

EDUCATION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF EMPOWERING RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE IN CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT Religious knowledge is one of the most essential skills that humans must acquire from a young age. This aligns with the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): "Seek knowledge (of religion) from the cradle to the grave." This community service activity aims to educate elementary school-aged children on the importance of empowering religious knowledge in developing a positive personality and mental health before they move on to the next level of education. This Community Service Program (PKM) was implemented in three sessions: 1) preparation and feasibility, 2) implementation, and 3) evaluation. The results of this PKM activity provide insight into the importance of empowering religious knowledge in elementary school children for developing positive mental and personality traits in their lives. This reality was evident in the elementary school children's attentive and cheerful listening to the speakers' educational presentations. Similarly, the teachers expressed their hope that similar PKM activities should be regularly held by universities to foster religious values, morals, and ethics in children from an early age, thereby fostering positive personality and mental health.

KEYWORDS: *Education on the Importance, Religious Knowledge, Empowerment, Elementary School Children, Positive Mental Health.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Providing religious knowledge to children from an early age is crucial for developing character, personality, and mental health, contributing to their meaningful lives. Childhood is a highly sensitive period for moral values and various social norms. Therefore, empowering religious aspects from an early age is crucial for developing individuals with good morals. Zakiah Daradjat stated that religious education is not only about memorizing religious material, but also about shaping children's attitudes, habits, and moral sensitivity in their daily lives. She emphasized that

childhood is the ideal time to instill religious values because children readily accept, imitate, and internalize religious teachings (Daradjat, 2005).

Efforts to instill religious values prioritize the affective and psychomotor domains. One effective way to achieve these is by creating innovative learning models that can add new color to the learning of religious values and knowledge (Ismatullah, 2019). However, in the real world, religious education still faces challenges. Many regions still face challenges in developing children's basic religious knowledge, such as reading the Quran or properly understanding religious teachings. This is evident in the results of community service conducted by Alfahrizy et al. (2023) in Pantai Sederhana Village, Muaragembong District, Bekasi, which showed that children's ability to read Arabic remains low.

This may be due to a lack of access to quality religious education institutions, a limited number of teachers, and a lack of tutoring. In addition to facilities and instructors, technological developments and modernization also have a significant impact on children's learning styles. Children now spend more time using gadgets, social media, and digital games, reducing the time they spend studying religion. This leads to a decline in children's interest and desire in religious activities. Several studies have shown that this challenge requires creative and innovative approaches to maintain children's interest in religious learning. An example is the Islamic Children's Festival program at the Penusupan Village TPQ (Islamic Children's Education Center), which provides a fun religious learning experience. Activities such as the adhan competition, daily prayers, and worship practices have been shown to be effective in increasing children's motivation, self-confidence, and engagement in religious learning. (Azizah et al., 2023)

Learning religion from an early age will shape the personality and mental health of the nation's next generation from infancy to adulthood. In Islam, mental health is viewed as an integral part of overall human well-being. Islamic teachings provide guidance on how a Muslim can maintain mental health through various worship practices, moral values, and life guidance that can help one face challenges/obstacles, stress, and difficulties in daily life. Therefore, by strengthening faith, connecting closely with Allah SWT, and maintaining a balance between spiritual, mental, and physical aspects, a Muslim can achieve optimal mental health in accordance with the teachings of their religion. (Daradjat, 2005; Ariadi, 2013; Saleh, 2023).

2. METHOD

The rationale for this community service was implemented through psychoeducation for students at SDN 11 Muara Batu, North Aceh Regency, using a descriptive qualitative approach. This community service activity was conducted over approximately one month, involving students

from the Psychology Study Program, Faculty of Medicine, Malikussaleh University (Unimal), and students at SDN 11 Muara Batu, North Aceh Regency. The implementation stages were divided into three segments:

1. Activity Preparation Stage

Preparations for the activity were conducted for three weeks prior to implementation, providing education on empowering children with religious knowledge in social realities. During this stage, the Community Service Program (PKM) team collaborated with the school to determine the PKM implementation schedule.

