

# Implementation of Religious Studies to Improve Religious Understanding in the Context of the Pillars of Islam in Kindergarten Children

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## A B S T R A C T

This research is qualitative research, namely research whose data sources are obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation obtained at the research location and on the objects and samples studied by the author to obtain valid and relevant information on the variables studied, namely in the form of movements, words, and images collected at the research location. Based on the research results, researchers found that: 1) The implementation of religious studies at the Waara Village TPA is routinely carried out every day after the Maghrib prayer, and sometimes continued after the Isha prayer if there are still children who have not had time to recite the Qur'an. The teaching carried out by the teachers starts from the introduction of the Hijayah letters, both pronunciation and makhraj, to children who are still at the Iqro level, as well as learning the laws of tajwid to children who have entered the Qur'an level. 2) The understanding of Islam, in this case understanding and implementing the pillars of Islam in the children of the Waara Village TPA, is quite good. This can be seen from the diligence of the children in performing prayers and fasting during Ramadan, and understanding the sentence of the shahada. This can be consistent because of the affirmation and supervision carried out by the Waara Village TPA teachers, who do not allow their students to learn to recite the Qur'an before performing prayers, and advise them every day before and after carrying out the Qur'an.

**Keywords:** *Religious Education Implementation; Religious Understanding; Pillars of Islam*

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## INTRODUCTION

In modern times as is the case today, there is a lot of decline or deterioration in behavior among children and adolescents. This is due to technological advances that are very dominant and influence children's characters. Many things happen as a result of children's actions that are not controlled and supervised by parents. This happens because many children today pay more attention to gadgets than education or learning, both when they are in the school environment and in the community. (Baharuddin: 2011)

Many factors significantly influence changes in children's behavior, ranging from environmental factors, social factors, and even family factors themselves. However, today many children are influenced by social factors, especially with all the conveniences available today. Children, teenagers, and even parents themselves are very pampered by gadgets or cellphones. Where these cellphones contain many games or games that keep children happy for hours playing, just as parents are also busy playing social media or simply opening online shopping apps.

We cannot avoid the current technological advances that are affecting our social, political, educational, and even religious environments. Therefore, education on how to manage these changes is crucial.

The current educational environment is severely deteriorating, leading to a decline in children's character, particularly behavioral issues. Many children lack manners and politeness, lack proper behavior, and lack the ability to speak to adults, even their own parents. Many children face problems due to their behavior, which others perceive as inappropriate. In this regard, religious education plays a crucial role in transforming children's character, as Islamic education focuses on human character and morals.

However, these changes must also be based on the awareness and encouragement of each child as Allah says in the Koran:

مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ۗ God bless you

*Translation:*

"Allah will not change the condition of a people unless they change it themselves."

(QS. Ar-Ra'd: 11)

From this, we understand the importance of understanding Islam in building good character and morals. There are many alternatives for gaining religious education, not just limited to the school environment, but also beyond.

In my residential environment, namely in Waara Village, apart from school, a child can get additional insight into Islamic education in the TPA study group environment where, in addition to studying the Koran, before and after the study group, children are usually given short material about understanding Islam which is good and easy for children to understand so that their understanding of Islam increases a little.

One of the challenges facing parents today is the difficulty of developing a child's moral character. Therefore, with the existence of religious studies and the provision of religious understanding outside of school lessons, namely in TPA-TPA, especially in the village where I live in Waara Village, a Koran teacher routinely every day before the Koran study always discusses the Koran activity, the methods used, the material taught, and the extent of its influence on changing children's behavior. Therefore, it is important to conduct research that focuses on the role of Koran studies in improving Islamic religious understanding among TPA children.

## METHOD

This research is qualitative research, namely research whose data sources are obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation obtained at the research location and on the objects and samples studied by the author to obtain valid and relevant information on the variables studied, namely in the form of movements, words, and images collected at the research location.

The data collection techniques used in this study were observation, interviews, and documentation. This research was supported by observation instruments, interview guidelines, a recording device, a camera, and written instruments. The recording device, camera, and writing materials were used to support and facilitate the research.

