

Character Education Media Makes Alms to Develop Children's Spiritual Intelligence

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Abstract

Character education is a system of teaching students moral principles that encompasses knowledge, awareness, or willingness, and actions to put these principles into practice toward God Almighty, other people, the environment, and their own country, making them into Kamil people. The purpose of this essay is to provide an explanation of alms as a character education tool to help kids become more spiritually intelligent. A descriptive analysis and literature review are the methods employed. The study's findings indicate that giving alms to kids can raise their spiritual intelligence. Giving alms is the act of giving to others, irrespective of the recipient's wealth or poverty. Children's spiritual brains can be educated through the means of almsgiving as a character education tool. Early childhood education includes the lightest alms, such as grinning, saying hello, lending something to someone, in addition to material alms.

Keyword: Alms; Character Education; Spiritual Intelligence

Introduction

One thing that determines the rise or fall of a country is its level of education (Panani & Effendi, 2024). Because the progress of a country is determined by the caliber of its character. Good character must be nurtured and developed from a young age. As a result, character education is needed, which requires the creation of attitudes and values based on an understanding of the reasons behind the principles. Thus, it can be said that education functions as a vehicle for the advancement of science to advance human civilization, the transformation of cultural values, and the strengthening of social ties among neighbors. Developing spiritual

intelligence is also one of the goals of character education (Suhifatullah, 2024).

Previous research conducted by Noni, Marsyitah, and Sisdiana (2024). "Management of Character Education in Developing Students' Soft Skills," *Research and Development Journal of Education*. This study aims to explore three main aspects: concept, implementation, and supporting and inhibiting factors in character education that focuses on developing soft skills. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collection methods through observation, interviews, and documentation. To ensure data validity, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability tests were carried out. Data analysis used triangulation, through the process of data reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study show that: 1) The concept of character education in developing soft skills is based on the principle of exemplary behavior, 2) The implementation of character education involves 18 character values that are applied in teaching and learning activities, as well as additional values such as discipline, environmental care, cleanliness, and social care through the Waste Bank Program, and 3) Supporting factors for character education include a supportive environment, planned programs, adequate facilities and infrastructure, and the role of teachers and leaders as role models. On the other hand, the inhibiting factors are the lack of communication between schools and parents, low student awareness, and differences in understanding regarding character education and soft skills development among school members (Noni et al., 2024). There are differences between the current research and previous research. Previous research only discussed the management of character education in developing soft skills. The current research discusses character education media by making alms to develop children's spiritual intelligence.

The spiritual brain is where communication between humans and God occurs (Sholeh & Mudlofir, 2024). Humans are able to think in terms of values because God exists. The ability to face and solve problems, especially those related to values and life goals, is known as spiritual intelligence, or Q. Children are born with spiritual intelligence, naturally. Teaching children to donate alms is one way. Starting with the smallest acts of kindness, such as grinning, greeting others, and reaching out to others. Because, without change, learning experiences later in life will not replace early childhood experiences.

The idea of charity as a character education tool to improve children's spiritual intelligence will be explained in this article. This is important because, throughout childhood, there is a golden age when brain connections and synapses develop about 1000 trillion times (Pasiak, 2008). Therefore, character education is a fundamental aspect of the state and must be embedded in children from a young age. There are many opportunities

for a person's personality to form and develop throughout this golden period. Teaching children to donate charity at a young age can improve their spiritual intelligence and have an impact on them far into adulthood (Sari & Yulianawati, 2017).

The main problem of this study is that character education media makes charity to develop children's spiritual intelligence. The formulation of the problem of this study is how character education media makes charity to develop children's spiritual intelligence. The purpose of this study is to explain character education media makes charity to develop children's spiritual intelligence.

Research Methods

This study is qualitative in nature, utilizing library research analysis to collect information from publications, books, and journal articles. Sugiyono claims that literature studies are connected to theoretical research as well as other sources on values, customs, and norms that emerge in the social context being studied. In addition, literature studies are very important for research because research cannot be separated from scientific literature (Sugiono, 2008). Data and information are collected through literature research and connections to the issues at hand. This step provides a theoretical framework and analytical direction for the difficulties.

