



Efforts of the Aqidah Akhlak Teacher in Enhancing Students' Spiritual Intelligence through Religious Culture at MTS Jabal Rahmah Palakka, Soppeng Regency

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ABSTRACT

One strategic effort to address this need is through the role of Akidah Akhlak teachers in internalizing religious values by cultivating a school-wide religious culture. This study aims to describe and analyze the efforts of Akidah Akhlak teachers in improving students' spiritual intelligence through religious culture at MTs Jabal Rahmah Palakka, Soppeng Regency. The research employs a qualitative approach using descriptive methods. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observations, and documentation. The informants in this study consisted of the principal, Akidah Akhlak teachers, vice principal, and students from grades VII, VIII, and IX. The results show that Akidah Akhlak teachers play a central role in developing students' spiritual intelligence through well-structured and systematic religious activities such as congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation (tadarus), group remembrance (dzikir), short religious sermons (kultum), and Islamic boarding programs (pesantren). The religious culture established at the school is not merely symbolic, but has become a routine practice that shapes students' daily attitudes and behaviors. Values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and social awareness have gradually become integrated into students' character. Nevertheless, challenges remain, including lack of discipline and negative external influences. In conclusion, the efforts of Akidah Akhlak teachers through religious cultural approaches have proven to be effective in holistically and sustainably enhancing students' spiritual intelligence.

INTRODUCTION

Education is an important foundation in building students' character, personality, and identity, so that they can develop into whole individuals. This includes intellectual intelligence as well as emotional and spiritual maturity. Education actually does not only aim to educate the brain, but also functions as a means of fostering values, forming morality, and strengthening the spiritual dimension that is the basis for living a meaningful life. In the context of Islamic education, the development of spiritual intelligence is seen as a very crucial and inseparable component of the entire learning process, as it plays a key role in shaping one's attitudes, behaviors, and value systems. Spiritual intelligence not only directs students to know their God, but also instills an awareness of the purpose of life, the meaning of existence, and moral responsibility in social and environmental relationships.

The development of individual potential occurs through education, including aspects of personality, morals, religion, intelligence, and others. Based on Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, national education has a role to develop potential and form a dignified character and civilization of the nation, aiming to educate the life of the nation and so that students grow into human beings who believe and fear God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and are democratic and responsible citizens.

Learning is not limited to youth alone, but lasts a lifetime. Thus, learning does not solely occur in the school environment, but must continue. The essence of Islamic religious education is to develop children's potential so that they become human beings who believe and are pious, and are able to carry out their role as the caliph of Allah on earth. This essence is the main guideline in the learning process to achieve the best results.

The role of teachers or educators as a key component in the education system is vital in developing the character, intellect, and spirituality of students. A teacher is not only responsible for delivering subject matter, but also educating, directing, and guiding the potential and intelligence that exists in each student as a whole. In carrying out their duties, teachers function as facilitators in the learning process, motivators, value planters, and examples in daily life. Through intensive and continuous interaction with students, teachers are expected to be able to foster the spirit of learning, form positive attitudes, and develop various aspects of intelligence, both intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual. Thus, success in the educational process is greatly influenced by the extent to which a teacher is able to carry out his duties professionally, responsibly, and based on strong moral and religious values.

In general, basic human intelligence is divided into three main categories: intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence. This intelligence works together in building a whole and harmonious human personality. Intellectual intelligence is related to the ability to think logically, analytically, and academically; emotional intelligence includes the ability to manage oneself and others' emotions, build healthy social relationships, and have empathy and self-awareness; while spiritual intelligence is concerned with the ability to give deep meaning to life, live a life according to noble values, and establish a close relationship with the transcendental or divine dimension.

Spiritual intelligence is the foundation for other intelligences, because it serves to provide direction, meaning, and purpose in a person's life. Spiritual intelligence is understood as the ability of individuals to understand and solve problems related to the meaning of life and the values of life. This ability also includes placing one's thoughts, behaviors, and life within a broader and deeper scope of meaning. Through spiritual intelligence, one is able to find meaning in every life experience in both happiness and hardship—as well as consider the moral, ethical, and spiritual aspects of every action and decision taken. This intelligence is a source of inner strength, peace of mind, and clear life directions, thus enabling individuals to face pressure, crisis of meaning, and the complexity of the challenges of the times. Thus, the development of spiritual intelligence is very crucial, especially in the world of education, so that students not only develop intellectually and emotionally, but also have spiritual maturity that will guide them to live a responsible and meaningful life.

