion that has not been properly explored before. This highlights the necessity for additional study on the topic of religious values' internalisation. The findings of this study are intended to contribute to the growing body of evidence on the benefits of instilling morals and character in young children and to meet the requirements of Muslim families who want their children to learn about and practise Islam from a young age. This study's conceptualisation focuses on elementary school-aged children's absorption of religious values.

2. METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore contemporary issues. Internalization of values with creations that put forward the local wisdom of the institution is certainly something contemporary. This research was conducted from November 2021 to January 2022. Data was collected by means of in-depth interviews individually, either directly or indirectly (via smartphone media), participant observation and documentation studies as data that "completes" the validity of the research. This effort is carried out by taking into account health protocols, so alternatives via WhatsApp and other social media platforms are very helpful in the data collection process (Creswell, 2009). Furthermore, the data were analyzed using (1) data reduction techniques, namely sorting out the data needed in research, while data or information that was "a bit" far from the research focus was filtered; (2) data display, at this stage, the previous data is presented by the researcher in the form of a narrative information arrangement to allow comprehensive data analysis,
and (3) drawing conclusions (Leavy, 2017). Furthermore, the assurance of the validity of the research data is carried out by using triangulation techniques. Triangulation is done by comparing the results of interviews between one participant and another on the same theme. The use of this technique is intended to collect data with various methods and methods, further by crossing the information obtained so that the data obtained is more complete and as expected.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, three main pillars or main points as research findings are described, namely: (1) Tahfiz Al-Quran Program, (2) School uniforms, and (3) Worship. The full description is described as follows: In this section, three main pillars or main points as research findings are described, namely: (1) Tahfiz Al-Quran Program, (2) School uniforms, and (3) Worship. The full description is presented as follows:

3.1 Tahfiz Alquran

Tahfiz Al-Quran is the flagship program at SDIT Ali Mahfuz. This program was deliberately initiated by the Chairman of the Foundation (Abuya AB) January 15, 2022, as an effort to foster an Islamic attitude in children through their love of the Koran. This is in line with the following interview excerpt:

"...yes ma’am, at SDIT, I hope that since childhood, children can read the Qur’an, memorize the Qur’an and practice the Qur’an. That’s why I propose to the principal to make the Koran the main literacy of children at school and become a superior program."

Supporting the interview excerpt above, JF (Head of SDIT Ali Mahfudz) on January 22, 2022, said that:

"Tahfiz Al-Quran is the flagship program at this school, Mrs. God willing, the teachers are also diligent in guiding our children to be able to read, memorize and hopefully practice the Qur’an and in their daily lives."

The interview excerpt above shows that tahfiz Al-Quran is the flagship program, and the main literacy is taught to children in schools. According to Assingkily (2019), the Qur’an is the main literacy that must be taught to children. Furthermore, Fatah (2014) explains that the embodiment of the Koran in children’s daily lives must be programmed in the education unit. Making tahfiz Qur’an a flagship program in madrasas/schools is a form of living the Qur’an (Assingkily, 2019; Sai, 2018: 148-157). Thus, the Qur’an is not only taught textually in schools, but becomes an object contextualised in children’s daily lives (students).

Based on school documents, information was obtained that tahfiz Qur’an was carried out comprehensively every day of learning by teachers at schools. Further, it can be seen in the table 1. Observing table (1) above, the school has programmed tahfiz Qur’anic activities in such a way as to foster children’s love for the Qur’an from an early age. According to Ainiyah (2013), habituation and even habituation carried out by adults to children is an effort to form noble character in children’s personalities. In line with the above, Ummi JS (Ummi is a female teacher at SDIT Ali Mahfudz) on December 2, 2021, via WhatsApp as the person in charge of tahfiz Qur’an activities stated that:

