The Effectiveness of Character Education Based on Religion and Culture: Case Study in Vocational High Schools

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Abstract. The study of Aqidah has been found to be of great importance in the education of students. The scope of Aqidah that allows students to form noble morals will result in them becoming qualified humans in all aspects of life. From the perspective of Aqidah, which plays a role in the formation of human morals, it can be said that humans can avoid despicable morals as a manifestation of the teachings of Islamic Aqidah. The morals derived from the Qur'an and hadith serve as the foundation for the development of spiritual values, which in turn produce quality generations. Aqidah and morals are inextricably linked; noble morals serve as a reflection of a person's personality and can elevate one's status. Moral education can be considered a form of moral education within the context of Islamic education. The objective of this study is to examine the learning of moral creed among students at XYZ School, and to assess the efficacy of this learning in fostering the formation of religious character. The study employs a multi-methodological approach, including observational techniques, in-depth interviews, and the analysis of documentary materials. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of moral creed learning at XYZ School has a significant impact on fostering the realization of student morals. The cultivation of character education is a value that should be embraced as a foundation of nationhood, as it serves as a cornerstone for Indonesian children to cultivate the requisite qualities to thrive as citizens of a nation, in alignment with the character values that are reflective of the nation's cultural heritage.. It is a highly effective approach that enables students to learn how to have morals towards themselves, to parents, to fellow friends, and to the wider community, which can be applied in everyday life.

Keywords: religion, character, culture, education

I. INTRODUCTION

The position of faith and morals is of great importance in this life, particularly for a Muslim. The core of the purpose of human life is the akidah and ahlak. A person with a good creed and morals will experience peace both physically and mentally. Conversely, a lack of creed and morals will result in a moral crisis within the individual. The moral crisis experienced by many countries today and in the past is not exclusive to the uneducated, but also affects student groups.

Indeed, human beings are created by God with minds that can be influenced by changing circumstances. Therefore, to avoid this, it is necessary to instill a sense of faith or religious faith, which is the basis and principal of religion, and akhlaq, which examines the attitude of life, or the personality of human life, to regulate human relations with God and human relations with other humans.

The media, including social media, provides evidence of the moral decline in society, particularly among students. This indicates that the Indonesian education system has not succeeded in fostering the development of morally upright individuals.

The term "creed" is defined as a belief that is free from doubt, where the heart justifies it, thus providing peace of mind. According to Kasmali (2015), akidah is defined as a belief in God Almighty. Islam is the religion of Allah revealed to the Prophet Muhammad SAW, which is a religion based on faith and charity. Akidah is the principal upon which the sharia stands. The belief includes good belief, which is also known as the pillars of faith. This encompasses belief in Allah, the angels, the messenger of Allah, the book he sent down, the Day of Judgment, and Qoda and Qodar.

Akidah is a robust ethical foundation that fosters a self-conscious nature and adherence to noble values and norms. Islam integrates faith and religion, where religion encourages every believer to embody noble morals, which are obligatory.

In discussing the concept of faith, it is also necessary to consider the related issue of morality. According to Suhairi (2016), the term "akhlaq" is used to describe the process of realizing and actualizing one's faith. The term "akhlaq" is derived from the



Arabic language, where it is used in the plural form to refer to various concepts, including "khuluqun," which means character; "al-aadat," which means habit; "al-muruu-ah," which means good civilization; and "ad-diin," which means religion.

Moral and creedal issues are problems that are often encountered in the school, home, and community environments. The influence of morals can be caused by various settings that can lead a student to form negative associations and cause them to deviate from the teachings of Islam. The most learning imparted at school is related to cognitive understanding only. It is therefore imperative that all parents be provided with guidelines to educate their children with good character from an early age. It is imperative that children be provided with guidance and direction through various activities in their family environment. In order for education to be successful, a comprehensive and well-rounded education curriculum is necessary in order to achieve the desired learning objectives. Therefore, the most effective method must be employed in order to achieve effectiveness in learning.