There are many data analysis models in qualitative research, and there are variations in how data is handled and analyzed. The main principle of qualitative analysis methods is to organize and analyze collected data into an orderly, structured, systematic, and meaningful way.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### **Implementation of the TPA Recitation in Waara Village, Lakudo District, Central Buton Regency**

The implementation of Koranic study groups for children in a village is still well implemented, especially with the support of the local government and the auspices of the Minister of Religion, making Al-Qur'an study centers for children spread across various regions and remote villages. Apart from the above, in Waara Village, the TPA is also not exempt from the existence of the TPA, with the existence of the TPA, the children in Waara Village are not excluded from attending Koranic study groups.

Based on the researcher's observations, there are several TPAs that have been formed and are under the auspices of the village government. With the existence of these TPAs, children flock to participate, especially since there is encouragement from parents to encourage their children to participate in studying the Koran at the TPA.

Regarding the things that the researcher wanted to know regarding the above, the researcher conducted several observations and interviews with the children of the religious study group and the teaching teachers at the religious study group, as follows:

#### **Implementation of Religious Studies at the Waara Village TPA**

Based on observations made by the researcher, the Koranic study sessions are conducted by teachers every day and attended by children living around the TPA, which is spread across several TPAs in the Waara Village area. This is also in line with interviews with teachers at the TPA and children who study the Koran at the TPA, as follows:

The results of the researcher's interview with Ustad La Isyi, were that:

*"The religious study is held every day during the break between Maghrib and Isha prayers. However, sometimes, because there are still some unfinished prayers, it is continued after Isha prayers."*

A similar thing was also said by a child named Rasti, that:

*"We recite the Koran every day after Maghrib prayers with our friends at the TPA led by the teacher".*

Another answer was also expressed by a child named Hafiz Ilman, that:

*"Every day my mother always tells me to recite the Koran at the TPA after the Maghrib prayer and if I don't recite the Koran that day I will be scolded"*

Based on the observations and interviews above, we can see that the Koran recitation is held every day, led by Ustad La Isyi after the Maghrib prayer and is also supported by the children's parents so that their children can learn to recite the Koran.

#### **Pronunciation and Understanding of Letters and Tajweed Laws for Children of Waara Village TPA**

In a predominantly Muslim society, many parents want their children to understand their religion. The fundamental lesson children need to learn is the holy book, the Quran, whose pronunciation and reading rules are essential for reading it correctly and clearly.

Based on observations made by researchers at the Waraa Village TPA on recitation children who study the hijayah letters and the laws of reading the Al-Qur'an, it is known that teachers and children who recite the Koran at the TPA learn the science of recitation and the hijayah letters well every day, even together with learning the basics of the Islamic religion. From these observations, the researcher also interviewed several sources to find out more clearly how children pronounce and understand the rules of tajwid, as follows:

The statement from Ustad La Isyi as a teacher, that:

*"The pronunciation of the hijayah letters for children who are still studying in Iqra is quite difficult, even though there are some who don't pronounce it well, but slowly they will become fluent and those who have entered the Al-Qur'an are already quite good at understanding the science of recitation".*

Based on the above, we can see that the teacher, Ustad La Isyi, did not fail to teach his students the correct pronunciation of letters and the rules for reading the Qur'an properly and correctly.

The story of a child named Rafi Ahmad, that:

*"I was taught the Hijaiyah letters by my Koran teacher by explaining how to pronounce the letters and what the sounds of the letters are like."*

Rehana also expressed another thing, namely:

*"We were introduced to the Hijaiyah letters when we were still learning Iqra, and after we got closer to the Al-Quran, we started to learn the laws of Tajweed, which is how to read the rules of recitation correctly."*

From the statements above, we can see that learning at the Waara village TPA in terms of pronouncing the Hijaiyah letters and the laws of Tajweed are taught well by Ustad La Isyi so that they can be absorbed and understood well by the children who study at the TPA.

**Special Methods of Study Used by Teachers**

The problem facing parents today is their children's lack of morals and manners. Many parents disregard their children's behavior beyond their expectations. Therefore, there is a need to improve education and training for children to foster awareness and significant change.

One of the best ways to anticipate changes in children's behavior is to teach and introduce children to religious matters so that religious awareness and good morals are built.

