

## **The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Increasing Students' Religious Awareness at Al Muzammil Aek Kanopan IT Elementary School**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to analyze the role of Islamic religious education teachers (PAI) in increasing students' religious awareness at SD IT Al-Muzammil Aek Kanopan. By using descriptive qualitative research methods and collecting data through observation and interviews with the principal and two PAI teachers. The results of this study show that the role of PAI teachers is very important in increasing the religious awareness of students who act as educators, role models and guides for students so that a religious character is formed for students. In this study, there are also several factors that affect the increase in students' religious awareness, ranging from supporting factors such as an Islamic school environment and inhibiting factors such as limited Islamic learning time to instill religious values. The strategies used by teachers are also inseparable from the goal of increasing students' religious awareness through formal learning and extracurricular activities.

**Keywords:** *Islamic Religious Education, Religious Awareness, Role of Teachers, Learning Strategies, SD IT Al-Muzammil Aek Kanopan.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays an important role in shaping the religious character of students from an early age. As the spearhead in religious education, PAI teachers are not only tasked with delivering subject matter, but also play a role as an example that reflects Islamic values in daily life. Through their attitudes, behaviors, and teaching approaches, PAI teachers are expected to instill solid moral and spiritual values in students. This role is becoming increasingly significant in Islamic schools, such as SD IT Al Muzammil, which is committed to educating students to become individuals of noble character. However, in this modern era, great challenges arise along with globalization and technological advances that affect the way students think and behave. The impact of social media, unlimited access to information, and foreign cultural values that are not in harmony with Islam are the main obstacles that must be overcome by PAI teachers. Teachers are required to be able to combine technology with religious learning without reducing the core of Islamic values taught. In addition, they must also be careful in protecting students from negative influences that have the potential to weaken their religious character. . This school is an example in integrating Islamic values into the daily lives of its students. The Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at this school adopt a holistic approach, not limited to classroom teaching only. They also try to build a religious atmosphere in the school environment through various activities, such as reading prayers together, memorizing Asmaul Husna, and carrying out congregational prayers. All of this aims to instill deep Islamic values in the students. (Saepudin, 2023)

Collaboration between teachers and parents is the key to strengthening student character education. Parents have the primary responsibility for instilling religious habits in the home, while teachers continue and reinforce such coaching in schools. The synergistic cooperation between the two parties is able to increase the effectiveness of religious education while creating continuity in the formation of students' religious character. With this support, students more easily live and apply Islamic values in their daily lives. A supportive school environment also

plays an important role in shaping students' religious personalities. At Al Muzammil IT Elementary School, Islamic values are reflected in various school activities that prioritize religious aspects. PAI teachers use a variety of methods, including positive habituation and setting an example, to create an atmosphere conducive to the strengthening of Islamic values. Research shows that this approach is very effective in building a strong religious character in students. (Aprilliana et al., 2024)

In this modern era, innovation in religious learning is a must. PAI teachers are required to adapt teaching methods to the needs of the times, without reducing the essence of Islamic values themselves. A creative approach that utilizes technology can help attract students' interest in learning about religion and applying it in their daily lives. In this way, students can face modern challenges while still adhering to Islamic principles. (Azaria Sarwinda Kusuma & Lathifatul Inayati, 2023) .

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research focuses on case studies at SD IT Al Muzammil and uses a qualitative descriptive methodology. The population involved in this study consisted of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, and school principals. The principal serves as the main informant who provides in-depth insight into the context of the research. Descriptive qualitative research is a type of research that produces a picture of data related to the words, writings, and behaviors of the observed people, but cannot be obtained by quantitative measurement. This research, titled "The Role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Teachers in Increasing Students' Religious Awareness at Al Muzammil IT Elementary School," aims to explain the role of PAI teachers in increasing students' religious awareness in schools. This method relies on data collected directly from the real situation at SD IT Al Muzammil. (Fikri, 2022)

This research was carried out directly with the subject, namely PAI teachers and other related parties, such as school principals. The focus of the research is how PAI teachers teach religious values to students through formal lessons, extracurricular activities, and their daily lives. In the data collection method, PAI teachers are interviewed to gain an understanding of their approaches, tactics, and experiences in helping students understand religious principles. In addition, the researcher made observations on the learning process, religious practices, and activities that support increasing religious awareness in schools. To get a better picture, reports on religious activities, learning implementation plans, and records of teachers' work programs were also analyzed.

The data analysis collected is carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. Relevant information about the role of PAI teachers is filtered through data reduction, and the observed phenomena are presented in the form of descriptive stories. The results of the data analysis show patterns, themes, or relationships, which determine the conclusions. To maintain the validity of the data, different methods and sources were used to compare data from observations, documentation, and interviews. In addition, the researcher also confirmed the informants' answers in the interviews to ensure that the interpretation of the data was in accordance with their experience.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### **The Concept of Religious Awareness**

A person's understanding and appreciation of the religious principles they adhere to can be defined as religious awareness, which is a complex and diverse concept. According to Jatmikowati et al., religious awareness consists of two main components: verbal awareness and ritual awareness. The first includes memorizing prayers, short letters, and the ability to read the Qur'an. The second includes worship activities such as prayer and fasting. This shows that religious awareness involves practical things and not just cognitive.

