



## **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION HEAD LEADERSHIP IN IMPLEMENTING ISLAMIC VALUES-BASED CHARACTER LEARNING**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The research was conducted to determine the leadership of the Early Childhood Education head in instilling Islamic values-based character learning. The formation of character with Islamic values is learning given in early childhood to form a personality with good moral values following Islamic teachings. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. The design of this study is a multi-site design at two schools in Pamekasan Regency, namely Al-Uswah IT Kindergarten and Al-Ghazali Kindergarten. The two Early Childhood Education schools both apply character learning with Islamic values. The technique used by researchers in collecting data was conducting in-depth interviews with Early Childhood Education heads in two schools, participatory field observations, and documentation studies to support the completeness of the research data. The results of this study indicate that Al-Uswah IT Kindergarten and Al-Ghazali Kindergarten both apply character learning with Islamic values, namely responsibility, curiosity, discipline, independence, and respect for achievement. (1) this responsibility is proven by taking toys and storing their play equipment in a place that has been prepared; (2) curiosity is shown by the teacher conveying a material either by telling a story or otherwise so that it stimulates children to ask questions about things they don't understand and answer questions from the teacher; (3) discipline, children are educated to be disciplined in carrying out habits in a class by lining up before entering class, reading prayers as a habit before learning; (4) independent, children are accustomed to carrying out their needs without the help of the teacher, for example in storing their shoes or bags in a place provided by the school; and (5) appreciating achievement, the teacher provides motivation and encouragement to children by applauding their courage and the confidence to tell stories in front of the class or appreciate other achievements

### **Keywords:**

Chiefs of Early Childhood Education, Character Learning, Islamic Values, Early Childhood

### **INTRODUCTION**

Early childhood growth can be said to require learning. Educational institutions create Early childhood education (EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION). Early childhood education is the responsibility of parents. It's just that due to the limitations of parental ability, it is necessary to have help from people who are able and willing to help parents in the education of their children. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION is one form of education that focuses on laying the foundation for physical growth and development (fine and gross motor coordination), intelligence (thinking power, creative power, emotional intelligence, and spiritual intelligence), social-emotional (behavioral attitudes and religion), language and communication, uniqueness and growth according to the child's development stage. The organization of education in early childhood's various stages are adjusted to the age of the child. Education at the age of 0-2 years is called a Daycare Center (TPA), at the age of 2-4



years it is called a Play Group (KB), and at the age of 4-6 years of education in the form of Kindergarten (TK) / Raudhatul Athfal (RA).

The learning process during the Early Childhood period is certainly not easy, so the role of the Head of Early Childhood Education has a role in creating the success of learning carried out with the programs carried out. Early childhood education is a broad discussion because it is the beginning of child growth and development (Sunanih, 2017). Heads of Early Childhood Education can practice effective and efficient leadership. Early Childhood Education principals who have personality competence will display a variety of behaviors that can support the implementation of their main duties and functions as leaders in Early Childhood Education institutions. Principals as leaders must have noble personalities, be role models and role models in behaving and behaving in the school community, and stay away from behaviors that can pollute the role and function of a leader (Wiyono, 2017). The learning program aimed at Early Childhood is character-based learning that has Islamic values. In early childhood, religion has a role in shaping children's behavior, so that the formation of children's personalities will blend according to the growth and development of children. Character education needs to be done in early childhood, to instill strong mental, moral, and moral traits (Aryani, 2019).

Character learning by applying Islamic values is carried out in kindergartens in Pamekasan, namely Al-Ghazali Kindergarten and Al-Uswah IT Kindergarten. Islamic values that are applied such as reciting the Koran, praying together, praying, compassion, courtesy, and other spiritual values. Character-based education begins with habituation from the opening of learning to the end of learning. This program is carried out to foster good character for children at an early age by instilling Islamic values. In this case, the teacher is the spearhead in implementing the character learning program so that it reaches students. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to find out how the leadership of the Head of Early Childhood Education is supporting Islamic values-based character learning at Al-Ghazali Kindergarten and Al-Uswah IT Kindergarten in Pamekasan.

## METHOD

This type of research uses descriptive with a multi-site study design. This research involves several sites as subjects or cases of this research. The approach of this research uses the constant comparative method by conducting repeated data collection and developing new theories after data collection is almost complete (Ulfatin, 2015). The research location was at Al-Uswah IT Kindergarten and Al-Ghazali Pamekasan Kindergarten.

Data collection in this study used participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Data analysis in the research was carried out to find and organize interview transcripts, observations, and other data materials to compare one information with other information so that it could be concluded to be reported as research findings. This research is a multi-site research, so it uses single-site data analysis and cross-site data analysis.





## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Principals are people who play an important role in improving the quality of a school. A principal has professional competence in leading the organization at school with the task of planning, managing, and evaluating the organization and working with the components in the school, namely teachers in carrying out the teaching and learning process as an effort to educate the nation's life as one of the goals of education. The success of the school essentially reflects the success of the principal as a leader (Banun S., 2016; Anggraeni, 2016; Bell, 2010).

Head of Early Childhood Education is a job that requires creativity and innovation, in addition to demanding more work, hard work, and various challenges. Because Early childhood education (ECED) is directed at delivering Indonesian children to become healthy, smart, cheerful, and noble individuals who are expected to be ready to enter further levels of education, early childhood, also known as critical times, is the most appropriate sensitive period for the formation of children's character. The position of head of Early Childhood Education is a job that requires creativity and innovation, in addition to demanding more work, hard work, and various challenges. The leadership of the head of Early Childhood Education is the key to how and where the organization is going, running in place or not running at all. In early childhood education, the head of Early Childhood Education needs to encourage teachers to instill Islamic-based character values.

