

Management of Education Character of Religious Values at Tunas Harapan Kindergarten

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Abstract: Character education is an important component in the formation of early childhood personality. This study aims to examine the management of character education based on religious values in Tunas Harapan Kindergarten, Jember Regency. This process is implemented through natural material collage art activities with star patterns, which focus on the religious values of the first principle of Pancasila, namely Belief in the Almighty God. The researcher used a qualitative approach in this study. Data collection was carried out using interview techniques, observation, and documentation studies. The role of the teacher as a facilitator is very visible in providing direction, instilling values, and encouraging cooperation among children. The results of this observation indicate that the planning, organization, implementation, and evaluation of activities were effective, despite challenges such as limited time and abstract understanding of symbols for children. Supporting factors include children's enthusiasm, school support, and a positive environment. Children succeeded in understanding religious values, showing creativity, and building character, such as discipline, cooperation, and environmental awareness. The evaluation of the activity showed satisfactory results, with positive feedback from children. This study confirms the importance of integrating religious values in early childhood character education through a creative and contextual approach.

Keyword : Management Of Educational Character, Religious Values, Kindergarten

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Introduction

Character education is one of the main focuses in early childhood education, considering that this age is a critical period in the formation of a child's personality. (Piaget, 1952), explains that early childhood is in the preoperational stage of development, where they learn through concrete experiences and creative activities. At this stage, character education, especially that based on religious values, is very important to shape children's behavior and morals as a whole. (Zuchdi, 2015).

Based on initial observations at Tunas Harapan Kindergarten, the implementation of religious character education still faces various challenges. Teachers revealed that children often have difficulty understanding religious values such as gratitude, compassion, and responsibility. This is largely due to the less interesting learning approach and limited supporting media. The methods used so far tend to be monotonous,

such as only through stories or memorizing prayers, so that they do not involve direct experiences that can improve children's understanding.

This condition reflects the gap between the ideal expectations of creative and contextual learning that suits children's needs and the reality on the ground. On the other hand, several studies have shown that art can be an effective medium for internalizing character values. (Fitriana, 2020) for example, found that collage art can improve creative thinking skills while helping children understand moral values. Likewise, (Wulandari, 2022) states that the use of natural materials in art can increase children's involvement in learning and strengthen their understanding of the beauty of God's creation.

However, there has not been much research that specifically explores how natural collage art can be applied to religious character education in early childhood. This study offers a new approach by utilizing natural collage art as a creative learning medium. This method not only trains children's fine motor skills and imagination, but also helps them internalize religious values through reflection on the beauty of nature.

This study aims to explore the application of natural collage art as a medium for religious character education in Tunas Harapan Kindergarten. Specifically, this study will analyze the planning, implementation, and evaluation of natural collage art activities, as well as identify supporting and inhibiting factors in its implementation. It is hoped that the results of this study can provide a significant contribution to the development of relevant and effective character learning methods for early childhood.

Methodology

This study applies a qualitative approach and case study design. This study aims to describe how the management of religious value character education.

Presence of Researchers

Researchers in case study research act as key instruments who act as planners, data collectors, analysts, interpreters and reporters of the results of their research. (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). The presence of researchers in the field as full observers and as a benchmark for obtaining data validity is expected to support success in understanding the focus of the research.

Data source

Data collected by the researcher himself obtained directly. Identifying data sources is done with the snowball principle, where information from the first informant will be used as key information to determine the next informant who can provide research data. This research was conducted on November 26, 2024 on Tuesday by interviewing the principal and class teacher. The data collection technique in this research is like case study research in general. The data collection techniques used are as follows: (1) in-depth interviews, (2) observation, (3) documentation studies.

According to (Miles et al., 2014) Data analysis is a process carried out to compile propositions through reviewing, sorting and grouping data. Meanwhile, according to (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003) Data analysis is the process of systematically collecting and organizing data from interviews, field notes, and other materials so that it is easy to understand and the findings can be disseminated.

