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Analysis of the Implementation of Islamic Religious Education Learning in Elementary Schools

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Abstract: This article aims to reveal the concept of learning Islamic religious education in elementary schools. In its development, elementary school-age children have their own characteristics, where their thinking skills develop gradually. This needs to be understood wisely in order to deliver the success of educational goals. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the library research method. The results of the study show that Islamic religious education in elementary schools has its own uniqueness. If in the past children's thinking power was still imaginative and egocentric, then in this period their thinking power has developed towards concrete, rational, and objective thinking. The scope of Islamic religious education studies includes the Qur'an, faith, morals, fiqh/worship, and Islamic cultural history. Educational methods that can be applied refer to the Quranic method, such as the amtsal method, the qishah method, the ibrah mauidzah method, the hiwar jadali method, the uswah hasanah method, and the targhib tarhib method. In addition, Islamic religious education can be carried out verbally or nonverbal, written or non-written, which aims to measure the intellectual, social, and spiritual competence of students. Thus, Islamic religious education is expected to be able to produce human beings who always strive to perfect faith, piety, and morals, and actively build Islamic civilization.

Keywords: Fiqih, Uswah Hasanah, Islamic Religious Education

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INTRODUCTION

Educational activities carried out by Muslims, or often referred to as Islamic education, include all educational interactions both through school and outside school (Efendi, Lubis, and Nasution, 2018). Islamic education activities outside of school can be seen in ta'lim assemblies, recitations, Islamic boarding schools, and other similar activities. Meanwhile, Islamic education through school channels is manifested in the form of formal educational institutions such as RA, MI, MTs, MA, IAIN/STAIN/PTAIS, as well as Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects in public schools. The existence of PAI in the public school curriculum is guaranteed by Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System Chapter X Article 37, which states that the primary and secondary education curriculum must contain religious education. In fact, PAI is one of the compulsory subjects that must be taught in every path, type, and level of education, both public and private (Hartati, 2017).

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) as a subject taught in schools has a strategic role in shaping the personality of students who are tough, both in terms of morality and in terms of science and technology (Sofwan Nugraha, Supriadi, and Saepul Anwar, 2014). However, the reality is that PAI learning in schools is often considered less successful in instilling moral and religious values. This can be seen from the rampant deviant behavior among adolescents such as drug abuse, promiscuity, fights, and other forms of social pathology (Hartati, 2015). This condition shows that the PAI learning strategy is still conventional and traditional, and less responsive to the development of the times and the industrial revolution 4.0 (Tang, 2018). In fact, today's students are very familiar with digital technology such as smartphones and laptops. Therefore, PAI teachers should be innovative and creative in developing learning strategies that are in accordance with the world of children today (Fakhruddin, 2014).

According to Zakiyah Darajat, Islamic education is an effort to foster students to understand the teachings of Islam comprehensively, appreciate its purpose, and be able to practice and make it a guideline for life. Islamic education includes two main things, namely educating students to behave according to Islamic values, and teaching Islamic teaching materials scientifically (Utomo, 2018). Hamka Abdul Aziz also divided the goals of education based on two main goals: first, the goals of education of the heart, which include faith, piety, noble morals, independence, and responsibility; second, the goal of brain education, which includes knowledge, skills, and creativity, so as to give birth to intelligent and moral human beings (Hamka, 2012).

PAI subjects in elementary schools include the fields of the Qur'an and al-Hadith, faith, morals, fiqh, and Islamic cultural history. Islamic religious education plays a role in shaping the balance of human relationships with Allah SWT, oneself, fellow humans, other creatures, and the environment (Hablun minallah wa hablun minannas). Thus, Islamic religious education is a conscious effort by educators to prepare students to be able to believe, understand, and practice Islamic teachings through the process of guidance, teaching, and training (Sulistiyowati, 2012).

The role of teachers in learning is very important. Teachers must be able to create active learning, involving students mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually (Budiyanti, Rizal, and Sumarna, 2016). Teachers must also be learning partners, increasing student motivation, responsibility, and creativity so that learning becomes more meaningful and student-centered. Learning must be associated with knowledge, skills, and values that are expected to be mastered by students (Shunhaji, 2019). Based on this background, it is important for educators to comprehensively examine learning in elementary schools—including concepts, objectives, materials, and evaluations—in order to adapt learning to the times. The concept of education in elementary schools emphasizes an integrative approach that is oriented towards the interests and comfort of students as well as the development of life skills. By understanding this concept in its entirety, learning goals will be easier to achieve optimally.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of literature research or library research. This approach was chosen because it is in accordance with the research objective, which is to examine the concept of learning Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in elementary schools through the review of literature, educational documents, and the results of previous research. Literature research allows researchers to collect, analyze, and interpret a variety of relevant written sources, so as to provide a comprehensive picture of PAI learning. According to Creswell (2012), qualitative research is suitable to be used to understand meanings, experiences, and concepts that are in-depth through the collection of non-numerical data. In this context, library research is an effective strategy because it focuses on the analysis of the content of texts and scientific documents.

