



The Effectiveness of the Montessori Method in Shaping Children's Character: A Case Study on the Formation of Moral and Religious Values in Children Aged 3–6 Years at Alifa Muslim Montessori Yogyakarta

Nabila Khairun Nisa', Sudarmadi, Anip Dwi Saputro
Postgraduate Program, Universitas Muhammadiyah Ponorogo
Email: belakhan.mb@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: *This study aims to examine the effectiveness of the Montessori method in shaping children's character, focusing on the development of moral and Islamic values in children aged 3–6 years at Alifa Muslim Montessori Yogyakarta. A mixed-method approach with an exploratory sequential design was employed. The qualitative approach involved descriptive case studies through observation, interviews, and documentation, while the quantitative approach used questionnaires with Respondent Achievement Rate (TCR) and regression analysis. Findings indicate that the Montessori method plays a significant role in fostering focus, independence, and moral awareness among children. It also enhances their ability to internalize religious values through daily practices such as prayer, honesty, responsibility, and empathy. Quantitative results show that the effectiveness of the Montessori method is categorized as 'Good' for variable X (82%) and 'Very Good' for variable Y (88%). Regression analysis reveals that 47.7% of character formation is influenced by the Montessori method, while 52.3% is explained by other factors. Thus, the Montessori method is proven effective in supporting the holistic development of children's moral and religious character in early childhood education.*

Sebagai upaya dalam menghadapi cepatnya informasi yang didapatkan oleh anak pada era digital 4.0 yang akan

menjadi pengaruh signifikan terhadap karakter anak maka Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui efektivitas metode Montessori dalam pembentukan karakter anak, dengan studi kasus yang berfokus pada pembentukan moral dan nilai-nilai agama anak usia 3-6 tahun. Metode yang digunakan untuk menelaah penelitian ini adalah dengan menggunakan pendekatan campuran atau *mix methods* dengan model *exploratory sequential design* dan penelitian ini didukung dengan kualitatif deskriptif (studi kasus) dalam pendekatan kualitatif serta menggunakan TCR (Tingkat Capaian Responden) yang kemudian dianalisis dengan menggunakan regresi sederhana untuk pendekatan kuantitatif. Peran metode Montessori mejadikan anak terbiasa melatih fokusnya dalam mengerjakan dan menggunakan alat diktatik, karena jika fokus anak mulai terbentuk akan memudahkan anak menerima pembelajaran lainnya. Berdasarkan data yang diperoleh metode Montessori memiliki peran penting dalam pembentukan karakter anak terutama pembentukan moral dan nilai-nilai agama Islam. dan tingkat efektivitas metode Montessori dalam pembentukan karakter anak dalam kategori Baik untuk variable X dan Sangat Baik untuk varibel Y dengan efektivitas penggunaan metode Montessori dalam pembentukan karakter anak adalah 47,7 % sedangkan 52,3 % lainnya menggunakan pendekatan yang lainnya.

Keywords: Keywords: Montessori, Character Education, Moral Values, Religious Values, Early Childhood

INTRODUCTION

The formation of children's character in the digital era 4.0 has become a critical issue, particularly for the generation born in 2010 and beyond, often referred to as Generation Alpha. Rapid technological development exposes children to abundant and fast-changing information, leading to challenges in moral and religious education. The Montessori method, emphasizing independence, focus, and experiential learning, is considered a relevant approach to address these challenges. Alifa Muslim Montessori Yogyakarta applies this method with a vision to balance academic and religious education, making it an ideal context to study how Montessori contributes to shaping children's moral and Islamic values.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Character education has been defined as efforts to shape children's habits and actions aligned with national traditions and universal principles (Suyanto, 2012). Early childhood is the golden age for cognitive, emotional, moral, and religious growth (Suryana, 2013). Parents, educators, and the environment are central in building a child's character. The Montessori method, introduced by Maria Montessori, emphasizes independence, sensory-based learning, and moral development. Islamic scholars such as Al-Ghazali also highlight stages in moral and religious character building: ta'dib, takhdib, and ta'lim. Meanwhile, Thomas Lickona underscores three components of character: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Integrating these perspectives supports the view that Montessori can effectively enhance children's character and values.

METHODS

This study used a mixed-method design with an exploratory sequential model. Participants consisted of 54 students (35 from Kindergarten A and 19 from Kindergarten B). However, the quantitative analysis focused on Kindergarten B due to their more advanced exposure to the Montessori method. Data collection techniques included unstructured interviews, participant observation, and documentation for qualitative analysis, while questionnaires based on a Likert scale and Respondent Achievement Rate (TCR) were employed for quantitative analysis. Statistical tests included normality, linearity, and simple regression tests.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the Montessori method at Alifa Muslim Montessori Yogyakarta includes three main aspects: (1) Environment: designed as a 'Children's House' to foster comfort, independence, and sensory-motor stimulation. (2) Active Learning: children follow structured daily routines such as prayer, reading, using didactic tools, and practicing social skills. (3) Holistic Education: integration of motor, sensory, language, moral, and Islamic values. This combination builds children's focus and independence, enabling them to internalize moral and religious values effectively.

Quantitative analysis showed that variable X achieved 82% (Good) and variable Y achieved 88% (Very Good). Regression results indicated that the Montessori method explains 47.7% of children's character formation, while 52.3% is influenced by other factors. These findings align with Lickona's theory of character education and Al-

Ghazali's concept of moral development, confirming the Montessori method as an effective educational tool for shaping both moral and religious character in early childhood.

CONCLUSION

The Montessori method significantly contributes to the formation of children's character, particularly in developing moral and Islamic values in early childhood. The study found that Montessori fosters independence, focus, honesty, empathy, and religious awareness through structured routines and didactic activities. Statistical findings further support its effectiveness, with high TCR scores and regression analysis demonstrating substantial influence. Teacher and parent collaboration is essential in sustaining these outcomes, ensuring consistent reinforcement at school and at home. Therefore, Montessori can be regarded as an effective model for integrating character education and religious values in early childhood learning contexts.

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