Crystallizing Religious Character in Early Childhood: An Analysis of the Teacher's Method

Ali Iskandar Zulkarnain1✉, Ajahari2, Abdul Azis3, Saudah4
Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini, IAIN Palangka Raya(1,4)
Pendidikan Profesi Guru, IAIN Palangka Raya(2)
Pendidikan Agama Islam, IAIN Palangka Raya(3)
DOI: 10.31004/obsesi.v7i4.5083

Abstract
Instilling religious character at an early age is very important because it will form a habit and will continue to be maintained until the child becomes an adult. This study aims to describe the method of crystallization of religious characters about faith, worship, and morals in children. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach, with the subject of research as many as 5 teachers of RA Almuslimun Palangka Raya, with data collection techniques using observation, interviews, and documentation, while data analysis used data collection, reduction, data presentation and conclusions. The results of this study show that the crystallization of religious character covers three domains, namely faith, worship, and morals. The crystallization method of the domain of faith uses the method of habituation, singing and storytelling. Meanwhile, the method of the worship domain uses methods of habituation, demonstration, and memorization; While the moral / moral domain uses habituation methods, advice, and example.

Keywords: Teacher Method; religious character; early childhood

Introduction
Children are the greatest gift that God has given, children are also the next generation of the nation and in the hands of children later the pillars of leadership will be handed over (Faliyandra, 2019). For this reason, it is important for parents and teachers to introduce religious education and instill good attitudes and good morals as early as possible in children, because religious education is the most important aspect of life (Sary, 2019). Therefore, every child needs to get a good education so that their potential can develop rapidly, grow into human beings who have a strong personality and have various kinds of abilities and skills that are useful (Ananda, 2017). Because every student has a different personality that needs to be trained, honed, and fostered in the hope that they will show a better attitude (Surawan & Norvia, 2022). Childhood is a very conducive period for the habituation of religious behavior and the formation of good morals, such as the habit of praying five times a day, the habit of reading the holy Qur'an, the habit of praying, the habit of serving both parents and the teacher the habit of respecting those who are more old and love the younger, and so forth (Rifa'i, 2017, p. 4).
Besides that, the learning process in RA is not too demanding on pure academics, but also plays in an educative way. Thus, the behavior of religious values is important to get used to since small children. Therefore the role of parents, (Ali, 2020, p. 138) educators, community leaders also plays an important role in instilling religious habituation so that children become human beings who are useful for their religion. As a form of the totality of internalizing values, education must be able to build the first and foremost environment because the educational environment is intensive, directed, and continuous (Surawan, 2019; Jennah, Mazrur & Rahmaniati, 2023).

Raudhatul Athfal (RA) is the level of early childhood education, where education is expected to help physical and spiritual growth and development so that children have learning readiness in entering further education (Maghfuroh, 2020). RA is an appropriate place to educate and introduce children to Islam, learn the Qur’an and morals which one day will become provisions for children to live their lives in the future, so that children have a strong religious foundation and need to be instilled as early as possible. Thus, RA also has an important role in the formation of a child’s moral personality so that he can fear Allah SWT and be virtuous (Saputra, 2014).

Based on data from RA/TK Palangka Raya teaches a lot of academics to students and psychomotor development (https://palangkakota.bps.go.id/, 2020), while based on the results of observations and interviews on May 9, 2023 at 09.30 am, which the researchers conducted with one teacher and RA Almuslimun teacher said that RA Almuslimun Palangka Raya not only teaches cognitive and psychomotor, but also teaches religious practices such as procedures for reading the Qur’an and tajwid science, inculcating religious values, both those relating to faith, worship, and morals (Nurma & Purnama, 2022). From the background of the problems above, researchers are interested in knowing the method of instilling religious character in children at RA Almuslimun so that it becomes an institution that truly produces superior and quality generations. Therefore, researchers want to conduct research that focuses on the problem of the crystallization process of religious values in early childhood. Because faith, worship and morals are the main foundation in shaping the character of a human being. If a human does not have morals, then his attitude will be bad, and if a human does not have religion, then his purpose in life will not be clear. https://palangkakota.bps.go.id/.