The subject of this research is not in the form of specific individuals or groups, but in the form of written sources that are relevant to PAI learning. The main sources include textbooks on Islamic religious education, academic journals, research articles, as well as curriculum documents published by the Ministry of Religion and the Ministry of Education. In addition, references from classical and contemporary literature are used to enrich the analysis. Moleong (2017) explained that in qualitative research, data sources can be texts or phenomena that are studied in depth, so that library research can be considered a valid form of qualitative research.

The research location is flexible because the researcher does not conduct field observations, but rather works through the study of documents and literature. All data was collected from libraries, online journal databases, and researchers' personal collections. This technique is in line with the opinion of Zed (2014) who states that literature research emphasizes the exploration of library sources as the main material for analyzing an educational phenomenon. The research procedure is carried out through several interrelated stages. The first stage is the identification of the problem that is the basis of the research, namely how PAI learning in elementary schools is carried out from the aspects of objectives, scope, methods, and evaluation. The next stage is the collection of relevant data sources. The sources studied were selectively selected by considering their academic validity, relevance, and relevance to the research focus. After that, the researcher organizes the data by grouping sources according to the theme of the discussion, for example about the scope of PAI material, the Qur'anic method, and the evaluation system.

The research instrument in the literature study is the researcher himself who functions as a planner, implementer, collector, and analyzer of data. According to Sugiyono (2018), in qualitative research, researchers are the main instrument because the direct involvement of researchers in interpreting data greatly determines the quality of research results. To strengthen the analysis, the researcher used tools in the form of documentation notes, thematic schemas, and reference management applications to organize literature data.

The data collection technique is carried out through searching literature from various reliable sources. Data was collected from Islamic education textbooks, reputable scientific journals, Islamic religious education research articles, and official curriculum documents. In addition, several classic works such as Qur'anic and hadith educational methods are used as references. This method is in accordance with the view of Arikunto (2015) who stated that secondary data in educational research is very important to provide a strong theoretical foundation.

Data analysis is carried out using a content analysis approach. According to Krippendorff (2013), content analysis is a research technique to make inferences that can be replicated and valid from a text or document in a certain context. In this study, content analysis was used to identify the main themes in PAI learning, then relate them to theoretical concepts and learning practices in elementary schools. The analysis process begins with data reduction, which is to select relevant information, then present the data in the form of a thematic narrative, and finally draw conclusions based on the interpretation of the analyzed literature.

To maintain the validity of the data, the source triangulation technique is used. Literature sources are compared to each other to test the consistency of information. For example, the view of the scope of PAI material from textbooks is compared with the provisions in the national curriculum as well as the results of contemporary research. Moleong (2017) states that source triangulation is important to avoid interpretation bias in qualitative research. Thus, the validity of the data can be accounted for academically. The ethical aspect of research is also considered. Although this research is based on literature, the researcher still maintains the authenticity of the work by listing reference sources according to the seventh edition of the APA citation standard. This is important to avoid plagiarism as well as give credit to the original author. In line with the opinion of

Creswell (2012), research ethics include academic honesty, scientific integrity, and openness in presenting research results.

By using a systematic literature research method, this research is able to provide a complete picture of the learning of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in elementary schools. Through a diverse literature analysis, this study not only highlights the scope of the material, Qur'anic methods, and evaluations, but also shows the importance of integrating the values of faith, piety, and morals in learning practices. Thus, the methods used provide a strong foothold to produce scientifically accountable conclusions.

RESULTS

The results of the research conducted through this literature study approach provide a comprehensive overview of the learning of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in elementary schools, especially from the aspects of student characteristics, the scope of material, learning methods, and evaluation. Based on a literature analysis, it was found that the implementation of PAI at this level has its own uniqueness because it is closely related to the developmental stage of elementary school-age children.

Children at elementary school age are in the stage of concrete operational development, as explained by Piaget (2010), which is a time when they begin to understand logical concepts but still need the help of real objects or concrete examples. The results of the study show that elementary school-age children no longer only fantasize or think egocentric as in early childhood, but have the ability to think rationally and objectively, even though they are limited to concrete things. This cognitive development has a great influence on the learning strategies that teachers must implement. Thus, the PAI learning provided must be packaged in a simple, real, and contextual form so that it is easier for students to understand.