2. Activity Implementation Stage

The education program was implemented on Saturday, October 25, 2025, at SDN 11 Muara Batu, North Aceh Regency, by a PKM team led by Mr. Safuwan Amin, S.Ag., M.Psi., with members: Ms. Nur Afni Safarina, S.Psi., M.Psi, and psychology students Ayu Wulandari, Aisyah Putri Al Qonita Lubis, Fahru Azrai Asrori, and several others participated in the community service program. The community service activity took place from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

3. Activity Evaluation Phase

The evaluation phase was conducted after the psychoeducational material was delivered by the PKM team speakers, Mr. Safuwan Amin, S.Ag., M.Psi, and Ms. Nur Afni Safarina, S.Psi., M.Psi. The evaluation method used was a question-and-answer session with the participants and teachers, as well as an understanding of the significance of the activity.

3. RESULT

This community service activity was held at SDN 11 Muara Batu, North Aceh Regency, on Saturday, October 25, 2025, in the last week of October 2025. The activity was divided into three sessions: The first session, following the opening by the school principal, continued with the delivery of educational material by Speaker I, Mr. Safuwan Amin, S.Ag., M.Psi, from 9:30 a.m. to 10:11 a.m. A break followed, followed by the delivery of educational material for Session II by Ms. Nur Afni Safarina, S.Psi., M.Psi, from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., followed by Session III/Q&A from 11:45 a.m. to 12:10 p.m.

The presentation of educational material on children's religious knowledge in Session I was delivered by Mr. Safuwan Amin, S.Ag., M.Psi (Head of the Student Creativity Program team from the Faculty of Medicine, Unimal). In his presentation, Mr. Safuwan outlined the significance of human existence on earth, as it encompasses not only worshipping God but also serving as a khalifatullah (carrier of God's mandate). These two main essences of human existence require

humans to learn and apply what they have learned throughout their lives. Learning is obligatory for Muslims throughout their lives, as exemplified in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave" (Narrated by Ibn Madjah). Speaker 1 emphasized that fostering religious knowledge from the elementary school level will serve as the foundation for developing a person's overall personality.



Figure 1:

Activity of delivering educational material on empowering religious knowledge to students at SDN 11 Muara Batu, North Aceh Regency, October 24, 2025

Next, Ms. Nur Afni Safarina, the second speaker, explained that the foundation for developing a holistic human mental health is based on empowering children with religious knowledge from the womb, after birth, and into old age. By introducing religious teachings to children, they will learn a variety of etiquette, norms, and values that will be integral to their lives. One of the key findings from this community service activity was the joy and excitement of the presence of the Student Creativity Program (PKM) team from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Maluku. The teachers fully supported their participation in this PKM activity and expressed high hopes that elementary school students would be enlightened in their spiritual development from elementary school through college. The teachers also hoped that the university would implement various community service activities (such as this one) at all levels of education.



Figure 2:

Activities, breaks, and a question-and-answer session following the delivery of educational material on empowering religious knowledge to students at SDN 11 Muara Batu, North Aceh, October 24, 2025.

In general, the results of this community service activity underscore the importance of empowering children with religious knowledge from an early age in shaping and nurturing their personalities with value and meaning. This allows children to engage with their complex obligations, including implementation in the religious, social, and academic realms, and beyond. This allows them to clearly understand the meaning and purpose of their lives in the world, and to manage purposeful behavior, fostering a healthy mental health and a positive psychological state.

4. CONCLUSION

This community service activity focuses on educating children on the importance of empowering religious education (knowledge) from elementary school age to foster positive personalities and mental health in their future lives. Through this education, it is hoped that higher education will play an active role in promoting the empowerment of religious knowledge among the nation's next generation, ensuring they develop a generation with noble character and a lifelong faith in God

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