Methodology

This study used a descriptive qualitative method, namely the researcher’s attempt to describe the results of the observations obtained from the data collected and then analyzed and concluded either written or oral data from certain people (Fadhallah, 2020). This study attempts to describe the method of crystallizing religious character. The subjects of this study were 5 teachers, while the informants were children and parents. The setting for the research was at RA Almuslimun Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan and was carried out for 3 months from May-July 2023. Data collection techniques used observation, interviews, and documentation, while data validation techniques used source triangulation. Data analysis techniques use data reduction, presentation, and verification (Arikunto, 2013; Fadli, Mazrur & Surawan, 2021).

Result and Discussion

Crystallization of Religious Character in RA Almuslimun Palangka Raya

In learning, an educator is a facilitator. Educators must be able to empower a variety of learning resources. In lead the learning process, educators need to pay attention principles in Islamic education and always guide it, even as far as possible to realize it together with students (Surawan & Athaillah, 2021). In this discussion the researcher will explain how the method of crystallization of religious character includes three aspects, namely faith, worship, and morals. The values of religious actualization that are applied in RA Almuslimun include
the values of aqidah/faith, worship values and moral values. As expressed by the SA teacher who said that:

There are three values that we actualize at RA Almuslimun, namely moral values, worship values and faith values, these three values are the basis for introducing children to religion and it is very important to teach them from an early age, such as morality is the etiquette of everyday life, especially to parents and teachers, worship, for example prayer (Interview with SA Teacher, Thursday 25 May 2023 08.30 am).

Methods of Crystallization of Religious Characters about Faith

Faith is the foundation of a building in Islam, someone who has strong faith will carry out worship in an orderly manner, have noble morals and behave well. To form a pious human personality, education is needed based on faith. Strong faith will become a stronghold for unwanted values to be internalized (Malisi, Fauziyah & Surawan, 2023). Faith is an important thing to teach children from an early age, faith materials at RA Almuslimun are taught such as introducing the meaning and meaning of the two sentences of the shahadatan, knowing the prophets and apostles of Allah and the pillars of faith and Islam. The methods used in crystallizing the character of faith include:

Habitation Method

The crystallization of the character of faith by teachers at RA Almuslimun uses the habituation method on material introducing the meaning and meaning of the two sentences of creed, children at RA Almuslimun are required to read the two sentences of creed along with their meaning after reading a prayer before learning, the goal is for children to get used to and understand the meaning of saying two shahadah from an early age, because the two shahada sentences are the first pillars of Islam and as proof of one's faith (Nurma & Purnama, 2022). Therefore, get used to children saying the two sentences of creed from an early age so that children are accustomed to and understand the meaning or content of the two sentences of shahada. This is in accordance with the results of interviews with SA teachers.

Yes sir, when we entered the class, we recited a prayer before studying then said the two shahada sentences and their meanings which were guided by the teacher before starting to study. we are obliged to recite two sentences of creed every day until we get used to it (Interview with SA, Thursday 25 May 2023 09.15 am).

According to Surawan & Mazrur (2020: 43) the habituation method is an activity to do the same thing, repeatedly in earnest with the aim of strengthening an association or perfecting a skill to become accustomed. Habituation is an important method, especially at the age of children, because they do not yet understand the benchmarks of what is right and wrong. Not having the burden to carry out tasks and obligations like adults, his attitude still often changes/switches to new things that he likes. As Wina Sanjaya's opinion, that process occurs in a person to bring up positive and negative attitudes, including habituation patterns and modeling (Muslimah, 2015: 59).

Singing Method

Especially for early childhood, this method is often used to develop children's intellect and creativity. Playing and singing is done with joy and will increase happiness and intimacy with the teacher. Increase children's self-confidence and optimism. Rasulullah SAW always conveyed kindness to children happily and jokingly (Muslimah, 2015: 70).

To build children's joy and enthusiasm, RA Almuslimun also teaches songs that can liven up the atmosphere and make the atmosphere cheerful. For example, make a song of about two shahada sentences that get children excited. saying the two sentences of shahada
using singing with enthusiasm and great enthusiasm and trying to keep the children from getting bored saying the two sentences of shahada (Nurma & Purnama, 2022). In addition, the singing method is a teaching method that aims to create a cheerful atmosphere in the classroom. In lessons with the singing method, it means creating learning by using songs that are sung and in accordance with the material taught by Akbar (2020: 69) at RA Almuslimun, the singing method is a method that is often used in delivering lessons, one of which is on the pillars of Islam and the pillars of faith and names. As explained by the AS teacher who said that:

So, so that children don’t feel that they know the prophets and apostles only by telling stories, I alternate them with the songs of 25 prophets and apostles, for example using the songs of 25 prophets Adam, Idris, Nuh, Hud, Soleh, Ibrahim and so on (Interview with AS teacher, Thursday 25 May 2023 08.30 am).