"... at school, we teachers were asked by Ummi the principal to form character or morality for the children, sir. One of them is with this activity, the tahfiz Qur’an program. We hope that the more children love and are close to the Koran, the better their morals will be. Because God said, the Qur’an is a written reflection of the character of the Apostle, sir."
Table 1. Schedule of activities for Tahfiz and the Qur’anic Companion Teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Description of activities</th>
<th>Companion Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>08.00-09.00 WIB</td>
<td>Tahfiz Alquran</td>
<td>Ummi Tiwi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>08.00-09.00 WIB</td>
<td>Muroja’ah</td>
<td>Ummi Jessica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>08.00-09.00 WIB</td>
<td>Tahfiz Alquran</td>
<td>Ummi Selly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>08.00-09.00 WIB</td>
<td>Muroja’ah</td>
<td>Ummi Tiwi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>08.00-09.00 WIB</td>
<td>Bina Hafalan</td>
<td>Ummi Jessica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>08.00-09.00 WIB</td>
<td>Tahfiz Alquran</td>
<td>Ummi Selly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Every Friday, memorization is held for all SDIT Ali Mahfudz students at the school mosque.

Supporting the interview quoted above, Hendriana & Jacobus (2016) explain that the formation of character or noble character in children can be through school routines or the example displayed by adults around them. Hakim (2014) added that the activities and programs based on the Qur’an greatly affect children’s internalization of religious values. Based on the description above, it is concluded that tahfiz Qur’an, as a flagship program at SDIT Ali Mahfudz is not just a routine program at school, but an activity that mediates the process of internalizing religious values in children and efforts to bring children closer to the Qur’an from an elementary age.

3.2 School Clothes or Uniforms

Purwaji (2016) argues that clothing is a reflection of neatness and is symbolic of one’s behaviour. Usually, someone who is well-dressed reflects that he obeys the rules and regulations at school. Likewise, Wuryandani et al. (2014) said that it is not uniformity that disciplines, but awareness that should be grown so that students can be disciplined and have character. In line with this opinion, JF (Head of SDIT Ali Mahfudz) on January 22, 2022, said that:

“...Clothes do not guarantee student discipline, sir, but one of the important aspects of training student discipline is through clothes, sir. On a daily basis other than Friday, students wear uniforms like SD/MI in Kutacane. Especially on Fridays, we deliberately designed different clothes so that students are aware that they must reflect religious values through everyday clothes.”

Figure 1. Special Friday Clothes for SDIT Ali Mahfudz Students.
(Documentation: Private, January 15, 2022)
Supporting this description, Ummi JS, (SDIT teacher Ali Mahfudz) on December 2, 2021, as the person in charge of the tahliz Qur’an program, stated that "...this uniform, in addition to reflecting the verandah of Makkah (Aceh), also reflects the character that the children at SDIT Ali Mahfudz have Islamic character or character. karimah since childhood". Kusumastuti (2020) stated that uniforms for school children are a pillar of implementing disciplined characters. Widuseno (2018) said that through uniforms, values for children be internalized, including cultural and religious values. Thus, children will be more accustomed to behaving well with the "shield" of their school uniform.

Based on the description above, it is understood that clothing is not an absolute thing to guarantee a reflection of the child’s character. However, through uniforms, children will get used to behaving well according to what they are wearing. This is the basic reason SDIT Ali Mahfudz uses special uniforms on Fridays for his students, to foster religious attitudes and values in children’s personalities.

3.3 Worship

Worship is the duty of creatures to their Creator (Allah swt.). Humans are required to worship throughout their lifetime, regardless of age, including from elementary age. The worship of adults and children is only distinguished on the level of consciousness. This is because adults or those who are mumayyiz carry out worship with self-awareness as servants of Allah swt. In contrast, the children are still at the stage of the awareness process (Maksum, 2012). According to Hadiawati (2008), the description above can be a basic reason related to the urgency of worship education for elementary-age children in the perspective of Islamic recommendations. Because, through the practices of worship, children will be more sensitive and aware of the obligations and even the essence of worship. Hasanah (2018) terms this as a form of giving experience and getting used to the practice of worship in children.

Supporting this opinion, JF (Head of SDIT Ali Mahfudz) on January 22, 2022 said that:

"...our children get used to it here for sunnah services, sir, especially those that are obligatory. For example, our children make it a habit to perform ablution before entering class (study), pray Duha in a congregation, pray together, pray for parents, pray for study and read the Qur’an."

