

The Importance of Islamic Education to the Early Childhood

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ABSTRAK

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Islamic education in childhood begins at an early age when the child is born into the world, and Islamic education begins to be applied. Childhood is the easiest age to respond to or to accept something either through expression, speech, the five senses, and even actions and experiences, so at that age, it is highly recommended to speak good words. Thus, in this golden age, children are able to absorb all life experiences obtained from the surrounding environment to become the foundation for their future. As a country where the majority of the population is Muslim, as an educator and observer of education, it is appropriate to reflect on this and make improvements to improve morals and make a nation capable of applying Islamic principles in education. Materials or curriculum that must be given in early childhood is the basic material of Islamic lessons, such as knowing Allah, the Messenger of Allah, and His books, and another lesson that can be useful to the children's development and life in childhood and adulthood. Furthermore, teaching Islamic Education to children will give some benefits. Firstly, in spiritual matters, children will be able to apply Islam in their daily lives, and the more he has a high spiritual depth the more they will avoid damage in modern times because they already know it is good or bad. Secondly, in terms of behavior or morals, by getting an Islamic religious education their morals will be better, for example, obedience to parents and teachers, with the knowledge of Islamic religion and good moral behavior, students will be encouraged to apply it in their daily lives.

1. Introduction

Education is a crucial thing in every human life. It is exploring the unknown, discovering new ideas, and communicating with the world around us (Tareque, 2012). Education is an activity that people realize consciously and intentionally and is full of responsibility carried out by adults (parents) to the children. So, interactions arise from both of them, so the children reach the desired maturity and it takes place continuously. Every parent hope that their children grow into humans that have a good attitude, are kind-hearted, belief, and be pious to Allah. Therefore, to make this happen, the education that children must be taught from an early age both physical and spiritual is Islamic education. This education will take place in their surrounding area namely the living environment or school area.

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Islamic education in childhood begins at an early age when the child is born into the world, and Islamic education begins to be applied. Childhood is the easiest age to respond to or to accept something either through expression, speech, the five senses, and even actions and experiences, so at that age, it is highly recommended to speak good words. Thus, in this golden age, children are able to absorb all life experiences obtained from the surrounding environment to become the foundation for their future.

In contrast to the reality in the field, children at an early age have not been taught Islamic education. Children have not been brought closer to the religious side, even though since they were in the mother's womb or even choosing a life partner, Islam has given signs. As a result, with so many omissions in teaching children's education, especially Islamic education which lacks parental attention, many children until they grow up become individuals who do not reflect a Muslim with Islamic character. Then, there is a character crisis that must quickly find the best solution. Problems related to character crises that have recently emerged, such as corruption, increasingly uncontrolled crime rates, and juvenile delinquency have become commonplace in society.

In addition, there are also people's thoughts that even parents have not been too concerned with Islamic knowledge and prioritize worldly sciences. So that many children when they grow up and reach puberty, of them neglect their obligations as Muslims. Such as often not performing the 5 daily prayers, using impolite words and even some parents are proud if their children are able to speak foreign languages from an early age or are skilled in worldly matters compared to being able to read the Quran or be useful for the afterlife.

As a country where the majority of the population is Muslim, as an educator and observer of education, it is appropriate to reflect on this and make improvements to improve morals and make a nation capable of applying Islamic principles in education. Thus, one real form of attention from parents who care about children's development is to provide various educations, one of which is Islamic education from an early age. Therefore, we must be able to provide the right stimulus so that children have a filter in living the life of the world. The education must be carried out as well as possible and must be based on the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet shallallahu 'alaihi wa Sallam. Some of the Salaf scholars said, "Seek knowledge from the cradle (when you are a child) to the grave (until you die...)". The command to educate children has also been explained in the Qur'an Surah At-Tahrim: 6 "O you have attained to faith! Ward off from yourselves and those who are close to you that fire (of the hereafter) ..."