Story Method

Storytelling is one of the methods used to convey various stories that take lessons and benefits to optimize the development of religious and moral values in children (Makhmudah, 2020). To apply the story method, the children at RA Almuslimun, after carrying out the Dhuha prayers in congregation, gather before entering class to listen to Islamic stories such as stories of prophets, stories of the prophet's companions and so on. As ST teacher said that:

Usually, when it comes to getting to know Allah's Apostle, I often tell stories about Allah's apostles and prophets, exemplary and Islamic stories, I use this method when children gather at the mosque after performing the Asr prayer in congregation, I insert Islamic stories that can be learned and benefited. At certain events, such as the graduation of khatam Al-Qur'an or tasyakuran khatam Al-Qur'an, Islamic art performances are held, they appear on stage such as hadrah, pray to the prophet, this activity aims to introduce children to the Prophet and teach them history (Makhmudah, 2020).

Methods of Crystallization of Religious Characters about Worship

The practice of worship taught at RA Almuslimun is still very basic, bearing in mind that they were still children so that religion at this time needs to be taught in a fun way so that without feeling the crystallization process it can be done in a fun way. This is because, a child who has the nature of obtaining religious development in themselves, and they assume that they accept religious teachings without any criticism (Gafur, 2020). This means that the truth they receive in religious teachings is not so deep that it is enough. Another meaning is that children's understanding and ability to learn religious values is not serious, they carry out worship activities that are childish in nature, as was done before in studying religion not too deep. The truth that children receive is not so deep that it is sufficient, and they are quite satisfied with information that sometimes does not make sense. Even so, in some children, some of them have the sharpness of mind to weigh the opinions they receive from other people (Surawan & Mazrur, 2020: 32). The worship material taught by prayer and fasting, and the methods used are as follows:

Demonstration Method

The demonstration method is a very effective teaching method because it helps students to find answers on their own based on true facts. The demonstration in question is a teaching method that shows how the process of something happening (Darmadi, 2017, p. 184; Gafur, 2020). The demonstration method taught at RA Almuslimun on prayer material is by practicing starting from prayer movements, prayer intentions to greetings, by using the
demonstration method in prayer material which aims to make it easy for children to understand material about prayer, what the movements are like, the reading and other things.

In addition to using the habituation method to teach children prayer material, we also use a demonstration method which aims to make it easy for children to understand prayer material, because it is immediately practiced starting from intentions to greetings and prayers after the prayer is finished (Interview with AS teacher, Thursday 25 May 2023 08.30 am).

Memorizing Method
Instilling religious values in children is a must given to children in both formal and non-formal education because this is the main theme in education (Gepu, 2021). Religious coaching in children also needs to be done repeatedly through clear speech and direct action. Like teaching a child to pray, he is first taught about memorizing the prayer readings repeatedly so that the memorization is accompanied by direct acts of prayer, and it will be more interesting if done together with his friends (Sutiana, 2016). After the child memorizes the prayer readings and their movements, then as they get older, experience and knowledge will be explained about the conditions, pillars, and wisdom of prayer. The same goes for other religious training materials (Surawan & Mazrur, 2020, p. 41).

Rote Method
The rote learning model is an approach to hone the intelligence of students, both academic and moral. The human brain basically functions to think, be creative and innovative in increasing one's capacity and supporting positive behavior (Muhammad Zaedi, 2022). The rote method applied to prayer material at RA Almuslimun aims so that children can learn prayer readings and memorize them from an early age because prayer is an obligation commanded by Allah SWT to all Muslims. As the results of interviews with RW teachers who said that:

Yes, we are here using the rote method to teach children the obligatory readings in prayer such as the intention to pray until greeting because here prayer is the main thing that we really emphasize to children (Interview with AS teacher, Thursday 25 May 2023 09.00 am).

