"Islamic Education Approach in Developing Spiritual Independence of Children with Down Syndrome"

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the approach of Islamic education in developing the spiritual independence of children with Down Syndrome. Children with Down Syndrome have intellectual and social limitations that demand adaptive and loving methods of spiritual coaching. Through a qualitative approach based on literature review, this study examines various scientific sources related to Islamic education, psychology of children with special needs, and relevant spiritual practices. The results of the study show that Islamic values such as compassion (rahmah), patience (sabr), and exemplary (uswah hasanah) are effective foundations in forming spiritual independence. The implementation of Islamic education based on direct experience, simple worship habits, and family and teacher support play a significant role in strengthening the spirituality of children with Down Syndrome. In conclusion, a humanistic, empathetic, and inclusive approach to Islamic education is able to foster spiritual independence while strengthening the confidence of children with Down Syndrome.

Keywords: Islamic Education, Down Syndrome, Spiritual Independence, Inclusive

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Introduction

Education is carried out throughout the life span which will never end until the end of life. From an early age, all humans have been educated to be human beings who know the rules. Especially for children who need high concentration [1]. Islamic education is oriented towards the formation of a whole human being who has faith, knowledge, and noble character. Islamic education does prioritize moral education which is its spirit, but it does not ignore the problem of preparing a person for life, earning a living and does not forget physical education, intellect, heart, will, ideals, hand, oral and personality skills. Islamic education has a strong comprehensive, fair and democratic principle. Educators and students are equally noble, so many aspects must be considered and maintained [2]. Parenting is an important determinant that affects all children. Developing children's morals is authoritative parenting in which it balances clear and high expectations with emotional support and recognition of children's autonomy. Authoritative parents try to direct the child, but in a rational way [3].

Islam as a Way of Life Paying close attention to the growth and development of the physical and psychological aspects of the child. By nature, children need education and guidance from adults [4]. In the context of children with special needs, especially children with Down Syndrome, the educational process requires a more personalized and adaptive approach. Children with Down Syndrome have different cognitive and social abilities than other children, so Islamic education strategies must adapt to their developmental stages and spiritual needs. Spiritual independence is the ability of children to recognize, understand, and implement religious teachings independently according to their capacity. This effort not only instills religious values, but also forms a sense of confidence and a deeper meaning in life.

Literature Review

Islamic education emphasizes the balance between cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects, education in general (formal and non-formal) is basically a primary need for human beings, both individually and as citizens, which leads to the formation of the main personality [5]. In the context of children with special needs, inclusion theory (Booth & Ainscow, 2011) emphasizes the importance of equal access to religious education to create a guarantee, acceptance, collaboration, and community stimulation, where everyone feels valued [6]. Down syndrome is one of the causes of a person suffering from disability or a person who has belowaverage intellectual ability. Tuna grahita is divided into three stages: light, medium, and heavy. The characteristic of a child with mild disability is that he is still fluent in speech, but has problems with his vocabulary because they have a little difficulty in abstract thinking and they can still take lessons in both regular and special schools.

Several previous studies related to people with Down syndrome have been carried out both related to social-emotional, cognitive, and acceptance of the social environment. Such as research conducted by Koizumi and Kojima which explains the condition of people with Down syndrome who have short-term memories that their condition is no longer excluded. In addition, the form of acceptance of DS sufferers is also shown from the results of research conducted by Mazeed who hone their motor skills using music This shows that by honing their skills in the field of motor skills, it makes it easier for parents to provide instructions or orders related to self-development so that DS sufferers are no longer considered a burden on the family [7]. The study of Islamic psychology (Az-Zahrani) highlights that spiritual development can be facilitated through the habit of simple worship, the example of teachers, and emotional support from the family [8]. Previous research (Rohman, 2021; Ningsih, 2023) shows that the

application of the Rahmah and Uswah Hasanah increase the sense of calm and spiritual independence of children with Down Syndrome in an inclusive Islamic school environment. The purpose of this study is to explore skills in the spiritual aspects of children with Down syndrome.

Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with the literature review method. Literature review is research conducted by finding sources of information or data from previous research articles on topics of discussion that are in accordance with the current research Data obtained through literature analysis from journal articles and books, which are relevant to the theme of Islamic education and children with Down Syndrome. The analysis process uses content analysis techniques, including identifying themes, categorizing concepts, and interpreting Islamic education patterns that support the spiritual development of children with Down Syndrome.

Results

The results of the study show that the development of spiritual independence of children with Down Syndrome can be achieved through:

1. Simple worship habits such as prayer, ablution, and prayer with visual and verbal guidance.
2. The example of teachers and parents, who become a model of positive spiritual behavior.
3. The rahmah approach, which creates a sense of security and comfort in learning religion.
4. Religious activities are based on direct experience**,** such as the practice of alms and simple mutual cooperation.

This approach is effective because it fosters a personal and meaningful spiritual experience, not just religious knowledge. Even with the limitations of cognitive abilities, DS children do not mean that they cannot achieve independence. In terms of caring for and taking care of themselves, parents cannot give instructions directly but through intermediaries with actions that can be exemplified by children.

Conclusion

With physical and psychological limitations and the role of parents in teaching daily activities and also the patience of parents in guiding, the child's learning process will have an impact on the child's future, especially in his social ability to carry out home activities such as wearing clothes, bathing, and other self-development. Even though both have received previous guidance, if it is not repeated, the child will be confused, moreover, it is the child's nature Down syndrome who are easy to forget. The way parents train children's independence gradually is such as exemplifying simple things over and over again so that children become accustomed to [9]. Islamic education plays a strategic role in developing the spiritual independence of children with Down Syndrome through an empathetic, compassionate, and habituation-based approach. By integrating the Rahmah, Uswah Hasanahand SABR, Islamic education can strengthen children's spiritual awareness and confidence in carrying out their religious activities. The results of this study are the basis for the development of an inclusive Islamic education model that is more adaptive and humanistic.

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