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## Nurturing Faith at the Margins: Mental-Spiritual Education for Muslim Children in Bogor through *Tilawati* and *Tahfidz*

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**Abstract.** This article examines a community service program aimed at fostering the mental and spiritual development of Muslim children living in the peripheral area of Bogor. The program was initiated in response to limited educational access, inadequate learning facilities, and the insufficient training and welfare of teachers in the area. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach and was conducted at PAUD Nibrosu Lamhariyah (NILAM), located in Cibeuteung Muara Village, Ciseeng District, Bogor Regency. The program was carried out over a four-month period, involving four teachers and forty-two students divided into two age groups. The learning activities focused on religious education through the *Tilawati* method for Qur'anic reading and the *talaqqi* method for *tahfidz* or memorization. The findings indicate that the program contributed positively to the children's religious learning outcomes. Around 90% of the students were able to follow the lessons and read *qira'ati* properly, while 85% were able to memorize up to four short surahs, short hadiths, and ablution prayers along with their practice. These results suggest that structured religious guidance can effectively support the spiritual development of early childhood learners in marginalized communities. However, the implementation of the program still faced several challenges, including limited infrastructure, insufficient financial support, and inadequate attention to teacher welfare in peripheral educational settings.

**Keywords:** Devotion, Development of learning, Religious Learning, Memorization and Recitation, Education.

**Abstrak.** Artikel ini membahas pelaksanaan program pengabdian masyarakat berupa pembinaan mental-spiritual bagi anak-anak Muslim yang tinggal di wilayah pinggiran Bogor. Program ini dilatarbelakangi oleh masih terbatasnya akses pendidikan yang memadai, minimnya fasilitas pendukung pembelajaran, serta rendahnya kualitas dan kesejahteraan tenaga pendidik di lingkungan setempat. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan lokasi kegiatan di PAUD Nibrosu Lamhariyah (NILAM), Desa Cibeuteung Muara, Kecamatan Ciseeng, Kabupaten Bogor. Kegiatan pembinaan dilaksanakan selama empat bulan dengan melibatkan empat guru dan empat puluh dua peserta didik yang dibagi ke dalam dua kelompok usia. Proses pembelajaran difokuskan pada pendidikan agama melalui metode *Tilawati* untuk kemampuan membaca Al-Qur'an dan metode *talaqqi* dalam *tahfidz*. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar peserta didik mampu mengikuti pembelajaran dengan baik; sekitar 90% anak menunjukkan kemampuan membaca *qira'ati* dengan baik, sedangkan 85% anak mampu menghafal hingga empat surat pendek, hadis-hadis pendek, serta doa wudu berikut praktiknya. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa pembinaan keagamaan yang terstruktur dapat mendukung perkembangan spiritual anak usia dini, meskipun pelaksanaannya masih menghadapi hambatan berupa keterbatasan sarana, rendahnya dukungan pendanaan, dan belum optimalnya perhatian terhadap kesejahteraan guru di wilayah pinggiran.

**Kata Kunci:** Pengabdian, Pembinaan pembelajaran, Pembelajaran Agama, Menghafal dan Mengaji, Pendidikan.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The family is the most basic social unit in human life and plays a central role in shaping the quality of individuals. Within the family, educational, economic, security, social, and religious functions are closely interconnected and collectively determine children's intellectual, emotional, and spiritual development. In this context, the religious function is not limited to faith alone, but also includes the cultivation of values, morality, character, and spiritual mentality that form the foundation of children's personal development (Rahmat, 2014).

At the same time, population growth and unequal development distribution remain persistent challenges in many regions of Indonesia, including Bogor. Data indicate that the population growth rate in Bogor has continued to increase, which in turn affects the social and educational conditions of communities living in peripheral areas (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2018). This condition can be observed in Cibuteung Muara Village, Ciseeng District, Bogor Regency, where the educational attainment of the community is still dominated by elementary school graduates. Such circumstances have implications for the low quality of human resources, limited economic opportunities, and weak support for children's education. In addition, peripheral communities located around urban expansion zones often experience unequal access to education and social welfare services (Rahayu, 2018).

