



## Increasing Religious Awareness In Early Childhood Through Religious Literacy Programs At Lukman Hakim Purwokerto Kindergarten

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### Abstrak

Religious awareness in early childhood is an essential foundation in forming children's character and morals. At this stage, children are at a critical phase in their cognitive and emotional development, where fundamental values and moral principles begin to take shape. This research aims to learn how to improve early childhood's religious basics through religious literacy programs. The research uses qualitative methods, observational data collection techniques, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis used is the Miles and Huberman model, namely data reduction, display, and verification. The results of this study show that Bntuk and the main components of the religious literacy program at Lukman Hakim Purwokerto Kindergarten include: daily activities, religious stories or stories, worship practice activities, creative and artistic activities, celebration of religious holidays, strengthening spiritual and social values, and collaboration with parents. Efforts made to increase religious awareness through religious literacy programs at Lukman Hakim Purwokerto Kindergarten are by 1) Introducing and getting used to religious practices, 2) Introducing and getting used to honest, helpful, polite, respectful, and sportsmanlike behavior, 3) Introducing and getting used to personal hygiene and environmental cleanliness, 4) Introducing religious holidays, 5) Daily activities to teach religious values, and 6) Introduce and foster respect and tolerance for other religions.

**Keywords:** religious awareness, early childhood, religious literacy programs

### Abstrak

*Kesadaran beragama pada anak usia dini adalah fondasi penting dalam pembentukan karakter dan moral anak. Pada tahap ini, anak-anak berada pada fase kritis dalam perkembangan kognitif dan emosional mereka, di mana nilai-nilai dasar dan prinsip-prinsip moral mulai terbentuk. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana meningkatkan kesadaran beragama anak usia dini melalui program literasi agama. Penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data yang digunakan adalah model Miles dan Huberman yakni reduksi data, display, dan verifikasi. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bentuk dan komponen utama program literasi agama di TK Lukman Hakim Purwokerto, meliputi: kegiatan harian, cerita atau kisah agama, kegiatan praktik ibadah, kegiatan kreatif dan seni, perayaan hari besar agama, penguatan nilai-nilai spiritual dan sosial, dan kolaborasi dengan orang tua. Upaya yang dilakukan dalam meningkatkan kesadaran beragama melalui program literasi agama di TK Lukman Hakim Purwokerto adalah dengan 1) Memperkenalkan dan membiasakan praktik keagamaan, 2) Mengenalkan dan membiasakan perilaku jujur, suka menolong, sopan santun, menghargai, dan sportif, 3) Memperkenalkan dan membiasakan kebersihan diri dan kebersihan lingkungan, 4) Memperkenalkan hari raya keagamaan, 5) Kegiatan harian untuk mengajarkan nilai agama, dan 6) Memperkenalkan dan menumbuhkan rasa hormat dan toleransi terhadap agama lain.*

**Kata Kunci:** kesadaran beragama, anak usia dini, program literasi agama

## INTRODUCTION

Religious awareness in early childhood is an essential foundation in forming children's character and morals. At this stage, children are in a critical phase in their cognitive and emotional development, where fundamental values and moral principles begin to form (Subur, 2014). Proper religious education

can help children understand the concepts of kindness, justice, and empathy from an early age (Rosyida, 2021). Although essential, religious education in Kindergarten (TK) often faces various challenges such as lack of resources (many kindergartens have limitations in terms of teaching materials and supporting resources for religious education), inappropriate teaching methods (religious teaching that is not by children's cognitive development can make children less interested and challenging to understand the material), and the role of parents and the environment (lack of support from parents and the surrounding environment can hinder the process of internalizing religious values in children).

Religious literacy programs in kindergartens can be an effective solution to overcome these challenges. Literacy activities are a major commodity in providing educational value for children today. Literacy skills have an important influence on children's success. Good literacy skills will help the younger generation understand oral and written information from an early age. Literacy mastery in the younger generation is essential in supporting their competencies (Faiqotul, 2024).

The command *of iqra'* in surah *al-alaq* is a marker of the importance of knowledge, which is synonymous with the growth of Islamic civilization through the revelation to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The practice of reading is an important factor in the development of the civilization of adherents of major religions in the world. Embaca is considered an activity to internalize religious values through the reading of God's revelation, while writing is an activity to reconstruct thoughts (Sofie, 2017).