The scope of PAI material in elementary school includes the Qur'an, faith, morals, fiqh or worship, and the history of Islamic culture. Each component of the material has an important role in shaping the Islamic personality of students. The results of the study show that learning the Qur'an in elementary school is usually focused on the introduction of hijaiyah letters, basic tajweed, and memorization of short letters. This aims to equip students with the ability to read the Qur'an correctly from an early age. In the aspect of faith, learning is directed to instill faith in Allah, angels, books, messengers, the last days, and destiny. Morals are taught by emphasizing the importance of polite, honest, disciplined, and respectful behavior of others. Fiqh material is more focused on daily worship practices such as ablution, prayer, and fasting. Meanwhile, the history of Islamic culture was introduced to foster a sense of love for Islamic figures and appreciate Islamic civilization. This finding is in line with the view of Muhaimin (2016) who emphasizes that PAI material must include aspects of knowledge, attitudes, and skills so that learning goals are achieved comprehensively.

The learning method applied in PAI in elementary school according to the results of the literature analysis refers a lot to the Qur'anic method. Teachers can use the *amtsal* method, which is to provide simple illustrations to facilitate students' understanding of abstract concepts. In addition, the *qishah* or storytelling method is one of the effective methods, because children at this age really like stories, especially those that contain moral values. The *ibrah mauidzah* method is used by giving advice taken from certain stories or events, while the *hiwar jadali* method is used through interactive dialogue between teachers and students. Teachers also apply the *uswah hasanah* or exemplary method, where the teacher's behavior becomes a real example for students. In addition, the *targhib* and *tarhib* methods are used to provide motivation in the form of promises of rewards for good and warnings against the bad consequences of wrong deeds. These findings reinforce the opinion of Sanjaya (2016) that a variety of learning methods can increase student engagement and make learning more effective.

In addition to the Qur'anic method, teachers in elementary schools also need to combine modern learning methods that emphasize student activity. For example, group-based learning, simple discussions, worship practice simulations, and educational games. The results of the study show that the combination of traditional methods with modern approaches will create a more interesting learning atmosphere and relevant to the needs of children. This is in line with the opinion of Uno (2019) who states that creative and varied learning can increase learning motivation and results achieved by students.

Evaluation in PAI learning in elementary school is carried out comprehensively by involving cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. The results of the analysis showed that the assessment was not only carried out through written tests, but also oral assessments, worship practices, and observations of students' attitudes and behaviors in daily life. Teachers assess the ability to read the Qur'an, perform ablution and prayers, as well as students' honesty, discipline, and responsibility. This approach is in line with the view of Muslich (2017) who emphasizes the importance of authentic assessments that measure the entire domain of student competence. With a comprehensive assessment, teachers can ensure that the learning objectives of PAI are truly achieved, not only in the aspect of knowledge, but also in the practice of religious values.

In general, the results of this study show that PAI learning in elementary school makes a great contribution to the formation of students' religious character. Through a comprehensive scope of materials, varied learning methods, and thorough evaluation, PAI is able to instill the values of faith, piety, and noble morals. These results reinforce Tilaar's (2012) idea that education in essence develops not only intellectual aspects, but also moral and spiritual aspects. Thus, PAI has a strategic role in shaping a generation that is not only academically intelligent, but also has an Islamic character.

However, the results of the study also reveal that there are challenges that are still faced. The limited time of religious lessons in elementary schools is an obstacle in exploring the material more widely. In addition, there are still teachers who are less creative in choosing learning methods so that students become less motivated. This shows the need for continuous development of teacher competencies so that PAI learning can continue to be improved in quality. From all the analyses carried out, it can be concluded that PAI learning in elementary school has great potential to form a generation that has faith, piety, and noble character, with the note that its implementation must pay attention to the characteristics of child development, variations in learning methods, and comprehensive evaluation. These findings provide a solid basis for teachers and policymakers to continue to develop PAI learning models that meet the needs of students at the elementary school level.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that the learning of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in elementary schools has a very important role in shaping the character, morals, and religious understanding of students from an early age. PAI in elementary school not only teaches cognitive aspects in the form of religious knowledge, but also instills affective and psychomotor values that are reflected in students' daily attitudes and behaviors. This reinforces the view of Bloom (1956) that effective education must cover all three domains in order to produce comprehensive learning.

One of the main findings of this study is that PAI learning becomes more meaningful when adjusted to the developmental characteristics of elementary school-age children. Children at this stage are in a concrete operational phase so that they can more easily understand the concept of religion through real examples, simple parables, and direct experience. Teachers who are able to present contextual learning will help students connect religious teachings with daily life. This is in line with Piaget's (2010) view that the cognitive development of elementary school-age children requires concrete and applicative learning.