Peripheral communities generally face multiple forms of vulnerability, including economic, social, psychological, and educational disadvantages. Poverty should not only be understood as a lack of income, but also as the inability to fulfill basic rights and needs necessary for a dignified and decent life (Rahman et al., 2019). Under such conditions, children's education often becomes difficult to achieve optimally. In fact, education has a strategic role in developing children's analytical, critical, creative, and productive capacities, while also fostering character and noble morality in a comprehensive and balanced manner in accordance with national educational goals (Yulita & Ardisal, 2020). For Muslim children, education is also an important space for instilling Islamic values from an early age, such as praying, reciting the Qur'an, memorizing short surahs, and practicing religious habits in daily life.

Several previous community service programs have shown that educational interventions in communities with limited access can generate positive impacts. Rohmi and Lestari (2018), for example, demonstrated that innovative learning training for elementary school teachers in Sukamakmur, Bogor, improved teachers' knowledge, skills, and awareness in enhancing classroom learning quality. Similarly, community empowerment programs based on religious education have been shown to contribute to improving social welfare and public health (Ginanjari et al., 2020). However, community service initiatives specifically focused on the mental and spiritual development of Muslim children in peripheral areas still require greater attention, particularly in communities facing limited educational facilities and inadequate religious guidance.

Based on these conditions, this community service program is considered important as an effort to strengthen religious education and the mental-spiritual development of Muslim children in the outskirts of Bogor. The program focuses on children in Cibuteung Muara Village, Ciseeng District, Bogor Regency, West Java, through structured religious learning activities. Therefore, this initiative is expected not only to support children's religious development but also to serve as part of a broader effort to expand meaningful educational access for marginalized peripheral communities.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### a. Geographical Profile of Cibeuteng Muara

Ciseeng District consists of ten villages, namely Ciseeng, Babakan, Cibeuteung Muara, Cibeuteung Udik, Cibentang, Cihoe, Karihkil, Kuripan, Parigi Mekar, and Putat Nutug. Cibeuteung Muara Village, located in Ciseeng District, Bogor Regency, West Java Province, covers an area of approximately 600 hectares. The total population of Cibeuteung Muara Village is 10,094 people, with a population density of 450 people per square kilometer. The main occupations of the residents are farming, agricultural labor, and civil service.

In terms of educational attainment, the majority of the population in the village are elementary school graduates, totaling 2,072 people. This is followed by 675 junior high school graduates, 552 senior high school graduates, 47 bachelor's degree holders, and 34 master's degree holders. The age composition of the population and the number of schools in Cibeuteung Muara are presented below Kecamatan Ciseeng. (2019).

**Table 1.1**

Komposisi usia penduduk dan jumlah sekolah di Cibeuteung Muara

Komposisi Usia Penduduk	Laki-Laki	Perempuan
Usia 0-6 Tahun	723	658
Usia 7-12 Tahun	547	511
Usia 13-18 Tahun	398	478
Usia 19-25 Tahun	522	518
Usia 26-40 Tahun	1.383	1.254
Usia 41-55 Tahun	1.171	1.062
Usia 56-65 Tahun	576	533
Usia 65-75 Tahun	153	108
Usia > 75 Tahun	0	2
<b>Jumlah</b>	<b>5.473</b>	<b>5.122</b>

  

Jumlah Sekolah	
Jenjang Sekolah	Jumlah Sekolah
PAUD atau TK	6
SD	5
SMP	2
SMA	2

Sumber: <https://kecamatanciseeng.bogorkab.go.id/desa/219>

### b. EDUCATION

Education is a conscious and planned effort to create learning environments and learning processes in which students actively develop their potential in terms of spirituality, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills needed for themselves, society, the nation, and the state (Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System [National Education System Law], 2003). Therefore, education should not be understood merely as a process of transferring knowledge, but also as a process of forming the whole person. In the context of early childhood education, this understanding is especially important because the early phase of child development is a decisive period for shaping character, learning habits, moral values, and the spiritual foundation that will influence later stages of development.

In the Indonesian context, educational problems are not limited to access, but also concern the quality of

learning and the equitable distribution of educational services. The World Bank noted that although Indonesia has made progress in expanding school participation, inequality in learning outcomes remains a major challenge, particularly for children from poor families, remote areas, and other vulnerable groups (World Bank, 2020). In addition, the quality of education is affected by various factors, including teacher absenteeism, limited teaching materials, inadequate school infrastructure, and weak classroom instructional practices (World Bank, 2020). More recent studies also show disparities in teaching practices between urban and rural areas, indicating that strengthening teacher capacity, providing adequate learning facilities, and implementing context-sensitive educational interventions in peripheral areas are urgent needs (Dini et al., 2024).

