Applying discipline character: Parents vs. teachers

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Abstract
Disciplining preschool-aged children is pivotal since it helps parents to introduce rules and basis to face challenges in life. Students in RA Baiturrahman Tasikmalaya tend to exhibit a discipline attitude. The present study aimed to investigate how students' parents and children applied discipline character. To this end, a qualitative descriptive method was applied. The participants of the study were recruited using proportional sampling technique. The data were collected through observation and interviews. The obtained data were analyzed. The data analysis process includes data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing of conclusion. The result of the study revealed that parents and teachers implemented conditioning and modeling to internalize the character. In the school setting, teacher internalize the character based on Islamic values in a structured manner.

Keywords: discipline, parents, teachers

INTRODUCTION
Education is crucial for individuals. Its success is not only measured based on cognitive aspects but also the character of each individual. As (Suwartini, 2017) asserts, students are demanded to have broad knowledge and distinguished character. Children with distinguished character are more prepared to solve any problems they face in life. In addition, they are likely to engage in lifelong learning, a concept defining a process where individuals engage in learning activities throughout life (Hoerniasih, 2019). The learning process occurs continuously, as lifelong education may take place in both informal, formal, and nonformal settings. By
understanding the lifelong learning concept, individuals are expected to engage in learning activities anytime. This learning concept highlights character education for children, one of the means to deliver an individual with distinguished attitudes. Character education is closely associated with optimal academic achievement. In Indonesian education system, the aim is to produce individuals with noble character since it is closely related to (Hasbi et al., 2019) other aspects of success. Having noble characters, children may exhibit emotional maturity, spiritual awareness, and controlled thought. Character education helps individuals to act according to the norms. Individuals who lack character education are at risk of showing misbehaviors Aeni as cited in (Munawwaroh, 2019), holds that character can perfect individuals.

The process to develop children’s character should be begun as early as possible. Among many characters, a child should learn is the character of discipline. Discipline is important since it prepares children to engage with future life challenges. By internalizing an attitude of discipline, children may adhere to the prevailing rules, dare to express arguments, and have satisfactory self-control. Discipline character is the main key to address future challenges and adjust one’s self to different rules applied in the environment (Yusnita & Muqowim, 2020). When children are aware of the rule and its importance, they may exhibit a good personality and have a robust foundation to face future challenges. Thus, they can understand instruction better. In this regard, children with a discipline attitude can accept instructions more easily (Ihsani et al., 2018). Being aware of the rule and the importance of discipline, individuals may exhibit norms-compliant behaviors in their life. According to (Ramdan & Fauziah, 2019) teachers and parents are responsible for giving a good role model for students. As a role model, teachers should focus on showing the expected behaviors to internalize the character values. For instance, teachers should arrive earlier, speak politely, showing compassion, and wear polite clothes. Parents are the main actor in children’s education, they have to exhibit good behavior in front of their children because children mostly imitate their parents' behavior. Considering the important roles of both parents and teachers, a synergy between school and family should be optimized in internalizing discipline character. The internalization process should be adjusted to the children’s age. Thus, children can develop following their ability.

According to the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture Regulation, children in the age of 5-6 years old should understand the given rules, as indicated by satisfactory worship performance, exhibiting politeness, maintaining self-hygiene, and environmental cleanliness, and proportional consumption (Indonesia, 2014). During the pandemic, the learning process was carried out online. Thus, children only learn twice a week. During the observation, children
tend to follow instructions more easily when they are at school. Interviews with teachers found that children exhibit different behaviors studying from home due to different environments and parenting styles. According to (Saputro & Talan, 2017) family environment may serve as the basic foundation that influences children’s character because children spend more time interacting with the family members. The present study was conducted to depict how to internalize the character of discipline.

The study was conducted in RA Baiturrahman, a kindergarten located in Jl. R.E. Martadinata No. 93b, Rt. 01 Cipedes, Kecamatan Cipedes, Kota Tasikmalaya. This kindergarten was selected since one of its visions and missions emphasize the improvement of character-oriented learning quality through internalization of behavior since the early childhood. Internalization of good manners is one of the featured programs of the kindergarten. During the observation, students showed that they could adhere to the classroom rules during the learning activities. The interviews with teachers found that both parents and teachers are aware of the discipline character by training them to adhere to the rules at home. Based on the description above, it is necessary to conduct a study to investigate the internalization of discipline character between parents and teachers.

METHOD

This study applied a qualitative descriptive approach to depict data related to discipline character at school through observation, interviews, and documentation. The participants were parents and teachers of RA Baiturrahman Tasikmalaya. They were recruited using the proportional sampling technique because each study group consists of an almost similar number of students.

The study was conducted in RA Baiturrahman because it offers a featured program of behavioral conditioning. Furthermore, children tend to be able to follow rules and teachers’ instructions. The school consists of five classrooms, namely B1, B2, B3, B4, and B5. One teacher and two parents were recruited as representatives of each class. The data were obtained through 3-month observation and an interview with teachers and parents. Interviews with teachers were conducted offline, while interviews with parents were conducted online several times until the data saturation was reached. Irrelevant data were removed in the data reduction phase. The data were validated using source and technique triangulations.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study was conducted for three months, consisting of observation and interviews. The observation was done throughout the learning process. The observation showed that students had understood the school rules. As teachers and parents stated during the interview, children can understand the rule. However, pandemics slightly lowers their discipline attitude because they did not have a clear schedule for each activity.

