

INSTILLING ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND NATURALISTIC INTELLIGENCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF A KINDERGARTEN IN INDONESIA

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Abstract: Children should be exposed to character education at an early age. Naturalistic intelligence and environmental consciousness should be introduced and instilled early on. The 2013 Curriculum includes this love of nature as one of the components of religious and moral growth. In spiritual and ethical development, we learn about the value and respect for God's creations as well as appropriate behavior toward other living beings, including plants and animals. The loving-nature mindset is integrated into the learning objectives of religious values and character in the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka). This study aims to describe the forms of nature-loving education in a kindergarten in Indonesia and the types of activities that children can engage in. This research employs a qualitative methodology with a case study approach. The population of this study consists of all 18 children in Kindergarten B. Data collection was conducted using observation and checklist assessment techniques, and data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman technique. The results indicate that children are more enthusiastic about visiting animal enclosures directly and creating crafts from recycled materials as part of fostering naturalistic intelligence and a love for nature.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education Curriculum, Implementation in Preschool Units, Attitude of Love for Nature, Natural Intelligence

A. Introduction

A great nation is created from a good education. This is supported by the educational curriculum used in various educational institutions. To achieve quality education, it is necessary to have a curriculum that is integrated with the needs of students which are interconnected with an attitude of caring for the environment, love of nature, and so on. Activities to preserve the environment fall into one of the multiple intelligences that must be stimulated from an early age, namely naturalist intelligence (Saripudin, 2017). An attitude of love for nature is not only something that must and needs to be done because it is contained in the Education law, but the meaning contained is much broader than that. Protecting nature is a form of evidence that naturalist intelligence is well stimulated and a form of the attitude of a Muslim as explained in the concept of Islamic education in various schools which use the Koran as a basis for implementing rules and laws (Ibrahim, 2021).

In realizing good quality and increasing resources to be able to compete globally, education is the main thing to pay attention to while still paying attention to the element of togetherness even though they come from different races. (Yayan Alpian, Sri Wulan Anggraeni, Unika Wiharti, 2019).

Based on the diversity of religions in Indonesia, every formal and non-formal education in Indonesia must be able to integrate a curriculum based on religious education. The need for every level of education to integrate religious-based education is not difficult to do, more broadly it has even become something that needs to be done by every educational institution. Bearing in mind that this policy has been stated directly in the educational curriculum used. The policy regarding the emphasis on religious-based education was previously stated in the 2013 curriculum and is also included in the Merdeka curriculum. So, this is a very fundamental basis for every educational institution to include religious-based learning. In the 2013 curriculum, religious-based education places more emphasis on aspects of religious and moral development.

The development of developmental and moral aspects is closely related to the formation of character and moral values in early childhood. 9 characteristics need to be instilled in children from an early age, namely love for Allah and the universe and its

contents, responsibility, discipline and independence, honesty, respect and politeness, compassion, care and cooperation, self-confidence, creativity, hard work, and abstinence. Surrender, justice and leadership, kindness and humility, tolerance, love of peace and unity (Indra Prasetia, Amiruddin, Nuraini, Arnisa Nadya, Abdu Mizar Ridho, Susanti, 2023).

Many forms of religious-based education have been found in Indonesia, such as TPQ (Qur'an Education Park), TBA (Children's Development Park), TAAM (Muslim Children's Foster Park), AL Qur'an PAUD, and so on. (Kebudayaan, 2015). The Islamic education curriculum places more emphasis on activities, knowledge, and experience sequentially for students to achieve the goals of Islamic education. (Noorzanah, 2017). The emphasis in developing a religious-based curriculum in the independent curriculum is on learning outcomes for elements of religious values and character. (Badan Standar, Kurikulum, Dan Asesmen Pendidikankementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, 2022). It contains an aspect of learning that emphasizes practice and interaction with others and nature. (Kurniasari & Susanti, 2021).

Students are not only taught to love themselves but also other creatures as a form of love and care for others. A form of caring for others, namely animals and plants. In PAUD units based on the Merdeka curriculum which is integrated with religious-based curriculum learning or Islamic religious curriculum education can be found in activities carried out in children's activities at school. One of them is activities that can bring children closer to natural activities such as playing or interacting directly with nature. One of the activities is gardening. Gardening activities not only emphasize the aspect of love for His creation but also teach children to know more about the process of growth of various types of plants in the garden such as vegetables, fruit, and so on, thereby instilling an attitude of love for food and not being picky about food. Again in the future (Fitriah et al., 2021). Through gardening activities, children not only know the process of farming but also become more grateful for plants as his creation.

The urgency of character education for a nation makes this material one of the important lessons in the world of education.

Character is a character that comes from within humans so it is a characteristic that differentiates it from other creatures (Jamhariani, 2020). Character education is the process of instilling attitudes and values in every school member, where several key elements are interconnected: knowledge, awareness or intention, and actions. By fostering these elements, individuals can embody values that honor God Almighty, demonstrate self-respect and love for others, care for the environment, and show patriotism. This holistic approach aims to nurture well-rounded individuals. (Chusnani, 2013). The introduction and instillation of character values need to be stimulated from childhood, including fostering a sense of care for the environment and a love of nature. (Oktamarina, 2021).