Children at RA Almuslimun are required to memorize readings in prayer such as prostration, bowing, sitting between two prostrations and so on. The application of the rote method to teach children prayer readings because in RA there is more emphasis on the obligation to pray. For prayer material, the rote method is suitable for applying at RA Almuslimun because prayer is an obligation that cannot be bargained at anymore. According to Ali, (2020, p. 138) The memorization method can be done by the teacher reading aloud repeatedly, while the students follow what the teacher reads and repeat it regularly. Children at RA Almuslimun are taught using the teacher's rote method to write on the blackboard and then guided by the teacher to read together. The actualization of the value of faith in RA Almuslimun uses the rote method for the pillars of Islam and the pillars of faith which form the basis of Islam. The rote method actualized at RA Almuslimun is one of the efforts to teach children about religion from an early age (Nurjanah, 2019).

Habituation Method
The prayer that is taught is the five obligatory prayers, but since the time of RA does not reach the 5 times prayer time like midday, the children at RA Almuslimun are accustomed by the teacher to carry out the obligation of Dhuha prayer in congregation using the habituation method so that children are accustomed from childhood to perform obligatory prayers (Imelda, 2017). The habituation method is an activity to do the same thing, repeatedly in earnest with the aim of strengthening an association or perfecting a skill to become
accustomed. In other words, the habituation method is a way of educating children by planting the habituation process (Surawan & Mazrur, 2020, p. 43). As explained by the ST teacher said that:

To pray here we emphasize the most because prayer is an obligation and must be accustomed to children from a young age, to find out whether the children's movements or readings are right or wrong I appoint one of their friends to be the priest as an example and for girls it is obligatory to bring a mukena each (Interview with ST teacher, Thursday 25 May 2023 08.50 am).

The Method of Crystallization of Religious Character regarding Morals

Morals and manners have a very important role in human life. It is a concept about the rules of human behavior in establishing life together. It can come from religion or other sources of value that are agreed upon by a group of people (Endah Mustika Pertiwi & Surawan, 2022; Mazrur, Surawan & Malisi, 2023). The process of instilling religious and moral values in children can start early. This period tends to be more effective where children start playing and develop their social aspects in getting along in the outside environment with an understanding that they have started to be able to receive advice from adults (Suherman, 2019). Moral development in the form of forming children's character is also influenced by the school environment (Inawati, 2019). The guidance carried out by RA Almuslimun in developing religious morals includes morals to creators, to parents/teachers, to people and the environment. The methods used by RA Almuslimun Palangka Raya teachers include:

Advice Method

Every parent and everyone who plays the role of being a child's educator wants to nurture a child to become someone who is good, has a strong personality and a commendable mental attitude and morals (Hamid, 2017; Maulaanaa, 2020). Of course, all of this is attempted with formal and non-formal education, every experience gained either through hearing, sight, and the treatment the child receives determines the child's personal development (Surawan & Mazrur, 2020, p. 42).

The actualization of moral values in children's material morals to God by using the method of advice, for example when they commit a mistake, whether it is joking during prayer and so on, children apologize to God when they commit a mistake. The application of the method of advice in matters of morals towards God is good, so that children do not play around and make mistakes that break the rules (Safitri, Kuswanto & Alamsyah, 2019). Children in RA Almuslimun must have good morals, both towards God, fellow creatures, and the universe. As based on the results of interviews with US teachers:

We always guide and give advice to the children when they make mistakes or break the rules at TPA, the punishment is not in the form of physical punishment, but what we prioritize is istigfar (asking for forgiveness from God) if the mistake is fatal, istigfar as much as possible and thank God for such a punishment they stop right away. Why do we ask forgiveness for the punishment, for example, not participating in congregational prayer or the prayer is playing around with the law of asking for forgiveness from God because prayer is not a human command but God's command (Interview with US teacher, Thursday 25 May 2023 08.30 am).