On the other hand, there were several previous studies that have been conducted, and some of the researchers focused on children at an early age. Firstly, by Siregar (2016) with the title "Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini Dalam Perspektif Pendidikan Islam". In her research, she applied a non-interactive qualitative method. The purpose was to analyze various aspects of education to early childhood, especially the approach of Islamic education. It was found that the children's education must be based on the Al-Quran and Hadist, particularly the obligation to study for each individual, and the aim is to maintain the child's character so that it becomes a soul in accordance with Islamic teachings and brings children to a life that is pleasing to Allah. Some of the methods that can be applied in early childhood education include exemplary methods, habituation, exercises, games, and stories. Another study titled "Effective Approaches of the Education of Children in Forming a Sustainable Family According to Islamic References" which is written by Rahman et.al (2020). They stated that the importance of emphasizing the development of children is a practice pioneered by Islamic scholars since ancient times based on teaching Islam that used Al-Qur'an and Sunnah as their references.

Therefore, based on the statements above, it is necessary to study how important Islamic Education is to children at an early age and how the involvement of the Islamic education expert. So, the researcher raised the title "The Importance of Islamic Education to Early Childhood". This study, it will be done by analyzing various aspects of early childhood education, especially in Islamic Education and also some benefits of teaching Islamic Education to the children at the early age. The method of this research uses qualitative methods. The type of qualitative method used is non-interactive qualitative, namely research on concepts through a document analysis.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Islamic Education

Education is one aspect of life that must be lived by all human beings, because even in religion we are required to study until the end of life. The term education can be found in the Qur'an with the terms 'at-Tarbiyah', 'at-Ta'lim', and 'at-Tadhib', but we find it more often with the phrase 'rabbi', the word at-Tarbiyah is in masdar form of fi'il madhi rabba, which has the same meaning as the word 'rabb' which means the name of Allah. In the Qur'an, the word 'at-Tarbiyah' is not found, but there is a similar term, namely; ar-rabb, rabbayani, murabbi, rabbiyun, rabbani. It is better to use the rabbinic terms in the hadith.

All these phonemes have different connotations of meaning. Some commentators have different opinions in interpreting the words above. As quoted by Ahmad Tafsir that education is the meaning of the word 'Tarbiyah' the word comes from three words, namely; rabba-yarbu which increases, grows, and 'rabbiya-yarbaa' means to become big, and 'rabba-yarubbu' which means to improve, control affairs, guide, guard, maintain.

According to Kihajar Dewantara (Father of Indonesian National Education) explains the notion of education, namely the demands in the life of the growth of children. The purpose is to guide all the natural forces that exist in children, so that they as humans and as members of society can achieve the highest safety and happiness. According to Law No. 20 of 2003, education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills they need for society, nation and state.

Ahmad D. Marimba (Achadi, 2018) defines education as a conscious guidance or education by educators on the physical and spiritual development of students towards the formation of the main personality. He also formulated five main elements in education, namely: 1) Efforts that are guidance, assistance, or leadership that are carried out consciously. 2) There are educators, mentors and helpers. 3) There are students. 4) There is a basis or purpose in the guidance. 5) There are tools used in the teaching process.

Meanwhile, Islamic education, according to Zakiyah Darajat quoted from Achadi (2018), is the formation of a Muslim personality or changes in attitudes and behavior in accordance with Islamic teachings. In addition, Islamic education is an activity that is carried out in a planned and systematic way to develop the potential of students based on Islamic religious principles. (Awwaliyah & Baharuan, 2018). They stated that Islamic education aims to achieve a balance of human personal growth as a whole through mental exercises, mind, intelligence, feelings and the five senses it has. Furthermore, the ultimate goal of Islamic education based on Jannah (2013) is the formation of Islamic behavior (noble morals) and submission (faith) to Allah based on the instructions of Islamic teachings (Al-Qur'an & Hadith). Meanwhile, Burlian Somad in Sudiyono (2009) states that Islamic education is education that aims to shape individuals into beings who have the highest self-styled character according to the size of the Qur'an, have a high degree according to Allah's standards and the content of education is the teachings of Allah.

Islamic education is a process of preparing the next generation to fill roles, transferring knowledge and Islamic values that are aligned with human functions to do good in the world and reap the rewards in the hereafter. Islamic education is a process of forming individuals based on Islamic teachings revealed by Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala to the Prophet Muhammad Shallallahu alaihi wasallam through a process where individuals are formed in order to achieve high degrees, so that they are able to fulfill their duties as caliphs on earth in realizing happiness in the world and the hereafter.