Religious literacy not only involves teaching religious aspects such as prayer and religious stories, but also involves various activities that support children's understanding of religious values. The goal is to help children understand religious concepts in a fun way, such as using stories, songs, and games related to religion to attract children's interest. Integrating religious values in daily activities, such as familiarizing children with honesty, compassion, and cooperation, through daily activities in the classroom and involving parents and the community such as encouraging the active involvement of parents and the community in the process of children's religious education, so that the values taught in schools can be applied in the home and surrounding environment.

Based on initial observations made at Lukman Hakim Purwokerto Kindergarten, it was found that in building early childhood religious awareness, a religious literacy program was implemented with a holistic and collaborative approach. The existing curriculum is developed inclusively, increasing the capacity and capabilities of teachers in religious aspects, providing interesting religious teaching materials, and the important role of parents in the involvement of religious awareness formation through religious literacy programs that children also carry out after school.

Increasing religious awareness in early childhood through religious literacy programs in kindergarten is important in shaping children's character. With the proper methods and support from various parties, this program can make a significant contribution to instilling religious values that will form the moral foundation of children throughout their lives.

From the above problems and statements, researchers are interested in conducting studies, analysis, and exploring more deeply to find new findings related to increasing early childhood religious awareness through religious literacy programs at Lukman Hakim Purwokerto Kindergarten. In addition, from the literature review conducted by the researcher, it was found that there have not been many studies related to increasing early childhood religious awareness through religious literacy programs, so through this study, it is hoped that new studies related to the implementation of religious literacy programs can be found as a solution to existing challenges, especially in increasing early childhood religious awareness.

## **METHOD**

This research was conducted at Lukman Hakim Purwokerto Kindergarten for one month, September 2024. The population of early childhood is 30. The formal object of the research is to increase religious awareness in early childhood through a religious literacy program (Zuriah, 2016) conducted at Lukman Hakim Purwokerto Kindergarten. From here, this study uses a qualitative paradigm that focuses on data and information, mainly from statements, notes, texts obtained in the field, and document studies (Moleong 2018), so that this research is referred to as field research. Data and information are collected through interviews, observations, and documentation.

Interviews were conducted with school principals, curriculum officials, parents, and students who are directly involved in increasing early childhood religious awareness through the religious literacy program (Moleong, 2018). Observations are made on religious literacy program activities identified through religious practices, introducing and habituating honest, helpful, polite, respectful, and sportsmanlike behavior, introducing and habituating personal hygiene and environmental cleanliness, introducing religious holidays, daily activities to teach religious values, and introducing and fostering respect and tolerance for other religions contained in the learning program documents, learning curriculum, and activity documentation.

The data that has been collected is then studied and analyzed using three important steps, namely data reduction, data classification, and data verification (Miles and Huberman 1994). Data reduction is carried out through the analysis of the suitability of data obtained through interviews, observations and documentation related to religious literacy programs, data that is not suitable will be reduced. Data classification is carried out by grouping data based on patterns that emerge. Data verification was carried out by reviewing and analyzing data based on the theoretical viewpoint of the religious literacy program and early childhood religious awareness, as well as discussions based on relevant theoretical studies and the findings of previous research, so that novelty can be identified in this study (Moleong 2018).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Religious Awareness**

Linguistically, awareness originates from the root word “conscious,” which has a meaning: convert, believe, feel, know, and understand. Awareness means a state of knowing, understanding, and

feeling or conversion. The meaning of consciousness understood here is the state of knowing, remembering, and measuring or converting oneself to the actual state. While the word religion comes from the root word “religion”. Religion means belief in God (gods and so on) with the teachings of worship and obligations related to that belief, for example, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and others, while the word religion means to embrace (practice) religion; worship; Obey religion throughout his life.

Based on some of the definitions above, it can be concluded that religion is a set of life guidelines believed to be sacred and come from the Most High Substance through the medium of a human being chosen by Him. Where the life guidelines contain rules about the deeds that should be done and the deeds that the believers should abandon, and whoever obeys the rules of the life guidelines will get the reward of enjoyment and happiness of life, both in this world and in the hereafter. In addition, it can also be concluded that religion contains the meaning of eternal bonds or guidelines for life and must be held and obeyed by humans. The bond in question comes from a higher power than human beings, as a supernatural force that cannot be grasped by the five senses but greatly influences human daily life.

In this study, the definition of religious awareness in question is all behaviors that are carried out by a person in the form of pursuing, remembering, feeling, and carrying out religious teachings (including affective, conative, cognitive, and motor aspects) to devote themselves to God (Allah) accompanied by sincere and sincere soul feelings, so that what he does is a religious behavior and one of the fulfillment of his spiritual needs.