Based on observations made by researchers, some children's behavior began to change, and they became more diligent in worship because they participated in Quranic study at the TPA with their friends. This significantly influenced their habits and changed their behavior. In line with the above, other answers can be found through several interviews, as follows:

The statement from Ustad La Isyi as a teacher, that:

*"Many children participate in reciting the Koran at our TPA, even though they only follow along, but because they are often and accustomed to the atmosphere of the Koran study, it makes them change, besides that, we also don't just teach the Koran, but before starting the Koran study there is an introduction and advice and after the Koran study there is religious education that emphasizes the importance of Islam by understanding the pillars of faith".*

From this presentation, we can see that the teacher at TPA, namely Ustad La Isyi, makes his students comfortable with his recitation so that the children are impressed with joining in the Koran. And apart from teaching the Koran, he also slowly provides an understanding of religion, especially in understanding and implementing the pillars of Islam as well as possible. Another interview with a student named Habib Zaidan, that:

*"Before we study the Koran, we are often given advice and instructed to calm the situation, as it can sometimes get quite rowdy at the TPA. After the Koran, we are also given an explanation of prayer and the other pillars of Islam. "*

Another child named Adibah shared:

*"Usually, before we start reciting the Koran, the Koran teacher always reminds us that those who haven't prayed are not allowed to continue reciting the Koran, and sometimes, if the Isha prayer time isn't finished, we continue after the prayer is finished, and everyone is required to join in the prayer."*

Based on the results of the observations and interviews above, we can see that the special method given by teachers to TPA children so that they are diligent in worshipping and orderly in their studies is always giving religious advice and encouraging them to pray before learning to recite the Koran and not forgetting to allow students who have not prayed to participate in reciting the Koran.

**Understanding Religion in Children in the Context of the Pillars of Islam**

One of the most important things for a person is having a good character or personality. Goodness or morals can only be inherent in a religious person; in this sense, a religious person can guide themselves to become a better person.

Islam has a fundamental foundation that distinguishes between those who are Muslim and those who are not. The foundation of Islam is the five pillars of Islam, which consist of the Shahada, prayer, fasting, zakat, and the Hajj (pilgrimage) for those who can afford it. The most fundamental and essential aspect in developing Islamic morals in children is first introducing them to the Shahada, prayer, and fasting. Introducing and habituating these practices to children will shape their Islamic character.

To determine the level of understanding and implementation of the pillars of Islam among children at the Waara Village TPA, researchers conducted observations and interviews with informants, as follows:

**Understanding the Pillars of Islam for Children at the Waara Village TPA**

One of the things that is obligatory for Muslims is to study and understand the Islamic religion well, this must be instilled in children from an early age so that their character and morals are easily formed and they are not easily influenced by culture. Learning and understanding Islam does not necessarily have to be obtained in school; it can also be learned

*Implementation of Religious Studies to Improve Religious Understanding in the Context of the Pillars of Islam in Kindergarten Children* outside of school. Based on observations made by researchers, elementary and middle school children who learn to recite the Quran at the TPA often receive additional lessons related to religious understanding given by their Quran teachers, both religious advice, about the pillars of faith and the pillars of Islam for TPA children so they can understand the religion well and correctly. This is also in line with what was stated by Ustad La Isyi as the Supervisor of the Waara Village TPA, that:

*"Yes, we start the Koran study for the children by giving advice and some explanations about the Islamic religion and often explaining the pillars of faith and Islam, especially regarding prayer, fasting, zakat, and the shahada".*

Another interview also revealed by a child named Salman, that:

*"Yes, we often listen to the Ustad explain about prayer and fasting so that we can pray and fast diligently and properly so that we can be good children and be loved by our parents."*

Another answer was also expressed by a child named Siti Aisyah Magfirah, that:

*"Yes, the Ustad gave us advice to pray and fast every day and explained that prayer is the most important worship after the Shahada and is a pillar of the Islamic religion"*

Based on the observations and interviews above, we can see that in addition to teaching how to read the Quran, teachers also provide an understanding of the five pillars of Islam, namely prayer, the pillar of the religion and the most important practice after the Shahada. This demonstrates that teaching at the TPA is crucial for nurturing children into Islamically literate individuals.