Nowadays there is widespread environmental damage caused by things that are considered trivial. Character education in this case has an important role because by providing character education in formal, informal, and non-formal institutions it can give full awareness of the need to maintain the balance of nature without destroying it. People's irresponsible behavior damages the environment. They do trivial things that are not even considered very serious, such as picking flowers for personal use or selfie photos, carelessly stepping on plants, and throwing rubbish carelessly. In rivers, the use of plastic materials which can damage the environment, excessive use of water sources, and illegal hunting of animals (Ruqoyyah Fitri, 2017). As a result of ignoring this and the lack of public awareness in protecting the surrounding environment, disasters occur everywhere. Natural disasters like floods, landslides, forest fires, and so forth are frequently caused by human negligence to preserve the environment. (Chandrawati & Aisyah, 2022).

At schools, fostering a love for nature can be achieved through various activities, such as encouraging children to care for their surroundings, water the plants in the schoolyard, sweep the school grounds, and refrain from littering. An attitude of love for nature is a conscious effort that needs to be instilled from an early age, especially in young children. The child needs the adults in their environment to guide them to support this. The attitude of love for nature is a form of gratitude towards nature by protecting and caring for it. Teachers as adults who

are around children when children are at school need to teach this. There are many ways that teachers can develop children's love for the natural world around them. Such as providing motivational support every time a child does something good, such as throwing away rubbish in its place, keeping the school yard clean, and so on. Some of these things must be present in the child so that with full awareness and independence the child will do these things by himself. Several things make it difficult for children to be independent in doing various things, namely children's dependence on the role of the adults around them. Worse yet, many adults do not give children the confidence to be able to carry out their tasks and obligations, making it difficult for children to complete the tasks they have been given. And there is no reward for the results they have worked on (Kamil & Asriyani, 2023).

An attitude of love for nature is included in naturalist intelligence. According to Semiawan in (Febriyanti AS, 2016), naturalist intelligence is the ability to recognize the flora and fauna around children. More specifics include knowing and loving nature, such as getting to know plants, looking after animals, and creating a clean environment.

Based on the background above, the author is interested in conducting research related to the implementation of the Islamic religious education curriculum in PAUD units in developing an attitude of love for nature. Many previous researchers have conducted research related to variable X, such as research conducted by Nurjannah. It is known that gardening activities can improve character education that cares about the environment. Nurjannah explained that gardening activities can build children's character, especially character education that cares about the environment. Apart from that, various aspects of children's development are well simulated through this activity, such as cognitive, emotional, physical, motoric, and social. (Nurjannah et al., 2022). The second research was conducted by Annisa et al. The difference between the first and second research is in the research method used. The first study used descriptive qualitative research, while the research conducted by Annisa, et al used classroom action research. Annisa explained that gardening activities can improve children's environmentally caring character. It is known

that gardening activities are implemented in spinach planting activities. In each research cycle carried out there was a significant increase in environmental care attitudes in children, namely 17% in the first cycle and 77% in the second cycle. (Marietta, Annisa Dwi, Evin Darmawani, 2019).

The difference between the two studies above and the one the researcher will carry out lies in the research variables and the type of research method that will be used. The focus of the research variable is to develop an attitude of love for nature and the research method that will be used is a qualitative method with a case study approach.

B. Method

This research uses a qualitative type with a case study approach. Case study research is research that provides researchers with the opportunity to conduct a wider exploration of a particular case or phenomenon at a certain time where information is collected in detail and detail using various data collection methods over a predetermined period (Kamil et al., 2023).

This research uses a qualitative type with a case study approach. Case study research allows researchers to conduct a broader exploration of a particular case or phenomenon at a specific time, where detailed information is gathered using various data collection methods over a predetermined period. (Kamil et al., 2023). The population in this study was all 18 children from Kindergarten IB 68. The samples in this study were early childhood children aged 5-6 years who were in class B1. The research was conducted for approximately 2 weeks by observing and analyzing children's behavior during the activity. The research was conducted from the second week of February 2023 to the third week of February 2023. The data analysis technique follows the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing, and verification. (Kamil & Anggraeni HR, 2023).

C. Result and Discussion

Based on research that researchers have conducted, data has been obtained that several simple activities in the school

environment can foster an attitude of love for nature. This is following the Merdeka curriculum with elements of religious values and character. An attitude of love for nature is part of character education that needs to be taught to children from an early age. The character trait of caring for the natural environment is reflected in actions that demonstrate a commitment to protecting it. Usually, this attitude is shown by several awareness actions such as protecting the surrounding environment from damage. (Ismail, 2021). Wilson (in Firdausyi & Marlisa, 2022) stated that there are 12 indicators of naturalist intelligence, namely as follows:

1. Pay attention to the patterns and rhythms of the environment easily starting from observing, distinguishing, and finding similarities or oddities in the patterns observed.
2. Shows details of environmental issues that others often ignore.
3. Has a perfect and detailed memory for observations of various things in the surrounding environment.
4. Have a perfect and detailed memory for observing various things in the environment.
5. Likes animals and finds out things related to them.
6. Enjoy outside activities such as gardening, camping, hiking or climbing, exploring, and others.
7. Has a hobby of reading books, and watching video shows containing information about nature and all its contents and phenomena.
8. Storing collections originating from observations or experiences of nature.