One of the long-term solutions that must be implemented is character education. One solution that should be of concern to all of us is the implementation of character education in educational institutions. This should be done in a conscious, wellprogrammed, planned, systematic, monitored, evaluated, and followed-up manner. The objective of implementing character values can be achieved through such an approach. Schools should serve as a fertile ground for sowing and growing the pillars of character values for future generations. Religious character guides a person to love Allah SWT and to strengthen their sense of faith and piety. Religious character is the primary determinant of an individual's capacity to lead a better life. It can be cultivated through an individual's devotion to Allah SWT and an understanding of the responsibility of one's actions in this world and the hereafter. Consequently, the formation of religious character is of paramount importance for implementation in the realm of education, particularly in schools, with the objective of transforming the behavior of students who exhibit negative or amoral tendencies. To foster positive and virtuous conduct among students, it is imperative to prioritize the cultivation of religious character at educational institutions. Religious character encompasses individuals who embody traits such as love for peace, tolerance, and sincerity. However, a significant challenge persists: despite the imparting of ahlak (Islamic moral values) to all students, a considerable number of them still lack the requisite religious character, exemplified by instances of discourteous conduct towards teachers, physical altercations, and intimidation of peers.

In light of these observations, the researcher is motivated to investigate the efficacy of instilling the creed of ahlak in the religious character formation of students at XYZ School.

II. METHODS

This research is field research, as defined by Sekaran & Bougie (2013), which entails the systematic gathering of data through observation and measurement in order to answer specific research questions and address identified issues. Consequently, an appropriate methodology is required to analyse the subject matter of the research. This entails collecting data from the field, with the objective of obtaining accurate information regarding the effectiveness of learning moral creed and religious character building in XYZ School students.

This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach. Qualitative data, which is presented in verbal form, differs from quantitative data, which is presented in numerical form. Qualitative research, in contrast to other research approaches, is a direct investigation of the resources and researchers involved. Qualitative research is also oriented towards the process rather than the final result or outcome (Sugiyono, 2013).

In order to gather empirical data in a field study, it is imperative to employ appropriate techniques that yield accurate and sufficient information. The researchers in this study utilized the following methodologies: observation. As defined by Merriam-Webster, observation is the act of perceiving with the senses, or the process of watching, studying, and analyzing a subject over time. This method involves prolonged engagement with a subject until a deeper understanding is achieved, after which the researcher can corroborate the information obtained by other means to ensure its accuracy and reliability. The author employs a direct observation method in this study. This entails observing the symptoms or processes that occur in the actual situation in order to obtain data on schools, teachers of moral creed subjects. The objective of this data collection method is to ascertain the effectiveness of moral creed learning in shaping religious character in students.

Interviews are question-and-answer activities in the form of conversations conducted by researchers and respondents related to the object of the problem being discussed. The author employs a guided, free interview, wherein the interviewer presents a set of guidelines, which serve as an outline for the questions to be asked. This method is utilized to obtain information directly from research subjects, including principals, staff, teachers, and students. The data obtained through this method pertains to the effectiveness of learning akidah akhlak in the formation of religious character in students at Madrasah Aliyah Hidayatul Mubtadi'in Bulusari.

Documentation is defined as written material, photographs, or notes related to the object of the study (Lexy J. Moleong, 2013). The author employs a checklist method, which is a list of aspects to be collected. In this case, the researcher only needs to indicate a special mark for each observed symptom. The author employs this methodology to gather data and information from the principal, staff, teachers, and students. This includes data on school activities, such as school profiles, lists of staff, teachers, students, infrastructure, and the effectiveness of moral education in shaping religious character.



Qualitative analysis is an analytical process based on information that is described. Qualitative data can be measured directly. Once the data has been collected, it is then analysed in order to reach the final results and conclusions of the research. In order to perform the analysis, the data must be processed according to the methodology proposed by McDrur.