The following is a picture of (2) one of the worship practices (Prayer Duha Congregation) at SDIT Ali Mahfudz.

Figure 2. The Practice of the Duha Prayer in Congregation of Students (Documentation: Private, January 22, 2022)
The practices of worship conveyed by the Head of SDIT described that one form of instilling religious values in students at SDIT Ali Mahfuz was through worship. Wahyuni & Putra (2020) explained that worship and teacher guides are closely related to shaping religious character and values in children. According to Abdurrahman (2019), religious values from the aspect of worship are obtained from the awareness that children have obligations as Muslims. Furthermore, Maksum (2012) states that elementary-age children are in a phase where they are taught and made aware of Islam through training and habituation of worship.

Based on the description above, it is understood that the internalization of religious values in elementary-age children can be done through worship. Because the practice of worship can grow and give children the experience of Islam since childhood. This underlies the SDIT Ali Mahfuz to program worship activities (practices) for students, including the Duha prayer in the congregation every morning, reading the Koran, and praying every morning.

3.4 Indicators of Improving the Quality of Religious Values

Increasing religious values in students is an effort to develop the potential for spiritual intelligence from an early age (Munif, 2017). As for religious values that are internalized to students, they should form habits, attitudes, and students’ personalities. This is because the provision of this character (personality) leads students to become individuals who have character and are able to balance individual needs with social interests as a form of awareness of God-fearing creatures (Daulay et al., 2022: 51-64).

The inculcation of students’ religious values at SDIT Ali Mahfuz leads to aspects of faith, piety, honesty, and maintaining daily speech and behaviour. Furthermore, the internalization effort is broken down into 3 (three) aspects, namely first, tahlidz al-Qur’an. In this program, students are taught perseverance to memorize kalamullah and practice it in maintaining speech and daily behaviour. Students are asked to get used to saying good words, repeating memorization, and maintaining behaviour as a form of maintaining memorizing the Qur’an (Arifandi & Fihrsi, 2022: 1-18). Thus, the tahlidz al-Qur’an program’s religious value is embedded in students by maintaining speech and behaviour. Second, clothing, through clothing, students are taught to maintain cleanliness as evidence of faith, according to Islamic teachings that cleanliness is part of faith. Since elementary, students are taught to dress cleanly, and neatly, and cover their genitals so as to keep other people’s bad views from the clothes worn by students (Nurmasari, 2022). The habit of dressing at SDIT Ali Mahfuz also strengthens students’ appreciation and practice of faith and piety. Next, third is worship. In this context, students internalize religious values in the form of faith and honesty (Ali & Sukmawati, 2022). Students were asked, “have you done ablution or not?” Of course, the honesty aspect of students is tested by the teacher. Likewise, the Duha prayer is a form of student devotion to worship Allah swt. and increase student confidence.

Based on the description above, it is understood that worship activities and tahlidz Qur’an at SDIT Ali Mahfuz internalize religious values in the form of faith, piety, and honesty to students from an elementary age. Likewise, with the habit of wearing Muslim clothes and covering their genitals, internalizing religious values in the form of appreciation and students’ experiences of faith, making students aware of the importance of covering their genitals since childhood. Thus, these three aspects are characteristic of SDIT Ali Mahfuz in internalizing religious values in students.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the internalization of religious values for elementary-age children at SDIT Ali Mahfuz is classified into 3 (three) parts, namely (1) Tahfiz Al-Quran, covering murajaah activities, memorizing the Qur’an and memorizing every Friday; (2) School clothes or uniforms, including special uniforms on Fridays; and (3) Worship, including the Duha prayer in congregation, reading the Qur’an and praying every morning line. Finally, the researcher admits that this research is not yet at the “point of perfection”, based on the limitations of
time and knowledge. Therefore, the researcher recommends that further researchers examine similar themes from the aspect of internalizing values according to Thomas Lickona’s theory (moral knowing, moral feeling, moral action), as well as the development of specific learning media to internalize values (characters) in students from an elementary age.

REFERENCES


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