Table 1. Indicators of Naturalist Intelligence

Value	Indicator
Children love the natural environment.	Children enjoy participating in activities in nature.
	Children love animals
	Children use used materials for creativity.

Based on the indicator table above, the researcher summarizes several indicators that the researcher will use as indicators for assessing attitudes toward nature. The indicators are as follows:

Table 2. Guidelines for Observing Love of Nature

Indicator	Kinds of Activity
Children enjoy participating in activities in nature	Children participate actively when invited to take a walk directly into nature
	Children are enthusiastic when playing in nature.
Children love animals	Children visit directly to the goat pen.
Children use used materials for creativity.	Children use used materials to make toys.

As for the assessment for each indicator item, the researcher determined a score range from 1-4 with categories 1 (the child does not understand yet), 2 (the child has begun to understand based on the teacher's direction), 3 (the child understands even though the teacher sometimes still reminds him), and 4 (the child already understands the explanation given by the teacher without having to be reminded again). The researchers carried out this observation and research by observing children's behavior regarding the indicators listed using the assessment observation guidelines above. The following is the child's data based on the following assessment observation guidelines:

Table 3. Results of observations on children

Initials	Gender	R1	R2	R3	R4
CA	F	3	2	4	4
YS	M	2	3	3	4
FA	M	2	3	3	4
RP	F	3	2	4	3
AA	M	2	2	4	4
AMP	F	3	2	3	3

GP	M	3	2	4	4
ZR	F	2	3	3	3
AU	M	4	2	4	3
AI	F	4	3	3	3
SS	F	3	2	4	3
KS	M	4	2	3	4
ZPM	F	2	3	4	3
SB	M	4	2	3	3
JO	F	3	4	4	4
APD	M	3	3	3	3
LMG	F	4	2	4	4
JH	M	2	2	3	3

Based on the data in the table, information is obtained that some children already understand loving nature and the environment as a form of self-interpretation of naturalist intelligence. This is evidenced by several children who got a score range of 3 to 4. For a score range of 3 in the category children already understand what to do even though sometimes they need the teacher's help to remind the child. The score range for the children category understands the teacher's explanation without having to explain it in more detail. The reason for loving nature is that with a score of 4, there are 5 children out of a total sample of 18 children. This means that the other 6 children are still in the score range 1 and 2, namely the children still do not understand the explanation given by the teacher and the children have begun to understand the teacher's explanation.

Children are enthusiastic when playing in nature, 6 children have a score of 3, and 1 child has a score of 4. 11 other children are in the score range of 1 and 2. For the indicator of the number of children responding to the activity of visiting the goat drum, there are still children who don't like the activity. Of this number, 9 children were in the score range 3, and 8 children were in the score range 4. This shows that almost all class B1 children understand and comprehend that playing in nature and visiting animal enclosures is something that needs to be done as a form of interpreting an attitude of love towards nature. For the activity of

using used materials in toys, there were 10 children with a score of 3, meaning children who enjoyed the activity based on the explanation given by the teacher but still had teacher guidance in the process, and 8 children got a score of 4.

Based on the data in the table above, it is known that in general children understand and comprehend the explanations given by the teacher, some children still need to get an explanation from the teacher about the benefits of the activities they have carried out. However, some children are starting to understand and understand even though the teacher does not provide further explanations.



Figure 1. Children enthusiastically participate in activities in nature
(Source: Author Documentation)



Figure 2. Children visit the goat drum
(Source: Author Documentation)



Figure 3. Utilizing used materials in toys
(Source: Author Documentation)

D. Conclusion

The implementation of the Islamic Education curriculum has long been implemented in each informal institution in Indonesia. This has even been stated in the education unit curriculum starting from the 2013 curriculum and even the Merdeka curriculum. Not only that, but many types of learning or formal educational institutions have integrated Islamic values such as TPQ, TBA, TAAM, and others. Not a few of the lessons found in each institution have been integrated with Islamic education. Islamic education in the Merdeka curriculum is based on the element of achieving the development of religious values and character. Meanwhile, the 2013 curriculum focuses on aspects of moral and religious development.

There are 3 activities carried out in the kindergarten, namely walking in nature, visiting the goat pen, and using used items to make toys. Out of the three activities, all the kids can do the visiting goats and making toys out of old stuff, but the teacher still must remind certain kids to do these things.

Naturalistic intelligence in kindergarten is built by introducing animals directly in their cages, thus raising awareness of keeping animals clean and well and making creations from used items, thus raising awareness of caring for nature. Introducing flora and fauna with a specific purpose will make children more enthusiastic about participating in activities.

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