ISLAMIC CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AS CHILDREN'S CHARACTER BUILDING

Lina Sundana

lina@iainlhokseumawe.ac.id

Department of Tadris Indonesian
Faculty of Education and Teacher Training of IAIN Lhokseumawe
Aceh, Indonesia Contact (0645) 47267

Abstract. The background of this literature review study is to see the phenomenon of a shift in the character of children getting taller, especially in Indonesia. Children's literature can be a solution that can instill character values in children. This literature review method is shown to describe Islamic children's literature. The literature review method is carried out by reading several articles and other written sources. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. The results of the study found that children's literature plays an important role in strengthening character. Islamic children's literature has a major contribution to strengthening children's character in the process towards maturity. Literature can be used as a means to instill, develop, and preserve values that are considered good by the family, society, religion, and nation so that they can develop good character that sticks with them into adulthood. Islamic children's literature is attached to very good Islamic values. The reference to Islamic values is guided by the Koran and Hadith. The delivery of characters packaged in Islamic stories will further foster children's interest in being exemplary and following the characters they read.

Keywords: *Children's Literature, Islamic, Character Building*

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of the shift in the character of young people, especially the z generation, is currently getting higher in Indonesia. Generation z born 1995 to 2010, they will more often fall into things that are not positive if they are not equipped with character education. It is very important to prioritize character strengthening. This can be seen from the rise of child cases that have been handled by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) reaching 1885 cases in the first half of 2018. Criminal perpetrators of 504 children, including drug offenders, theft, and are dominated by immoral cases (Ikhsanudin, 2018).

KPAI also noted that 62.7% of junior high school youth in Indonesia are not virgins. Other results also stated that 93.7% of junior high and high school youth had kissed, 21.2% of junior high school youth had had an abortion, and 97% of junior high and high school youth had seen pornographic films (Suhendi, 2010). Other cases were also found in Banyumas, Central Java. One cilok seller gives bonuses to watching porn videos to his buyers, most of whom are early childhood and elementary school children (Ridlo, 2018). The effect of watching porn movies is very dangerous, Detiknews.com (2008) reported that elementary school students molested kindergarten students because they practiced scenes in the film.

In order to overcome this moral crisis, the roles of parents, teachers, and the community environment are the most important factors in strengthening children's character. The birth age range of children up to 6 years is a sensitive period so that children will be sensitive and ready to respond to stimulation from their environment (Hainstock, 1999). During this golden period, physical and psychological functions matured so that various educational efforts were expected to incorporate character values at that time (Hainstock, 1999). These character values can be exemplified and applied in everyday life.

There are 18 values of character education based on Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 87 Article 3 of 2017, namely (1) religious, (2) honest, (3) tolerance, (4) hard work, (5) creative, (6) independent, (7) democratic, (8) discipline, (9) friendly/communicative, (10) curiosity, (11) appreciating achievement, (12) fond of reading, (13) national spirit, (14) love of the motherland, (15) love peace, (16) care for the environment, (17) care for social, (18) responsibility. Learning literature has the main opportunities for character formation and change (Khair, 2018).

Through learning literature, early childhood can learn various human values regarding relations between humans horizontally and spiritually as human beings who believe in Allah SWT and appreciate everything in life around us (Aminah, 2022). Through children's stories can provide an understanding of character for early childhood (Juanda, 2018). The children's stories presented must be in accordance with the growth and development of children and have character values.

Children's literature has benefits for intellectual development and emotional development. The activity of reading children's stories or literature can be done from infancy. Children can be invited to choose their own books according to their interests. That's why it's important to instill the habit of reading in children so that reading is not just a process of playing but a necessity (Sujiono, 2013). Reading activities can hone one of the eight aspects of intelligence (Gardner, 1999), namely linguistic intelligence. Linguistic intelligence is one of the intelligences of children in processing words and using words effectively both orally and in writing.

For Muslim families and Islamic schools, the selection of reading material for Islamic children's literature is very important. Character values are expected to form students who are intelligent and have noble character in accordance with Islamic teachings contained in the Alquan and Sunnah of the Prophet. The purpose and purpose of this writing is to explain the importance of children's literature, especially Islamic children's literature for Muslim children which is useful for building children's character so that it has benefits for children and the surrounding environment.

