

The Habit of Daily Prayer as A Means Of Instilling Spiritual Values and Islamic Ethics at Kindergarten Griya Anak Sholih Padang Sidempuan

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Abstract

This study aims to describe and analyze how the habit of daily prayer can be an effective means of instilling spiritual values and Islamic ethics in early childhood at Griya Anak Sholih Padang Sidempuan Kindergarten. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data collection techniques include participatory observation, interviews with teachers and principals, and documentation of daily activities. The results of the study showed that prayer habituation activities at Griya Anak Sholih Kindergarten were carried out consistently in various moments of children's daily activities, such as before and after study, before eating, and before going home. These prayers are not only memorized, but also given simple meanings so that they can be understood by children. This habit has been proven to be able to shape religious behavior, such as gratitude, politeness, and obedience to rules. Teachers have an important role as models and guides, while parents contribute through home memorization assistance. Despite some obstacles, such as lack of parental involvement or limited children's memory, prayer habituation remains an effective medium in instilling Islamic spiritual and ethical values when done consistently and collaboratively.

Keywords: Prayer Habituation, Spiritual Values, Islamic Ethics, Character Education

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Introduction

Early childhood education is the most crucial stage in forming the foundation of a child's character, spirituality, and personality. The age of 0–6 years is known as the "golden age" period because in this period children have high sensitivity to the values instilled in them, including religious and ethical values (Mustari, 2011). In the context of Islamic education, early childhood is a strategic moment to instill the basics of faith, worship, and morals as a provision for children to build a pious personality and be spiritually and socially responsible (Zuhairini et al., 2011).

One of the approaches that is considered effective in value education in early childhood is the habit of daily prayer. Prayer is not only a spiritual practice, but it is also a form of inner communication between man and the Creator, which indirectly educates children to have an awareness of God's presence in every aspect of life. Through prayer, children are introduced to the concepts of tauhid, gratitude, manners, and the attitude of tawakal to Allah SWT (Al-Ghazali, 2003). This habit also helps to form a strong religious character from an early age, which in turn will shape ethical attitudes in children's daily lives.

The implementation of prayer habituation in the kindergarten (TK) environment must be designed in a systematic, consistent, and fun manner. The teacher as a central figure has a strategic role not only in teaching the text of prayer, but also being an example in the practice of prayer and instilling the meanings behind it. Value instilling through prayer includes the spiritual dimensions (relationship with God), social (praying for others), and moral dimensions (asking for forgiveness, asking for guidance, etc.) (Fadilah, 2020). When children are invited to pray before and after activities, they also indirectly learn about order, discipline, and responsibility—which are part of Islamic ethics.

However, in practice, not all PAUD institutions are able to carry out prayer habits with a deep and meaningful approach. Many prayer habits are only memorized and have not touched the spiritual and ethical aspects contained in it. In addition, the active involvement of teachers and the school environment in consistently accompanying children is a challenge in itself (Sauri, 2017). Therefore, a study is needed that raises how the practice of prayer habituation can be implemented as a means of internalizing authentic Islamic spiritual values and ethics in children's lives.

Griya Anak Sholih Padang Sidempuan Kindergarten is an early age Islamic educational institution that has a vision to form a Qur'anic generation and has a noble character. In its daily activities, this institution implements various forms of religious habituation, including prayers before and after activities, prayers when entering and leaving the room, and special prayers such as prayers for eating, studying, and entering the bathroom. However, the effectiveness of such habituation in instilling spiritual values and Islamic ethics has not been widely researched academically.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze how the habit of daily prayer is applied in Griya Anak Sholih Kindergarten, how teachers build the spiritual meaning behind the practice, and how the habituation plays a role in shaping children's ethics and character. This research is expected to make a scientific and practical contribution to the development of character education based on Islamic values in the PAUD environment.

Research Methods

Research This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type of research. This approach was chosen because it aims to deeply understand the practice of daily prayer habituation and how the process becomes a means of instilling spiritual values and Islamic ethics in students. The qualitative approach allows researchers to explore the experiences, meanings, and perceptions built by teachers, students, and the school environment towards such habituation practices in typical social and religious contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The subjects of the study were teachers of Kindergarten Griya Anak Sholih Padang Sidempuan, students aged 4–6 years old as the main participants, and the principal as key informants. The determination of informants is carried out purposively, namely selecting individuals who are considered to understand the most and are directly involved in the process of habituating prayer in the school environment (Sugiyono, 2019). Researchers chose classroom teachers because they have a major role in guiding children directly in daily spiritual practices.

