

INTERNALIZATION OF RELIGIOUS VALUES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

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INFO ARTIKEL	ABSTRAK
Diterima 27 November 2022 Direvisi 8 Desember 2022 Disetujui 14 Desember 2022 Kata kunci: Early Childhood, Internalization of Religious Values, Teacher Strategies.	Internalization of religious values is one of the efforts that can be made to build the next generation of the nation who is not only intelligent but also has a noble character. This study aims to analyze the strategies applied by teachers in an effort to internalize religious values in early childhood. This research is a descriptive qualitative research. Data was collected by using interview, observation, and documentation techniques. Respondents in this study consisted of principals, teachers, and representatives of parents of early childhood. The internalization strategy is applied by telling stories, singing, doing yoga, praying, visiting places of worship or religious tourism, setting an example, and habituation through routine activities. The strategies implemented have succeeded in facilitating the religious development which can be seen from children who have been able to know their religion and God, are accustomed to praying and worship according to their religion, understand noble behavior, distinguish good and bad behavior, recognize rituals and religious holidays, as well as respecting the religions of others.

Introduction

Many people complain about the fading of religious values among Indonesian people today, including in the age group of children. This is based on the number of children who no longer prioritize politeness in behavior, do not greet others and older people, are not tolerant of other people, lack understanding related religious holidays, are not used to praying before starting activities, not maintaining the cleanliness and sanctity of temples or holy places, up to violating one's own obligations and the rights of others.

One of the tangible manifestations of the waning implementation of religious values in children is the rampant cases of bullying among students. Reports in the mass media stated that bullying behavior among students even claimed lives. The Indonesian Child Protection Commission stated that throughout 2019 there were 153 complaints of physical and psychological violence against students, of which 39% of cases occurred at the elementary school level, 22% at the junior high

school level or equivalent, and 39% occurred at the senior high school level or equivalent.

The forms of bullying behavior among students can be grouped into four: 1) physical bullying such as pushing, punching and hitting, tripping, and grabbing; 2) verbal bullying such as giving unpleasant nicknames, insulting, sarcastic, threatening, and spreading gossip; 3) social bullying such as ostracizing, ignoring, bullying, and slandering; 4) bullying in cyberspace such as making fun of on social media, changing photos inappropriately, and sending messages of terror (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2017a).

The rise of various forms of bullying is a reflection of the lack of religious education among students. Bullying behavior will not appear if students have been equipped with the knowledge and ability to practice and internalize religious values. According to the developmental psychology approach, early age is the most appropriate period for internalizing the basics of religious values in

individuals (Abdurrahman, 2019). Early childhood tends to be faster in understanding and imitating a behavior, so that the process of habituation of behavior according to religious values will be easier to do at this age (Ekaningtyas et al., 2022).

Children who are accustomed to behaving in accordance with religious values from an early age have a greater possibility of being able to apply these habits continuously so that they remain a character in the future, because the development of children at an early age is related to their development in the childhood phase, and the developmental phase of childhood is related to its development in the adolescent phase, and so on. The linkages between these developmental phases underlie the importance of early childhood because this period is a golden age period for all aspects of individual development, that form the basis of individual development and will affect the individual's ability to fulfill developmental tasks in the next phase (Wong, 2008).

Previous research concluded that providing religious education to early childhood is not an easy thing to do. Therefore, parents and teachers must always improve their insight, understanding, and skills related to early childhood religious development (Ananda, 2017). There are several ways that can be done to internalize religious values, such as through routine, integrated, and special activities. Routine activities in the form of stimulation of religious values are carried out regularly and well planned, such as greeting, praying before and after eating, praying before studying, and praying daily according to their own religion. Integrated activities refer to religious stimulation activities by incorporating religious values in every activity in early childhood education. Special activities are activities that in their implementation require special time and planning such as visiting places of worship or religious holy places (Ifitah, 2020).

The internalization of religious values in early childhood ideally should not be carried out based on the whims of parents and teachers alone, but must refer to the developmental needs and potential of early childhood. The development of the religious aspect of one child may be different from another child, so the

stimulation strategy required is also different. Parents and teachers need to understand the stages of early childhood religious development so that they can detect the developmental achievements of each child and can then develop strategies to stimulate them according to the needs of each child. This is what underlies researchers to conduct research related to strategies for internalizing religious values in early childhood.