Meanwhile, according to Seiddel, the data analysis stage is carried out by: 1) Recording, which produces field notes and provides codes so that resources can still be traced; 2) Collecting, sorting, classifying, synthesizing, summarizing, and indexing; 3) Searching and finding patterns and relationships and making general findings.

The process of triangulation, which entails the validation of data through the examination of its reliability, involves the comparison of observation data and interview results, the analysis of public discourse, the observation of situations by researchers, and the correlation of interview results with the content of a related document.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of learning akhlaq in the classroom is designed to facilitate the improvement of a child's morals or character. In this context, the teacher assumes a crucial role in setting a positive example, as exemplified by the teachings of Rasulullah SAW, in which the individual is regarded as having been sent to the world for the purpose of attaining moral perfection. Furthermore, it is imperative to propose learning themes in everyday life, as this will facilitate the students' ability to apply the lessons learned in each lesson.

Based on the principles of effective learning, it is essential to utilize goal-oriented strategies. These strategies must be adjusted to the circumstances that are considered suitable, as not all strategies are suitable for achieving learning objectives. Consequently, prior to the commencement of teaching and learning activities, the teacher initiates the session with a prayer, thereby ensuring that the knowledge imparted and acquired during the lesson is not only useful but also accompanied by the teacher's example, sincerity, patience, and greatness of soul. These efforts are made to emphasise the importance of good morals for a teacher, and that these must be implemented when the teacher conveys the material to students, in order to achieve the maximum benefit from the lesson. This can be achieved by the teacher through an approach, particularly for students who frequently engage in solitary activities and demonstrate a lack of attention to the material presented in class. The strategy employed by the teacher in the subject of akidah akhlak will be readily absorbed when learning is facilitated by providing examples of good morals not only in the classroom but also at home, school, the wider community, and wherever it is.

The teacher's selection of methods for opening lessons with direction and guidance is followed by the use of several methods, including the demonstration method and the advice method. The latter focuses on student behavior to facilitate the assimilation of the examples set forth. This strategy is employed in the implementation of teaching and learning activities with the objective of enabling the teacher to administer group or independent assessments. Additionally, other methods are adjusted to the material being studied.

The formation of students' religious character in the Akidah Akhlak subject at school is carried out in various stages. These include, for example: 1). The use of learning methods; 2). Organising good material; 3). Effective communication; 4). A positive attitude towards student; 5). Giving fair value and evaluating

The research was conducted at XYZ School with the aim of obtaining a comprehensive and accurate picture of the efficacy of learning in the formation of religious character in educational institutions. This chapter analyses the effectiveness of the learning of Akidah Akhlak in XYZ School students. It then analyses the development of religious character and evaluates the impact of learning Akidah Akhlak.

A data analysis of the learning of akidah akhlak on students at XYZ School reveals that the learning objectives have been met. This can be evidenced by the planning that has been done, the methods that have been determined for learning the moral creed, the selection of appropriate materials, and the implementation of the learning activities in accordance with the rules. The sequencing of the material is regular. Before the learning activities begin, the teacher greets the students with a pembuka, followed by prayer. Then, the material is introduced. The material presented is based on topics and sub-materials that are easily accepted by students, allowing them to quickly absorb lessons during the learning process. During learning, the teacher provides direction, demonstrates patience and attention, and provides encouragement and motivation to students to be more enthusiastic in learning. Grades are given according to students' abilities, and the teacher also relates the material to developments that occur, thereby creating a lively and engaging learning atmosphere. The teacher provides opportunities for students to ask questions related to material that is difficult to understand. Additionally, the teacher provides opportunities for discussion related to the material discussed during the learning time. This allows students to develop the ability to express their opinions and to respect each other, as well as to be responsive, intelligent, disciplined, and responsible. The activities of students in the learning environment demonstrate a sense of responsibility and enthusiasm for learning. These students listen carefully to the material presented, take notes from the teacher's explanation, answer questions from the teacher, and convey understanding. They also exhibit religious character at school.