This condition is relevant to the context of Cibeuteung Muara Village, which in this article is described as an area where the educational level of the community remains relatively low and local educational support is still limited. Such a situation shows that education in peripheral areas cannot be addressed solely through administrative approaches; rather, it requires socio-educational interventions capable of strengthening learning motivation, character development, and the inculcation of religious values from an early age. Accordingly, religious education for Muslim children at PAUD Nibrosu Lamhariyah is relevant not only as a form of religious instruction, but also as part of a broader effort to expand access to meaningful, contextual, and character-oriented education amid the social, economic, and institutional constraints faced by the local community.

### 3. METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to examine the implementation of religious education for children at PAUD Nibrosu Lamhariyah (PAUD NILAM). A qualitative descriptive design is appropriate for investigating natural social settings and for understanding phenomena based on participants' experiences, behaviors, and interactions in context. In this approach, the researcher serves as the primary instrument, data are collected through direct engagement with the field, and findings are interpreted inductively to emphasize meaning rather than generalization (Sugiyono, 2007). In the present community service program, the research focused on how religious learning was carried out through mental and spiritual development activities, particularly Qur'anic reading and memorization practices for early childhood learners.

The study was conducted at PAUD Nibrosu Lamhariyah, also known as PAUD NILAM, over a period of four months. The program involved four teachers and 42 students, who were divided into two groups according to age level: Class A for children aged 4–5 years and Class B for children aged 5–6 years. This setting allowed the researchers to observe the teaching process in a real educational environment and to describe the actual implementation of religious instruction for young children. The descriptive qualitative design was therefore used to portray the learning process in detail, including its instructional practices, classroom dynamics, and the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting the implementation of religious education in this institution.

The learning activities in this program were centered on two main instructional methods. First, *Tilawati* was used for Qur'anic reading instruction, applying a rhythmic vocal pattern commonly described as flat-descending-rising in order to support children's pronunciation, fluency, and engagement. Second, *Talaqqi* was used in the *tahfidz* (memorization) sessions, in which students listened to the teacher's recitation and repeated it directly as a guided oral learning process. These two methods were chosen because they are suitable for early childhood religious learning and help children develop basic competencies in recitation and memorization. Through this qualitative framework, the study aimed to provide a clear and contextual description of how these methods were implemented in practice and how they contributed to the children's religious learning experiences at PAUD NILAM (Sugiyono, 2007).

#### 4. RESULT DAN DISCUSSION

The learning plan was prepared by the teachers, approved by the principal, and subsequently endorsed by the foundation. It was then compiled into a set of instructional documents used by each classroom teacher. The Daily Lesson Plan (RPPH) served as the main guide for classroom activities and, during the period of online learning, was also shared with parents one day before the lesson so that they could assist their children during the learning process.

Based on the four-month mentoring program, teaching activities were conducted four days a week. For three days, students received religious instruction focusing on tahfidz and Qur'anic reading, while one day was allocated as a free day for sports and creativity-based activities. In the learning process, the teacher first delivered the Tilawati material, also referred to as Qiro'ati, clearly, audibly, and in language appropriate to the children's age. This was reflected in the students' active participation during the lesson. After the teacher's demonstration, the students were asked to recite individually in front of the teacher so that their reading ability could be assessed.

After the Tilawati session, the students continued with tahfidz learning. In this session, the talaqqi method was applied, in which memorization was carried out using the *muyassar* approach. One surah was recited collectively at the beginning of the class, and each verse was repeated two to five times. After the joint recitation, the students individually presented their memorization to the teacher. In addition to tahfidz, the students were also taught short hadiths, such as teachings about disposing of garbage properly, along with explanations of how to apply these values in daily life. On one designated day, the students participated in sports and creative activities, such as coloring, arranging origami, and making handicrafts, to support the development of both fine and gross motor skills.

The learning process during the pandemic differed from the previous schedule. Before the pandemic, learning activities lasted for three hours. However, due to government regulations during the pandemic, instructional time was reduced to two hours, from 08.00 to 09.00. Despite this limitation, the students remained enthusiastic and actively participated in the learning process. This was evident from their eagerness to present their memorization and their strong, clear voices during *muroja'ah*, which was conducted collectively before the lesson began using the *muyassar* rhythm.

