

METHODS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CHARACTER EDUCATION: A STUDY OF MUHAMMAD 'ATHIYAH AL-ABRASYI'S IDEAS

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Abstract

This study seeks to explore the ideas of Muhammad 'Athiyah Al-Abrasyi about the method of character education for early childhood. It is believed that this study would help identify an early childhood technique of moral or character education that is suitable and pertinent for character education in the nation's educational institutions. According to Muhammad 'Athiyah Al-Abrasyi's, the core of Islamic education is moral teaching for young children. Early moral education should serve as the cornerstone of Islamic education. The Qur'anic principles or teachings serve as the foundation for early moral instruction. He claims that the goal of moral education in Islam is to create individuals with high moral standards, a strong sense of self, etiquette in speech and decency in behavior, as well as a mature, civilized, sincere, honest, and religious temperament. Al-Abrasyi devised a number of methods for instilling moral values in young children, including: (1) the direct method, which involves giving instructions, guidance, and advice while pointing out the advantages and drawbacks of something; (2) the indirect method, which involves suggesting or providing children with encouragement, strength, trust, and inner memories; and (3) the method by capitalizing on children's propensities and tendencies to imitate their parents.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini berusaha mendalami gagasan Muhammad 'Athiyah Al-Abrasyi tentang metode pendidikan karakter bagi anak usia dini. Melalui kajian ini diharapkan ditemukan metode pendidikan akhlak atau karakter bagi anak usia dini yang sesuai dan relevan dengan pendidikan karakter di lembaga-lembaga pendidikan di Tanah Air. Dalam perspektif pemikiran pendidikan

Muhammad 'Athiyah Al-Abrasyi, pendidikan akhlak bagi anak usia dini adalah komponen utama pendidikan Islam. Bagi Muhammad 'Athiyah Al-Abrasyi, pendidikan akhlak anak usia dini harus dijadikan dasar utama pendidikan Islam. Pendidikan akhlak anak usia dini adalah pendidikan yang didasarkan pada nilai-nilai atau ajaran-ajaran al-Qur'an. Menurutnya, tujuan dari pendidikan akhlak dalam Islam ialah membentuk orang-orang yang berakhlak baik, keras kemauan, sopan dalam bicara dan mulia dalam tingkah laku dan memiliki perangai bijaksana, beradab, ikhlas, jujur, dan suci. Al-Abrasyi merumuskan beberapa metode pendidikan akhlak anak usia dini, yaitu (1) metode pendidikan akhlak secara langsung, yaitu dengan cara menggunakan petunjuk, tuntunan, nasihat, menyebutkan manfaat dan bahayanya sesuatu; (2) metode pendidikan akhlak secara tidak langsung, yaitu dengan cara sugesti atau memberi dorongan, kekuatan, kepercayaan, dan ingatan batin kepada anak; (3) metode dengan cara mengambil manfaat dari kecenderungan dan pembawaan anak-anak yang kerap meniru idolanya.

Keywords: Character education, early childhood, holistic, Islamic education, Muhammad 'Athiyah Al-Abrasyi

Introduction

A modern-day thinker on Islamic education is Muhammad 'Athiyah Al-Abrasyi. His publications are widely cited by experts and practitioners of Islamic education. Unfortunately, Muhammad 'Athiyah Al-educational Abrasyi's philosophy is used to guide most of the research on him (Al-Abrasyi, 2018). Few scholars have attempted to investigate Muhammad 'Athiyah Al-views Abrasyi's on moral education, particularly in relation to the technique of moral education (Al-Abrasyi, 1969). Research on the opinions of Islamic scholars and scholars about character education, especially character education for early childhood, is believed to be increasingly important in light of the growing number of discourses or discourses on character education (another term for morality) and the concern of the Indonesian people regarding the decline of the nation's morals.

Currently, the discourse on the importance of character education for early childhood is being discussed again, along with the strengthening of the concerns of the Indonesian people towards intolerant attitudes and behavior, violence, terror, corruption, and other destructive behavior among the Indonesian people (Hisyam, 2003). Destructive behaviors, such as violence, assault, intolerance, arson, demonstrations, and brawls that have recently

tended to strengthen in society, have made the Indonesian people aware of the importance of character education for early childhood (Mara, 2020).