The data collection technique is carried out through three main methods, namely:

1. Participatory observation, to directly observe the process of habituating prayer carried out before, during, and after learning activities. The researcher recorded the teacher's activity in leading prayer, the child's diligence in following, and the consistency of the practice in daily life.
2. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and principals to dig deeper into the purpose of prayer habituation, the methods used, the meaning conveyed to children, and the challenges faced in its implementation.
3. Documentation, such as daily schedules, Daily Learning Implementation Plan (RPPH) books, children's prayer books, photos of joint prayer activities, and teacher notes were used to reinforce observation and interview data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

The data obtained was analyzed using an interactive analysis model from Miles and Huberman. The analysis process is carried out in three stages, namely: (1) Data reduction – sorting and simplifying important data according to the focus of the research, (2) Data presentation – structuring data narratively and thematically so that it is easy to understand, and (3) Conclusion drawn/verification – looking for patterns and meanings to conclude the role of prayer habituation in shaping Islamic spiritual values and ethics (Miles et al., 2014).

To maintain the validity of the data, the researcher uses triangulation of sources and techniques, namely by comparing information from teachers, principals, and observations of students, as well as verifying through learning documents. In addition, member checking is also carried out on informants to ensure that the researcher's interpretation is in accordance with the true meaning (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

With this approach, it is hoped that the research can provide a complete and contextual picture of how the habit of prayer is not only a routine, but also a medium for internalizing Islamic spiritual values and ethics in real life in early childhood life.

Results And Discussion

4.1 Research Results

This research was conducted at Kindergarten Griya Anak Sholih Padang Sidempuan with the aim of finding out how the habit of daily prayer is carried out and how it affects the cultivation of spiritual values and Islamic ethics in early childhood. Data was obtained through direct observation, in-depth interviews with teachers and principals, and documentation of learning activities.

4.1.1 Forms of Prayer Habituation Carried Out in Schools

Griya Anak Sholih Kindergarten has integrated prayer activities into all children's daily activities. The habit of prayer is carried out systematically in various relevant situations and conditions. The types of prayers that are habitual include:

- a) Prayers in and out of class: Recited together as children enter and leave the classroom.
- b) Prayer before and after study: Done as a routine to start and end the learning session, in the hope that the child realizes that knowledge comes from God.
- c) Prayer before and after meals: Done during meal breaks. Children are guided to read prayers, then eat with Islamic manners.

- d) Prayer in and out of the bathroom: Introduced during hygiene practice activities.
- e) Sleep-and-wake prayers: Delivered in the form of memorized and engaging interactive songs.

The prayers are adjusted to the level of language and cognitive development of the child. Children are not only invited to memorize, but also given a simple understanding of the meaning and function of the prayer in daily life.

4.1.2 Teachers' Strategies in Getting Used to Prayer

Teachers play a major role in the process of habituating prayer. The strategies carried out include:

- a) Repetition-based learning: The teacher leads the prayer each day with specific tones and movements to make it easier for the child to remember.
- b) Utilization of audio and song media: Some prayers, such as the prayer before meals and the prayer to sleep, are taught in the form of Islamic songs to make them more enjoyable.
- c) Modeling approach: The teacher shows a solemn and serious attitude when praying, so that the child imitates it.
- d) Contextualization of prayer: The teacher explains the context of the time and place of prayer, so that children understand that prayer is not just memorization, but part of a meaningful daily activity.

From the results of the interview, the teacher said that children will more quickly grasp the meaning of prayer if they are given real examples in daily life, such as "If we forget to read the prayer of eating, let's remind our friends!"

4.1.3 Children's Response to Prayer Habits

The results of observations showed that the majority of children in the upper class (ages 5–6 years) were able to memorize at least 5–6 short prayers and say them in the appropriate context. Children seem enthusiastic about participating in prayer activities, especially if they are delivered in the form of songs or role-playing methods (for example: pretending to sleep and then reading prayers together).

Some indicators of Islamic spiritual values and ethics that are beginning to appear in children include:

- a) Spiritual awareness: Children say Allah's name in daily activities, for example saying "Bismillah" before writing or "Alhamdulillah" after eating.
- b) Manners: Children become more polite, for example, greeting teachers and friends spontaneously.
- c) Discipline and responsibility: Children begin to get used to regulating themselves with prayer routines that are done at certain times.

However, it was also found that some children were still passive or less enthusiastic, especially those who came from families who did not get used to praying at home.

4.1.4 The Role of Parents in Supporting the Habit of Prayer

The school involves parents through daily communication books and prayer strengthening tasks at home. In some teachers' notes, parents generally support these activities, but not all of them are consistent. Some parents take notes on their child's memorization and guide bedtime prayers, but others leave it entirely to the school.

Parental support greatly influences the success of internalizing children's spiritual values. The teacher stated that children who were used to praying with their families at home were more likely to show spiritual development and Islamic ethics than children who only practiced at school.