The results of the four-month mentoring program showed that 90% of the students were able to participate well and read Qiro'ati properly, while 85% of the students were able to fluently memorize up to four short surahs, as well as short hadiths, the ablution prayer, and its practical application. In fact, several students were able to memorize more than four short surahs. These findings indicate that structured religious mentoring using age-appropriate teaching strategies can contribute positively to children's spiritual and moral development. This result is in line with the view that education should not only develop cognitive competence, but also strengthen spiritual values, self-control, and noble character in learners (Hasbullah, 2001; Rahmat, 2014).

One early childhood education institution in the area that offers a tahfidz program and is highly appreciated by parents is PIAUD Nibrosu Lamhariyah (NILAM). This institution is known for its one day one verse Qur'anic memorization program, which uses the Tilawati method integrating three learning modalities: audio, visual, and kinesthetic. PIAUD NILAM upholds the school vision of "forming students into an Islamic generation with noble character, independence, skills, intelligence, and creativity." This approach reflects the broader objective of character-based education, which emphasizes the formation of balanced and morally grounded learners (Yulita & Ardisal, 2020).

Based on the interview results, PIAUD NILAM is recognized as a quality institution that places strong emphasis on the Qur'an rather than on songs or entertainment-based approaches commonly found in other schools. Several of its graduates have demonstrated stronger memorization skills than students from other institutions, particularly when continuing their education in elementary schools that also emphasize Qur'anic memorization. In addition to memorizing verses, the students are also introduced to the meanings of the verses they learn. The tahfidz program at PIAUD NILAM has produced graduates who completed the program with memorization from Juz 30. This suggests that early religious education, when implemented consistently and systematically, may build a stronger foundation for later learning achievement and character formation.

With regard to facilities, PAUD NILAM has one classroom used by Class B, a terrace used by Class A, several shelves for storing textbooks and Qur'anic reading materials, a sound system, desks and chairs, and a whiteboard. Based on interviews with the principal and teachers, the surrounding community still has relatively low awareness of the importance of education, as most residents have only completed elementary school. The teachers at PAUD NILAM are also mostly high school graduates. However, under the newer local regulation, principals of PAUD or kindergarten institutions in Cibeuteung Muara are required to hold at least a bachelor's degree. Therefore, the principal and teachers at PAUD NILAM are currently pursuing undergraduate study in order to fulfill these requirements.

PAUD NILAM also implements a very modest tuition system, and children who are orphans are exempted from payment. This condition affects the welfare of the teachers, who largely depend on limited government assistance provided only once a year. The teachers continue to teach sincerely even with minimal financial compensation, and most of them also work in other schools that offer similarly low salaries. These findings highlight that the success of religious and character education in peripheral communities often depends not only on instructional commitment, but also on the socio-economic context in which the school operates. Previous studies have similarly shown that poverty, limited educational access, and low institutional support remain major barriers to educational development in marginalized communities (Rahman et al., 2019; Rahmat, 2014).

More broadly, the present findings support earlier community-based educational initiatives in Bogor which found that mentoring and targeted educational assistance can improve the quality of teaching and learning in underserved areas (Rohmi & Lestari, 2018). They also resonate with community empowerment programs emphasizing that educational and religious interventions can contribute to social welfare and community development when implemented in a sustained manner (Ginanjar et al., 2020). Therefore, the experience of PAUD NILAM demonstrates that although local religious education programs can produce meaningful learning outcomes, their long-term sustainability requires stronger institutional support, improved facilities, and better teacher welfare.

## KESIMPULAN

Based on the results of this community service program, it can be concluded that the implementation of the **Tilawati** method for Qur'anic reading and the **talaqqi** method for **tahfidz** learning contributed positively to religious education at PAUD NILAM. The program showed that **90% of the students were able to participate well and read Qiro'ati properly**, while **85% were able to fluently memorize up to four short surahs**, in addition to short hadiths, the ablution prayer, and its practical application. These findings indicate that structured and continuous religious mentoring can effectively support the spiritual, moral, and educational development of children in peripheral Muslim communities. The program also demonstrates that age-appropriate instructional methods and consistent practice can improve both Qur'anic reading skills and memorization outcomes among early childhood learners. However, the implementation of the program still faced several challenges, including limited funding, inadequate learning facilities, and insufficient institutional support. Therefore, stronger attention from both educational stakeholders and government institutions is needed to sustain and improve the quality of religious education programs in underserved areas.

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