Until now, the method of character education for early childhood is mainly taken and developed from values education figures from the West (Wening, 2012). The theory of learning character education for early childhood is also taken from Western educational thought, which was then modified and adapted to the country's educational practice needs. Meanwhile, the educational thoughts of Islamic scholars, including Muhammad 'Athiyah Al-Abrasyi, received less attention and tended to be ignored. This neglect is believed to be because researchers and reviewers of Islamic education do not provide space for the thoughts of Islamic scholars in the field of educational methods. So far, both classical and contemporary scholars of Islamic education have been researched more for their educational philosophy (Faujiah et al., 2018).

This study seeks to explore the ideas of Muhammad 'Athiyah Al-Abrasyi about the method of character education for early childhood. Through this study, it is hoped that a method of moral or character education for early childhood is appropriate and relevant to character education in educational institutions in the country.

Methods

This research uses literature review method. Through this method, the researcher collects, selects, categorizes, and analyzes the literatures by Muhammad 'Athiyah Al-Abrasyi, especially in the fields of early childhood education and character education. The researcher also conducted a search on the literature on various thoughts of Islamic education. The analysis of this text is carried out using deductive and inductive reasoning procedures, so that the authors obtain results that are not only coherent with the existing conceptual truths, but also correspond to the results of the author's reflections.

The Concept of Moral Education Methods for Early Childhood

The method of moral education or character education for early childhood can use several methods (Khorida, 2013). Several methods can be used in moral education. In the world of education, methods and approaches are often confused. So far, moral education and character development of students in Civics, Islamic Religious Education, or *Akidah Akhlak* subjects (at madrasas) have been dominated by the cultivation approach through lecture

and indoctrination methods. In addition to the ineffectiveness of integrating the content of character/moral education in all subjects in schools/madrasas, character education does not become an integral part of the school/madrasa education system but becomes a separate lesson (Mulyasa, 2012).

Moral education, which at the academic level is also known as value education at the practical level, can be implemented using several approaches. By tracing the value education literature, there are at least five character education approaches that were commonly used in the decade of the 90s, namely the rational development approach, the consideration approach, the value clarification, the cognitive moral development, and the social behavior approach. The results of Douglas P. Superka's research in 1973 entitled "A Typology of Valuing Theories and Values Education Approaches" resulted in a summary of five approaches, namely (1) the inculcation approach, (2) the cognitive moral development approach.), (3) values analysis approach, (4) values clarification approach, and (5) action learning approach (Superka, 1976).

The classification of a more straightforward approach was made by John E. Elias, who divided it into three approaches, namely the cognitive approach, the effective approach, and the behavioral approach (Elias, 1989). According to John R. Rest, this classification is based on three elements of morality that usually become the foundation of psychological studies: behavior, cognition, and affection (Englehardt & Pritchard, 2018). As already mentioned, methods and approaches are often used interchangeably. The two are often obscured or confused in their use. The two have slight differences that can be used to emphasize that the two terms are indeed different (Burroughs, 2018). According to the Indonesian Dictionary, the approach means things (actions, efforts) approaching or getting closer. According to the English dictionary, the meaning of approach is a way to do something. From these two meanings, it can be understood that the approach at least contains elements as an activity which includes: the process of time travel, and efforts to achieve something, and can also have characteristics as a way to do something (Ainusyamsi, 2021).

It is appropriate for educators or parents to understand that to convey an educational message, students must understand how that message can be received properly and perfectly. To achieve the delivery of messages to students, of course, an educator or parent must have or choose the skills to use an approach that follows the mindset and psychological development of children. The accuracy or suitability of choosing an approach will affect the success of teaching children morals. At the same time, the method has a slightly different meaning from the approach.

