



## The Role of Teachers in Instilling Religious and Moral Values in 5-6 Year Old Children at Mukti Asih Kindergarten

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### Abstract

This study aims to describe the role of teachers in instilling Religious and moral values in children aged 5-6 years at Mukti Asih Kindergarten. Religious and moral values are very important to be formed from an early age, because at this time children are in the developmental phase. golden age of character development. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. The subjects in this study were two group B teachers and 17 children aged 5-6 years. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The results of the study indicate that teachers have a very important role in instilling religious and moral values through habituation activities, role models, storytelling methods, role playing, and providing positive reinforcement. The role of teachers is not only as educators, but also as role models in daily behavior that have a major impact on children's character development. This study contributes to increasing understanding of effective strategies for instilling religious and moral values in early childhood education.

**Keywords:** Role of Teachers, Religious Values, Moral Values, Early Childhood, Character Education

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### INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is a crucial foundation for the development of a child's personality, character, and future behavior (Arini, Mudjito, & Hariyati, 2021). Between the ages of 5 and 6, children enter a golden age of development, crucial for the formation of their values and morals (Siswanto, Zaelansyah, Susanti, & Fransiska, 2019). During this phase, children exhibit a keen sense of curiosity, a strong memory, and a rapid ability to imitate their surroundings (Maftutah, Jannah, & Utama, 2021). Therefore, the values instilled during this period will serve as a foundation that influences their behavior into adulthood (Mulat, Siregar, & Fah, 2022). Instilling religious and moral values from an early age is one of the primary goals of early childhood education, as they serve as a guide for life, foster a noble personality, and guide children in distinguishing between good and bad behavior (Oktarina & Latipah, 2021). Religious values foster faith, devotion to worship, and a harmonious relationship with God, while moral values foster politeness, responsibility, empathy, and discipline in social life (Jaenullah, Ferdian Utama, 2022).

The teacher holds role central in the planting process religious and moral values in schools. As figures who interact directly with children every day, teachers are not only on duty deliver learning materials, but also become real role models show positive behavior (Kusumastuti, 2020). The teacher's behavior, speech, and attitude will naturally imitated by children, so teachers need to demonstrate consistency in guiding and providing good examples (Utama,

Irhamudin, & Linawati, 2022). This role is realized through learning strategies that integrate planting values in daily activities, such as habituation positive behavior, giving role models, storytelling methods with moral messages, role playing to train empathy and cooperation, as well as giving positive reinforcement that motivates children to maintain good behavior (Juwita & Yunitasari, 2024). These strategies not only help children understand the concept of religious and moral values, but also make it easier internalization values through direct and repeated experience (Futika Permatasari, 2021).

Conditions at Mukti Asih Kindergarten demonstrate that the process of instilling religious and moral values is carried out in a planned manner through learning activities and routine habituation. Children are accustomed to pray before and after activities, say greetings, help friends, follow class rules, and maintain cleanliness and order environment. Teachers play an active role in guiding, reminding, and providing positive reinforcement so that good behavior becomes part of children's habits. However, this process also faces challenges, such as differences in family background, level varying parental support, limitations learning facilities, as well as face-to-face time relative face short. These challenges have the potential to impact the level of success internalization value, so strong cooperation is needed between school and family.

This study aims to describe in detail the role of teachers in instilling religious and moral values in 5-6 year old children at Mukti Asih Kindergarten, identify the strategies used, and explore the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence their success. The results of this study are expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the teaching and learning process. can give contribution to development practice early childhood education, to become reference for teachers to design effective learning strategies, as well provide input to schools and related parties in strengthening partnership between school and parents. With a thorough understanding of the role of teachers in planting religious and moral values, it is hoped formed a generation that has character religious, moral noble, and able to behave according to norms in social life.

Early childhood education programs hold role strategic in the formation individual character from the early stages of life because at this stage the child is in the golden age of cognitive, social, emotional and moral development, where the brain developing very rapidly and children begin to be sensitive to influences environment, so that values, habits and behavior are instilled through role models, habituation, and proper stimulation will become the basis of personality, attitudes and patterns think about their future (Sarinastitin, 2019). At the age of 5-6 years, children are in a phase of rapid cognitive and social development, where moral and religious values begin to be understood and internalized because at this stage the child is able to differentiate good and bad behavior, starting to understand social rules, and copy behavior exemplified by adults around them, so that proper guidance through habituation and role models will help them develop character religious and social consistently. Teachers as figures central in the institution early childhood education programs have a big responsibility in forming the foundations of children's character because teachers not only play a role as a transmitter of learning materials, but also as a role model whose behavior, attitude and speech will... imitated by children, so that positive interactions, habits good behavior, and implementation religious and moral values consistently by teachers help children internalize these values into their daily lives.

