

Early Childhood Education in Surah Maryam: Perspective of Tafsir Al-Qurthubi

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ABSTRACT

In discussions about education, early childhood education has become a primary focus. The question is, when is the ideal time to begin this education? While many believe that education starts after a child enters school or preschool, research indicates that education actually begins during pregnancy. Al-Qur'an, as the guiding principle for Muslims, emphasizes the importance of early education. Therefore, studying Al-Qur'an is an obligation for every Muslim. This study focuses on early childhood education based on the Surah Maryam (Chapter of Mary) in the commentary by Imam Al-Qurthubi. The research method employed is a literature review using primary data from Al-Qurthubi's Tafsir. The findings reveal that early childhood education, according to Al-Qurthubi, particularly in Surah Maryam verse 12, centers around Al-Qur'an education. Memorizing and practicing Al-Qur'an are integral parts of this education. Al-Qur'an education should ideally commence during early childhood, around the ages of 2-3 years. At this stage, it is crucial to introduce children to the oneness of Allah (Tawhid) and teach them the fundamental declaration of faith (Kalimat Tauhid). This research provides fresh insights into early childhood education within Islam. By studying Al-Qur'an from an early age, it is hoped that children will grow into individuals who are faithful and possess noble character.

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Al-Qur'an; al-Qurthubi; early childhood; education; interpretation.

Article History:

Received: 12 Feb 2024

Revised: 19 Feb 2024

Accepted: 28 Feb 2024

Published: 10 March 2024

How to Cite in APA Style:

Sofiani, I., Mahfud, M., & Anshorullah, A. H. (2024). Early Childhood Education in Surah Maryam: Perspective of Tafsir Al-Qurthubi: English. *Educational Researcher Journal*, 1(1), 1-8

Introduction

The definition of education according to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) is the process of changing the attitudes and behavior of individuals or groups through teaching and training. Education involves three key elements: educators, students, and educational methods. The results of this educational process are determined by the interaction of these three elements. (Language Development and Development Agency, n.d.)

Education is the right of every individual without exception. Early childhood children are included in the group that needs education to optimize their potential and intelligence from an early age. Many studies have shown that the early period

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of life is a crucial foundation in developing a child's potential in the future. (Azhari, 2014, p. 1)

Early childhood education is the educational stage that children go through before entering elementary school (SD). Focusing on children aged 0-6 years, this education aims to develop their character and personality. This age is often referred to as “*golden age*” because it is a critical period in the formation of various aspects of child development. In the National Education System Law no. 20 of 2003, article 1 paragraph 14, early childhood education is recognized as an important part of the overall educational process. (Sabariah, 2019, p. 13) During the golden age, human brain development at an early age plays a very significant role. According to research by Osborn, White, and Bloom, human intellectual development at the age of 0-8 years reaches around 80%, and will reach its peak at the age of 18 years. (Hidayah, 2017, p. 57)

Early childhood education has a crucial role in individual development. During the golden age, children's memories are sharp and they are very receptive to knowledge. Parents play an important role in imparting quality education. Religious education, such as reciting the Koran and teaching prayers, is the responsibility of parents. Children are a trust from Allah and the nation's next generation.

Every parent is a teacher for their child, although not formally like at school. Sincere and loving learning from parents has a big impact on children. Education is not only formal, but also involves values and ethics. The importance of Al-Qur'an education is also emphasized. The Qur'an is a reference source for every individual and contains ethical values and life guidelines. Understanding the Koran is an obligation for every Muslim. Tafsir Al-Qurthubi, although it is a type of tafsir *no opinion*, referring to the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad. and the opinions of previous scholars. Al-Qurthubi emphasized the importance of Al-Qur'an education from an early age. This is as stated in QS. Maryam: 12.

According to Al-Qurthubi, teaching the Koran to children from the age of 2-3 years is an important step in their early education. This not only includes the study of the text, but also involves memorization and practical implementation of the teachings of the Qur'an. (Al-Qurthubi, 2006, p. 423) The aim of Al-Qur'an-based education at an early age is to form a generation that loves the Al-Qur'an.

According to Ibn Khaldun's thoughts, Al-Qur'an education for children has a very important role. He believes that Al-Qur'an education is actually the basis of the entire educational curriculum in the Islamic world. The Qur'an is considered a religious transmission that is able to strengthen beliefs and strengthen faith (Ibn Khaldun, 2004, p. 353). Apart from that, Ibn Sina also emphasized the importance of Al-Qur'an education for children. According to him, all children's potential, both physically and intellectually, must be directed to receive this basic education. In this way, children will acquire their native language and beliefs can flow and be embedded in their hearts (Syarifuddin, 2004, p. 12). This research aims to explain early childhood education in the letter Maryam according to Imam Al-Qurthubi in his interpretation.