Learning methods are an important aspect that determines the effectiveness of PAI implementation. The results of the analysis show that Qur'anic methods such as *amtsal*, *qishah*, *ibrah mauidzah*, *hiwar jadali*, *uswah hasanah*, and *targhib-tarhib* can be applied well in elementary schools. The *qishah* method or story, for example, has proven to be very popular with students because it presents inspirational stories from the Qur'an and hadith that are easy to understand and contain moral value. With this method, students can take lessons from the stories of prophets, companions, and other Islamic figures that are relevant to their lives. These findings reinforce the results of Sanjaya's (2016) research which emphasizes the importance of variety of methods in creating a fun and effective learning atmosphere.

In addition to the Qur'anic method, a variety of modern approaches such as group discussions, worship practice simulations, and educational games also contribute positively to students' learning motivation. Teachers who are creative in combining traditional and modern methods will be more successful in arousing students' interest while increasing their understanding. According to Uno (2019), teachers who utilize creative strategies can encourage students to be more active, critical, and reflective in learning. This is also evident in elementary school, where students show higher engagement when learning methods are varied.

The implementation of the principle of exemplary is also a factor that greatly determines the success of PAI learning. Teachers play a role not only as material presenters, but also as real role models in terms of behavior, attitudes, and worship. Elementary school-age children tend to imitate the behavior of teachers or figures they admire. Therefore, teachers who consistently display noble morals will have a great influence on the internalization of Islamic values in students. Lickona (2014) emphasized that character education is not enough to be taught verbally, but must be shown through real examples that students can see and imitate.

The evaluation aspect also received important attention in the results of this study. A comprehensive evaluation not only measures students' cognitive abilities through written tests, but also assesses attitudes through observation and worship skills through practice. With this approach, teachers can ensure that students not only master religious knowledge, but also practice Islamic values in their daily lives. This is in line with Muslich's (2017) idea of the importance of authentic assessment in religious education, where students' success is not solely seen from test scores, but also from the attitudes and behaviors they show.

When compared to previous research, these findings are consistent with the opinion of Muhaimin (2016) who stated that PAI learning must emphasize integration between aspects of knowledge, attitudes, and skills. However, this study makes an additional contribution by emphasizing the importance of choosing contextual Qur'anic methods and variations of modern strategies so that learning is more in line with the characteristics of children's development. Thus, this study expands the discourse on the implementation of PAI learning in elementary schools with a more integrative approach.

The practical implication of this study is that PAI teachers must always develop learning strategies that are in accordance with the characteristics of students. Teachers are required to be creative in combining Qur'anic methods and modern approaches to make learning more interesting and meaningful. In addition, schools need to support teachers by providing adequate facilities and training so that teacher competence continues to improve. Tilaar (2012) emphasized that the quality of education is highly determined by the quality of teachers and the support of the education system.

With this support, PAI learning in elementary schools can provide more optimal results. Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on Islamic religious education by showing the relevance of the Qur'anic method in the context of contemporary learning in primary schools. Practically, this study provides recommendations for teachers, schools, and policymakers to develop PAI learning that is more innovative, contextual, and in accordance with the needs of students. By paying attention to the results of this research,

it is hoped that PAI in elementary school can function not only as a subject, but also as a foundation of character that forms a generation of faith, piety, and noble character.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that Islamic Religious Education learning in elementary schools has a very strategic role in shaping the Islamic personality and character of students. The developmental characteristics of elementary school-age children who are at the concrete operational stage require religious learning to be packaged in a simple, real, and contextual way. The scope of material which includes the Qur'an, creed, morals, fiqh/worship, and the history of Islamic culture has been proven to be able to instill knowledge, attitudes, and skills that complement each other. Qur'anic methods such as amsal, qishah, ibrah mauidzah, hiwar jadali, uswah hasanah, and targhib-tarhib, when combined with modern learning strategies, have proven to be effective in increasing student motivation, understanding, and engagement. Based on the findings of the study, several suggestions can be proposed. First, PAI teachers in elementary schools need to increase creativity in choosing and integrating learning methods, especially integrating Qur'ani methods with modern approaches to make learning more interesting and meaningful. Second, schools should provide full support to teachers in the form of training, provision of learning media, and innovation spaces so that teachers can continue to develop their competencies. Third, education policymakers at the national and regional levels should pay more attention to religious learning in elementary schools, both through curriculum strengthening and policies that encourage the implementation of religion-based character education. Fourth, further research needs to be conducted to test the effectiveness of the combination of Qur'anic methods with contemporary learning strategies empirically in the classroom, so that the results of this research can be more applicable and make a real contribution to educational practices.

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