# Formation of Noble Morals through Development of Character Values in Early Childhood (Multi-Site Study at Tarbiyatul Athfal Kindergarten and Beruntung Jaya Kindergarten)

**Darmiyati[1], Alfi Zaida Barirah[2]**

[1] Department, Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar, Universitas Lambung Mangkurat, Banjarmasin dan 70123 Indonesia

[2] Department, Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, Universitas Lambung Mangkurat, Banjarmasin dan 70123 Indonesia

**ABSTRACT:** The purpose of the study was to determine the formation of noble morals through character development in early childhood. A descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques such as interviews, observation, and documentation were used. The study was carried out at Tarbiyatul Athfal Kindergarten Banjarmasin and Beruntung Jaya Kindergarten. Furthermore, data analysis was conducted in phases, including reduction, presentation, and conclusion with various findings. First, the formation of noble morals through character values in early childhood was influenced by habituation. Second, the noble morals in early childhood include religiosity, courtesy, honesty, independence, and discipline. Third, the religious, moral, and skill values were derived from the school's vision and cross-site findings. Lastly, the formation of noble morals was strongly influenced by developing character values in early childhood, including parental support, school environment and infrastructure, and qualified teachers. However, less parental support, limited learning time, and the child's condition inhibited noble morals.

**KEYWORDS:** Formation, noble morals, moral values

## INTRODUCTION

Humans are social beings that cannot live in isolation. Therefore, for people to work harmoniously, fulfill the needs of life, and maintain the rights of others, they must have noble morals (Anwar, 2017). The function of noble morals is to ensure the wellbeing of all individuals by governing their behaviors and interaction (Ulwan, 2012)

According to Dalam Umayah (2016), morality results from education, training, coaching, and earnest struggle. Shoimin (2013) stated that failure to provide the generation with educational stimuli would result in deviant behaviors in society. Sigit (2013) explained that one of the universal human values is character-a person's awareness in acting and behaving. Otib (2015) asserted that character is associated with morals, ethics, noble character, and manners. Good manners involve the values of human life that are truly implemented based on understanding and self-awareness.

According to Ilyas (2015), the development of character involves a variety of role experiences based on certain situations that they are able to overcome character problems of their own volition. This is also supported by Trianto (2011), who affirmed that character education is appropriate if it is instilled from early childhood.

Tarbiyatul Athfal Kindergarten and Beruntung Jaya Kindergarten were selected for the research because they were considered institutions which high moral values are inculcated to students early. Kesuma (2011) explained that kindergarten education is a coaching effort to children aged 0 to 6, conducted through the provision of educational stimuli to promote physical and spiritual growth and development in readiness for higher education.

According to Megawangi (2011), kindergarten education heavily focuses on knowledge content and provides little attention in character building, which has led to smart kids without good manners. Harun (2009) explained that education plays a major role in inculcating moral values in the early years helps children to have noble characters and strong personalities.

Based on the description above, the study was interested in gathering information and knowledge on the formation of noble morals through character development in early childhood at Tarbiyatul Athfal Kindergarten and Beruntung Jaya Kindergarten. This was designed to examine the process of forming noble morals, the characters that lead to the formation of noble morals, and lastly, the supporting and inhibiting factors for forming noble morals in early childhood.

## DISCUSSION

### Formation of Noble Morals through the Development of Character in Early Childhood

Llight of the data obtained from the formation of noble morals through the development of character in early childhood, teachers instill moral values by employing exemplary habituation and giving advice.

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## Habituation

Context of moral formation, children need guidance, a training process, and continuous habitation. This is in accordance with the opinion of the Center for Early Childhood Education and Development (2009), which states that children need exercises and routines. Allowing children to do the same activity repeatedly gives them the opportunity to develop character traits and virtuous habits. Asmani (2012) explains that in the theory of student development, the environment plays a role in moral development as it allows a person to act in accordance with the basic potential that exists. Therefore, the subtle basic potential is continuously directed toward the goals of moral education. The formation of noble morals by habituation means that teachers must use the principle of continuity or routine in all aspects of life. Salahudin (2010) affirms that habituation is a character trait directed toward the moral and the good.