Result and Discussion

1. Definition of Alms

Alms are donations to the less fortunate. According to the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language. Based on compassion for others, safety, feasts, and donating to the less fortunate or those who deserve it outside the framework of zakat and zakat fitrah based on the capacity of the giver (charity). The word alms comes from the word *sadaqa*, which means true. One can consider someone who likes to give alms as someone who truly acknowledges their beliefs. Alms are the deduction of part of one's property or income in exchange for interest mandated by religion, according to sharia terminology. In addition, alms are given freely to anyone, without conditions or deadlines (Sanusi, 2009). Giving something with the intention of getting closer to Allah is known as alms.

Iskandar defines *sadaqah* as something a Muslim gives to others freely and on their own initiative, without regard to time or money constraints (Iskandar, 2023). It can also refer to a gift offered by an individual as a virtue seeking the favor and benefit of Allah Swt. alone. *Sadaqah* has a linguistic connotation of justifying.

The Arabic word *shadaqa*, meaning righteous, is where the word *sadaqa* comes from. The term *sadaqa* appears 85 times in the Qur'an. In general, giving *sadaqa* is a gift to others, regardless of whether the recipient is

wealthy or not (Arifin, 2011). Thus, the definition of sadaqah covers a wide range of actions, from the most benign (smiling, greeting, or being kind to others) to the most intimate (such as giving birth to a child). Regarding the following, there are several types of charity, in particular supporting the family is the main one, spreading knowledge is charity, being a reliable and honest administrator is very important, speaking the truth and visiting the mosque are charity, praying in congregation is charity, lending is charity, sleeping before praying is sacrifice, and charity is to feed and drink the living.

2. Education and Character Education

John Dewey defines education as the process of developing basic abilities, both intellectual and emotional, towards the natural world and other people. In this case, education serves to ensure that the future generations of the country inherit all the experiences, information, skills, and abilities that support the values and norms of life and can live, understand, and practice these values or norms (Muslich, 2011).

Three main objectives can be used to categorize certain indicators of the achievement of the goals of Education. First, to produce intelligent students, namely students with a high level of intellectual intelligence who can solve their own problems or help solve the problems of others who need their help. Second, to produce students who are emotionally pious or patient, because this will show their maturity in dealing with life's challenges. Third, to produce spiritually pious students who will obey the commands of Allah and the Prophet Muhammad saw by implementing and realizing the five pillars of Islam in their daily lives.

Experts define character as having the following qualities. First, character is a set of principles that form a framework for ideas, attitudes, and actions that are demonstrated (Rahmah, 2019). Second, personality and character are the same. A person's personality is defined as the nature, characteristics, style, or attributes that develop over time as a result of the formation obtained from their environment, such as their family during childhood, or as something innate from birth (Albertus, 2007). Third, according to Imam Ghazali, human spontaneity in attitudes or behaviors that have become ingrained in humans so that, when it happens, there is no need to think about it, is an example of a character that is closer to morality.

Among the virtues are the following: (1) religious, (2) honest, (3) tolerant, (4) disciplined, (5) hard working, (6) imaginative, (7) independent, (8) democratic, (9) curious, (10) national spirit, (11) affection for the country, (12) appreciation of achievement, (13) friendly and communicative, (14) Love of peace, (15) love of books, (16) environmental protection, (17) social justice, (18) and responsibility. The assimilation of moral principles during childhood (the golden period) acquires greater significance and is better

documented. A person with good or superior character tries to maximize his potential (knowledge) and is supported by his awareness, emotions, and motivation (feelings) in order to do the best things for God, himself, others, the environment, the nation, and the world in general (Hamid & Saebani, 2013).

3. Spiritual Intelligence

Spiritual Brain, The God Point that Ramachandran discovered in the temporal lobe is the focal point of the spiritual brain. It is the neurological foundation upon which high levels of human consciousness, or spirituality, are based. Gray matter is what gives the brain its structure and consciousness. Logical thought, the first step toward higher (spiritual) states of consciousness, is born when these cells are functioning (Kushartanti, 2003).

God has imprinted His imprint on human neurology. Humans are able to think in terms of values because God exists. These ideals are institutionalized through a process commonly referred to as religion, which is the systematization of the spiritual functions of the brain. Thus, a person's realization of the spiritual aspect of his brain is indicated by his religious affiliation. Likewise, a person's religious affiliation indicates that he has become aware of the spiritual aspect of his brain. In the same vein, a person who does not formally practice any religion but upholds moral principles in his daily interactions also expresses the spiritual aspect of his brain. Therefore, regardless of belief, the optimization of the spiritual brain will lead to a better and more fulfilling existence for an individual (Kushartanti, 2003).