Method

This research focuses on the thematic interpretation method of letters using a qualitative descriptive approach. This approach was chosen because the researcher wanted to explain Al-Qurthubi's views regarding early childhood

education. In collecting data, researchers use primary data obtained directly from the subject or object of research. The subject of this research is the book *Al-Jami' li Ahkam Al-Qur'an Wa Al-mubayyin Lima Tadhommanahu Min As-Sunnah Wa Ayyi Al-Furqon*, a commentary on the work of Imam Al-Qurthubi, a scholar from Andalusia (currently Spain) who was born, grew up and studied in that country.

Results

Early childhood education programs

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students are able to actively develop their own potential to control themselves in religion, have noble character, good personality, skills according to the needs of themselves, the community, the nation and country (Ndari & Chandrawaty, 2016, p. 11).

Education in Arabic is known as *education*. *education* comes from three word origins: first, *share* which mean *something* namely increase; second, *raga* which mean *nasya* namely growing, developing to become big, nurturing, educating; and third, *ramble* which mean *Ashlah* namely repairing (Hamdani, year, p. 7).

In terms, *education* refers to human growth from stage to stage in all aspects of life, as a means of obtaining happiness in the world and the afterlife (Hamdani, year, p. 7). Early childhood education is also an effort to develop human potential as a whole and instill socio-cultural values believed by a group of people in order to maintain a decent life (Handayani, 2016, p. 27).

PAUD is a form of educational unit organized specifically for early childhood with the aim of facilitating the child's overall growth and development or emphasizing the development of the child's personality in all aspects (Ndari & Chandrawaty, 2016, p. 7). According to Sujiono, PAUD is a service provided to children from birth to around the age of six or eight years, which is important to get the attention of all parties responsible for the child's growth and development, especially parents or other adults who are close to the child (Syifauzackia et al., 2021, p. 21).

PAUD aims to stimulate, guide, nurture and provide learning activities so that children are ready to face further education (Ndari & Chandrawaty, 2016, p. 11). It also focuses on comprehensive development that stimulates all aspects of children's development so that they grow and develop optimally, including religious and moral values, physical motor, cognitive, language, social, emotional and artistic.

Based on the description provided, early childhood education (PAUD) can be formulated as a systematic and planned effort to create a learning environment that allows children to develop their potential as a whole. Through this approach, PAUD aims to hone children's human aspects, such as morality, personality, skills, and readiness to face further formal education. The tarbiyah approach in this context emphasizes the holistic growth of children from stage to stage, with a focus on life values that will bring happiness both in this world and in the afterlife. PAUD is also a collaboration between families, communities and educational institutions to ensure children receive optimal attention in their growth and development process. Thus, PAUD is not just initial education, but an important foundation in forming future generations who are superior morally, intellectually and socially.

Goals of Early Childhood Education

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is the provision of efforts to stimulate, guide, nurture and provide learning activities that will produce abilities and skills in children (Ndari & Chandrawaty, p. 8).

The goals of early childhood education include several aspects, including (Ndari & Chandrawaty, p. 8):

1. The child's readiness to enter further education.
2. Reducing the number of repeat classes.
3. Reducing school dropout rates.
4. Accelerate the achievement of 9 years of compulsory education.
5. Improving the quality of education.
6. Reducing illiteracy rates at an early age.
7. Improving the health and nutritional status of early childhood.
8. Increasing the Human Development Index (HDI)

According to UNESCO (Ndari & Chandrawaty, 2005, p. 8), the objectives of PAUD are based on several reasons, namely:

1. Reason for education: PAUD is the initial foundation for increasing children's ability to complete higher education, as well as reducing the number of repetitions and dropping out of school.
2. Economic reasons: PAUD is a profitable investment for families and the government.
3. Social reasons: PAUD is an effort to break the cycle of poverty.
4. Legal reasons: PAUD is every child's right to obtain an education guaranteed by law.

Based on the description provided, early childhood education (PAUD) is a systematic and holistic educational strategy to stimulate, guide, nurture and provide learning activities aimed at developing children's abilities and skills from an early age. The main objectives of PAUD include preparing children to continue higher education, reducing grade repetition rates and dropping out of school, accelerating the achievement of compulsory education, improving the quality of education, reducing illiteracy rates, improving health and nutrition levels, and contributing to increasing the Human Development Index (HDI).