The aspects that affect children’s religious awareness are affective and conative (that human desires and needs are not only biological needs but also human needs), cognitive aspects (including qalbiyah intelligence, emotional, moral, spiritual, and religious), and motor aspects (including prayer discipline, fasting, good morals, honesty, trustworthiness, sincerity, and not being arrogant) (Hasyim, 2019).

The strategy for developing early childhood religious awareness can be carried out by religious coaching by emphasizing more on direct experience, carrying out religious activities that are tailored to the child’s pleasure, children’s religious experiences in addition to being obtained from their parents, teachers, or friends but also the surrounding environment, religious development is carried out repeatedly and continuously, considering the nature of children’s religion that is still imitative, giving examples is important, and make direct visits to religious activity centers.

## **Early Childhood**

The essence of early childhood is explained in the National Education System Law Number 20 of 2003, which states that a group of people is aged zero to six years. This age limit is carried out according to the level of the PAUD institution, namely, at the age of zero to six years. In early childhood growth, children have a phase in the age range of 0 to 6 years. From another opinion, children are in the early

childhood range, ranging from zero to eight years old. Knowing this age range, children are experiencing rapid physical growth. Physical growth always experiences maturity that must be prepared to support the needs of children in the adult phase later (Susanto, 2010).

The psychological characteristics of a child are egocentric, such as a child who does everything that is self-centered without needing his friends. Everything children do is to meet their desires and needs. Through optimal exploration and expression, children have a naturally high sense of curiosity. The child's curiosity and egocentric nature make the child always try to do and conquer the things around him. Everything that children feel is always something they want to try, and everything that challenges them must want to use holding, and play it as creatively as possible. Children always conquer various ways in their daily activities.

Regarding social instinct, children are social individuals, who have the proper awareness and whether or not they can live without others. Children always relate well in social life, with relationships with parents and peers. Children constantly interact and communicate well to maintain the social environment relationships that they love. Children are members of a social group that must be taken care of because they are important actors in continuing the struggle in their society (Suyadi, 2013).

The child's development will be related to all personalities, because the child's personality will form an integrated unit. The unity of the individual is difficult to separate. However, it just helps by making it easier to learn and understand it, namely with various aspects that must be met for educators or parents who need to be done. In simple terms, educators can distinguish between aspects of child development seen through moral and religious aspects, social aspects, emotional aspects, intellectual aspects, language aspects, and physical and motor aspects of children (Masganti, 2021).

### **Religious Literacy Program**

The Religious Literacy Program is an educational approach designed to develop religious understanding, skills, and values in children from an early age. The program not only focuses on teaching religious doctrine, but also includes the introduction and internalization of moral, ethical, and spiritual values that are by the teachings of the religion adhered to. The main goal is to form a child's character based on religious values and be able to apply them in daily life.

The objectives of the Religious Literacy Program are as follows: First, to increase religious understanding. Help children understand the basic concepts of religion, such as God, worship, and morality. *Second*, developing moral character and instilling moral and ethical values taught by religion, such as honesty, kindness, tolerance, and responsibility and third, forming spiritual habits. Familiarize children with spiritual practices that they can carry with them into adulthood, such as praying, worshipping, and meditating and fourth, Supporting Emotional and Social Growth. Improve children's ability to empathize, cooperate, and socialize with the surrounding environment based on religious

principles. *Fifth*, Fostering Respect for Diversity. Teaching children to respect and appreciate the diversity of religions and cultures in their environment.

Introduction to religion is an important part in helping children understand religious values, build positive relationships with God and fellow humans, and form positive characters that they should be developed in early childhood because at this time, children are still responsive to stimuli given by parents and teachers. The development of early childhood religion is influenced by maturity and interaction with the environment, such as the family environment, educational environment, gender roles, and peers.

### **Religious Literacy Program at Lukman Hakim Purwokerto Kindergarten**

The religious literacy program at the Lukman Hakim Purwokerto Kindergarten level is designed to introduce fundamental religious values and character formation with an approach that is appropriate to the age of children. The following are the primary forms and components of the religious literacy program at Lukman Hakim Purwokerto Kindergarten:

#### 1. Daily Routine Activities

##### Prayer Together

Children are taught to read daily prayers, such as before and after meals, before studying, or in morning prayers.

##### Short Letter Memorization

Children are introduced to short letters that are easy to memorize, such as Al-Fatiha or other short letters.

#### 2. Religious Stories or Stories

##### Telling the Story of Religious Figures

Teachers tell stories about prophets, apostles, or other religious figures interestingly, using puppets, pictures, or props.