## Exemplary/examples

Engaging children at an early age will help to instill noble morals. For example, letting children dress themselves, attending school on time, tidying up things, and saying thank you when they get help from others, etc.

According to Joseph Joubert in Ernawulan (2015), it states that "Children need models more than they need critics." Syaepul Manan's results in 2017 stated that character education is most effective when students know that it is in accordance with what they see in their teachers. Therefore, teachers should be good role models who can be imitated. Parents, educators, and community should also be good examples to instill good values and build up moral characters in children.

## Giving Advice

Giving advice plays a significant role in shaping the child's personality and promoting noble morals. According to Asmuri (2014), giving advice has a big influence on opening children's hearts to the nature of things. From the findings, pieces of advice such as teaching the children about love and care help to cultivate good morals. In the "Messenger of Allah" narrated by Abu Dawud: "From Amr Bin Shu'aib from his father from his grandfather said: The Messenger of Allah said: "Order your children to pray and beat them at the age of seven years." (Narrated by Abu Dawud)." Fadjar (2009) explained that the hadith of the Prophet contained a way of educating children based on love and punishment. Mulyadi Hermanto (2015) stated that giving advice will foster faith, prepare children's moral, spiritual, and social values.

## The Formation of Noble Morals

The values developed during the formation of noble morals in early childhood include religiosity, courtesy, honesty, independence, and discipline.

## Religiosity

Fadlillah (2014) revealed that religious attitudes involve showing a sense of tolerance towards followers of other beliefs. Religious examples that instill noble morals include teaching children greetings and how to respond, memorizing short letters, readings and prayer movements, asmaul husna, and short hadiths. This is supported by Gunawan (2012), who revealed that religious values lay the foundation of faith in certain cultures. These values are implemented according to the child's abilities, such as habituation of good behavior in everyday life. Yenni Mutiawati (2013) stated that character education involves supporting the growth of a child's personality according to the moral and social values existing in society. For instance, the development of the Islamic personality in early childhood is grounded on Islamic moral and social values.

## Courtesy

The results showed that politeness helps to form a noble character. This is manifested by how children kiss the hands of teachers and parents and say such words as sorry and thank you. According to Pranowo (2009), politeness in language shows a gentle attitude in the behavior of a person. Therefore, the more polite a person's language is, the smoother the character and personality of that person will be. Marmawi's (2018) stated that a teacher has a great role in showing politeness to students by practicing it for students to imitate. In the end, the children get accustomed to the virtue of politeness, thereby start applying it both in word and deed. **Honesty**
The results showed that honesty plays a role in the formation of noble morals. Schiller in Yaumi (2014) asserted that honesty leads to a fulfilling life and promotes mutual trust. To support this assertion, Nina Kurniah's (2017) stated that honesty could be built through simple daily activities such as effective communication and creating healthy relationships. Honesty helps to build good communication skills between parents and children, which in the end leads to trust. **Independence**
Early childhood education helps children to gain lifelong skills. According to Erik Erikson in Martini Yamin, each stage of life from infancy determines the development of the child's independence. From the findings, independence is exhibited in various ways, including cleaning up eating utensils, tidying up toys, going to the toilet without being assisted by the teacher, and doing their homework. Stein and Book (2009) stated that independence is the ability to direct and control oneself in thinking, acting, and being emotionally independent. Rika Sa'diyah's (2017) also stated that independence gives children the ability to think and do things independently. **Discipline**
From the results, it was found that discipline helps in the formation of noble morals. The children are taught to obey rules such as attending school on time, obeying the teachers, putting shoes on the shelf, and bringing complete school equipment. This is in accordance with the statement from Wiyani (2009), maintaining discipline in early childhood helps children aged 0-6 to develop their self-regulatory abilities. In study of Martha Rika Partikasari (2020), it applied various theoretical perspectives of classical psychology

about how the teacher should instill disciplined behavior and found that they should set rules that every child must obey. According to Wibowo (2012), the art of disciplining in early childhood entails giving rules, instilling the perception that discipline is important, firmly identifying what is right and what is wrong, and giving motivation and praise if the child does something according to the slightest command. Wiyani (2013) also said that in applying discipline, parents and teachers should use ways that can increase children's motivation to behave well.