Looking at the existing problems, it can be concluded that the development of spiritual intelligence is very crucial to shape students into individuals with high morals and noble spiritual qualities. If the spiritual intelligence possessed by students is not optimized and improved, it can have an influence on the decline of students' intelligence. Therefore, teachers' efforts are needed. In this study, the researcher focuses on moral faith teachers. Teachers of moral faith are expected to be able to optimize these subjects and education as a means to increase the spiritual intelligence of students.

In the context of education, spiritual intelligence is very important for parents to instill in children from an early age. This is because spiritual deepening is the main foundation in forming good morals (*akhlakul karimah*) as a provision in living life. When spiritual values have been integrated in students and manifested in their daily lives, they will be better prepared to face future challenges and be able to achieve happiness and success, both in this world and in the hereafter.

Referring to the background description above, the author considers it important to explore in more depth how the influence of religious culture contributes to the development of the emotional intelligence of students at MTs Jabal Rahmah Palakka, Soppeng Regency. MTs Jabal Rahmah Palakka Soppeng Regency as a research site is a school that has a variety of religious activities to support the improvement of students' spiritual intelligence, such as *Dhuha*, *Zuhur*, and *Asar* prayers in congregation, *tahsin salat*, *tahsin Qur'an*, and others. The implementation of various religious activities reflects systematic efforts in fostering the spiritual intelligence of students through their direct involvement in these religious activities.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study aims to describe and analyze the efforts of *Akidah Akhlak* teachers in improving students' spiritual intelligence through religious culture at MTs Jabal Rahmah Palakka, Soppeng Regency. The research employs a qualitative approach using descriptive methods. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observations, and documentation. The informants in this study consisted of the principal, *Akidah Akhlak* teachers, vice principal, and students from grades VII, VIII, and IX.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Spiritual intelligence

The spiritual intelligence of students at MTs Jabal Rahmah Palakka Soppeng Regency has shown significant and positive development in recent years. This development can be seen from the increasing

awareness of students in carrying out religious teachings consistently, both in the form of individual worship and in social interaction. These changes are not temporary or superficial, but rather show a profound transformation that touches their spiritual consciousness as Muslim individuals who believe and are pious. The increase in spiritual intelligence is reflected in the daily behavior of students, such as increasing order in carrying out congregational prayers, actively following the tadarus of the Qur'an before starting learning, and increasing their polite and polite attitude in communicating with teachers, peers, and other school residents. In addition, the sense of social empathy also grows strong, characterized by the involvement of students in social activities such as social services, donation collection, and concern for the cleanliness of the madrasah environment.

This phenomenon is not the result of spontaneity, but is the fruit of structured and continuous coaching in the madrasah environment. Religious culture built through daily religious activities becomes a strong foundation in the formation of students' character and spiritual intelligence. Routines involving congregational prayers, joint dhikr, and strengthening Islamic values through spiritual coaching programs are an integral part of the educational process at MTs Jabal Rahmah Palakka.

The implementation of religious activities is not only symbolic or a mere formality, but has become part of the heart of madrasah life. Activities such as daily cults, commemoration of Islamic holidays, flash Islamic boarding schools during Ramadan, as well as moral and worship trainings, are organized systematically with the main aim of cultivating and honing the spiritual intelligence of students in the actual context of their lives. Islamic values are instilled through real experience, not just through teaching in the classroom.

This spiritual development process is further strengthened by the example of teachers and educators, especially Akidah Akhlak teachers, who consistently become models in terms of worship, speech, and manners in daily life. The presence of teachers as exemplary figures makes spiritual values easier to accept and internalize by students. They not only hear theories about sincerity or patience, but also witness how those values are embodied in real action by their teachers. More than that, strengthening spiritual intelligence is also carried out through a humanistic and dialogical approach. Teachers opened a space for discussion and reflection with students about the meaning of worship, life goals, and Islamic values that are relevant to the challenges of modern life. With this approach, learners not only carry out religious rituals mechanically, but also understand the deep meaning of each spiritual practice they undertake.

