

## TEACHER STRATEGIES IN FORMING EARLY CHILDHOOD MORALS THROUGH HABITS AT UMINDA ISLAMIC KINDERGARTEN IN MAKASSAR CITY

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### ABSTRACT

*This is a qualitative descriptive study that aims to describe teacher strategies in shaping the morals of early childhood through habituation at Umindia Islamic Kindergarten in Makassar City. The research methodology used a qualitative approach with data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, and documentation. The study was conducted in the even semester of the 2022–2023 academic year. The research subjects included class teachers, students aged 5–6 years, and parents as supporting informants. The results show that teacher strategies in shaping children's morals are carried out through habituation through routine activities, role models, programmed activities, providing advice, and the application of educational rewards and punishments. These habits are reflected in children's behavior such as greeting, praying, performing religious duties, being honest, polite, helping others, being responsible, and maintaining personal and environmental hygiene. In general, children's moral development is in the Developing According to Expectations (BSH) category, although ongoing guidance and reinforcement are still needed.*

**Keywords:** Children's Morals, Habituation, Teacher Strategy

### INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is a place for the development of children's aspects where early education will develop potential and provide a solid foundation for the development of children's character so that growth and development will be optimal and in accordance with expectations (Azia et al., 2025). Early childhood education (PAUD) is seen as a golden age for forming the foundation of a child's personality, moral character, and social skills, not just cognitive (Mohebi et al., 2018). Various studies in Indonesia and abroad show that PAUD systematically instills values such as honesty, responsibility, independence, compliance with rules, courtesy, social concern, love of the environment, and nationalism in children (Harun et al., 2020). Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is essentially education organized with the aim of facilitating the growth and development of all aspects of a child's personality and overall development or emphasizing the development of all aspects of a child's personality (Azriyani Mutalib et al., 2023).

Early childhood education can be provided through formal, non-formal, and/or informal education channels. Formal early childhood education (PAUD) takes the form of kindergartens (TK), raudatul athfal (RA), or other equivalent forms. In addition, non-formal early childhood education (PAUD) takes the form

of playgroups (KB), childcare centers (TPA), or other equivalent forms. The management and implementation of PAUD must refer to the Early Childhood Development Achievement Level Standards (STPPA). STPPA is a criterion for the abilities that children have achieved in all aspects of development and growth (Azizah et al., 2024).

One aspect of development that requires special attention in early childhood education is the aspect of religious and moral values, reflected in children's behavior or morals (Karima et al., 2022). Morals are a reflection of a person's behavior, demonstrating good and bad attitudes in everyday life. The formation of morals from an early age is crucial because during this period, children easily accept and imitate behavior observed in their surroundings, especially from teachers and other adults.

In the context of Islamic education, moral development is the primary goal. Good morals will shape children into individuals who are faithful, pious, honest, disciplined, polite, and caring for others. Therefore, moral education needs to be instilled from an early age through various appropriate strategies tailored to the characteristics of young children.

One strategy considered effective in shaping morals in early childhood is habituation. Habituation is an activity carried out repeatedly and consistently until it becomes a habit in a child's daily life (Kamisykatina & Sobarna, 2022). Through habituation, children are trained to practice good behaviors such as greeting, praying before and after activities, being polite to teachers and friends, helping each other, and being disciplined in following rules.

Teachers play a crucial role in shaping the morals of early childhood. They serve not only as instructors but also as mentors, guides, and role models for children. This is in line with Albert Bandura's social learning theory, which states that children learn through observation and modeling of important figures, such as teachers and parents (Yanuardianto, 2019). Therefore, teachers are required to consistently implement habituation strategies and provide positive role models in every learning activity.

Based on initial observations on November 18, 2022, then continued on November 21-22, 2022, conducted at Uminda Islamic Kindergarten, Makassar City for the 5-6 year old group, it was found that this school has instilled morals through habits and role models which are reflected in the good attitudes of students, speaking politely and responding to greetings when the teacher greets them, raising their hands when praying, saying excuse me and sorry when they want to borrow something, and helping friends when they need help. This is reflected during the teaching and learning process or when playing outside the classroom.

Based on the results of interviews with educators at the school, it can be seen that in the application of habituation methods to form the morals of early childhood, the practices carried out include getting used to saying and responding to greetings when arriving and when going home from school, getting used to praying before and after activities, as well as helping each other and being able to work together during learning activities in the classroom, which have not been maximally practiced.

Based on this description, the researcher is interested in examining more deeply the strategies teachers use to shape morals in early childhood through habituation at Umina Islamic Kindergarten in Makassar City. This research is expected to provide a clear picture of the strategies teachers use to shape morals in children through habituation.