Spirituality and Mental Values in Humans, Talking about spirituality is talking about the soul. At-Tusi asserts that the soul is a basic and immaterial substance endowed with inherent vitality. Proof is not required for the existence of the soul. The organs of the body are incapable of perceiving the presence of the soul, but are controlled by the muscles and senses of the body. Logic, physics, mathematics, and other specific difficulties are among the many things that the soul is capable of remembering (Zamroni, 2022).

The soul is called a reviling soul because it constantly curses those who do wrong and fail to serve Allah if it is able to consistently reject the characteristics of the repulsive qualities. On the other hand, the soul becomes peaceful (*an-nafs al muthmainnah*) if it is saved from all the repulsive characteristics. Therefore, souls can be divided into three categories: souls that have accumulated many repulsive qualities; souls that have rejected these qualities; and souls that have reached the peak of purity, peace, and tranquility – that is, the Muthmainnah soul. Allah has promised that the muthmainnah soul will reach Paradise (Hamid & Saebani, 2013).

Children's Spiritual Brain, Young children have spiritual wisdom. From the moment a child is born, his wisdom comes from the reality of fitrah (holy). Moreover, studies on the existence of the God Spot in the brains of children have provided evidence for such a reality. Thus, there is a scientific neurological basis for the spiritual intelligence of children in addition to the theological (religious) one (Jalaluddin, 2010).

According to research in neuroscience, a baby's brain contains about 100 billion cells at birth, most of which are not connected to each other. In other words, only the brain cells responsible for a person's heartbeat, breathing, reflex movements, hearing, and life instincts. Children's brains have formed about 1000 trillion networks of connections, or synapses, by the time they are three years old. This number is twice as high as the adult population (Awhinarto & Suyadi, 2020).

4. Training Children's Spiritual Intelligence by Giving Alms

Character education is a system of teaching students moral principles that include knowledge, awareness, or will, and actions to apply these principles into practice towards God Almighty, other people, the environment, and their own country to become perfect people. Thus, character education must be promoted to produce a generation of upright morals and knowledge known as perfect people. Teaching minors to donate alms is one way to teach them character education. In a broad sense, alms involves everything in the form of goodness, not just material things. This training can use a number of strategies.

First, the value instillation approach. The instillation strategy places a strong emphasis on teaching students social values. This method states that accepting desired social values is the goal of value education. This approach states that the following techniques are used in the learning process: role modeling, role acting, simulation, positive and negative reinforcement (Muslich, 2011).

Second, the cognitive development approach. Because of its nature of highlighting cognitive and growth features, it is referred to as cognitive development. With this method, students are encouraged to actively consider moral dilemmas and moral choices. This method states that moral judgments are made at a higher level of reasoning rather than a lower one. For example, the instructor explains that humans, animals, and plants are examples of living things. Eating and drinking are life necessities to avoid death. Thus, the instructor conveys the idea that, for example, an innocent animal that needs food or drink should be given what it needs. Likewise, a drying plant should have water applied to it. Children's (cognitive) awareness of the sustainability of living things develops, and their moral

growth to love and care for other living things is enhanced. Furthermore, feeding and drinking living things is taught to be charity.

Third, the action learning approach. The action learning approach places a strong emphasis on giving students the opportunity to act morally on their own or in groups (Muslich, 2011). This method stimulates the child's spiritual intelligence through habituation. With this in mind, teachers and parents should work together to collect alms by providing each child with a box that will be partially filled with pocket money. The teacher will collect this package once a week and distribute it to individuals in need. Therefore, it is explained to the young person that the money set aside will not be given back to them; instead, it will be used to help those in need. The child will receive a reward from Allah Swt. in exchange for Allah's love.

These three methods will have an impact and increase spiritual intelligence in children. This is due to its direct influence on the brain which plays a role in reasoning and involves the five senses through the three techniques mentioned earlier. With the interaction between humans (children) and Allah Swt., spiritual intelligence will develop better when the logical brain and five senses work optimally

Conclusion

Character education needs to be instilled early on, especially in the brain development phase called the "golden age," where the child's neural connections reach their peak. One effective way to develop a child's spiritual intelligence is through the teaching of charity, which can be done through three approaches: modeling good deeds such as smiles and small help, expanding cognitive understanding of the importance of helping each other, and teaching real practice by giving some of their pocket money to charity. Thus, the integration of the rational brain and the five senses in the act of charity will optimally increase the child's spiritual intelligence.

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