Spiritual activities that are integrated into madrasah life have formed the mindset and attitude of students who are religious, responsible, and able to control themselves in facing various life dynamics. They become more patient, less easily provoked by emotions, and have high social concerns. These attitudes are the main indicators of healthy spiritual intelligence, as affirmed by experts in Islamic education and spiritual psychology. The normative basis can be found in the Qur'an surah Adz-Dzariyat verse 56 which reads:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ٥٦

Translation:

"And I did not create the jinn and mankind but that they should worship me." That is why we need to be careful not to overdo it. Adz-Dzariya/ 51:56)

This verse emphasizes that the existence of humans on earth is not just to live, develop, or seek worldly happiness, but the main purpose is to serve and worship Allah SWT as a form of fulfillment of the purpose of its creation. In the perspective of Islam, this is a manifestation of human nature as a spiritual being who has a natural tendency to know, love, and submit to his God. Therefore, education that relies on strengthening worship and habituating religious values is not only ritualistic, but also an effort to return human beings to their true identity.

The implementation of religious culture in madrasah environments such as MTs Jabal Rahmah Palakka proves that Islamic education that is carried out with seriousness, habituation, and example is able to develop the spiritual potential of students as a whole. School is not only a place for knowledge transfer, but also a field for deep character and spirituality formation. In this context, MTs Jabal Rahmah has made religious values as the spirit of education, not just a complement to the curriculum.

Thus, the spiritual intelligence that develops among the students of MTs Jabal Rahmah Palakka is not only an academic achievement, but also a cultural and spiritual achievement that must be maintained and improved. This success can serve as a model for other Islamic educational institutions in building a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also has spiritual depth, moral nobility, and strong personality integrity. In order to develop the spiritual intelligence of students as a whole, MTs Jabal Rahmah Palakka implements a number of integrative and systematic educational strategies. First, madrasahs build a culture of religious habituation that is carried out through routine activities such as congregational prayers, recitals of the Qur'an, morning dhikr, and joint prayers. This activity is not only a routine, but also used as a medium for the formation of spiritual awareness through repeated direct experiences. Second, an exemplary approach is applied by teachers, especially Akidah Akhlak teachers, who act as moral and spiritual figures in the daily lives of students. Through examples in attitudes, worship, and speech, teachers provide concrete examples that are easy for students to internalize. Third, madrasahs use a reflective and dialogical approach in learning, where teachers open a space for discussion and reflection with students about the meaning of worship, life goals, and

contextual Islamic values. This approach allows students not only to understand the ritual aspect, but also to dive into the inner meaning of religious teachings. Fourth, the collective involvement strategy is carried out by involving all elements of the madrasah principal, teachers, staff, and parents of students to form a conducive spiritual environment inside and outside the classroom. This simultaneous environmental support strengthens the sustainability of the religious culture that has been built. Finally, MTs Jabal Rahmah also integrates socio-religious activities such as social service, humanitarian donations, and participation in community Islamic activities as a form of strengthening *hablumminannas*, so that spiritual intelligence is not only vertical to God, but also touches the social aspect in real terms.

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the spiritual intelligence of students at MTs Jabal Rahmah Palakka grows through a combination of religious habituation strategies, teacher examples, reflective approaches, collective involvement, and the integration of social values. This systematic effort makes madrasahs not only a place of learning, but also a center of spiritual development that has a real impact in forming a generation of noble and spiritually responsible people.

Religious cultural forms

The religious culture at MTs Jabal Rahmah Palakka does not grow spontaneously, but is formed through careful planning and consistent implementation. This madrasah develops an educational atmosphere that not only focuses on the academic aspect, but also brings to life Islamic spiritual values in every aspect of school life. This is reflected in various religious activities that are held in a structured manner and involve all madrasah residents. The embodiment of this religious culture is not limited to the formality of the program, but has become part of the collective identity of the madrasah. One of the tangible forms of the application of this religious culture is the implementation of a daily *kultum* (seven-minute lecture) which is carried out before starting teaching and learning activities. This cult is not only delivered by teachers, but also in turn by students. In this way, students not only listen to religious advice, but are also trained to become agents of conveying Islamic values. It fosters courage, communication skills, and most importantly—spiritual understanding and responsibility.