## **METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. This approach was chosen Because researchers want to obtain an in-depth and comprehensive picture of the role of teachers in instilling religious and moral values in children aged 5-6 years. The study was conducted at Mukti Asih Kindergarten, located in Sumber Jaya Village, Gedung Aji Baru District. The location was selected purposively, considering that this school consistently implements a character building program. religious and moral values in learning activities and have a sufficient number of children aged 5-6 years to be research subjects. The subjects of this research were two

class teachers namely Mrs. Siti Marpuah and Mrs. Endang who directly teach children aged 5-6 years, in number There were 17 students. Teachers were chosen as the main subjects because they have a role central to the learning and formation process children's character at school. This research also involves children as objects Observations were used to directly observe the implementation of learning strategies used by teachers. Data collection techniques included observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to directly observe teachers' behavior in implementing strategies of habituation, role modeling, storytelling, role-playing, and providing positive reinforcement to children. In-depth interviews were conducted with teachers to gather information related to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of strategies for instilling religious and moral values. Documentation was used to collect supporting data in the form of activity photos, class diaries, and school documents relevant to the implementation of religious and moral values learning (Arias, Arias, & Rodríguez-Medina, 2021).

The data analysis technique used the Miles and Huberman model, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was obtained through triangulation of techniques and sources. The validity of the data in this study was carried out using triangulation techniques to ensure the validity and reliability of the data. Data were obtained from various sources, such as direct classroom observation, interviews with teachers and related parties, and documentation of lesson plans and teaching materials. By comparing data from various sources, the validity of the information can be ensured. The use of three data collection techniques (observation, interviews, and documentation) allows for cross-verification between the results of each method. This helps reduce bias and increase data accuracy. The researcher ensured sufficient time for participants in data collection to understand the context, culture, and patterns existing at Mukti Asih Kindergarten. The data obtained was analyzed and discussed with colleagues or experts to obtain an objective perspective. The researcher validated the findings with key informants, such as teachers or the principal, to ensure the data collected corresponded to actual conditions. By implementing these steps, the data obtained in the study can be ensured to be valid.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that the role of teachers is very important in instilling religious and moral values in early childhood. These roles include :

### ***Habituation Religious and Moral***

The teacher guides children to get used to it say greetings, reading praying, queuing, asking permission, saying thank you, and helping friend. Mrs. Siti Marpuah say :

*make it a habit for the children here every morning pray dhuha and prayer together. We also teach each other respect and speak polite."*



**Figure 1. Interview with Mrs. Siti Marpuah about Supportive Activities Habituation Children's Religious and Moral**



**Figure 2. Dhuha Prayer Practice**

***Teacher's Exemplary Behavior***

Young children are excellent imitators. Teachers serve as role models through gentle speech, honesty, patience, and discipline. According to Ibu Endang:

*"If we're not disciplined and patient, our children will imitate us. So, we try to demonstrate good behavior in every activity."*



**Figure 3. Interview with Mrs. Endang about Teacher Exemplary Behavior**

***Storytelling and Role Playing Method***

Teachers use fairy tales and stories prophet to instill moral values indirectly. For example, the story of the honest Prophet Muhammad SAW used as an example in storytelling activities. Children are also invited to play roles about attitudes of mutual assistance or honesty.

***Positive Reinforcement***

Children who demonstrate good behavior are given praise, stickers stars, or applause. This reinforces expected good behavior and boosts the child's self-confidence.

### ***Collaboration with Parents***

Teachers establish regular communication with parents so that the habit of values in school can be reinforced at home.

The results of the study indicate that religious and moral habits implemented by teachers in early childhood education institutions are carried out through daily routines such as greetings, reciting prayers, queuing, asking permission, and helping friends. Based on an interview with Mrs. Siti Marpuah, children are accustomed to performing the Dhuha prayer and praying together every morning. This finding is in line with Bandura's Social Learning theory which emphasizes the importance of learning through observation and reinforcement. Children imitate the behavior demonstrated by teachers and peers, then internalize these values into habits. This is also supported by Piaget's theory of moral development at the heteronomous stage, where early childhood tends to view rules as absolute provisions from authority, so the habit of praying and praying together is effective in instilling religious values.