Data analysis activities in this research are activities of systematic review and compilation of all interview transcripts, field notes, and other research materials that have been recorded by researchers during the collection of research data. (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Analysis The data in this study was conducted using an interactive model from Huberman and Saldana (2014), which applied four (4) steps in analyzing data as shown in the image below:

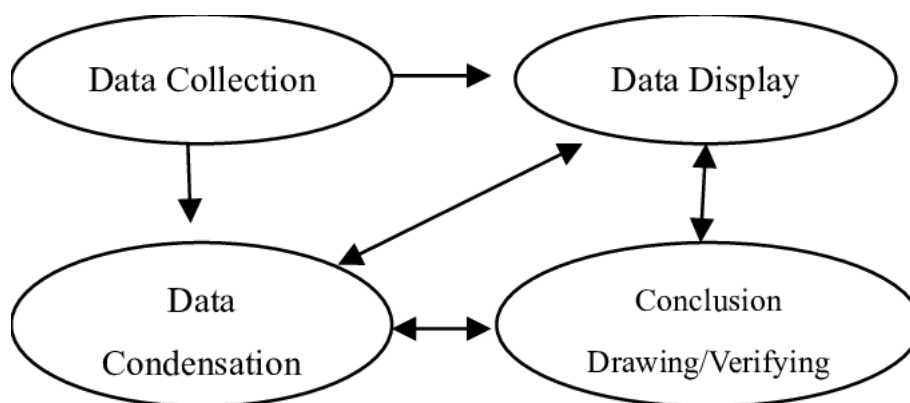


Figure 1. Interactive Data Analysis Chart According to Miles, Huberman & Saldana 2014

The validity of data in qualitative research includes credibility tests (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability), and confirmability (objectivity). The first data validity test is carried out through a credibility check carried out using triangulation techniques of data collection methods, triangulation of data sources, peer discussions, and re-checking (member check). Triangulation of data collection methods is carried out by matching data obtained from in-depth interview methods, observations, or documentation studies with each other so that data accuracy is obtained, according to Reynolds & Nasution's suggestions quoted by (Mantja, 2008).

Result and Discussion

Results

This study aims to identify and analyze the implementation of religious value character education in Tunas Harapan Kindergarten. The study was conducted with a qualitative approach, using data obtained through interviews, observations, and interpretations. The following are the main findings of this study:

1. Character Education Planning

Religious character education is an integral part of the curriculum at Tunas Harapan Kindergarten, which refers to the Merdeka Curriculum. This activity is designed to instill religious values that are in line with the first principle of Pancasila, namely Belief in the Almighty God. One of the activities carried out is making a star-shaped collage using leaves as the main material. This activity not only aims to train children's fine motor skills and creativity, but also to introduce the star symbol as a representation of God. The implementation of this activity begins with the introduction of star patterns by the teacher. Children are given

pattern sheets and invited to choose the leaves they like to stick on the pattern. The teacher provides direction and guidance so that children can work neatly and pay attention to detail.

2. Organizing Character Education

The organizing process went well. The class was divided into small groups to make it easier for the children to work. The teacher acted as a facilitator who provided examples and directions. The children were taught to work together, share tools such as glue and scissors, and maintain cleanliness during the activity. The teacher also explained the meaning of the star symbol in this activity, emphasized the importance of appreciating God's creation, and inserted moral messages to the children.

3. Implementation of Character Education

The activity began with a joint prayer to instill a sense of gratitude in the children. During the collage-making process, the teacher provided guidance and motivation to the children to express their creativity. The children were invited to understand that the star symbol not only depicts God Almighty, but also serves as a reminder of human obligations to protect nature. The children showed high enthusiasm during the activity. They enthusiastically selected leaves and attached them to the star pattern according to their respective creativity. The teacher motivated them to maintain neatness and involved children who finished earlier to help their friends who had not finished, so that the values of cooperation and helping each other could be instilled.

4. Evaluation of Character Education

Evaluation was conducted by inviting children to reflect on the activities they had done. The teacher asked about the meaning of the star symbol they had made and the reasons for choosing leaves as the collage material. This was done to find out to what extent the children understood the religious values taught. The collage results showed varying levels of creativity. Most children were able to complete the collage well, while some showed unique patterns. The teacher provided positive feedback, appreciated each child's efforts, and re-emphasized the religious meaning of the activity.

5. Supporting Factors

- Children's Enthusiasm: Children really enjoy this activity because they can learn while playing.
- School Support: The principal and teachers provided full support, so that this activity could be carried out well.
- Supportive Environment: A positive school and home environment helps shape children's character.