In general, strategy is defined as a broad outline of action to achieve predetermined goals. In relation to teaching and learning, strategy can be defined as the general patterns of activities undertaken by teachers and students in implementing teaching and learning activities to achieve predetermined goals (II, 2021). A strategy is a plan or pattern of action systematically developed by educators to achieve educational goals effectively and efficiently, taking into account student characteristics, materials, methods, media, and the learning environment.

Strategies in PAUD learning are approaches and steps used by teachers in managing the learning process for early childhood by paying attention to the developmental characteristics, needs, and potential of children.

Early childhood education teachers play a strategic role in designing and implementing learning that is appropriate to the characteristics of young children. From infancy, children learn a great deal by observing and imitating the actions of adults and other children. The teacher's strategy is the habituation method. This method can encourage and provide students with space for theories that require direct application, making difficult theories easier to grasp through frequent practice (Meltzoff & Marshall, 2018).

The goal of habituation is to form new habits and improve existing ones through commands, role models, experience, and the application of sanctions. Habituation aims to foster positive attitudes and habits that are contextual and aligned with moral norms and values, both religious and cultural (Danuwara & Giyoto, 2024). Habituation is a number of behaviors or responses that have the same effect on the immediate environment.

From the description above, it can be concluded that habituation is behavior that is planned to influence an object, which is carried out by a person intentionally and repeatedly so that it becomes a habit for them. affected object (Nuril Ayni, Risma Nurmaning Azizah, 2022). The method of habituation in children includes various behaviors that need to be instilled from an early age. According to Wahyuni (2024) the behaviors that are habituated include the habituation of politeness as a reflection of attitudes in social life that are seen in daily activities; a helpful attitude as a positive habit that is inherent in children; punctuality or discipline as a form of responsibility in various activities; a humble attitude that makes it easier for children to be accepted in the social environment; independence that is instilled from an early age so that children become independent and brave individuals and are useful in social life; generosity as a habit of sharing with others; and the habit of diligent study so that children have the awareness to continue to increase knowledge and insight from an early age.

According to (Maulida, 2023), the essence of habituation is based on experience and repetition, which play a crucial role in developing good attitudes and habits from an early age, including getting children used to saying the Basmalah before engaging in activities. Habituation strategies are implemented

through routine, spontaneous, exemplary, and programmed activities that support each other. Indaryati (2021) explains that routine activities are carried out daily, spontaneous activities are given when inappropriate behavior is detected, exemplary behavior is demonstrated through teacher examples, while programmed activities are systematically designed within the learning program, such as memorizing surahs and short hadiths.

The following are indicators of the habituation method in (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2014):

1. Get to know the religion he adheres to
2. Performing worship
3. Behave honestly, helpfully, politely, respectfully, sportingly, and so on.
4. Maintain personal and environmental hygiene
5. Know your religious holidays
6. Respect (tolerance) other people's religions.

This habituation strategy aims to instill morals in early childhood. The morals of early childhood are still in the formation stage. Children are not yet able to perfectly distinguish between good and bad, so they are highly dependent on their environment, examples, and the habits provided by adults, particularly teachers and parents.

Noble morals are a sign of perfect faith. The stronger a person's faith, the better their morals, and vice versa. The nobility of human morals extends not only vertically, namely a good relationship with Allah Ta'ala, but also horizontally. You can see how good relationships with other humans and even with other creatures of God, such as animals and plants, are in everyday communication. For the benefit of moral goodness (Riami et al., 2021). Morals are behaviors that emerge from the accumulation of the soul, thoughts, feelings, innate and synthetic habits that create a unified ethical behavior felt in everyday life, forming an inherent moral sense in humans. As a natural characteristic, it allows a person to understand issues of good, bad, useful, and useless (Rahmah, 2021).

Thus, early childhood morality reflects the development of faith, feelings, and habits that begin to form early in life. Good morality is evident in a child's ability to establish harmonious relationships, both with God through a religious attitude, and with others and the surrounding environment through polite, caring, and compassionate behavior. At an early age, children possess natural moral potential, enabling them to recognize and imitate good behavior seen and experienced in everyday life. Through consistent practice, moral values will be ingrained and shape a child's character, such as honesty, responsibility, empathy, and concern for living things and the environment. Therefore, moral education in early childhood is an important part of the process of developing a complete and sustainable personality.

## RESEARCH METHODS

Qualitative descriptive research is a form of qualitative research that aims to describe a phenomenon as it is, using words, not numbers, based on data collected in the field or from documents (Nassaji, 2015). It emphasizes meaning, process, and context from the perspective of the subject/phenomenon being studied (Fadli, 2021).