METHODS

This research is a qualitative research because in this research the data collected is in the form of descriptive data. The method used is in the form of literature study. Literature study is another term for literature review, literature review, theoretical study, theoretical basis, *literature review*, and theoretical review. The data needed in research can be obtained from library sources or documents. Sources of data for research on literature studies are in the form of articles and several writings, both in the form of books/manuals and digitally. Data

analysis techniques are carried out by examining the results of research/journals from various sources that have been collected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Children's literature is different from adult literature (*adult literacy*). The difference is in the description in children's literature focusing on a meaningful picture of life for children. Children's literature is also inseparable from educational elements, including non-fiction works such as alphabet books (Krissandi, 2018). The authors of children's literature do not have to be children, but can also be written by adults. Children's literature is expected to reflect the feelings and experiences of children through the views of children who have meaningful values for them (Huck, 2005).

Parents and educators can choose readings for children by considering readings that have values or messages so that they must be selected according to the child's developmental stage. Books on the market are not necessarily of good quality or suitable for the child's personality, there are several books on the market that are not censored when discussing sex or sexual deviation. An example of a case criticized by the KPAI is in the children's book entitled *Aku Berani Tidur Sendiri* by Fitria Charawati which was published by PT. Triumvirate (Endah Lismartini, 2017). The book contains unfriendly content and encourages sexual deviance. The number of cases that occur makes parents worry, so it is important to choose children's reading.

One of the references for choosing children's reading is according to the stage of child development, including stages of intellectual development, stages of moral development, stages of emotional development, and personal stages (Conscience, 2011) Children aged 0-6 years have not yet reached the stage of reading texts, but only recognizing symbols (letters, numbers and pictures) so that parents or educators can guide children by providing reading information so that children can understand it through stories. Assistance for children is needed and carried out on an ongoing basis so as to get maximum results according to the needs and stages of the child's development.

Good children's reading is expected to have useful messages for children's lives. Age is a golden period for cultivating character that will affect his whole life. At this age, it is necessary to form basic sensory abilities, think, and grow standard values and religious norms as the beginning of achieving a child's self-identity. Attitudes, habits and behaviors that are formed at this age will determine how he succeeds in adjusting to life as an adult (Rosyadi, 2013).

There are six types of literary genres, namely realism, formulaic fiction, fantasy, traditional literature, poetry, and non-fiction (Lukens, 1999). It can be concluded that all children's books are children's literature, for example at an early age (2-4) years a child cannot yet recognize letters or cannot read, but children can understand that the book is useful for them through the activities of parents or educators who often introduce books by reading the contents of the book.

One of the children's literature writers who prioritizes character in his writings in Indonesia is Ratna Megawangi. In his writings, he includes nine pillars of character which are universal noble values (across religions, cultures, and ethnicities) with the hope that students will become human beings who love peace, responsibility, honesty, and a series of other noble character (Krissandi, 2018). The values of the nine pillars of character can be seen in the following table.

No.	Internalization of the 9 Pillars of Character
1.	Love God and the universe and its contents
2.	Independent, discipline, responsibility
3.	Honest, trustworthy and kind
4.	Respectful, polite and a good listener
5.	Generous, helpful, and cooperative
6.	Confident, creative, and never give up
7.	Good and fair leader
8.	Kind and humble
9.	Tolerance, love peace, and unite

Table 1. Internalization of the 9 Character Pillars

Ratna Megawangi wrote these nine characters in nine different books. He uses pictures that explain the same character concept. The role of parents and teachers is expected to be able to tell the child then there will be a discussion related to the concept of character being taught. Children are also expected to be able to respond to teacher questions. The final stage is an independent evaluation and reflection.

Figure 1. Book Children's literature: 9 pillars of character 2
Independent, Discipline, Responsibility

For Muslim families and Islamic schools, the selection of children's literature is prioritized on Islamic children's literary genres. Islamic children's literature is a repetition of holy books and religious teachings, such as the Koran and hadith as a reference for Islamic children's literature. Islamic children's literature began to emerge in the 1980s, but was banned during the New Order era because Islam was seen as a religion that had the potential to undermine the New Order's political power and domination, for example the comic strip heaven and hell was banned at that time. Even though it had disappeared, the existence of Islamic children's literature remained attached and inseparable from its owner (Susanto, 2016).