Methods

This research is a qualitative descriptive study with a heuristic approach. Qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words and observed behavior from people (Moleong, 2017). Qualitative research examines participant perspectives with multiple strategies, interactive strategies such as direct observation, participatory observation, in-depth interviews, documents, complementary techniques such as photos, recordings, and others (Sukmadinata, 2016).

This research was conducted at Kumar Asih Kindergarten, Mataram City, West Nusa Tenggara Barat, Indonesia. Respondents in this study consisted of the principal, six teachers, and four representatives of parents or guardians from each class. Data collection is done by interview, observation, and extracting documents. Interviews in this study are semi-structured, with non-participant observation. The documentation technique is done by collecting data through written records such as archives or early childhood development reports owned by the teachers, literature books, journal articles or other scientific papers, population statistics data, and other relevant references. Data analysis techniques include data classification, data reduction, and data interpretation. Checking the validity of the data is done by using triangulation of methods, triangulation of data sources, and triangulation of data collectors.

Results and Discussion

The Big Indonesian Dictionary defines religion as a teaching or system that regulates faith or belief and worship to God Almighty as well as rules relating to the relationship between humans and their environment (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2008). The word internalization interpreted as appreciation, including appreciation of a teaching, doctrine, or value so that it is a belief and awareness of the truth of a doctrine or value that is manifested in attitudes and behavior (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2008).

Internalization has the aim of inserting new values or strengthening the values already embedded in each individual or group. The internalized values can be in the form of national values, morals, culture, religion, and objective values that are believed to be good for a group on the basis of empirical evidence.

Early childhood according to the law of the Republic of Indonesia number 20 of 2003 concerning the national education system is a child aged 0-6 years (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2017b). The internalization of religious values in early childhood in this study is interpreted as an effort to incorporate and/or strengthen religious values in children aged 0-6 years to manifest in the attitudes and behavior of children everyday. This can be seen from children's understanding of good and bad behavior, children's habits of good behavior, children's habits to pray before and after activities, and children's habits to say and return greetings.

Standards for early childhood education in Indonesia describe the level of achievement of the development of religious values and morals of early childhood as follows (Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2014):

Table 1. Level of Achievement of Religious and Moral Development

No.	Age (Year)	Level of Achievement
1	2-<3	1. Imitate the movement of praying.

		2. Imitating short prayers
		3. Understand when to say hello, thank you, sorry, and so on.
2	3-<4	1. Understanding the meaning of opposite behavior although if has not always been implemented (examples: good and bad, right and wrong, polite and impolite).
		2. Understanding the meaning of love and compassion for God's creation.
3	4-<5	1. Knowing God through his religion.
		2. Imitate the movement of worship.
		3. Pray before and after doing something.
		4. Recognizing good/polite and bad behavior.
		5. Get used to behaving well.
		6. Say and return greetings.
4	5-<6	1. Know their religion.
		2. Get used to worship.
		3. Understanding noble behavior (honest, helpful, polite, respectful, and so on).
		4. Distinguishing good and bad behavior.
		5. Get to know religious rituals and holidays.
		6. Respect other people's religions.

This study aims to analyze the strategies (techniques and procedures) of early childhood education teachers in internalizing religious values in early childhood, the description of the results of internalization so far, as well as the obstacles faced during the internalization process and alternative solutions applied.

A. Techniques for Internalizing Religious Values in Early Childhood.

The techniques used in internalizing religious values in early childhood are quite diverse, which is intended so that children

will not get bored, remain interested, and actively involved in the process of playing while learning so that the goals of internalization can be achieved.

Internalization techniques applied by early childhood education teachers include: storytelling, singing, doing yoga, visits to places of worship or religious tours, prayer and ritual practices, setting examples, habituation through routine activities, and appreciate the achievements of children's development. The implementation of these internalization techniques begins with teacher laying the basis or foundation for the internalization process.

The basis for the internalization process needs to be given so that early childhood is interested in being actively involved and working independently to internalize religious values. The selection of this techniques is based on the results of previous analyzes of the conditions and needs of children.