From some of the definitions above, it can be concluded that education in general and Islamic education have a very close relationship. Where both aim to shape the personality of students and achieve the safety of the world and the hereafter. Thus, Islamic Education learning is a process of interaction between students and the learning environment that has been regulated by educators which is useful for fostering and nurturing in a systematic and

planned manner in preparing students to recognize, understand, live, believe and practice the teachings of Islam. accompanied by guidance to respect adherents of other religions in relation to inter-religious harmony to realize national unity and integrity through the basic teachings contained in the Qur'an and Hadith (Jasuri, 2015).

2.2 Early Childhood

Indonesian Dictionary, states that "early childhood is an individual population aged between 0-6 years". National Education System Law No. 20/2003 paragraph 1, states that "which includes early childhood are children who fall within the age range of 0-6 years. Early childhood is a human age group aged 0-6 years, namely a group of children who are in a unique process of growth and development, in the sense of having a pattern of growth and development (fine and gross motor coordination), intelligence (thinking power, creativity, intelligence). emotional, and spiritual intelligence), emotional social (attitude and behavior and religion), language and communication specifically in accordance with the level of growth and development of children (Siregar, 2016).

The growth and development of early childhood is divided into three stages, namely (a) the baby is born to the age of 12 months, (b) the toddler period (toddler) aged 1-3 years, (c) the preschool period aged 3-6 years, (d) early grade elementary school age 6 -8 years. The growth and development of early childhood needs to be directed at laying the foundations that are appropriate for the growth and development of the whole human being, namely physical growth and development, the power of thought, creativity, social emotional, language and communication are balanced as the basis for the formation of a complete personality. (Mansur, 2005).

The learning process in early childhood should be carried out with the aim of providing basic concepts that have meaning for children through real experiences that allow children to show activity and curiosity optimally (Semiawan cited by Ariyanti 2016). Montessori in Hainstock (Ariyanti, 2016) states that in the age range from birth to 6 years, children experience the golden age, which is a period when children begin to be sensitive/sensitive to receive various stimuli. The sensitive period is the period of maturity of physical and psychological functions, the child is ready to respond to the stimulation provided by the environment. The sensitive period for each child is different, along with the rate of growth and development of the child individually. This period is also the period of laying the first foundation to develop cognitive, language, motor-motor, and socio-emotional abilities in early childhood. (Ariyanti, 2016).

Therefore, paying more attention to children at an early age is a necessity. The form of attention includes providing education either directly from their own parents or through early childhood education institutions. (Fauziddin & Mufarizuddin, 2018)

2.3 Islamic Education of Early Childhood

In simple terms, early childhood education is an adult's effort to provide education to children and is carried out when children are still in the pre-school age phase (0-6 years), this is what in terms of Islamic education is called *التربية الطف ل*, namely education that given to children aged 0-6 years.

In the Qur'an we find how Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala narrates Luqman's advice which is a form of education for their children. Likewise, in the hadiths of the Prophet shallallaahu 'alaihi wasallam, we also find many forms of education for children, both from orders and actions he educates children directly. Educators, parents, and teachers should know how big their responsibility is before Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala for their children's education.

The Importance of Islamic Education to the Early Childhood

The success of education in the early days of birth, left a fundamental and deep impression so that in the following years it was only to broaden horizons, and increase personal stability, in accordance with the teachings of the Prophet. So, parents should not be negligent in the slightest of efforts to educate their children, considering that human faith can decrease and increase, education should be carried out continuously by using all opportunities and various situations that exist and require sacrifice. (Salati, 2012)

In the view of Islam, everything that is carried out must have a legal basis, whether it comes from the naqliyah basis or the aqliyah basis. So is the case with the implementation of education in early childhood. Regarding the implementation of early childhood education, the following words of God can be read: *“And Allah brought you out of the wombs of your mothers while you knew nothing, and gave you hearing, sight, and intellect so perhaps you would be thankful”*. (An-Nahl: 78)

According to the tafsir of the verse above, Then Allah mentions His blessings to His servants in that He brought them from their mothers' wombs not knowing a thing, then He gives them hearing to recognize voices, sight to see visible things and hearts - meaning reason - whose seat, according to the correct view, is the heart, although it was also said that its seat is the brain. With his reason, a person can distinguish between what is harmful and what is beneficial. These abilities and senses develop gradually in man. The more he grows, the more his hearing, vision and reason increase, until they reach their peak. Allah has created these faculties in man to enable him to worship his Lord, so he uses all these organs, abilities and strengths to obey his Master. (<https://quran.com/16:78/tafsirs/en-tafisr-ibn-kathir>)