Character in Islamic terminology is known as *akhlaq* which means behavior or character. The child's ability to carry out adab, namely doing something commendable, both words and deeds is a top priority in the application of morals. The importance of adab and moral cultivation is very important. The best role model is Prophet Muhammad SAW. One of

the Islamic children's literature books that strengthens children's character is titled *Muhammad My Teladan*, written by Eka Wardhana and the Syamil Books Team, published in 2016. The book consists of 12 books containing moral messages and stories of the Prophet Muhammad. Children can read the story of the prophet and imitate him because all the words and deeds of the prophet are examples for Muslims.
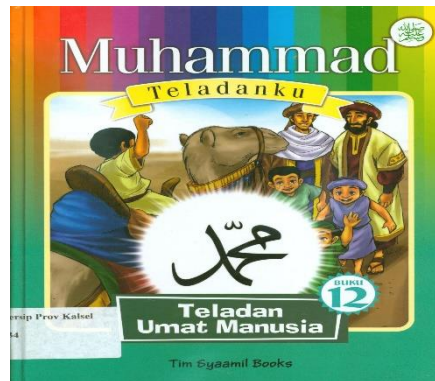

Figure 2. Islamic children's literature book: Muhammad My Example

Based on research that has been conducted by Hestin, he uses the book as a learning resource by reading the contents of the book, the book contains religious values from the attitudes and good qualities of the Prophet which students can emulate (Hestin, 2018). There was an increase in learning outcomes using these learning resources. The mindset of children will be formed after reading exemplary stories. Parents and educators are expected to read more often, accompany and direct children to realize values that strengthen children's character in children's literature.

CONCLUSION

Islamic children's literature has a significant contribution to strengthening children's character in the process towards maturity. Literature can be used as a means to instill, develop, and preserve values that are considered good by the family, society, religion, and nation so that they can develop good character that sticks with them into adulthood. Islamic children's literature is attached to very good Islamic values. The reference to Islamic values is based on the Qur'an and Hadith. The delivery of characters packaged in Islamic stories will further foster children's interest in being exemplary and following the characters they read. Therefore, parents or education are expected to be able to choose Islamic readings that have character inculcation according to the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad. The author also hopes that many children's literature writers use Islamic references to write children's stories so that children have appropriate character or *morals*.

References

Aminah, S. (2022). Character Education Through Literature Learning in Early Childhood. *Joeces: Journal of Early Childhood Education Studies*, *1*(1).

Conscience, Y. (2011). *Basic Concepts of Early Childhood Education*. Index.

Endah Lismartini. (2017). *KPAI Minta Buku Anak Berisi Pendidikan Seks Ditarik*. Viva.Co.Id. https://www.viva.co.id/gaya-hidup/parenting/885373-kpai-   Minta-buku-anak-berisi-dinding-daughter-sex- pulled

Gardner, H. (1999). *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century*. Basic Books.

Hainstock, E. G. (1999). *Metode Pembelajaran Montessori untuk Anak Pra Sekolah*. Pustaka Delapratasa.

Hestin, R. (2018). *Muhammad's book Exemplary as a Learning Resource at SDIT Salsabila 3 Banguntapan*. UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta.

Huck, P. (2005). *Understanding Children's Literature*. Routledge.

Ikhsanudin, A. (2018). *There are 504 cases of children becoming criminals highlighting parental supervision*. Detik.Com. https://news.detik.com/berita/d-4128703/ada-504-case-anak-jadi-pelaku-pidana-kpai- highlight-supervision-parents

Juanda. (2018). Revitalization of Values in Fairy Tales as a Vehicle for Early Childhood Character Formation. *Journal of Library Culture*, *5*(2), 11–18.

Khair, U. (2018). Learning Indonesian Language and Literature (BASASTRA) in SD and MI. *Ar-Riayah: Journal of Basic Education*, *2*(1), 81.

Krissandi, A. D. S. (2018). *Children's Literature: Children's Language Learning Media*. Future Indonesian Book.

Lukens, R. J. (1999). *A Critical Handbook of Children's Literature*. Longman.

Ridlo, M. (2018). *Gosh, in Banyumas Kids Buy Cilok Bonus to Watch Porn Videos*. Liputan6.Com. https://www.liputan6.com/regional/read/3433463/astaga-di-banyumas-anak-anak-beli-cilok-bonus-nonton-video-porno

Rosyadi, A. R. (2013). *Islamic Education in the Formation of Early Childhood Character*. Rajawali.

Suhendi, A. (2010). *62.7 Percent of Junior High School Teenagers Are Not Virgins*. Kompas.Com. https://money.kompas.com/read/2010/06/13/08364170/~Megapolitan~News

Sujiono, Y. N. (2013). *Konsep Dasar Anak Usia Dini*. PT Indeks.

Susanto, D. (2016). Building Islamic Identity: Islamic Children's Literature in the 1980s as a Contrast to the Power of the New Order. In *Megapolitan News*. Library.uns.ac.id.