In addition, the implementation of flash *pesantren* activities during the month of Ramadan is an important moment in deepening the spiritual experience of students. Through this activity, students are not only given more intensive religious materials, but also guided to live the values of patience, discipline, and togetherness. These activities strengthen the habit of daily worship such as congregational prayers, *tadarus Al-Qur'an*, and joint *dhikr*, all of which are directed to build a complete spirituality. The commemoration of Islamic holidays, such as the Prophet's Birthday, *Isra Mikraj*, and Islamic New Year, is also an educational event that is packaged in cultural nuances and *da'wah*. This activity is not just a ceremony, but a media to broaden the Islamic knowledge of students, deepen the love for the Prophet *ﷺ*, and introduce the historical values of the Islamic struggle that can be learned in modern life.

Religious culture at MTs Jabal Rahmah is also manifested through social and religious activities such as social services, fundraising, or visits to orphanages. This activity encourages students to not only be obedient in a vertical relationship with God, but also to have concern for fellow humans. This dimension of *hablumminannas* is one of the important indicators of balanced spiritual intelligence. The formation of religious culture is also inseparable from the strategy of example. Teachers, especially *Akidah Akhlak* teachers and PAI teachers, are always required to be a living example in implementing Islamic values. In this way, learners learn not only from oral teaching, but also from real deeds. This example includes politeness in communication, discipline in worship, and honesty and trust in daily life.

In addition, the regular implementation of spiritual development programs is also an important strategy in shaping the spiritual character of students. In this session, students were given space to do self-reflection, *muhasabah*, and spiritual motivation that touched the heart. This coaching aims to balance the cognitive dimension with affective and spiritual aspects, so that students are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have nobility.

The religious atmosphere is also maintained through a supportive physical and symbolic environment. For example, there are posters of religious motivation, writing verses of the *Qur'an* in classrooms, as well as audio reminders of the call to prayer and *dhikr* that are listened to through loudspeakers. All of this forms a spiritual climate that encourages religious awareness naturally in students' daily lives. These activities are also overseen by a system of evaluation and continuous coaching. Teachers and homeroom teachers are active in monitoring the development of students' religious attitudes through behavioral observations, liaison books, and mentoring activities. This approach does not rely on a punishment system, but rather the reinforcement of values through dialogue, direction, and personal coaching. All of these activities are based on the basic values in Islam about moral education and purification of the soul.

As Allah says in QS. *Al-Jumu'ah* verse 2, that the main task of the Prophet was to recite His verses, purify the soul, and teach wisdom. Therefore, madrasah as the successor to this prophetic mission makes religious culture a way to transform students into people with noble character and aware of their spiritual responsibilities. To ensure that religious culture can run effectively and sustainably, the madrasah implements

various strategies as follows:

Activities such as congregational prayers, morning tadarus, afternoon dhikr, and cults do not only take place sporadically, but are instilled as daily routines that have clear time and responsibilities in the school structure.

Teachers and madrasah heads become role models in morals, worship, and social interaction. They directly exemplify religious attitudes that can be imitated by students.

Students are involved as organizers of religious activities such as being khatib kultum, prayer imams, PHBI committees, and volunteers for social activities. It reinforces responsibility and a sense of belonging to religious values. The religious culture at MTs Jabal Rahmah Palakka is formed through a strategy of habituation, example, and planned spiritual coaching. This strategy is effective in shaping the spiritual intelligence of students, making them religious, socially caring, and noble individuals.

The Efforts of the Moral Teacher

The Moral Faith Teacher at MTs Jabal Rahmah Palakka plays a very important role in fostering and improving the spiritual intelligence of students. They are not only present as theoretical presenters or curriculum teachers, but also as central figures who are able to become real examples in behavior, speech, and worship. Through their presence, Islamic values are not only conveyed, but also lived in the daily lives of students through example and direct interaction. In the context of Islamic education, teachers of Akidah Akhlak carry out the functions of murabbi (educator), mu'allim (teacher), and mursyid (spiritual guide). These three roles are combined in their efforts to nurture students to be not only intellectually intelligent, but also spiritually mature. The spiritual intelligence in question includes self-awareness as a servant of God, the ability to maintain relationships with others, and sensitivity in seeing the meaning and purpose of life based on divine values.

The Moral Faith Teacher in this madrasah actively initiates and facilitates various religious activities that are spiritual developmental. Among them are daily cults, guidance on the tadarus of the Qur'an, strengthening manners in society, and other Islamic activities that are carried out routinely and incidentally. The activity is directed so that students experience the process of internalizing values, not just knowing or memorizing religious teachings.