In addition, the child is also a test for every parent as mentioned in QS. Al-Anfal:28 *“And know that your wealth and your children are only a test and that with Allah is a great reward”*. This verse explains one of the tests that Allah *وَتَعَالَىٰ سُبْحَانَهُ* gives to parents, namely their children. That is why every parent should really be responsible for the mandate given by Allah as well as a test case that must be carried out. If children are educated to follow the teachings of Islam, parents will get a big reward for the results of their obedience.

Parents bear a great responsibility for the behavior of their children, they also have the main responsibility to educate, prepare, cultivate and direct their children to a path that is loved and pleasing to Allah. The Messenger of Allah has emphasized the responsibility of parents towards their children in his saying: *“Each of you is a leader and is responsible for his leadership, and a man (husband) is the leader of his family and he is responsible for what he leads, and a woman (wife) is the leader in the house of her husband and children and she is responsible for leadership”* (HR. Bukhari, Muslim, dan Tirmizi).

In the hadith above, the Prophet thought about the responsibility for the education of children as a whole to their parents. According to Hasan (2009) "Blessed are parents who make religion as the initial capital of education for their children, because if it is not based on religion, then children may leave their nature to embrace the religion of monotheism (*Tauhid*)". Therefore, Islamic education in early childhood is very necessary in order to form good morals for children in the future. In this case, the role of parents and teachers is indispensable in educating and guiding children toward goodness by providing good and appropriate learning.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 The Importance of Islamic Education of early childhood

The Qur'an instructs parents to educate their children with an education based on faith and instill the value of piety into the hearts of their children. Children who are born into the natural world are the next generation. They are new shoots that will grow and develop. Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala says in Q.S An-Nisa: 9

“Let the guardians be as concerned for the orphans as they would if they were to die and leave their own helpless children behind. So, let them be mindful of Allah and speak equitably.”

In the Quran, it is explained that it is the obligation of adults not to neglect their children and provide proper education for these children. In addition, children are also a gift mandated by God to parents, thus they must be responsible for all their children's needs, both material and immaterial. The child is made as a trust, then the child must be nurtured, guarded, cared for and educated properly and given a strong and correct foundation of faith so that they grow up to become human beings who build, not destroy. Giving proper Islamic education to early childhood will give birth to a generation that is not only good at science but good at being grateful as creatures of Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala.

3.2 Early Childhood Education Methods in Islamic Perspective

The main points of education or curriculum that must be given to children include all Islamic teachings which can be broadly grouped into three, namely, faith, worship, morals, and is equipped with education to read the Qur'an.

- a. Faith education, is given because Islam places faith education in the most basic position, especially for children's lives, so the basics of faith must be continuously instilled in children so that every development and growth is always based on the right faith.
- b. Religious education, it is also important for the growth and development of early childhood. Therefore, the comprehensive worship system as enshrined in Islamic fiqh should be introduced as early as possible and accustomed to children from an early age. It is carried out so that in the future they will grow into truly pious people, namely people who are obedient in carrying out all religious orders and also obedient in avoiding all prohibitions.
- c. Moral education, in the context of educating children with morals, besides having to be given the right example, must also be shown how to respect and behave with parents, teachers, brothers and be polite in getting along with fellow human beings. It would be wise if parents or other adults had started and instilled moral education in their children from an early age, especially if it was carried out in a programmed and routine manner.

To realize the implementation of educational activities in early childhood and to achieve encouraging results, educators should always look for various effective methods, and look for educational principles that have an effect on preparing and assisting the growth of early childhood, both mentally and morally, and spiritually and social ethos. Based on the Qur'an and hadith, there are several methods of Islamic education that can and should be applied to educational activities for early childhood. (Sholeh, 2018)

1. Method with Exemplary

Exemplary in Islamic education is a method that is influential and has proven successful in preparing and shaping the moral, spiritual, and social ethos of children from an early age. It is because educators are the best figures in the eyes of students whose behavior and manners, whether consciously or not, it will become the attention of children and imitate them. Early childhood is an excellent imitator and a formidable explorer; therefore, we must take advantage of this sensitive period to grow and educate children with an example from everyone the child meets. The example that should be followed by all mankind is the moral example of the Prophet Muhammad. Parents must be smart and always imitate the morals of the Prophet so that our children always behave and have good character. We also have to always synergize with the people around our children to behave with good morals.