Methods of Character Education for Early Childhood According to Al-Abrasyi

According to Muhammad Athiyah al-Abrasyi (Al-Abrasyi), the method is the path taken to gain students' understanding of all kinds of lessons in all subjects. The method is a plan made by the educator before entering the class and applying it in the classroom (Al-Abrasyi, 2018). The methods of Islamic education that are relevant and effective in teaching Islam according to Muhammad Athiyah al-Abrasyi are: (1) the inductive method (*al-istiqrāyah* or *al-istinbathiyah*); (2) deductive method (*al-qiyasiyah*); (3) the advertising method (*al-ikhbariyah*) and the meeting method (*al-muhadharah*). The advertising method (*al-ikhbariyah*) and the meeting method (*al-muhadharah*) are carried out by placing advertisements, notifications, announcements, brochures, news either through television, radio or newspapers, journals, or magazines. This method can be realized by using the following models: (a) lecture (*al-mawidhah*); (b) writing (*al-kitabah*); (c) dialogue method (*hiwar*) (Al-Abrasyi, 1975).

Specifically, to realize the dialogue method, the following models can be used: (a) question and answer (*al-as'ilah wa ajwibah*); (b) discussion (*al-niqasy*); (c) rebuttals (*al-mujlah*); (d) brainstorming (suggestion); (e) correction and criticism method (*al-tanqibiyah*); (f) the method of metaphor (*al-amtsal*); (g) game method (*al-la'bu*); (h) drill method (*al-tadrib wa al-muronah*); and (i) the lecture method (*muhadharah*) (Al-Abrasyi, 1982). Of the many educational methods according to the Al-Abrasyi, Al-Abrasyi then formulates a method of moral education for early childhood, which according to him consists of several methods: First, the direct method of moral education, namely by using instructions, guidance, advice, mentioning the benefits and dangers of something. Early childhood students have explained things that are beneficial and what are not, leading them to good deeds, encouraging them to have high character, and avoiding despicable things. This moral education is often used in poetry and poetry because they both have a beautiful homecoming style, an influential rhythm, and a deep impression it creates in the soul. Therefore, Islamic books in literature and history are full of words of wisdom and wills of useful instructions. According to Al-Abrasyi, Westerners are now using these methods (Al-Abrasyi, 1994).

Among the words of wisdom, goodwill in the field of moral and moral education for children, according to Al-Abrasyi, is stated as follows: Courtesy is the best inheritance, good character is a true friend, and reaching consensus is the best leader. Ijtihad is a favorable view, and the reason is the most beneficial treasure; there is no disaster greater than ignorance, there is

no opponent more trusted than deliberation, there is no silence worse than exalting oneself (Al-Abrasyi, 2018).

Second, the method of moral education indirectly, namely by suggestion. Like dictating poems that contain wisdom to children, preventing them from reading empty poems. This is not surprising because education experts in Islam believe in the influence of wise words, advice, and real stories in the moral education of children because these aphorisms can be considered as suggestions from outside. In psychology (psychology). The poems are very influential in children's education, they will justify what they hear and have what they read in their textbooks, poems, words of wisdom, and wills about manners that greatly affect them (Al-Abrasyi, 1975).

Third, take advantage of the tendencies and dispositions of children in the context of moral education. In Al-Abrasyi language, taking advantage of children's inclinations and dispositions is referred to as: For example, students imitate the utterances of people closely related to the teacher. Therefore, Islamic philosophers expect every teacher to be decorated with good, noble character and to avoid anything that is reprehensible.

Islamic education requires every teacher to seek useful ways of forming good customs (Groeninck, 2021). They have an excellent moral education for the purity of his conscience, directing his childhood traits to walk straight and getting him used to doing good deeds and avoiding every evil. The position of the teacher in moral education is very strategic (Mastiyah, 2017). The success of moral education is very dependent on the teacher's morals. Because moral education is very important, the teacher's position is also very important. In Al-Abrasyi's view, moral education has a core position in the structure of Islamic teachings. These critical values can be referred to through two approaches: the *naqliyah* (normative) approach and the *aqliyah* (scientific) approach (Bisri & Husni, 2020).