The ability to memorize prayers and short letters, as well as active involvement in worship activities, is an indicator of religious awareness in elementary school children. School culture, which includes the development of aqidah, worship, and morals, can help increase religious awareness, according to Huda research (2023). This shows that the educational environment plays an important role in developing children's religious awareness. (Hezbollah Huda, 2023)

### **The Role of PAI Teachers**

In religious education, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers have very important functions and responsibilities. They are not only responsible for teaching religious material, but also responsible for building students' religious character and attitudes. Ghani emphasized that religious education is very important to shape students' character and moral values, especially in the context of social and cultural diversity. Teachers' interactions with students, both in formal and informal learning, can greatly affect students' religious attitudes. According to research conducted by Mulyana, teachers can improve students' morals by using their learning strategies. (Mulyana et al., 2022)

### **Approaches and Methods of Religious Education**

Affective, cognitive, and psychomotor approaches are very important to be applied in religious learning. The cognitive approach focuses on understanding concepts and knowledge, while the affective approach focuses on the formation of attitudes and values. The psychomotor approach focuses on the practical ability to worship. Methods such as stories, roles, and the application of Islamic values can help students become more involved in learning religion. For example, Parmilyasari's study shows that interactive methods such as stories and hands-on experiences can improve a child's learning experience. However, it is important to remember that, since this study focuses on Hindu religious education, its relevance to Islamic religious education must be considered. (Vista et al., 2024)

### **Previous Research**

- a. In this study, the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Kawedanan in increasing students' religious awareness is discussed thoroughly. In the school, PAI teachers use an approach centered on the development of religious learning by using a religious activity approach. Religious lectures, group discussions, and congregational prayers are part of this activity. In addition, PAI teachers also personally help students who need spiritual guidance. This study emphasizes how important the presence of teachers is as a moral example. The results of this study show that this method is effective in building students' awareness to be more active in following religious teachings. (Wahyutik, 2020)
- b. The focus of this research is the method used by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at SMAN 1 Pandaan to increase students' religious awareness. Researchers found that PAI teachers use a structured and practical approach, which includes three main components: a personalized approach, activity-based learning, and the formation of

a religious environment. Activity-based learning involves students in activities such as reading the Qur'an, praying in congregation, discussing religious issues in groups, and participating in competitions with Islamic themes. With individual guidance, a personalized approach is carried out. PAI teachers pay special attention to students who have difficulty understanding and practicing religious principles. Teachers also act as counselors and help students integrate religious principles into daily life. (Wijayanti, 2015)

The results of this study aim to gain a better understanding of the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in increasing students' religious awareness at SD IT Al-Muzammil Aek Kanopan. The researcher interviewed three people, including the principal and two PAI teachers, to collect data and the results were analyzed descriptively based on the interview topic. The researcher gave the same 3 questions to each of the speakers. The three questions are:

- 1) What is the role of Islamic religious education teachers in increasing religious awareness of students of SD IT Al-Muzammil Aek Kanopan?
- 2) What are the influencing factors in increasing students' religious awareness?
- 3) What is the strategy of Islamic religious education teachers in teaching religious values to students through formal lessons and extracurricular activities?

After interviewing the three sources, the researcher found a research result from analyzing the data and concluded it into three parts, namely:

### **1. The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Increasing Students' Religious Awareness**

Based on the results of interviews with the principal and two PAI teachers, the researcher concluded that PAI teachers have a very important role in increasing students' religious awareness. The roles include the following:

- a. The role of PAI teachers as educators  
PAI teachers not only provide religious knowledge but also act as educators who help students understand, appreciate, and practice Islamic teachings in daily life. PAI teachers also teach moral, moral, spiritual, and build students' character to become individuals of faith and piety.
- b. The role of PAI teachers as role models  
PAI teachers play a role as role models in practicing Islamic values such as honesty, discipline, and concern for others. With attitudes and behaviors that reflect the teachings of Islam, they inspire students to apply these values in their daily lives, both in school and in the wider community.
- c. The role of PAI teachers as supervisors  
PAI teachers also have an important role in helping students who are experiencing difficulties in understanding religious teachings. PAI teachers not only provide a better understanding, but also help build Islamic character in students, build a personality with noble character, and instill religious values in daily life.

### **2. Factors influencing in increasing students' religious awareness**

In this study, the researcher found factors that supported and hindered the results of the interviews of the three sources. Then the researcher compiled what are the key factors in increasing students' religious awareness at SD IT Al-Muzammil Aek Kanopan.