Schools are important for building character from an early age, where schools are ready to instill character education so that children slowly have good character. The importance of building character from an early age is because in principle children are born in a state of fitrah, or if likened to a white paper whose writing can be filled with good writings or bad writings. Character education for children at an early age can be applied in everyday life. Islam teaches Islamic values utilizing habituation of worship, such as: praying 5 times, praying before and after activities, reciting the Koran, fasting, and so on. The habituation method is highly recommended and considered effective in teaching religion in early childhood. If the quality of religiosity is already owned by the child and has been firmly embedded in him, it will have an important and influential role throughout his life.

The results of research from IT Al-Uswah Kindergarten and Al-Ghazali Kindergarten in Pamekasan related to how the leadership of the Head of Early Childhood Education in implementing character learning that contains Islamic values towards children themselves include: Responsibility, Curiosity, Discipline, Independence, and Respect for Achievement. The results of research at Al-Uswah Kindergarten show that: first Responsibility, children are taught to have a high sense of responsibility by taking their toys to be used during learning and cleaning up the tools used to play. This result is relevant to the results of Al-Ghazali Kindergarten which children are educated to be responsible for completing the tasks assigned when learning begins and cleaning up all game items without the teacher's help in the original place when the learning is finished. This kind of habituation trains children at an early age to have good character. Such as being responsible for being an individual character of children who need to live and cooperate with others and be able to take responsibility for what is done (Silahuddin, 2017).



Second, regarding Curiosity, the results at Al-Uswah Kindergarten stated that the teacher read a storybook in the form of pictures that invited students to ask questions related to what they wanted to understand from the theme, and the results at Al-Ghazali Kindergarten conveyed children's curiosity with the teacher providing interesting learning media with the theme "color" with the media, children recognize and mention the colors shown by the teacher. In the early age of children, learning activities are packaged with play where almost all the time is used to play. The games played are repeated so that they will form a habit, from this habituation, a personality will be formed in the child. Because role-playing is an activity that children do directly to understand the character of the role when learning activities take place and children can bring out their abilities by themselves without coercion, children bring out the expressions they have in playing their roles, be it roles that exemplify good or bad attitudes (Nirmala, 2020).

Third, Discipline, the results of Al-Uswah Kindergarten show that students are instilled with the spirit of discipline by getting used to lining up before learning in class begins and reading morujoaah prayers, class entry prayers, and prayers before learning. Children are educated to have disciplinary values following school regulations. The results from Al-Ghazali Kindergarten also conveyed that when the bell rang the children immediately prepared to line up with their friends. The teacher immediately tells the children to read the class entry prayer and study prayer before entering the class. From this character, children begin to have a sense of discipline and respect for the teacher in front by shaking hands before entering the class neatly. Guidance and upbringing from the teacher is an effort to develop aspects of the child's personality both physically and spiritually, including religious aspects to achieve a balanced life between material and mental spiritual needs between the world and the hereafter (Rahmawati, 2020).

Fourth, Mandiri, the results of research from Al-Uswah Kindergarten stated that children are accustomed to shaking hands with the teacher in front of the class, not forgetting that children begin to open their shoes to store in the place provided and bags on hangers that have been prepared in each class. Children are accustomed to being independent without the help of the teacher because students must be able to do something themselves to train character. The results at Al-Ghazali Kindergarten also accustom students to get used to doing needs independently such as storing their shoes in the place provided. Teachers train children by doing it themselves without the help of others. This independent activity also trains independent students with different characters. Because every child has their desires. The independence trained by teachers to students becomes character learning for children in shaping a better personality. The importance of character education for early childhood is because it supports the development of personality, attitudes, and mental, and intellectual development formed at an early age of children.

Fifth, Appreciating Achievement, the results of research at Al-Uswah IT Kindergarten familiarize every child with doing class assignments the teacher gives appreciation with enthusiasm and applause so that children in doing the work begin to be even more enthusiastic in doing the task. Children drawing animals there the teacher provides motivation and encouragement so that children get up and want to





do tasks like other friends. With appreciation, a sense of arising in the child's mind to be like his friends. At Al-Ghazali Kindergarten, it was mentioned that appreciating achievement starts with the teacher always providing support and motivation in doing the child's work and it becomes an appreciation for the child to be enthusiastic in completing the task. When the child is told to come forward by the teacher, the teacher, and other friends applaud by giving appreciation to encourage the confidence of his friends in answering easily. The research results in both schools, show that principals encourage teachers to be consistent in instilling character education with Islamic values to students. Good deeds based on good habituation, in religious teachings have been arranged in such a way as to produce national children who have good morals in their lives. Therefore, educating children's character with Islamic values must be taught and instilled from an early age because it will be easier to form a good personality and character in the future (Syarifudin, 2019).

### CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the discussion above, it can be concluded that the head of Early Childhood Education at Al-Uswah IT Kindergarten and Al-Ghazali Kindergarten in Pemekasan is encouraging teachers to apply Islamic-based character learning values, namely responsibility, curiosity, discipline, independence, and respect for achievement. The application of character learning with Islamic values from both schools is carried out as a form of habituation of daily activities. This activity encourages students to have good character that is embedded in the soul of the child from an early age. This is because it is easier to produce children who have good personalities and characters from an early age.

From the conclusions of the research that the researchers have done, of course, there are many shortcomings in the breadth of research findings and discussion, so the researchers hope that further research can deepen and broaden the study of the role of the Head of Early Childhood Education at the kindergarten school level in implementing character learning based on Islamic values. Deepening and broadening the discussion in the form of other character values that have Islamic values applied at the Kindergarten level. In addition, it can also be studied at higher levels such as elementary school/equivalent.

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