### **Implementation of the Pillars of Islam for Children at the Waara Village TPA**

The five pillars of Islam are divided into five: the shahada, prayer, fasting, zakat, and the pilgrimage for those who can afford it. The three pillars most frequently taught and instilled in children are the shahada, prayer, and fasting. These three pillars are often emphasized and constantly monitored by TPA teachers. This aligns with the researchers' observations of the variables studied.

The following are several interviews conducted by researchers on several samples at the research location to find out the above:

Ustad La Isyi as the Supervisor of the Waara Village TPA said that:

*"We as TPA Supervisors strongly recommend our students to perform the 5 daily prayers regularly and fast during the month of Ramadan and to understand the shahada and supervise them by asking about this before starting the recitation".*

Another answer was also expressed by a child named Muhammad Afkar, that:

*"Yes, the teacher always told us to pray at the mosque before coming to the Koran study and during the fasting month we were told to fast completely"*

Another expression was also expressed by a child named Filal, that:

*"Yes, we are always required to pray first before reciting the Koran or those who do not fast are given sanctions by not participating in the Koran"*

Based on the results of the observations and interviews above, we can see that the implementation of the pillars of Islam among the children of the Waara Village TPA was carried out well and under the supervision of their Koran teachers who gave sanctions to children who did not perform prayers, let alone fasting, by not participating in the Koran study that day.

### **TPA Children's Consistency in Implementing the Pillars of Islam**

Carrying out the pillars of Islam is not easy for anyone, especially those who are not accustomed to them. This is especially true for children with their active playtime. Therefore, regular practice and advice will shape good character in children, and this is what parents hope for, so that their children will grow up to be good and moral individuals.

Observations made by researchers found that children who regularly study the Quran at the Waara Village TPA consistently and regularly recite the Quran and participate in prayers at the mosque before and after the Quran lessons. This is due to the emphasis and habituation of the children at the Waara Village TPA to consistently perform prayers and other acts of

*Implementation of Religious Studies to Improve Religious Understanding in the Context of the Pillars of Islam in Kindergarten Children* worship as a form of recognition of their Islamic faith. This is in line with interviews conducted with informants, as follows:

Ustad La Isyi as a teacher at the Waara Village TPA stated that:

*"As teachers at the Waara Village TPA, we always monitor and emphasize to our students to perform prayers and fasting properly, not just following along, but to truly worship properly. In addition, we also supervise them at the mosque, and this is very efficient."*

Another expression was also expressed by a child named Parhat Ramadhan P, that:

*"Yes, every day before we go to the Koran study, my friends and I invite each other to go to the mosque to pray and after the Maghrib prayer, we go to the TPA to learn to recite the Koran."*

Another answer was also expressed by a child named Agung, that:

*"Yes, we always attend and participate in prayers at the mosque before going to the TPA and are supervised by the ustad, especially during the fasting month when we are closely supervised and participate in breaking the fast together at the mosque."*

Based on the observations and interviews above, we can understand that the implementation of the pillars of Islam among the children at the Waara Village TPA can be said to be consistent due to the supervision of the teachers and the requirement to do so before attending religious study. Therefore, the children

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the discussion in this research with the title *Implementation of Religious Studies to Improve Religious Understanding in Children of the Waara Village TPA, Lakudo District, Central Buton Regency*, then the author can draw the following conclusions: Recitation activities at the Waara Village TPA are routinely carried out every day after the evening prayer has finished and sometimes continue after the evening prayer if there are still children who have not had time to recite the Koran. There are teachings carried out by teachers starting from the introduction of Hidajayah letters, both pronunciation and makhraj to children who are still at the Iqro level, as well as learning the laws of recitation to children who have entered the Al-Qur'an level. The understanding of Islam, particularly understanding and implementing the pillars of Islam, among the children at the Waara Village TPA is quite good. This can be seen from the children's diligence in performing prayers and fasting during Ramadan, as well as understanding the shahada. This consistency is achieved through the affirmation and supervision carried out by the Waara Village TPA teachers who do not allow their students to study the Koran before praying and provide advice every day before and after the Koran study.

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