The role model of teachers was also an important finding. Based on an interview with Mrs. Endang, teachers strive to demonstrate discipline, patience, and honesty because children will imitate these behaviors. This confirms Bandura's view on modeling, which states that children learn primarily through imitation of significant figures in their environment. This finding also aligns with Vygotsky's theory, which states that children at an early age are in the imitation phase, so the teacher's attitude displayed in daily interactions has a direct influence on children's behavior. From an Islamic educational perspective, these results support the concept of role modeling as one of the main methods in moral education, as reflected in the Prophet's hadith on the importance of noble morals.

Storytelling and role-playing methods have also been found effective in internalizing values. Teachers use stories from the prophets, particularly about the honesty of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and invite children to role-play around themes of mutual assistance and empathy. This practice aligns with Bruner's narrative theory, which explains that children understand the meaning of life through stories. Vygotsky also emphasized that role-playing provides a space for children to practice social values within their zone of proximal development, allowing them to learn not only through words but also through direct experience.

Furthermore, positive reinforcement is a consistently implemented strategy. Teachers provide praise, star stickers, or applause to children who demonstrate good behavior. This finding supports Skinner's behaviorist theory, which emphasizes that behavior that is positively reinforced tends to be repeated. Observations also show that providing reinforcement not only strengthens the consistency of good behavior but also increases children's self-confidence, in line with Hurlock's view that rewards contribute to the development of self-esteem. Collaboration with parents is a final finding in this study. Teachers maintain regular communication with parents so that the instilling of religious and moral values at school can be continued at home. This aligns with Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, which emphasizes that child development is influenced by interactions between systems, particularly microsystems such as family and school. This finding also aligns with the Islamic concept that places the family as the first madrasah, where parents play a central role in the formation of children's morals, as emphasized in QS. At-Tahrim: 6.

Based on research findings at Mukti Asih Kindergarten, the strategies of habituation, role-modeling, storytelling, role-playing, and positive reinforcement implemented by teachers have been shown to play a significant role in fostering religious and moral behavior in children aged 5-6 years. This improvement is seen in aspects of politeness, honesty, responsibility, and children's ability to distinguish between good and bad behavior. From a relevant theoretical perspective, these results are in line with the views of research by Leli Dea and Agus Setiawan who emphasize the role of teachers as role models, guides, and motivators in character formation in early childhood, and Anwar Zain who emphasizes the importance of integrating religious and moral values in children's daily activities. These findings can also be explained through observational learning and reinforcement theory, where teacher role-modeling facilitates children to imitate positive attitudes and behaviors, while habituation and positive reinforcement form consistent

habits. The storytelling and role-playing methods contribute to the understanding of moral concepts and provide children with opportunities to practice them through concrete experiences, in line with the principles of social constructivism that emphasizes learning through social interaction.

Compared with previous research by Muzahrah and Nessa, which highlighted the importance of habituation, role modeling, and communication with parents, this study provides a novel contribution by revealing that teachers' personal commitment to the values taught and active parental involvement are determining factors for successful internalization of values. Furthermore, obstacles such as differences in family background, limited learning resources, and limited time were identified, which have implications for variation in achievement among children. Overall, previous theories and studies not only validate the strategies used but also help explain the mechanisms of their success and identify relevant supporting and inhibiting factors. This underscores the importance of increasing teacher capacity through training, developing lesson plans that integrate value instillation into daily activities, and strengthening partnerships between schools and parents to ensure the continuity of value instillation both at school and at home.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that teachers at Mukti Asih Kindergarten play a strategic role in instilling religious and moral values in children aged 5-6 years through various learning strategies integrated with daily activities. The strategies implemented include habituation, role-modeling, storytelling, role-playing, and positive reinforcement. Habituating religious and social activities, such as greeting, praying before and after activities, and helping friends, has been shown to consistently shape positive behavioral patterns in children. Teachers' exemplary behavior, both in attitude and speech, serves as a concrete example for children to imitate, while storytelling and role-playing strengthen understanding of moral concepts and provide opportunities for children to practice them through direct experience. Positive reinforcement, such as praise and rewards, encourages children to maintain good behavior. Factors supporting the success of this strategy include teachers' personal commitment to the values taught, a conducive learning environment, and active parental involvement in continuing the habituation at home. However, obstacles such as differences in family background, limited learning resources, and limited time contribute to variations in achievement among children. Overall, the results of this study confirm that the successful instillation of religious and moral values requires a combination of appropriate learning strategies, consistent role models, a supportive environment, and synergy between schools and families.

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