The qualitative descriptive research method is a research approach used to

understand and describe in depth a social phenomenon based on natural conditions, by placing the researcher as the primary instrument. This research aims to describe the reality, behavior, role, or process experienced by the research subjects holistically and contextually, without using statistical calculations. Data in qualitative descriptive research are collected in the form of words, actions, documents, and meanings through observation techniques, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data analysis is carried out inductively, namely drawing conclusions from specific facts found in the field towards a general understanding, and emphasizing meaning over generalization. This research focuses more on the process than the final result, so the research design is flexible and can develop according to the dynamics of findings in the field, and the research results are presented in the form of descriptive descriptions that reflect the actual conditions from the perspective of the research subjects (Alaslan, 2023).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research data was obtained through interviews and observations conducted during the research on June 6, 2023, at Umina Islamic Kindergarten, Makassar City. This study aims to describe teacher strategies in instilling religious and moral values in early childhood through habituation methods in the 5–6 year old age group at Umina Islamic Kindergarten, Makassar City. Data were obtained through observations and interviews conducted in June 2023 with class teachers and 12 students in group B2.

The research results show that the instillation of religious and moral values at Umina Islamic Kindergarten in Makassar City is carried out through several main strategies, namely programmed activities, role models, providing advice, and implementing rewards and punishments. These strategies are consistently applied in daily learning activities.

### 1. Get to know the religion he adheres to

The research results show that the ability of children aged 5–6 years to understand their religion falls within the BSH (Developing According to Expectations) category. Children are able to recognize and articulate basic religious teachings, such as prayers before and after activities, the pillars of Islam, the pillars of faith, and several short surahs and hadiths. Habitualization through programmed activities, teacher role models, and reinforcement through advice and rewards helps children practice applying religious values in their daily school activities. These findings demonstrate that consistently implemented habituation strategies are effective in helping children understand and understand their religion from an early age.

### 2. Performing worship according to the religion one adheres to

The ability of children aged 5–6 years to perform religious services according to their religion falls into the BSH (Developing According to Expectations) category. Most children are able to follow teacher-guided worship practices, such as performing prayers in the correct order, reciting prayers before and after activities, and demonstrating orderly and focused behavior during worship. Habituation through prayer practices, teacher role models, and repeated advice play a role in increasing children's understanding and involvement in worship. These findings indicate that consistent worship practices in the school environment are effective

in fostering religious awareness in early childhood.

3. Behave honestly, politely, respectfully, helpfully, sportingly and responsibly

The development of honest, polite, respectful, helpful, sportsmanlike, and responsible behavior in children aged 5–6 years is in the MB (Starting to Develop) to BSH (Developing According to Expectations) categories. Some children have been able to demonstrate commendable behavior in learning and play activities, such as telling the truth, helping friends, following rules, and tidying up toys after use. Habitualization through providing advice, teacher role models, and the application of educational rewards and punishments encourages children to repeat these positive behaviors. However, some children still need guidance and reinforcement due to the influence of environmental factors and habits at home.

4. Maintain personal and environmental hygiene

Children's ability to maintain personal and environmental hygiene falls into the BSH (Developing According to Expectations) category. Children are accustomed to washing their hands before and after meals, dressing neatly and cleanly, tidying up toys, and maintaining a clean classroom. Regularly practicing these habits, accompanied by direct examples from teachers, helps children understand the importance of cleanliness as part of everyday behavior. This demonstrates that consistently implementing hygiene habits effectively fosters a sense of cleanliness in early childhood.

5. Get to know the important days of his religion

The research results show that children's ability to recognize religious holidays falls within the BSH (Developing According to Expectations) category. Children are able to name and recognize religious holidays, such as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, and understand their meaning in simple terms through stories, thematic activities, and teacher explanations. Habitualization through storytelling and repeated reinforcement helps children remember and understand the concept of religious holidays according to their developmental stage.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that the instilling of religious and moral values in 5-6 year old children at Umindia Islamic Kindergarten in Makassar City has been well implemented and can serve as an example for other schools. The development of religious and moral values is carried out through habituation strategies that include routine activities, role models, polite habits, and programmed activities. These habits are manifested in daily activities, such as praying before and after activities, maintaining personal and environmental hygiene, speaking politely, and memorizing daily surahs and prayers. Through the role of teachers, children are guided to understand their religion, carry out worship, demonstrate noble behavior, and maintain cleanliness according to their developmental stage. The strategies used include habituation, programmed activities, role models, providing advice, and the application of rewards and punishments in an educational manner.

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