Enhancing Student Morality Through Religious Extracurricular Activities in the COVID-19 Pandemic Era: A Case Study in Elementary Schools in Bogor City

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study examines improving student morality through religious extracurricular activities during the COVID-19 pandemic in Bogor City, West Java elementary schools.
Design/methods/approach – Employing a case study method, this research was conducted at SDN Empang 02, Bogor City. Data was collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Data analysis was performed interactively and reflectively to ensure validity through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability criteria.
Findings – The findings indicate a significant improvement in students' morality at SDN Empang 02 Bogor during the COVID-19 pandemic. The religious extracurricular program, focusing on developing students' talents and interests, has been effectively planned, organized, implemented, and supervised.
Research implications – This study provides new insights into the importance of religious extracurricular activities in shaping student morality, especially in the context of the pandemic. These findings emphasize the need for a comprehensive and integrated approach to education, focusing on academic aspects and developing students' morality and character.

1. Introduction

Education aims to shape wholly developed individuals, with the moral character being a primary indicator. A national generation characterized by noble character is a desired outcome of national educational practices (Rusydi, 2018). Consequently, education is vitally important for humans as beings entrusted with tasks by the Creator. Through education, individuals are taught to recognize, understand, and apply the knowledge and skills bestowed upon them. With these skills and knowledge, humans can fulfill their tasks as individuals and as members of society or organizations. In Islam, education is a mandated religious practice for every Muslim.

The ability of students to grow more effectively with guidance and encouragement tailored to their interests and talents is in line with the goal of education itself. This goal is to develop students' potential to become faithful and devout to the Almighty God, morally upright, physically and spiritually healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, independent, and responsible democratic citizens (Sujana, 2019).

The formation of students' character can be facilitated through academic interactions in schools, including good character development. It is widely believed that moral improvement can be instilled through education within the family and moral education in schools. This is essential to filter out negative external influences such as harmful website information, foreign cultures, games, and information from

various social media platforms that reach the public. Many phenomena indicate that these factors significantly influence students' morals and character (H.Y.S. Santosa Giriwijoyo, 2012).

Regarding moral enhancement, the learning and teaching process demands maximal effort, not only in imparting knowledge but also in guiding and assisting students to develop optimally according to their potential. Students need to be guided, directed, and nurtured through various positive activities to achieve this goal. One forum for fostering activities in schools is religious extracurricular activities. Religious extracurricular activities refer to activities organized to provide students with opportunities to develop their personalities in line with religious values. The fundamental goal is to shape educated and devout individuals (Hadi, 2021).

Fundamentally, there is no principal difference between religious and general extracurricular activities, except in the orientation of their implementation towards Islamic teachings and the types of activities conducted. Religious extracurricular activities focus more on Islamic values, such as Dhuha prayer, religious lectures, Tadarus Al-Qur'an, MTQ, Khitabah, Hadrah, Marawis art, and other religious social programs students conduct outside the curriculum.

Observations conducted at SDN 02 Empang, Bogor City, in June 2020 revealed that before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, the school had organized various extracurricular activities focusing on religious education. These activities included Marawis art, Al-Qur'an reading and writing lessons (BTQ), Tahfidz Al-Qur'an, Pencak Silat, Dhuha prayer, religious lectures, and scouting. Even though learning shifted to online methods during the pandemic, there was a significant improvement in students' morals, particularly in their interactions with teachers. Additionally, the students adhered well to school rules, indicating practical cooperation between school management and parents in supporting the learning process at home.

Based on these phenomena, this research focuses on the improvement of student morals in elementary schools in Bogor City through religious extracurricular activities during the COVID-19 pandemic era. The aim is to identify key factors contributing to the moral improvement of students in this context. The findings of this study are expected to provide new insights and serve as a meeting point in summarizing different approaches in education, integrating pragmatic and religious educational objectives.

2. Methods

This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study methodology. The objective is to explore and investigate information objectively obtained from informants, allowing the data to be depicted engagingly up to the point of discovery. The motivation behind the in-depth case study is to provide an objective, authentic, and accurate portrayal of the researched reality (Moleong, 2018).

The selected location is SDN Empang 02 in Bogor City, a school that implements religious extracurricular learning in its educational environment. The primary data sources for this research are the school principal, vice principal for curriculum, extracurricular coordinators, religious and character education teachers, counseling teachers, students, and educational staff.

The data collection techniques used are observation, interviews, documentation, and literature study. Supporting documents include the student database and school profile. The data analysis technique employed follows the data analysis flow of Miles and Huberman (Taufik, 2015).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. *Planning of Religious Extracurricular Activities at SDN Empang 02 Bogor City*

The SDN Empang 02 Bogor City findings indicate that religious extracurricular activities are well-planned as part of the school curriculum. Planning processes involve early academic year

teacher meetings, establishing activity schedules, allocating a budget for extracurricular activities, and engaging all human resource components, from coordinators and instructors to the school's board of supervisors. The execution of these activities includes both preparation processes and actual event management. Supervision involves assigning teachers and instructors to monitor extracurricular activities during and post-events. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these activities were conducted virtually, but in the last year, they have been held face-to-face, adhering to health protocols (Sri Wahyuni-Principal, interview, Date: 29-09-2020).