Interviews with teachers during the preliminary study revealed the importance of implementing character education in early childhood. The character may serve as the foundation that determines their decision in the future. The followings are the findings during the interview.

A. Parents

Parents view that character and academic development are interrelated, parents prefer to have a child with good character and moderate academic aspect. Both parents and teachers internalize discipline character to children by providing a role model, making a daily schedule, and involving children to make a rule. Furthermore, some parents asked their children to tell a story about their activity and gave some values to support the children's story. According to Allemand & Hill as cited in (Amini & Mariyati, 2021), internalizing characters from early childhood may provide individuals with stronger foundations. During their golden age period, children should receive adequate attention because this period may significantly influence their future success. As asserted by (Nuraeni et al., 2020), character education aims to improve students' noble character, sense of responsibility, autonomy, and creativity. Children with discipline character, as conveyed by (Masruroh et al., 2020), can adjust themselves to the environment. By adjusting to the environment, they may exhibit behaviors that comply with the prevailing norms. Children in 5 to 6 years of age may want to behave to gain other people's appreciation, they have not completely understood what good and bad behaviors are. However, discipline should be internalized consistently to positively affect children. Discipline character helps children to face various challenges in life because it develops their sense of respect and time management(Rahmah & Zirmansyah, 2019).

It was found that parents applied rules that had been agreed upon, such as rules related to children's screen time and toy clean-up. Some parents were found to habituate daily worship in a mosque, sunnah fasting, and tahajjud prayers. As a result, their children were able to understand time rules. Parents were aware that children should have the
discipline to face life challenges. Compliance behavior is important since individuals live with social and religious norms and compliance behavior is related to time, procedures, and ethics in practicing the norms (Mz, 2018).

In this digital era, parents should be digitally literate to prevent children from negative influences. It is necessary for parents to limit their children's gadget use. Teachers and parents in this era should be prepared to face technological advancement to control children's behavior and prevent them from negative behaviors (Munawar & Nisfah, 2019).

Parents always provide rewards for children in the form of compliments, compassion, and sometimes children's favorite toys and foods to motivate them to improve their behavior. When children violate one of the rules, parents, and teachers give advice and explain reasons why the behavior is considered to violate the norms. Some parents punish their children by asking them to recite Quran, shortening playing times, and giving different treatments to their siblings.

Successful conditioning at school should be followed up in the family environment. However, due to limited time, parents only apply some of the conditioning such as bedtime, eating, and toilet habit. In educating their children, parents relied on information from social media because the parenting program at school, despite its importance, had not been optimally implemented. This is in line with the statement that explain the parenting program is one of the programs designed by the government to be implemented in the school setting (Febyaningsih & Nurfadilah, 2019). By implementing such a program, it is expected that the education process in the school and family environment could be synchronous.

The synergy between parents and teachers is crucial in developing children's discipline character because conditions in both environments may influence children's character. Various factors, including parenting style, may influence the process of internalizing discipline character (Khotimah, 2019). The family serves as the first education provider for children (Oktavianingsih, 2019). Thus, interaction during the parenting process may influence the children's character. In addition to interaction, reinforcement also plays a pivotal role in preventing children from behavioral distortion that arises from their environment. In the character education process, parents' reinforcement is necessary to prevent children from misbehavior (Sastradiharja, 2018).

Some challenges in the parenting process are also noticed, including children's unstable moods. To maintain children's mood, parents are required to make innovations and be patient during the process. During the online learning process, children exhibit positive changes due to optimal parents' support.
B. Teachers

Interviews with teachers related to the internalization of discipline character found that the program aims to accustom children to good habits. Thus it is expected that they can practice good habits when they grow. In this program, teachers present quotes related to morality to show the ideal discipline attitude when interacting with friends or older individuals. The manners internalized to children are closely related to their daily activities. One of the teachers stated that the students learned at least twelve manners, including manners when entering and exiting the washroom, meeting others, eating, before sleep, when talking with parents, when waking up, greeting, passing a group of older people, sneezing, putting on shoes, and manners in wearing clothes. Another teacher asserted that the focus is the children’s manner at school, whereas the other manners are merely introduced and require parents' support to practice them at home. Character education can be more easily applied through conditioning, when children are accustomed to doing behaviors, they may find it difficult to leave the habit. Developing discipline character requires a positive relationship with children to make them comfortable (Hapsari & Iftayani, 2016). Therefore, the concept of conditioning is considered effective because children may perform the expected manners voluntarily. When turning into a habit, discipline character may trigger one's awareness of obeying the rule prevailing in an environment, thus improving the students' sense of responsibility. Character education can be implemented through conditioning and role modeling presented in the form of storytelling, drawing, singing, and other activities familiar to children (Iswantiningtyas & Wulansari, 2019).