6. Inhibiting Factors

- Limited Time: Some children need more time to complete their collages. Teachers should be wiser in managing time so that each child can complete the task well.

- **Difficulty Understanding Symbol Concepts:** Some children have difficulty understanding the meaning of the star symbol. Teachers should use a more concrete approach, such as a story or visual illustration, to make it easier for children to understand.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that character education through natural material collage activities at Tunas Harapan Kindergarten shows a strong relationship with the principles of early childhood education and character education theory. This activity not only builds fine motor skills through the manipulation of natural materials, but also introduces deep religious values, such as gratitude for God's creation. Within the framework of character education theory, this activity is in line with the opinion (Lickona, 1991) which states that character education is a deliberate process to help someone understand, feel, and behave in accordance with ethical values. In line with research on character education management, specifically character education management will shape children's personalities to be responsible, cultured, religious, honest, tolerant, disciplined, creative, independent, curious, love peace, care about the environment, love their country, appreciate achievement and are communicative. (Primary, 2022)

The activity of sticking leaves with a star pattern reflects three aspects of character education, namely: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Through the introduction of the star symbol as a representation of the Almighty God, children gain moral understanding (moral knowing). The sense of gratitude instilled through the teacher's story creates an emotional bond with religious values (moral feeling). (Anbiyaa & Maliki, 2025) Meanwhile, creative actions in maintaining cleanliness, sharing tools, and protecting the environment are forms of implementing moral values in action (moral action).

This study supports previous findings by Hasanah et al (2021), which showed that nature-based activities can be an effective medium in instilling religious values in early childhood. In their study, nature-based activities such as planting plants were also shown to help children understand the relationship between humans, nature, and God. This strengthens the argument that nature-based activities not only support skill development but also shape a more holistic religious character in early childhood.

From the perspective of creativity theory, this collage activity is also relevant to the opinion (Torrance, 1966) about the importance of giving children the freedom to explore with materials and ideas. Choosing leaves of different shapes and colors and sticking them in a star pattern gives children the opportunity to develop creative thinking. This is consistent with research conducted by (Nugraha, A., 2020). Found that exploration-based art activities can increase creativity in early childhood.

In terms of implementing the Independent Curriculum, this activity supports the dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile, especially in terms of religiousness, mutual cooperation, and love for the environment. The activity of sticking leaves with friends not only builds cooperation but also instills the value of love for the environment as a form of gratitude for God's creation. This result is in line with the research of Damayanti et al

(2022), which states that the Independent Curriculum provides space for the integration of Pancasila values in learning, especially for early childhood.

However, there are some challenges that need to be considered. One of them is the limited time to explore the meaning of symbols for children. Some children have difficulty understanding the relationship between the star symbol and God. This refers to the theory of cognitive development (Piaget, 1964) which states that early childhood is in the preoperational stage, where symbolic understanding is still developing. To overcome this, concrete approaches such as the use of stories, visualizations, or drama can be more effective solutions in strengthening their understanding.

Conclusion

This study shows that the application of natural material collage art in Tunas Harapan Kindergarten is not only successful in teaching religious values, but also makes a significant contribution to the development of early childhood character. Through this activity, children not only learn about the symbols of the Almighty God, but also internalize values such as gratitude, cooperation, and love for the environment. This collage activity is in line with the principles of character education that emphasize the importance of understanding, feelings, and moral actions, and supports the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum which integrates Pancasila values in learning.

From the results of the study, it is seen that although there are challenges in symbolic understanding among children, creative approaches involving direct experience and exploration of natural materials can increase their engagement and understanding. Therefore, it is hoped that similar activities can be further expanded and integrated into the early childhood education curriculum in various institutions, with an emphasis on the use of more concrete and fun methods.

Prospects for developing the results of this study include further exploration of various other art techniques that can be used for character education, as well as the development of more comprehensive learning modules. Further research can also explore the long-term impact of art-based activities on children's character development, as well as how parents and the surrounding environment can play a role in supporting this process. Thus, it is hoped that religious character education can be an integral part of early childhood learning, which not only forms individuals with good character, but also creates a generation that cares more about the environment and others.

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