Planning is crucial in determining the programs to be implemented. It involves a series of decisions and explanations of goals, policy determination, program selection, methods, specific procedures, and daily schedule activities (Majid, 2011). This aligns with findings at SDN 02 Bogor, where extracurricular activity planning involves teacher meetings, activity scheduling, budget allocation, and all human resource components. Kulsum argues that effective planning is instrumental in realizing students' internalization of moral values and influencing their behavior (Kulsum, 2017). Goals must be clearly and structurally defined (Sanjaya, 2010), and program arrangements are essential for stakeholders to achieve set objectives (Terry, 2012). Hence, well-planned religious extracurricular activities have professional implications and provide mental readiness and motivation for learning activities. Planning also influences students' morals in developing consistent attitudes, professionalism, and visionary thinking.

3.2. Organization and Types of Religious Extracurricular Activities at SDN Empang 02 Bogor City

Findings reveal that religious extracurricular activities at SDN Empang 02 Bogor City are well-organized. The principal oversees these activities, with the vice principal for student affairs as the coordinator. Instructors include religious and moral education teachers with a structured schedule and groupings for activities and established rules for implementation. Instructors synergize with other subject teachers for effective organization. Activities include Marawis art, Al-Qur'an reading and writing, Tahfidz Al-Qur'an, Dhuha prayer, Hadrah, short lectures after Dhuhr prayer, scouting, and Pencak Silat (Sri Wahyuni-Principal, interview, Date: 29-09-2020). Instructors adopt strategies for effective and engaging religious extracurricular activities, incorporating online platforms like WhatsApp, Google Drive, and Google Meet. Instruction methods include inquiry, demonstration, lectures, drills, and simulations. Content is delivered via video recordings, and instructors occasionally visit students' homes, following health protocols. Activities are tailored to students' interests and potentials (Sri Wahyuni-Principal, interview, Date: 29-09-2020). This aligns with Sigit Purnama's views on the effectiveness of educational technology in creating meaningful learning experiences (Purnama, 2018). Hadi states that religious extracurricular activities are designed outside regular school hours, catering to students' interests and talents (Hadi, 2021). These activities instill values like leadership, independence, loyalty, cooperation, patriotism, social skills, brotherhood, and responsibility, ultimately enhancing students' morals.

3.3. Students' Morals at SDN Empang 02 Bogor City

The study shows that SDN Empang 02 Bogor City students exhibit good morals, especially in interactions with teachers, parents, and peers. Despite the shift to online learning during the pandemic, students maintained discipline, adhered to school rules, and showed enthusiasm for scheduled school activities, including religious extracurricular activities. There were no reported violations related to ethics, morals, or behavior. The students were disciplined, respectful, well-dressed, responsible, and adhered to school rules (Chairil et al., interview, Date: 30-09-2020). This finding supports Sutarto's opinion that disciplined behavior in school members significantly impacts

the school environment (Sutarto, 2019). Online learning poses challenges in preparation and execution, requiring mature strategies, methods, and models for effective outcomes (Annisa et al., 2021).

3.4. Enablers and Barriers to Religious Extracurricular Learning at SDN Empang 02 Bogor City

The study identifies factors supporting religious extracurricular activities at SDN Empang 02 Bogor, including full support from the principal, cooperation between teachers and parents, competent instructors, adequate facilities, and enthusiastic student participation (Sri Wahyuni, interview, Date: 29-09-2020). This aligns with Hasan's view on the importance of school management, community support, teacher dedication, learning facilities, and funding (Hasan, 2010). However, barriers include the prolonged pandemic, limited number of competent instructors, limited learning time, and sometimes inadequate internet connectivity. These challenges indicate the need for programmed evaluations to find solutions for out-of-curricular learning activities (Bahri, 2019).

3.5. Solutions to Overcome Barriers in Extracurricular Learning at SDN Empang 02 Bogor City

To address these challenges, the school optimizes the roles of existing coordinators and instructors, enhances their competencies through online scientific activities like webinars and workshops, and involves parents in home-based training and learning, given the limited learning time during the pandemic (Chairil Afriansyah, interview, Date: 30-09-2020). Yustisia highlights the importance of conducive and dynamic learning interactions and effective communication between instructors and students (Yustisia, 2012). The school also facilitates virtual activities for students and teachers (M. et al., 2022). Hypnotherapy training is another solution for enhancing learning progress, focusing on creating a comfortable learning environment internally and externally (Ratnawati, 2010).

4. Conclusion

This research has thoroughly examined the impact of religious extracurricular activities on the moral improvement of students at SDN Empang 02 Bogor City during the COVID-19 pandemic. Adopting a case study methodology, data was gathered through participative observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, emphasizing interactive and reflective data analysis. The study's findings indicate that structured and effective religious extracurricular programs significantly contribute to the moral enhancement of students. This is reflected in students' positive behaviors in interactions with teachers, parents, and peers, as well as their adherence to school rules. The use of effective and engaging educational technology in extracurricular activities, along with active involvement from all educational components at the school, including principals, teachers, and parents, has supported the creation of a conducive learning environment.

However, the research also identifies several obstacles in implementing extracurricular activities, such as the limited human resources of teaching staff, constrained time, and internet connectivity issues. Proposed solutions to overcome these challenges include optimizing the roles and functions of existing coordinators/instructors, enhancing trainers' competencies through online scientific activities, and involving parents in the home learning process. Overall, this study provides new insights into the importance of religious extracurricular activities in shaping student morals, especially in the context of the pandemic situation. These findings underscore the need for a comprehensive and integrated approach in education that emphasizes not only academic aspects but also students' moral and character development.

Declarations

Author contribution statement

Muhammad Hidayat Ginanjar compiled the ideas presented—Irvansyah was the data collector. Muhamad Syukur and Rahman developed the theory. All authors performed data analysis. All authors discussed the results and contributed to the final manuscript.

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Data availability statement

The datasets generated during and analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Declaration of Interest's statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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