In the school environment, the students were familiarized with manners to introduce them to rules. Character education that is grounded on the conditioning of good manners can help children to follow prophet Muhammad PBUH’s attitude (Maulidina et al., 2020). Such conditioning is expected to deliver a generation with good characters. It is consistent with (Herawati et al., 2020) who state that moral education in early childhood can be applied through daily behaviors. Morality could be internalized through role models and conditioning. Manners taught to preschool children include manners in interacting with others, manners when talking with others, when eating when entering the home when using the toilet, when visiting others' homes, and when worshiping.

Each of these manners is taught for a week. Meanwhile, some manners related to school activities such as eating, drinking, queuing, talking to teachers, and politeness are
continuously internalized during school time. Teachers state that the method used in the learning activity included storytelling, watching relevant videos or movies. In addition, these media are supported by the provision of good role models for teachers. Teachers must provide a good role model to create a positive school environment. As a role model whose behaviors are imitated by the students, teachers exhibited the expected behaviors such as being on time, paying attention during the classroom time, greeting, and showing compassion to other individuals.

The storytelling method allows teachers to explain good and bad behaviors more easily. Moreover, this method allows students to understand the value better (Ramdhani et al., 2019). Internalizing character and moral values could be done through storytelling because the plot, characters, and messages of the story can tell children the allowed and prohibited behaviors. Discipline and politeness could be taught through the character in the storytelling activities. Storytelling is familiar to children. It may contain useful advice to develop their character, imagination, creativity, socio-emotional, and cognitive aspect. Parents and teachers should be able to select the story that suits children’s development. Another method that can be applied to develop children’s discipline character is role modeling. Role modeling can optimize the result of the education process. Role modeling is a good behavior shown by a teacher or parents to be imitated by the children. This modeling could be applied by wearing neat clothing, arriving at school on time, talking politely, showing compassion, and being honest, among others (Hapsari & Iftayani, 2016).

All teachers during the interview agree that students should be evaluated fairly. The assessment is usually done using anecdotal records and a development achievement scale. To reach a certain level, teachers must communicate with parents. Most parents complain about the difference between their children’s behavior at school and at home. Before the pandemic outbreak, the school regularly conducts a home visit to directly observe the children’s behavior. A home visit is done once a year. It takes about one or two hours, depending on the children’s needs. During the home visiting activity, teachers directly communicate with parents and children to understand more deeply the children’s behavior.

It is necessary to motivate children to exhibit good behaviors through verbal appreciation such as “great!”, “wow, it’s cool”, and many others. Non-verbal reinforcement is seldom given during classroom activities. When children make mistakes or violate the rules, they should not be directly punished. Continuous, consistent advice should be given to improve their behavior. However, a slight “threat” could also be used such as “you cannot play anymore...” It is necessary to motivate children to exhibit behaviors that
comply with the norms. Parents and teachers should provide their support by giving appreciation or rewards. The reward can be given when children exhibit the expected behavior. It could be in the form of expression of pride, applause, thumb up, or hug to show appreciation. (Agustina et al., 2021) State that parents and teachers’ reward is important in stimulating and maintaining good conditioning to optimize the children’s development. Children whose behavior complies with the norms may also exhibit their potentials and cognitions. Usman as cited in (Sabartiningsih et al., 2018), states that reward could be given in verbal or non-verbal manners.

During the online learning activities, teachers appreciate the students’ work by sharing the students’ work through the teachers’ WhatsApp status. In this digital era, teachers can motivate their students by publishing the students’ work because the students feel appreciated for their works (Fadlilah, 2021). During online learning, mothers’ role is pivotal when children learn from home. During the covid-19 outbreak, a strong collaboration between parents and teachers is important to prevent potential hindrances in children’s development (Kurniati et al., 2020). Parents’ role is crucial during learning from home. They play important role in facilitating children to do the task, creating a safe environment, building intensive communication with children, becoming a role model, guiding and motivating children, and making innovation at home. By doing this role optimally, parents may prevent the children’s unstable mood and boredom. In addition, parents may develop children’s discipline character, cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development (Harahap et al., 2021). Parents’ unpreparedness may result in children’s lateness in submitting tasks. This unpreparedness can result in unmonitored children’s progress, limited learning presentation, and suboptimal material presentation. Another noticed hindrance was the parents’ lack of attention to the children’s development and involvement in each developmental stage. Other hindrances include lack of opportunity for children to refuse, to express their argument, impatience, and stress (Amini, 2015).

CONCLUSION

Discipline character should be internalized from early childhood since it serves as a foundation to face challenges in the future. By internalizing discipline since early childhood, children may understand the importance of rules and be aware of the fact that individuals are always bound by different rules depending on their environment. Discipline was applied through conditioning that is supported by providing a role model. Parents and teachers always
give advice when children make mistakes. Furthermore, children are also engaged in argumentation and question why an event occurs. When children exhibit good behavior and adhere to the rules, children receive reinforcement in the form of verbal rewards or gestures showing that parents or teachers are proud of them.

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