More broadly, PAUD is also seen as an economically profitable investment for families and the government, as well as a social effort to break the cycle of poverty. More than just initial preparation, PAUD is considered the right of every child guaranteed by law to receive a decent and equitable education. Thus, PAUD not only prepares children for formal learning, but also plays a key role in shaping a better future for individuals and society.

Discussion

Educating Children with the Qur'an

In Tafsir Al-Qurthubi, it is mentioned that Yahya bin Zakariya was ordered to study the Torah book, which became the reference of the prophets in upholding the law for followers of the Jewish religion, including monks and priests (Alu Shaikh, 2019, p. 537). The Torah is the holy book that God revealed to Moses to preach to the Israelites. In a hadith of the Prophet, peace be upon him. said, "O

Musa, Allah has chosen you with His pen and established the decision of the Torah for you with His hand" (HR. Bukhari from Abu Hurairah, no. 6614).

After the coming of the Qur'an which was revealed to the last prophet, Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him, God sent the most important and honorable Messenger as the bearer of His most noble book (the Qur'an) for all mankind, not just for one certain people like the previous prophets. Al-Qur'an is the last book revealed by God, perfecting the religion of Islam after the previous books, as stated in Surah Al-Maidah verse 3.

In the Qur'an it is explained that the Jews had changed the book of the Torah which was witnessed by Allah (Alu Syaikh, 2008, p. 204). Therefore, the teachings in previous books no longer apply after the Qur'an was revealed. In this context, the Torah is replaced by the Koran, considering the position of the Koran and its implications for the times. This verse is included in the rule of Al-I'brotu Bi Umuumi Al-Lafdhi Laa Bi Khusuusi As-Sabab, which means that the lesson or law of a verse of the Qur'an is taken from the general editorial text, not from the cause of its revelation. specifically (Al-Qathan, 2019, p. 272).

Muslims are obliged to believe in the holy book Al-Qur'an. Believing in the Al-Qur'an is one of the pillars of faith, believing that all the revealed books such as the Torah, the Gospel, and the Psalms invite to worship God alone without associating Him, even though the laws are different (Zad Group, 2017, p. 16) . The Qur'an was revealed in Arabic and was promised by God for its purity. Protecting the Qur'an is an obligation, by studying it and teaching it, so that its purity remains awake. As the Prophet, peace be upon him. teaching the Qur'an to the companions before teaching other knowledge.

Education must begin when the child is in the womb by providing stimulation for the development of brain cells in the fetus. The most commonly known prenatal stimulation is through sound. Stimulation can be given when the fetus is around 24 weeks old, when the fetus' hearing organs are formed and functioning perfectly. At this time, the fetal brain is able to interpret sound stimulation, so this is the right time to provide stimulation. The aim of prenatal stimulation is to teach the fetus that its actions will produce a response and is a two-way way of communicating (Indrijati, 2017, p. 11).

In the fifth month of pregnancy, the fetus is ready to learn verbal communication in the form of sound and touch. For example, rubbing the stomach, asking to talk from outside the mother's stomach, and making sounds. Because sounds from outside the uterus are filtered through the mother's stomach and the placenta, mothers need to speak twice as loud as normal volume (80 decibels) (Indrijati, 2017, p. 13). This sensory experience will stimulate the growth of brain cells responsible for the ability to give and receive affection. Without the development of the brain's affection center, a person is biologically incapable of having basic human emotions (Indrijati, 2017, p. 11).

Research by The Prenatal Enrichment Unit at Huachiew General Hospital Bangkok shows that babies who were given prenatal stimulation quickly became adept at speaking, imitating sounds, saying first words, smiling spontaneously, turning their heads towards their parents' voices, being more responsive to music, and developing more social patterns. well as adults (Indrijati, 2017, p. 12).

Islam's attention to the development of the fetus in the mother's womb is reflected in the teaching that the fetus can see and hear when it is 120 days old, when Allah sends an angel to breathe its soul into it. Rasulullah saw. said that after

42 days, Allah sent an angel to shape the fetus and create hearing and sight (Al-Atsari, 2016, p. 35).

Scientists found that the brain intelligence of early childhood is very high. Benjamin S. Bloom from the University of Chicago found that the growth of brain tissue cells in children aged 0-4 years reached 50%, and at the age of 8 years it reached 80% (Musbikin, 2010, p. 71). If the brain does not receive maximum stimulation at this age, the child's brain development will not be optimal (Musbikin, 2010, p. 71). Therefore, it is important for Muslims to take advantage of this condition by providing stimulation in the form of Al-Qur'an education to the fetus, which will affect the development of its brain cells. By reading and listening to Al-Qur'an murrotals, children will more easily memorize the Al-Qur'an and be familiar with His book when they grow (Al-Atsari, 2016, p. 38).