##### Stories About Moral Values

For example, stories about honesty, compassion, or sharing are told through a religious approach.

#### 3. Practical Activities

##### Worship Simulation

Congregational prayer for Islamic-based kindergartens, focusing on simple movements and prayers.

Making a sign of the cross or praying in a place of worship for Christian/Catholic-based kindergartens and teaching simple rituals based on other religions such as singing bhajan in Hinduism or singing Buddhist songs.

##### Learning to Share

Sharing snacks or toys as part of learning about kindness.

#### 4. Creative and Art Activities

##### Coloring Pictures with Religious Themes

For example, images of mosques, churches, or religious symbols.

##### Singing Religious Songs

Teaching children's religious songs that are simple and easy to remember.

##### Religious-themed handicrafts

Making decorations or crafts related to a particular religious festival.

#### 5. Religious Holiday Celebrations

Holding special activities to commemorate religious holidays, such as:

Islam: Commemoration of the Prophet's Birthday, Eid al-Adha, or Eid al-Fitr.

#### 6. Strengthening Spiritual and Social Values

##### Role Play

Role-play in everyday life scenarios to practice religious values, such as helping a friend or respecting a teacher.

##### Character Education

Focus on teaching universal values such as compassion, tolerance, and discipline with a religious approach.

#### 7. Collaborate with Parents

Parents are invited to continue religious learning at home, for example by reading prayers together before going to bed or teaching religious songs.

Holding activities with parents, such as family recitations, family worship, or religious holiday celebrations.

The religious literacy program at Lukman Hakim Purwokerto Kindergarten is adapted to the cultural context, the majority religion in the school environment, and a child-friendly educational approach. The main goal is to build a strong spiritual and moral foundation, while fostering love and respect for religion and others.

### **The Implementation of the Religious Literacy Program in Increasing Religious Awareness in Early Childhood at Lukman Hakim Purwokerto Kindergarten**

The stimulation carried out by Lukman Hakim Purwokerto Kindergarten is to foster religious awareness in early childhood which is in harmony with daily life as follows:

#### Introducing and familiarizing religious practices

1. Early childhood children need to be introduced to religious practices/activities that are in accordance with their family's beliefs.

This can include activities such as praying, reading scripture, attending worship, and more. By experiencing this religious practice firsthand, children can understand the values and traditions that are instilled in their religion.

2. Introduce and habituate honest, helpful, polite, respectful, and sportsmanlike behavior

Fundamental moral values such as honesty, kindness, politeness, respect for others, and sportsmanship are also important to be taught in early childhood. It helps them understand how religious values are reflected in their daily actions and form a good character. Introduce and familiarize yourself with personal hygiene and environmental hygiene

3. Cleanliness is an important part of many religious teachings and is also a good moral value for children to learn.

Through teaching about the importance of maintaining personal hygiene and the environment, children can develop a sense of responsibility towards themselves and the community around them.

4. Introducing religious holidays

Inviting children to celebrate religious holidays helps them understand the values and meanings behind the celebrations. It also helps them feel a sense of togetherness and identity with their religious community.

5. Daily activities to teach religious values

There is no need to do large-scale activities to implement big ideas. Can show religion as a part of daily life by practicing it in speech and behavior. For example, when you open a window in the morning, you can say, "Alhamdulillah, it's so sunny today." Or when sleeping at night it can be said, "All praise be to the Lord who has blessed us today."

6. Introducing and fostering respect and tolerance for other religions

It is important to teach children about religious diversity and universal values such as respect and tolerance. This helps them develop a broader understanding of the world and foster an open attitude towards differences.

## CONCLUSION

The religious literacy program at the Lukman Hakim Purwokerto Kindergarten level is designed to introduce basic religious values and character formation with an approach that is appropriate to the age of children. The main components of the religious literacy program at Lukman Hakim Purwokerto Kindergarten, include: daily activities, religious stories or stories, worship practice activities, creative and artistic activities, celebration of religious holidays, strengthening spiritual and social values, and collaboration with parents.

Efforts made to increase religious awareness through religious literacy programs at Lukman Hakim Purwokerto Kindergarten are by 1) Introducing and getting used to religious practices, 2) Introducing

and getting used to honest, helpful, polite, respectful, and sportsmanlike behavior, 3) Introducing and getting used to personal hygiene and environmental cleanliness, 4) Introducing religious holidays, 5) Daily activities to teach religious values, and 6) Introduce and foster respect and tolerance for other religions.

It is important to teach children about religious diversity and universal values such as respect and tolerance. This helps them develop a broader understanding of the world and foster an open attitude towards differences.

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