B. Procedures.

The right techniques will be beneficial if it supported by proper implementation procedures. Procedures are steps that are carried out in every activity, in every session, on every day. Procedures applied to one technique may be the same or different from procedures applied to other techniques. The procedure for internalizing religious values in early childhood applied in this study can be described as follows:



Figure 1. Procedures for Internalizing Religious Values in Early Childhood

The description of the procedures for internalizing religious values in early childhood is as follows:

1. Analysis.

The analysis meant here is the analysis of the achievement of early childhood development. The analysis was conducted to determine the current condition and potential condition of early childhood in all aspects of its development. This is done by collecting information related to early childhood from various sources, in order to obtain a clear and complete picture of the conditions and achievements of early childhood development, including the factors that influence it.

2. Mapping.

Mapping here refers to compiling the internalization needs of early childhood. The results of the analysis of achievements and developmental conditions are then used to map the needs and objectives of internalizing religious values in early childhood. Mapping of internalization needs is carried out by referring to theories or guidelines for achieving early childhood development.

Individual early childhood achievements are assessed using general-scale achievement guidelines so that the internalization needs of children can be mapped. This is done to ensure that the internalization efforts carried out are in accordance with the conditions and development needs of the child, neither less nor more.

3. Composing

Composing here refers to the arrangement of an early childhood internalization strategy. Early childhood education teachers develop stimulation strategies with reference to the conditions and needs of children to facilitate early childhood in the process of fulfilling developmental tasks according to their age. Stimulation strategies are also adapted to school conditions and discussed with school

principals and other teachers to make it more optimal.

4. Implementation.

Implementation here refers to the application of procedures in the learning process which consists of four stages: the basis of the learning environment, the basis before learning, the basis while learning, and the basis after learning.

At the stage of laying the foundation for the learning environment, early childhood education teachers prepare infrastructure and create a conducive environment for the process of internalizing religious values in early childhood. In laying the groundwork before learning, the teacher explains to early childhood about the activities to be carried out and what the teachers has prepared for these activities. Early childhood is then given independent tasks.

At the stage of laying the groundwork while learning, the teacher observes early childhood while learning and provides motivation so that they remain actively involved and able to solve problems in the learning and internalization process. After playing, teachers and early childhood do reflection and relaxation. Here, early childhood is asked to retell what they have made and learned during the internalization process.

5. Evaluation.

Evaluation here is an assessment of the implementation of the internalization strategy. This is done to find out whether the procedures carried out have achieved the desired goals and are in accordance with what was planned. Evaluation is carried out to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the procedures applied, as a basis for future improvements. Evaluation is carried out both periodically and incidentally as needed.

C. Results.

The results of data analysis illustrate that the internalization process is considered successful where early childhood experiences positive development in terms of knowledge, skills, and behavior. Children aged 3-4 years who were still shy are now willing to be actively involved in activities. They are used to starting and ending activities by praying, are used to greeting and respecting teachers.

Children in this age group are also used to saying please, thank you, and sorry in their activities with friends, teachers, and parents at home. They already know the religion they profess, and know that we must love each other as religious people, should not hurt and upset other people, animals, or plants.

Children in Kindergarten class A (aged 4-5 years) dan class B (aged 5-6 years) also showed good religious and moral development for their age. The children already know and are able to tell about God their religion. They are also used to doing routine worship with appropriate worship movements. Children are also used to praying before and after studying, praying before eating, and praying together on religious holidays. Children have been introduced to religious rituals since the beginning of joining the school and on certain occasions religious tours are held with the participation of parents.

Children aged 4-6 years have also been able to distinguish between good and bad deeds, and it can be seen in their daily activities at school that they are getting used to being polite and implementing commendable behaviors. The children seem to be able and accustomed to saying "help, please" when asking for help, "thank you" when receiving help, and sorry when accidentally dropping other people's belongings.

Children have also been able to recognize the good and bad values of a story or song delivered by the teacher. The teachings of tolerance have also been

understood by the children quite well, where the children have been able to tell the existence of various religions in Indonesia and the forms of tolerance behavior that they can do to the followers of other religions.

D. Obstacles.

Constraints to internalization of religious values in early childhood include differences in parenting patterns between school and home, differences in age and child development achievements, as well as children limited focus. The efforts made by early childhood education teachers to overcome internalization obstacles include the application of various internalization strategies and according to children's needs so that children remain actively and voluntarily involved during the internalization process.