Al-Qurthubi recommends that Al-Qur'an education be started at an early age, around 2 or 3 years old. Allah creates advantages in young children that other age groups do not have. Mastering the Koran and memorizing it requires gradual time and continuous repetition over a long period of time.

Studying the Koran and practicing it

Since it was first revealed, the Koran has become the main focus for Muslims through memorization activities, which have been carried out for generations. At the beginning of the revelation of the Qur'an through the Angel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad saw, the Qur'an was memorized by the Prophet and then taught to his friends. Generations after the companions were able to accept the Qur'an because of the role of memorizers of the Qur'an during the time of the Prophet. The collection of the Qur'an into a complete mushaf, as it is known today, also involved memorization.

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, explained many virtues and virtues in studying the Qur'an. He said, "The foremost people among you are those who study the Qur'an and teach it" (Bukhari, No. 256). God rewards those who recite the Qur'an according to their abilities.

A knowledgeable person becomes skilled because of the knowledge learned and repeated continuously over a long period of time. Reading the Qur'an many times is similar to memorizing it. Memorizing the Qur'an is considered easy. The verse that affirms the ease of memorizing the Qur'an is repeated four times in the same surah, showing that God promises ease for anyone who wants to memorize it. If memorizing is not easy, why are there so many hafids from the time of the Messenger of God?

In the book Ahkam Al-Maudud, it is said that knowledge should be juxtaposed with morals. If not, the knowledge can be the cause of the collapse of the knowledge itself (Ibnu Al-Qoyyim, 2006, p. 22). That is, no matter how little knowledge is gained, it must be accompanied by practice. The Qur'an contains Islamic educational resources, and practicing the Qur'an is part of education itself (Al-Qurtubi, 2006, p. 423). Practicing the Qur'an means doing what God commands in His word and getting rewards in the form of rewards, as well as refraining from things forbidden by God (Al-Qurtubi, 2006, p. 423).

Many hadiths explain the virtues of memorizing the Koran. These hadiths state that someone who memorizes the Koran and then practices it will be put into heaven by Allah. Allah will also intercede for ten members of his family who should go to hell, except for the disbelievers who do not receive this intercession.

The Al-Qur'an and As-Sunnah are the foundations of various sources of Islamic education (Ibnu Al-Qoyyim, 2006, p. 11). If studying and memorizing the Al-Qur'an starts from an early age, children will grow up to love the Al-Qur'an and get used to memorizing it. Children will also have many opportunities to deepen the Al-Qur'an and other knowledge, such as tafsir knowledge from various mufassir, qira'at, and so on.

Introducing and Teaching Tawhid

The Koran has a position as a guide for all Muslims. All books revealed by Allah aim to invite humanity to worship only Allah, without associating partners with Him, with different sharia (Zad Group, 2017, p. 16). Children need to be introduced to the oneness of Allah from an early age, such as that Allah is the Rabb who created the universe. It is also important to explain to children what faith in Allah Ta'ala is and teach the sentence of monotheism since they start interacting with the environment around them (Ummu Ihsan & Abu Ihsan Al-Atsari, 2016, p. 66).

The basis of worshiping God for humans is to unite Him (Ummu Ihsan & Abu Ihsan Al-Atsari, 2016, p. 67). Therefore, children need to be taught about the oneness of God, His rububiyah, His uluhiyyah, as well as His names and attributes from an early age, so that later they can worship according to His will. Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him said, "Open the first sentence with *God bless you* on your little children" (Baihaqi, No. 8649). So, teach the children sentences *God bless you* so that this sentence becomes the first sentence they can say fluently (Ummu Ihsan & Abu Ihsan Al-Atsari, 2016, p. 66).

Conclusion

Based on research results, early childhood education according to Al-Qurthubi in Surah Maryam verse 12 is related to Al-Qur'an education. Al-Qurthubi emphasized that Al-Qur'an education must start from an early age, around 2-3 years. More than just studying the Koran, this education also includes memorizing and practicing the contents of the Koran. The importance of this education is to introduce children from an early age to the oneness of Allah, that Allah is the Rabb who created the universe, and that only Allah has the right to be worshipped. Children are also taught the monotheistic phrase "Laa Ilaaha Illaallah" from an early age, with the hope that this sentence will be the first sentence the child says when they start talking.

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