The teacher's efforts are also very visible in the moment of personal coaching of students. When a student experiences a crisis of confidence, is lazy to worship, or has problems in behavior, the Akidah Akhlak teacher becomes a safe and fostering place for consultation. Through a gentle personal approach based on compassion (mahabbah), teachers strive to revive students' spiritual awareness to return to religious values. Teachers not only give verbal advice, but also invite students to do muhasabah together, discuss the meaning of life, and explain the wisdom behind religious commandments and prohibitions. This process is carried out with a humanistic and educational approach, so that students feel heard, appreciated, and guided towards a higher spiritual consciousness. This is a real form of heart-based and value-based education.

One of the main strengths in the strategy of the Akidah Akhlak teacher is consistency in providing examples. Every teacher's actions are a reflection of the teachings of Islam: how he is honest, patient with students, discipline in worship, and maintaining speech. When teachers exemplify what they teach, students will more easily accept and emulate without feeling patronized. Spiritual strengthening is also carried out by teachers through integrating the values of faith and morals into daily lessons. For example, when discussing the concept of monotheism, the teacher attributed it to the importance of relying solely on Allah when facing life's difficulties. When teaching the chapter of morality to others, the teacher guides students to apply it in their interactions in the madrasah and family environment. In addition to formal learning, teachers also develop spiritual-based character strengthening programs, such as daily adab training, daily prayer exercises, dhuha prayer practices, and Islamic mentoring activities that take place informally. This effort aims to form a religious lifestyle that is rooted in the personality of students, not just a routine that is empty of meaning.

Teachers of Moral Faith also play a role in coordinating synergy between school elements in supporting the spiritual development of students. Together with the head of the madrasah, other teachers, and homeroom teachers, they designed a measurable and sustainable religious program. This collaboration is important so that all components of the school move in one integrated spiritual vision. With all these roles and contributions, the Akidah Akhlak teacher at MTs Jabal Rahmah Palakka not only educates, but also spiritualizes students. They act as guardians of the spirit of Islamic education in madrasahs, which instill the values of faith and noble morals as the main foundation for the lives of students in the present and future.

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that Akidah Akhlak teachers play an important role in shaping the spiritual intelligence of students at MTs Jabal Rahmah Palakka through example, value development, and strengthening religious practices. A systematic and sustainable strategy makes teachers the main motor in instilling the spirit of Islamic spirituality in the lives of students.

CONCLUSION

The spiritual intelligence of students at MTs Jabal Rahmah Palakka has developed positively, marked by increasing awareness of worship, politeness, and social concern. This is reflected in daily routines such as congregational prayers, *tadarus*, *dhikr*, and other religious activities that have become school culture.

Religious culture in madrasahs is built systematically through habituation of religious activities involving all school residents. Activities such as cults, flash Islamic boarding schools, commemorations of Islamic holidays, and social services provide space for students to cultivate spiritual values, ethics, and Islamic character in daily life.

Moral Faith Teachers play a central role in increasing the spiritual intelligence of students. They not only deliver material theoretically, but also become role models in behavior, guides in spiritual activities, and facilitators in the process of internalizing Islamic values.

SUGGESTIONS

For Moral Faith Teachers, it is necessary to continue to develop interactive and contextual learning methods so that the values of faith and morals are more easily internalized by students, it is recommended to improve personal coaching, such as through mentoring or spiritual guidance, so that students feel more emotionally and spiritually cared for, providing consistent examples in attitudes, speech, and deeds as role models in daily life in Madrasah environment.

For the Madrasah (Principal and Staff), it is necessary to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation system for the implementation of religious culture on a regular basis so that its application is not just a formality, giving awards or appreciation to students who are active and consistent in religious activities to increase motivation, expand cooperation with external parties, such as religious leaders, alumni, or religious institutions, in order to enrich spiritual activities in the madrasah.

For students, it is expected to be more active and aware in participating in religious activities at school and making spiritual values as a guideline in daily life, utilizing religious moments as a means of self-reflection and moral improvement, both in the school, home, and community environment.

For Parents/Guardians of Students, it is expected to support the formation of children's religious culture by creating a religious atmosphere at home and setting an example in behaving in Islam, establishing intense communication with the madrasah to monitor the spiritual development of children as a whole.

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