Efforts to overcome obstacles related to parenting are carried out by establishing routine and effective communication with parents, holding parenting classes, and giving independent assignments to children involving parents so that parents know their child's development and know what to do to facilitate their growth and development.

E. Discussion

The results of data analysis illustrate that in general, early childhood education teachers have a good understanding of the stages of early childhood religious development and strategies that can be used to stimulate them. Early childhood education teachers have understood that early childhood has several developmental tasks of religious and moral aspects that need to be mastered at a certain age to become the basis for mastering further developmental tasks.

Early childhood education teachers also understand that to be able to master these developmental tasks, early childhood must be given stimulation so that they will be able to master these developmental tasks independently. Early childhood education teachers have also realized that mastery of developmental tasks in

early childhood is influenced by various factors and is different for each child, so the strategies applied must be adapted to the needs and developmental achievements of each child.

The application of various internalization techniques is in line with the results of previous research which states that several stimulation techniques that can be applied in increasing the achievement of aspects of religious and moral development in children aged five years are storytelling (Anggraini, 2015), reminding worship (Suryana, 2019), giving or setting an example (Widya & Munisa, 2019), and giving rewards (Yusuf T et al., 2020).

The application of these various internalization techniques is in accordance with theory of developmental psychology which states that every early childhood is unique and therefore requires different internalization techniques. Certain techniques may work in one early childhood, but may not be effective when applied to another child (Hurlock, 2002). In addition, various and non-monotonous internalization techniques will help young children stay interested and enthusiastic about participating in the activities provided so that the classroom atmosphere will be more fun and children will still feel comfortable.

The procedure applied in this study also in accordance with the theory of developmental psychology which believes that every child is unique so that aspects of individual differences must be considered in the internalization process. So the procedure that begins with collecting information and analyzing the condition and needs of the child is the right step. This is often not done in the education sector, where strategies are usually designed with the assumption that children have reached a certain age so that they should have mastered certain skills, without collecting information related to the actual conditions and needs of children.

The achievement of religious aspect development of early childhood in this study have met the level of achievement of religious and moral values development of early childhood set out in the standards of early childhood education in Indonesia. This development achievement is also in line with the results of previous research which stated that children aged five years can reach the level of religious development for their age by showing that they know their religion, do worship, know their religious holidays, and respect other people's religions (Zulkifli, 2019).

Internalization efforts carried out in schools will not give maximum results if they are not followed up with a similar parenting pattern at home. If the child does not receive the same stimulation at home, or worse, home becomes a dangerous environment for children's growth and development, then internalization efforts at school will not have an optimal impact. This is also accordance to previous research which stated that children's character education should start from within the family, because family is the smallest unit of society and it will depend on parents to teach children from early age (Hasanah & Deiniatur, 2018).

Differences in age and developmental achievement of children cause their stimulation needs are also different, so that different internalization strategies are needed. Children's focus during learning experiences a lot of distraction due to the influence of the environment and the presence of their friends, so early childhood education teachers need to implement strategies that can attract attention and keep children's focus.

This is in accordance with the results of previous research which stated that it is important how teachers take a role in implementing the best strategies in order to stimulate the interests, needs, and potentials of each child (Farisia, 2020; Putri & Putra, 2019). The results of this study are also in

accordance with previous research which states that children must be guided and accustomed to being obedient, virtuous, and disciplined as obedient servants of God (Abdurrahman, 2019).

Conclusion

Internalization of religious values in early childhood is important to do as a preventive and curative effort for the proliferation of extreme ideals that can lead to intolerance, radicalism, and acts of terrorism. Internalization of religious values in early childhood requires a special strategy that is in accordance with the achievements and development needs of early childhood. The techniques used include: storytelling, singing, yoga, prayer and prayer practices, religious tourism, exemplary, and habituation or routine activities. The procedures carried out consist of analyzing the achievements of early childhood development; mapping stimulation needs; develop a stimulation strategy; and the implementation of strategies in learning which include environmental basis, basis before learning, basis during playing, and basis after playing; as well as regular and periodic evaluations to determine the effectiveness of the internalization strategy. The strategy implemented has proven to be successful in internalizing religious values in early childhood which can be seen from the increase in children's knowledge, skills, and attitudes in applying the values of their religious teachings.

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