Normatively, the Qur'an and the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad provide a clear affirmation of the necessity of humans to have noble character which is raised in the reflection of actions, whether in words, deeds, or attitudes (Daud, 2003). Humans in whom there is a divine manifestation which is then actualized through perfect humanity (*insan kamil*) with a reflection of noble character, will get praise from Allah. In the Qur'an, Allah praises His servant so beautifully: By the soul and its perfection (its creation). So Allah inspires to the soul (the way) wickedness and piety. Indeed, luck is the one who purifies the soul. And indeed loses those who pollute it. (Q.S. al-Sham: 7-10).

The verses above emphasize that human glory lies in moral glory, so it deserves God's praise. In Islam, the glory lies in righteousness. Because piety is the essence of morality, interestingly, the verse, which is identified as praising the Prophet, uses the word praise with one of the attributes of Allah, namely *al-azim* (the Supreme Being). According to Al-Abrasyi, morality is realizing and characterizing oneself with the nature of the morality, not knowledge of meanings or concepts as obtained by referring to a dictionary; that the womb (love) is like this and *'athif* is like this. Thus, it is clear the meaning of the hadith of the Prophet that Allah has 99 names. Whoever understands it and puts it into practice, will enter Paradise. Whoever behaves with it, then he will enter heaven. This is because the hadiths explain each other, as some of the Qur'an discusses some of the others.

Moral excellence is also the purpose of sending prophets. In one of his hadiths, the Prophet Muhammad emphasized that Allah sent him to perfect human morals, "indeed I was sent to perfect human morals." daily life in their community. The words of the Prophet are both general and specific. It is because the word *bu'itstu* (Arabic), which means 'I was sent' shows the general meaning of prophethood and apostleship which means messenger of God, but on the other hand, the Prophet also emphasized that he was steadfast and patient in facing various difficulties, insults, insults from the Arab polytheists, and so on. -other. All that he took to perfect noble character. As for the sentence to perfect it, it can be understood that all religions and divine teachings aim to improve human morals.

Thus, the spiritual dimension of prophethood is not obtained by chance and chance, but by hard work by mobilizing all of its potential so that it reaches the state of closeness to Allah until it is declared worthy to carry out the prophetic mission. The struggle of the Prophet Muhammad, who was so steadfast to maintain himself on the path of holiness in the midst of the storm of the destruction of the Arab society of Mecca, made the Prophet a consciously trained figure to always speak, behave and act in civilized, authoritative, and noble ways. The Prophet's habit of always doing useful and good activities makes him the perfect human in the universe (Rizal, 2014).

Al-Abrasyi states that the morals that are produced from the *malakah* (skills, dispositions) of the soul with repeated practice and practice so that it can be easily raised, and various activities will be strongly internalized in humans so that they are not easily damaged. According to Al-Abrasyi, a certain character (*malakah*) may appear in humans for one of the following reasons: (1) Natural and artificial make-up; this shows that some people are patient while others are irritable and insecure. (2) Habits; are formed

because of special activities and actions carried out repeatedly and continuously to form a certain character (Al-Abrasyi, 1975). Conscious practice and effort, if carried out continuously over a long period, will allow it to form a certain character. So, suppose you want to acquire noble character. In that case, a person is recommended to repeat good deeds and righteous deeds continuously so that it becomes a habit embedded in the soul and difficult to get rid of.

Al-Abrasyi also describes three educational methods to achieve perfection and improvement of early childhood morals, namely: First, educating early childhood morals with good worldly goals (Al-Abrasyi, 2018). It means dealing with praise and reproach before people. Second, educating early childhood morals through *ukhrawi* goals that indicate rewards and sins, rewards and punishments on the final day later. Third, educating early childhood morals descriptively and scientifically by using science (*ma'arif*) leaves no subject of reproach. The use of these three methods is adjusted to the right conditions and situations according to the level and ability of the individual.