2. Education with Practice and Experience

In terms of education through practical training, the Messenger of Allah, as the first and foremost Islamic educator, has actually applied this method and turned out to give encouraging results for the development of Islam among the companions. In many ways, the Rasulullah shallallahu alaihi wa sallam always taught it accompanied by practice, including; procedures for purification, ablution, performing prayers, performing the pilgrimage and fasting.

Furthermore, learning by doing or by applying theory to actual practice, very impressed in the soul, strengthening knowledge in the heart and strengthening memory. In this case, in addition to learning to educate children with theory, we must also convey education through training and experience that must be possessed by children, so that their knowledge increases and their experience becomes more mature.

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3. Educate through games and stories according to his growth

Early childhood is indeed fond of doing various interesting games for them. In this regard, education through games is an interesting method applied in early childhood education. Of course, the game is positive and can develop children's intellectual and creative. Children under five, playing with their mother certainly has more positive impacts because it facilitates communication between the two, and is their best friend. Educating using Quranic and Prophetic stories, parents can communicate anything through language that can touch the hearts of their children. So, with frequent communication, parents can instill values, personality, and noble character so that a child is expected to grow and develop with commendable morals. Through storytelling, parents or teachers can tell interestingly about a character who behaves well (Musbikin,2010). Thus, the child will be encouraged to imitate the behavior of the character in question.

4. Educate with *Targhib* and *Tarhib*

Targhib is a promise that is accompanied by persuasion and makes one happy about something beneficial, enjoyable, or pleasurable in the hereafter. While *Tarhib* is the threat of punishment as a result of committing a sin or mistake that is forbidden by Allah, or the result of being negligent in carrying out the obligations ordered by Allah. This is a method of Islamic education based on the nature that Allah has given to humans.

5. Praise and Flattery

No doubt praise for children has a very dominant influence on him so that it will move his feelings and senses. Thus, a child will rush to straighten out his behavior and actions. The Prophet as a human being who understands the human psyche has reminded him of praise that has a positive impact on the child's soul, his soul will be moved to accept and carry out the tasks assigned to him.

6. Cultivate Good Habits

In an effort to provide education and help the development of early childhood, in addition to developing intelligence and skills, it is also necessary to instill positive habits from an early age. Education by teaching and habituation is the strongest pillar for early childhood education, and the most effective method in shaping children's faith and rectifying their morals, hence this method is based on participation. Undoubtedly, educating children by habituation from an early age is the most guaranteed to bring positive results, while educating and training after adulthood is very difficult to achieve perfection.

3.3 The benefits of Islamic education

First, in the spiritual matters of children, if children have received Islamic education they will be able to apply Islam in their daily lives, for example praying in congregation, and shaking hands with parents or teachers, of course in applying, students really need help and support from the environment, family environment is the main thing that is parents, parents must direct and support children to implement in everyday life, after what students get in school about Islamic religious education, parents also have to monitor their children's relationships, because this is very It is important to determine the future of the student, the more he has a high spiritual depth the more he will avoid damage in modern times because they already know it is good or bad.

Second, in terms of behaviour or morals, by getting an Islamic religious education their morals will be better, for example obedient to parents and teachers, polite, humble to everyone, helping each other to help, at this point, students need to be piloted from behaviour or morals of parents and teachers, with the knowledge of Islamic religion and good moral behaviour, students will be encouraged to apply it in their daily lives.

4. Conclusion

In the scope of education, Islamic education is very important for school students, even small children entering the world of school also need to be given Islamic education. So that when children enter the world of education, they will get used to it and they only need to add and implement it in everyday life. In the current era, Islamic Education is very much needed for children because there are many negative impacts on students. Therefore, there are several methods that can be used in educating children, namely educating using the stories of the Qur'an and the Prophet, education through parables, education by example, education by practice and experience, praise and flattery, and cultivate good habits. In creating Islamic learning for children, of course, we must package learning according to the characteristics of children's learning, including learning, playing, and singing, development-oriented learning, learning life skills, learning from concrete objects, and integrated learning.

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