#### **a. Supporting Factors**

- 1) SD IT Al-Muzammil Aek Kanopan has an environment that supports the implementation of Islamic values, including regular religious activities. For example, such as morning recitation, duha prayers, memorization of the Qur'an after zuhur and other religious activities that are carried out every day.
- 2) The support factor of parents who support their children to understand and apply their religious values at home even though each child has a different home

environment. However, most parents of students support their children to apply religious values at home and in their play environment.

- 3) SD IT Al-Muzammil Aek Kanopan also provides Islamic library facilities in the form of Islamic religious books in the form of cartoon animations so that students are more interested in reading them. For example, a prayer book for each activity with children's animation.

b. Inhibiting Factors

- 1) SD IT Al-Muzammil Aek Kanopan has many activities that apply Islamic values, even so there are still some students who lack interest in learning religious values, so the role of teachers is very important to take a more creative approach to children who are less interested in learning Islam.
- 2) The inhibiting factor that often occurs in any school, including SD IT Al-Muzammil Aek Kanopan, is the limited learning time of PAI in the independent curriculum is an obstacle for PAI teachers in providing religious understanding to students, even though there are many activities that apply religious values, but to teach elementary school children also needs enough time to provide a broad understanding of religion at their level.

### 3. Strategies of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Teaching Religious Values

In increasing students' religious awareness, PAI teachers must also have a strategy to teach religious values by using effective learning models and methods in conveying an understanding of religious values to students. Therefore, teachers also have strategies that can be able to instill religious values in students, namely through formal learning and extracurricular activities.

- 1) The strategy of PAI teachers through formal learning is to use lecture methods, storytelling, playing religious puzzles and direct practice about religious values.
- 2) Then the strategy of PAI teachers through extracurricular activities that can support students' religious awareness such as morning recitation, duha prayers, memorization of the Quran after the zuhur prayer, and congregational prayers. In this case, teachers can fill in the gaps in providing an understanding of religious values that are hampered during formal learning.

In this case, the researcher concluded that one of the important things that must be instilled from an early age is religious awareness, especially in Islamic schools such as SD IT Al Muzammil. In this school, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers have the responsibility of strategies to help students understand and practice Islamic teachings as a whole. According to Rahmawati (2020), teachers not only function as educators about religious material but also as moral and spiritual guides who seek to instill religious values in students' daily lives. The main method to cultivate deep religious awareness in students is to instill Islamic values through active learning. PAI teachers at SD IT Al Muzammil use learning methods that involve students directly in the learning process, such as religion-based learning projects, role plays, simulations, and group discussions. Students are expected to be able to understand Islamic teachings cognitively and make summaries with the real world through this activity. According to Hasanah (2019), this method is very effective in improving relevant and practical understanding. (Fikri, 2022) (Wahid et al., 2024)

One of the best approaches to fostering students at SD IT Al Muzammil is a personalized approach, along with an active learning approach. To understand each student's character, needs, and difficulties, PAI teachers build a strong relationship with them. This fosters a strong sense of trust between teachers and students, so students feel comfortable sharing their opinions and difficulties on how to teach religion. The role of PAI teachers is very important to instill strong religious values in students from an early age. Teachers not only teach religious concepts, but they also give students examples of daily life to see those values applied. Students not only gain

a better understanding of religion but also become more motivated to apply Islamic principles in their lives, both in school and in society. PAI teachers also help create a good school environment and foster religious awareness among students, teachers, and other employees. (Badrun, Duck 2024)

The exemplary role of PAI teachers is also very prominent at SD IT Al Muzammil. Teachers are the main figures exemplified by students in carrying out Islamic values. Behaviors such as honesty, discipline, simplicity, and tolerance shown by teachers provide a clear example of how religious teachings are applied in daily life. This example not only builds students' religious awareness but also instills noble morals that are an inseparable part of Islamic education in this school (Prasetyo, 2016).

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at SD IT Al-Muzammil Aek Kanopan have a significant role in increasing students' religious awareness. PAI teachers perform this role in three main aspects: as educators, role models, and mentors. PAI teachers are not only responsible for delivering lessons, but also must help students understand, live and practice Islamic teachings in their daily lives. By being a real example in applying Islamic values, PAI teachers are able to inspire students to develop a strong religious awareness. Supporting factors are able to contribute to increasing students' religious awareness at SD IT Al-Muzammil Aek Kanopan: a safe school environment, parental support, and the availability of Islamic-based educational facilities. On the contrary, there are a number of obstacles, such as students' lack of interest in religious learning and the limited time of learning PAI in the independent curriculum. To overcome this problem, PAI teachers use a variety of approaches.

They do this through formal learning, such as lectures, discussions, and worship practices, as well as extracurricular activities, such as memorization of the Qur'an, and religious studies. In addition, PAI teachers also use a personal approach to build strong relationships with their students, in order to make them comfortable to learn more about religion. PAI teachers not only teach religious concepts but also build a strong Islamic character in their students. By actively and contextually instilling Islamic values, it is hoped that students can apply religious teachings not only in the school environment but also in their social life in the community.

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