As already explained, Al-Abrasyi views the position of the teacher as very important in early childhood moral education. According to Al-Abrasyi, teachers in Islamic education must possess the characteristics: (1) *Zuhud* does not prioritize material and teaches because he seeks the pleasure of Allah. (2) Cleanliness of teachers. A teacher must be clean in body, free from sins and mistakes, clean in the soul, free from major sins, rejoicing (looking for names), envy, hostility, disputes, and other despicable traits. The Messenger of Allah said: The destruction of my ummah is because of two kinds of people, an evil scholar, and an ignorant pious person, the best of whom are good scholars and the worst of people are ignorant people. (3) Sincere in work. The sincerity and honesty of a teacher in his work is the best way to succeed in carrying out his duties and the success of his students. A person classified as sincere is someone who follows his words and deeds, does what he says, and is not shy about saying, "I don't know if there is something he doesn't know." Besides that, he is sincere towards his students and takes care of them; a teacher must be humble, firm, wise in word and deed, gentle without weakness, and hard without rudeness. (4) Forgiving. A teacher must be forgiving towards his students. To be a perfect teacher, he must have a personality and self-respect, maintain the honor, avoid low and low things, refrain from something bad, not make a fuss, and shout that he is respected and appreciated. (5) A teacher is a father before he is a teacher. A teacher must love his students as he loves his children and thinks about their situation as he thinks about his children. (6) Must know the character of students. In Islamic education, a teacher must be knowledgeable about

children's willingness and character and pay attention to this in teaching so that they can choose suitable subjects for them that align with their level of thinking. (7) Must master the subject. A teacher must be able to master the subjects he gives and deepen his knowledge of these subjects (Al-Abrasyi, 1982).

In early childhood, moral education, according to Al-Abrasyi is to familiarize students with carrying out the obligations that must be done: (1) Before starting to learn, the student must first cleanse his heart of all bad qualities because teaching and learning are considered worship. (2) By learning that, he intends to fill his soul with *fadhilah*, draw closer to Allah, not to show off, be proud and proud. (3) Willing to seek knowledge, including leaving family and homeland. (4) Do not change teachers too often; think before acting to change teachers. (5) He should respect and honor it and glorify it for the sake of Allah and endeavor to please the teacher in a good way. (6) Don't bother the teacher with many questions, don't tire him out to answer, don't walk in front of him, don't sit in his seat, and don't talk, except after getting permission from the teacher. (7) Do not reveal the secret to the teacher, do not deceive the teacher, nor ask the teacher to reveal the secret, and immediately apologize to the teacher if his tongue slips. (8) Be earnest and diligent in studying, day and night, to gain knowledge by seeking more critical knowledge. (9) The spirit of mutual love and brotherhood must illuminate the interactions between students so that they look like children who are the same father. (10) First, greet the teacher, reduce the conversation in front of the teacher, and do not say to the teachers who are not polite. (11) Study hard, repeating the lesson at dusk and before dawn. The time between *Isha'* and *Suhoor* is a time full of blessings. (12) Determined to study until the end of life, do not underestimate a branch of knowledge, but should consider that all knowledge is useful (Al-Abrasyi, 1982).

Al-Abrasyi considers it important to establish good behavior in children as early as possible (Al-Abrasyi, 1982). It is under the views of Islamic education philosophers who have described what educational psychologists currently use, namely the formation of good behavior in children from childhood, such as getting used to sleeping faster and getting used to it—walking and doing sports, getting used to not spitting in public places, not blowing your nose or standing with your back to others, not liking to lie and not swearing whether right or wrong and getting children to obey their parents and teachers. These are all healthy habits in society and morals that must be instilled in the soul of children from childhood. The point is that when the children's nerves are still elastic and receiving formation.

Conclusion

According to Muhammad 'Athiyah Al Abrasyi's, the core of Islamic education is moral instruction for young children. Early moral education should serve as the cornerstone of Islamic education, according to Muhammad 'Athiyah Al-Abrasyi. The Qur'anic principles or teachings serve as the foundation for early moral instruction. He claims that the goal of moral education in Islam is to create individuals with high moral standards, a strong sense of self, etiquette in speech and decency in behavior, as well as a mature, civilized, sincere, honest, and religious temperament. Al-Abrasyi developed a number of methods for instilling moral values in young children, including: (1) the direct method, which involves giving instructions, guidance, advice, and pointing out the advantages and drawbacks of something; (2) the indirect method, which involves suggesting or providing children with encouragement, strength, trust, and inner memories; and (3) the method by capitalizing on children's propensities and tendencies to imitate their parents.

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