**Targeted Characters in the Formation of Noble Morals through the Development of Character**
The character values that are the targets of the formation of noble character are religious, moral, and skill values.
**Religious Values**
Religious values, which are targeted in the formation of noble character in early childhood, are accustomed to reading prayers before and after doing something and memorizing short letters and other related matters. This is expressed by Sukidi (2014) that religious habituation is the process of making something or someone become accustomed to doing something repeatedly. Azmi (2010) also explained that habituation of religious values would help students to familiarize themselves with thinking and act according to the guidance of the religious teachings they learn. This is in line with results by Yulia Nayriza (2012), which stated that religious education is a guide for physical and spiritual growth obtained through directing, teaching, training, nurturing, and supervising the application of all Islamic teachings. **Moral Values**
Study revealed a need to teach the children to distinguish between wrong and right behavior. These teachings include helping each other, respecting elders, forgiving one another, and being respectful. According to Plato (2014), moral development in the early years helps children become accustomed to justice, simplicity, and courage. Farhan stated that moral development in children is considered successful when they finally behave well. Grusec (2006) explained that when moral value lessons are abandoned, the nation is at risk of losing a piece of peace from our culture. Thomas Lickona (2015) also revealed that morals would grow by learning from how other people behave, the lessons generated from what was seen and processed in the heart determine whether it is good or bad. **Skill Value**
The study results showed that skill value could be gained by allowing children to interact with other people and giving them the opportunity to solve problems. According to Vayrynen (2016), children who get through the day at school can be believed to have developed social skills. Semrud Clikeman (2009) asserted that children develop social skills during early childhood through interaction with teachers, working together during learning, playing with friends, and interacting with people around them in and outside the classroom. The results from Isah Cahyani's (2018) showed that social skills allow children to interact with other people. In the end, the children form social skills through experiences and observations from their surroundings.

**Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Formation of Noble Morals through the Development of Character The**
Supportive parents, qualified teachers, and adequate facilities are supporting factors that help to build noble character. However, lack of cooperation between parents, limited learning time, and the condition of the child is detrimental to noble character formation.

**CONCLUSIONS**
First, the formation of noble morals in early childhood is achieved by forming noble character by habituation. Second, the students will easily imitate and develop noble character by learning from their teachers and parents. Third, noble character formation by giving advice will promote and open the heart of a child.
Religious values develop noble characters imparted early in life. For instance, introducing Islam to a child will help to develop an Islamic personality in their souls. Courtesy helps children be good in behavior and speech, while honesty assists aids in bringing up children who can be trusted in words, actions, and work. The value of independence makes children selfindependent. Lastly, the value of discipline helps to produce children who behave in an orderly and obedient manner to various provisions and regulations.
Characters targeted for the formation of noble morals are, first, Habituation and application of religious values-based behavior, which will help to develop religious characters in children. Second, Habituation and application of moral value-based behavior help children to have commendable character, while Habituation and application of skill value-based behavior will shape the children to become social and independent.
Moreover, supporting factors in forming noble character include parental support, facilities and infrastructure, and teacher knowledge, while inhibiting factors are lack of parental support, limited learning time, and child conditions.
Based on the results, it was concluded that Kindergarten Principals should make written documentation concerning the rules for each child's activities at school. The written rules will remind the students about school values and expectations. Besides, all school members will be accountable and responsible for their actions. Teachers should participate in every activity and provide exemplary and real examples for students to emulate. Therefore, the future study should reference materials related to the formation of noble character to produce complete and better results.

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