Habituation Method

One of the factors that shape a child's character is what the child sees, because it will become a child's habit accustomed (Zulkarnain, Surawan & Wahidah, 2022). The method of habituation is an activity to do the same thing, repeatedly with the purpose of strengthening an association or perfecting a skill to become accustomed (Darmadi, 2017). In other words, the habituation method is a way of educating children by cultivating a routine habituation process (Surawan & Mazrur, 2020, p. 43). The habituation method applied to the material on Morals
to Allah at RA Almuslimun is by accustoming children to always have morals when praying, which is a habit that must be habituated from childhood, because childhood is the right time to educate and familiarize them (Gafur, 2020). This is reinforced by the results of interviews:

_Saving the morals of the nation’s generation since childhood is our hope, so that when they grow up the children already have a strong moral foundation so they don’t falter easily, our hope is that by habituating we are able to familiarize children with the attitude of akhlakul karimah until they become adults in the sight of Allah SWT_ (Teacher TB interview, Friday 26 May 2023 at 08.50 am).

The children at RA Almuslimun are accustomed by their teachers to have morals towards Allah, for example in praying they must put their hands up which is an adab when praying to Allah SWT. Habits that are applied to moral material to God, for example getting used to praying before and after studying, praying to enter the mosque and other prayers (Nashuddin, 2020). This is so that children from an early age memorize prayers so that they are very useful for others and can teach them to others. This morals to Allah material is very good and suitable to be taught to children from an early age because introducing religion to children is very well done (Yusin, 2022).

In addition, instilling moral values in children at RA Almuslimun using the method of habituating moral material to the child's environment is accustomed to always keeping the environment clean, for example disposing of trash in its place, cleaning the class before learning so that when learning lessons can be understood easily (Nurjayanti, Pudyaningtyas, & Dewi, 2020). The researcher also conducted an interview with one of the children studying at RA Almuslimun who said that he was always taught not to litter, to keep the environment clean to avoid disease. Researchers also saw that RA’s environment was clean and there was no trash scattered around (Batubara, 2019).

**Exemplary Method**

The behavior displayed by parents or education greatly determines the merits of a child's behavior. If parents or educators speak politely, look simple, and are able to display moral behavior that is in accordance with the teachings of their religion, then children will also show good moral behavior and religious life by imitating their parents or educators (Surawan & Mazrur, 2020). The behavior displayed by parents or educators greatly determines the merits of a child's behavior. If parents or educators speak politely, look simple, and are able to display moral behavior in accordance with their religious teachings, children will also show good moral behavior and religious life by imitating their parents or educators (Ulfa, 2014; Gafur, 2020). The children at RA Almuslimun will imitate what they see and they will imitate what they see (Surawan & Mazrur, 2020).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Religious character</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Faith/Aqidah</td>
<td>Habituation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tell a story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>Demonstration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Moral</td>
<td>Habituation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moral advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exemplary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Method Religious Character
The children at RA Almuslimun will imitate what they see and they will imitate what they see. For example, parents or educators are polite to those who are older, then children will imitate what parents and educators do. Given the imitative nature of children's religion, giving real examples from parents, teachers, and the community around them is very important (Buseri, 1999). For this reason, in the coaching process, the behavior of parents and teachers must really be emulated by children both orally and in action (Surawan & Mazrur, 2020). Therefore, in the current era as a teacher, it is necessary to introduce the belief that Islam is a moderate, full religion tolerance, respect each other regularly believe in the truth of the beliefs of each religion. That way the examples done by the teacher will have a long-term impact on student beliefs (Anshari, Surawan, Adi & Azmy, 2021). So, it can be concluded that the method used by RA Almuslimun Palangka Raya is table 1.

Conclusion
Instilling religious character in children needs to be done early, because if children are accustomed to growing in a good religious environment it will help their development in a positive direction. The method of crystallization of religious character carried out by RA Almuslimun is divided into three domains, namely faith, worship, and morals. The method of crystallization of the religious character of the faith domain uses habituation methods, singing and storytelling. While the worship domain method uses demonstration, memorization, and habituation methods. Meanwhile, the moral domain method uses advice, habituation, and exemplary methods.

Acknowledgement
The researcher expresses his deepest gratitude to the Head of RA and the teachers and all RA Almuslimun students. In addition, we also thank all parties who have helped this research to completion.

References
Crystallizing Religious Character in Early Childhood: An Analysis of the Teacher's Method

DOI: 10.31004/obsesi.v7i4.5083

Islamic Education (JQAIE), 1(2), 103-111. https://doi.org/10.47945/jqaie.v1i2.431


Di Tk Harapan Bunda Woyla Barat. Yaa Bunaya: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini 6(1). DOI: https://doi.org/10.24853/yby.v6i1.11531