4.1.5 Obstacles Faced in the Process of Habituation of Prayer

Some of the obstacles identified in the process of habituating prayer include:

- a) Children's verbal abilities are still limited, especially in children aged 4 years and below, making it difficult to memorize long prayers.
- b) The lack of prayer habits at home causes children to experience inconsistencies between learning at school and practice at home.
- c) Limited learning time causes teachers to divide their focus between strengthening prayer memorization and other curriculum materials.

To overcome this, teachers take an individualized approach, repetition, and develop a schedule to strengthen prayer memorization in a gradual and thematic manner.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Habituation of Prayer as a Foundation for Instilling Spiritual Values in Early Childhood

Prayer is one of the most fundamental media in early childhood spiritual value education. When prayer is habitual and enjoyable, children not only memorize it verbally, but also begin to form an understanding that every activity they do is connected to a higher spiritual power, namely Allah SWT. Through prayer, children learn that they are small and limited, so they need to surrender, be grateful, and ask for guidance at all times.

This is in line with Al-Attas' view that Islamic education is not just the transmission of knowledge, but the process of purifying the soul and forming the right manners through the knowledge of God. (Al-Attas, S. M. N. 1991) In the context of early childhood, the introduction to God is carried out concretely, such as through daily prayer associated with physical activity: eating, sleeping, studying, and others.

4.2.2 Prayer as a Means of Learning Islamic Ethics

Every prayer that children read contains a moral message that can be instilled naturally. For example, prayer before meals not only contains spiritual value in the form of gratitude, but also forms good manners (such as eating with the right hand, sitting while eating, and not being greedy). Prayer in the bathroom teaches the ethics of maintaining cleanliness and politeness. Therefore, every prayer becomes an effective tool in building children's Islamic character through repeated concrete experiences.

This is reinforced by Piaget's theory of moral development, which states that early childhood learns moral values not from verbal commands alone, but through the repetition of rules in meaningful social activities. (Piaget, J. 1965) The habit of prayer in daily life provides space for children to experience moral values directly in a context that is fun and relevant to their lives.

4.2.3 Teacher's Example as a Determinant of Success

The role of teachers in this process is vital. Teachers not only function as memorization teachers, but also as the main role models. Early childhood is in an imitative developmental phase, where they learn through observation and imitation of the adults around them. In many cases, children absorb grades faster if they see them consistently performed by a figure they admire—in this case, a teacher.

Bandura's social learning theory explains that children learn behavior through observation of models that are trusted and appreciated. (Bandura, A. 1977) Therefore, teachers who show a solemn attitude when praying, as well as associate prayer with real actions, will make it easier for children to imitate and internalize their values.

4.2.4 Consistency and Synergy of School-Parents as the Key

The habit of prayer will be successful if it is done consistently and integrated, both at school and at home. The mismatch of habituation between home and school is one of the most significant obstacles in the process of internalizing values in children. Some children who do not receive reinforcement at home tend to forget memorization or do not understand the meaning of the prayer that has been taught. (Zannatunnisya, 2024). According to Hurlock, habit formation in children is only effective if it is done through repetition and consistency of the environment. (Hurlock, E. B. 1999) Therefore, synergy between schools and parents is absolutely necessary. Schools need to involve parents through daily communication, memorization reporting, and assignments of prayer habituation at home.

4.2.5 Prayer Habituation as a Long-Term Process

The results of this study also confirm that the formation of Islamic spiritual values and ethics through prayer is a long-term process. Not all children are immediately able to memorize, understand, and practice prayer perfectly. However, when this process is carried out continuously, an Islamic habitus will be formed that is embedded in the child's daily consciousness and behavior. (Parapat, A. 2020).

This is in accordance with the Islamic character education approach which states that character is not formed through one activity, but through a consistent and reflective process of repetition. (Zuchdi, D. 2008) Therefore, the habit of prayer must be an inseparable part of the learning system and culture of Islamic schools.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and discussions that have been carried out, it can be concluded that the habit of daily prayer at Griya Anak Sholih Padang Sidempuan Kindergarten is an effective strategy in instilling spiritual values and Islamic ethics in early childhood. Prayers that are recited regularly in various daily activities—such as before study, before eating, and when entering or leaving the room—form a simple religious custom but have a profound impact on the formation of a child's character.

This habituation process not only develops children's spiritual awareness, such as gratitude, dependence on Allah SWT, and the spirit of prayer, but also fosters ethical behaviors, such as politeness, discipline, and responsibility. Teachers have a central role as role models and facilitators of prayer learning, while parental involvement is an important supporting factor in strengthening these habits in the home environment.

Despite some obstacles, such as children's limited verbal abilities or lack of support from family, the habit of prayer that is done consistently, contextually, and pleasantly has been proven to form a strong spiritual foundation and build children's Islamic character from an early age.

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