Based on the data presented, the moral creed learning activities at XYZ School have been running smoothly and effectively. The learning method is adjusted to the material, and the objectives are achieved. For instance, the material presented is adjusted to the objectives achieved in terms of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. From a cognitive standpoint, the teacher conveys material related to the subject matter by developing knowledge in students through clear explanations and by linking it



to everyday life, thus facilitating the students' comprehension of the presented lessons. From an affective perspective, the teacher endeavors to instill the values inherent in the material presented, thereby enabling students to respond to and engage with the material. From a psychomotor standpoint, the teacher strives to exemplify the material through its application in everyday life, based on the skills and habits that have been fostered at XYZ School.

Data Analysis on Religious Character Building in XYZ School Students Moral creed education is of great importance in the formation of religious values, which are instilled in students through a process of character development. This process aims to cultivate individuals who embody the values of worship, jihad, amanah and sincerity, exemplary conduct, discipline, and other religious virtues. Various strategies are employed at XYZ School to facilitate the planting of religious characters in students. Educational strategies implemented at XYZ School through both curricular and extracurricular activities are designed to facilitate learning through the use of various materials, exemplary role models, advice, and daily habits, including interactions between teachers and students, students and teachers, and students and students or teachers and teachers. The strategy encompasses several stages, commencing at the basic level and progressing to the middle and upper levels. At the basic level, the strategy is implemented to impart knowledge in accordance with the tenets of education, subsequently instilling positive moral values that can be leveraged for the benefit of good behavior. Subsequently, advice is proffered as a strategy to provide students with direct knowledge about the significance of good values and the identification of those that are detrimental. At the intermediate level, the strategy is implemented through direct action, whereby the teacher provides exemplary examples and familiarizes students with good habits. This enables students to emulate the values exemplified, thereby fostering the development of character and the acquisition of experience and knowledge. At the highest level, the strategy is carried out through an action and panic approach, which has been found to be an effective method for instilling the value of discipline and a sense of responsibility in students through the use of punishment and praise. Respect for teachers, respect for fellow students, care for the feelings of others, and taking responsibility are key values that should be instilled in students. The moral and ethical learning program at XYZ School has been running smoothly and effectively. The learning process has achieved the goals and objectives set by the teacher, namely the formation of a religious student's personality and the subsequent instilling of noble values in students. This is supported by the enthusiasm of the teacher in realizing these noble students. The program also instills in students the importance of education, which is viewed as a form of jihad, a value of worship, a value of trust and sincerity, a value of discipline, and an exemplary value. The success of the learning process is supported by the existence of education personnel, a curriculum, classroom management, facilities and infrastructure, and the management of other special fields. These factors demonstrate the reality of the expected results.

Based on the data presented above, it can be concluded that the implementation of learning and the objectives set by the teacher have been achieved. This is evidenced by the success of student learning and the application of akhlakul karimah in everyday life at XYZ School. This can be seen from the achievement of learning objectives. Students are able to form a moral relationship with Allah. This can be observed in their punctuality in performing zuhur prayers in congregation at the Madarasah, which instills an attitude of patience and piety towards Allah and an attitude of discipline in worship.

Students are able to form a moral relationship with themselves. This can be observed in students' displays of honesty, humility, politeness, obedience to parents and teachers, a sense of trust, jihad, discipline, and a positive example. Able to form students who have morals with the environment.

This is evidenced by students' displays of mutual respect, respect for teachers, respect for fellow friends, consideration for the feelings of others, and responsibility. The author posits that the implementation of moral and religious education at XYZ School has a profound impact on the development of students' moral values. It fosters the growth of students' moral compass, enabling them to cultivate positive values such as respect for God, self-respect, respect for parents, and respect for the wider community. These values can be applied in everyday life, contributing to the formation of well-rounded individuals.

Culture is one of the educational factors that influence human character, along with religion. According to the views of experts, including Tilaar (1999) in Rakhmat (2013), culture cannot be separated from the realm of education. In fact, culture can be considered the foundation or basis of education. Therefore, the culture that serves as the foundation of education must be national in nature. In this context, the culture in question is a clearly defined culture, namely the culture that is part of the Indonesian national community. Education, on the other hand, has a direction in realizing the needs of the educational goals in order to elevate human dignity. Furthermore, education also provides solutions and answers to create a culture based on the needs of society, in accordance with the values and systems that apply. Education without cultural values is meaningless, as is the case with clapping. Education without a value orientation is impossible. Consequently, cultural values must be incorporated into the educational process. In other words, education must be based on the values of a culture.

In culture-based character education, culture is of paramount importance because it must be passed down and even learned by the younger generation. Otherwise, cultural values will be lost. Consequently, the objective of education as a cultural mission is to facilitate the transmission of cultural heritage, assist individuals in the selection of social roles, educate them in the performance of these roles, and integrate their self-identity into a broader cultural context. Furthermore, it must serve as a source of social innovation.

Article 3 of the Law elucidates that national education functions to cultivate skills for the education of the community, the formation of character and civilization, and the development of the potential to become a noble, healthy, knowledgeable, capable,



creative, independent, democratic, and responsible citizen. This serves to remind us that national education is a planned effort to construct a virtuous Indonesian culture and character.

The relationship between culture and education is profound. Culture can be preserved and developed through the transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next, facilitated by an educational system. Furthermore, culture-based education is a movement that aims to raise public awareness of lifelong learning in the face of the ever-changing and challenging circumstances of life.

At XYZ School, the development of students' character is based on religion and culture in accordance with the nation's character. This approach is seen as an effective solution to various societal issues. In particular, the Indonesian society, with its diverse cultural heritage, exemplifies the concept of unity in diversity. The concept of multiplicity can be understood as a contradiction or gap, indicating a dual situation. This is exemplified by the existence of different subgroups of society and their cultures, which cannot be grouped together. In contrast, heterogeneity is the opposite of homogeneity and describes the nature of inequality or differences in its elements. History shows that every tribe and ethnicity has its own local wisdom.

The combination of religious and cultural characters instilled in children, especially students, can form characteristics that are in accordance with the nation's culture.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of the moral creed curriculum at XYZ School has been progressing well. This can be evidenced by the establishment of structured learning objectives, the determination of effective moral creed learning methods, the selection of appropriate educational materials, and the implementation of these methods through the consistent sequencing of material. The learning activities associated with the moral creed curriculum at XYZ School have been conducted in a systematic and effective manner, with the learning method being tailored to the specific material and objectives being met. For instance, the material presented is adjusted to the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor objectives achieved. The formation of religious character in students at XYZ School is of great importance. Religious values are instilled in students through a process that aims to shape their personal character, with the goal of fostering individuals who embody the ideals of insan kamil, or "complete humanity." This is achieved through the instilling of values such as worship, jihad, amanah and sincerity, exemplary behavior, discipline, and various other strategies. Educational strategies are implemented at XYZ School through both curricular and extracurricular activities, with a particular focus on the learning materials, exemplary behavior, advice, and daily habits of the students, as well as the interactions between the teachers and the students, the students and their fellow students, and the teachers and their colleagues. The efficacy of the akidah akhlak curriculum in fostering character development among students at XYZ School has been consistently positive. The learning process has consistently achieved the goals and objectives set by the teacher, namely the formation of a religious student's personality, which is then supported by the teacher's enthusiasm in realizing students with noble character. The teacher's enthusiasm in fostering noble character in students, instilling the value of education as a form of jihad, worship, trust, sincerity, discipline, and exemplary behavior, has been instrumental in achieving these outcomes. The success of the Kemidian approach is contingent upon the existence of qualified educators, an appropriate curriculum, effective classroom management, adequate facilities and infrastructure, and the effective management of other special fields. The implementation of moral and akidah learning at XYZ School has a significant impact on the development of students' moral character, and the programme is wellmanaged and effective. Students are able to learn how to have morals towards God, themselves, parents, friends, and the wider community, which can be applied in everyday life.

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