The Nature of Children in Islamic Education

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Abstract : This study aims to describe the nature of children from an Islamic educational perspective. This study uses a library research method by examining various relevant literature, including classical texts, the Qur'an, hadiths, and contemporary scientific works that discuss the concept of children in Islam. The results of the study indicate that children, from an Islamic perspective, have a very noble and strategic position, encompassing six main aspects. First, children are seen as a trust from Allah SWT. Second, children are a potential that needs to be developed. Third, children function as the next generation and bearers of the future of the community. Fourth, children have the right to receive a good and proper education. Fifth, children are positioned as subjects who have rights and roles in social life, not just objects of education. Sixth, children are also a source of happiness and well-being for their families and their surroundings. In the context of Islamic education, there are several methods that can be applied to educate children, including the method of role model, reward and punishment, the story method, and the advice method. These four methods play an important role in shaping children's character, faith, and morals in accordance with Islamic values. Understanding the nature of children in Islamic education is the main basis for building a generation that is faithful, has noble morals, and is responsible for themselves, their families, and society.

Keywords : Allah SWT, Children, Essence, Islamic Education, Qur'an

1. Background

In Islam, children hold a very important position, not only as the next generation, but also as a trust and blessing from Allah SWT (Siregar, 2021). The essence of children in Islamic education is not only seen from a biological or psychological perspective, but also from a comprehensive religious perspective, encompassing spiritual, moral, social, and intellectual dimensions (Syafira et al., 2022). As individuals born in a state of fitrah (pure nature), children are faced with an educational process aimed at guiding them to grow and develop into good individuals, with noble morals, and capable of fulfilling their duties as caliphs on earth (Yogaswara, 2019).

In Islamic teachings, children are entrusted by God and have the right to receive a good education, both in religious and worldly aspects (Hidayat, 2021). Therefore, Islamic education for children focuses not only on academic instruction but also on instilling moral values, ethics, and a strong faith. As a trust, parents and society have a significant responsibility to educate and guide children to prepare them to face life's challenges, both in this world and the hereafter (Zulfahmi & Sufyan, 2018).

Islamic education teaches that a child's education is a valuable investment in their future. Children are educated not only to master knowledge, but also to become individuals who are devoted to God, respect their parents, maintain good relationships with others, and make positive contributions to society and religion. Therefore, the importance of children in Islamic

education cannot be separated from the larger goal of developing a generation that is intelligent, virtuous, and obedient to Islamic teachings (Nurrita, 2021).

In this context, Islamic education teaches that children are a trust that must be guarded, cared for, and educated with love, attention, and guidance in accordance with Islamic principles (Wahyuni & Putra, 2020). Islamic education is a holistic and integral process, encompassing physical, spiritual, and social aspects. A good education will shape children into responsible, productive individuals capable of fulfilling their roles in the world with a deep fear of Allah SWT.

Overall, the essence of children in Islamic education encompasses aspects of spirituality, morality, intellect, and sociality, which must be applied comprehensively in educating children. Through education in accordance with Islamic guidance, children can grow into a generation that is not only successful in this world but also achieves eternal happiness in the afterlife. From this perspective, the author aims to examine how Islam views the essence of children in Islamic religious education .

2. Theoretical Study

In the Islamic view, children have a very important position and are considered a gift and trust from Allah. Islam views children not just as individuals who must be educated and cared for, but as potential future people who need to be respected, protected and given a good education.

In general, a child is defined as a person born from a marriage between a woman and a man, without considering that a person born to a woman who has never been married is still considered a child. According to the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language, a child is a small, immature human being who is in a period of growth and development. As a small, immature human being, he needs guidance and education from his parents and educators in his development towards adulthood. Children are characterized by frequent imitation, a tendency to rebel, a lot of movement and restlessness, inability to distinguish between right and wrong, asking many questions, having a sharp memory, liking to play and be happy, and having sharp emotions (Khotimah, 2022).

3. Research methods

This study employed a literature review, utilizing various sources, such as books and other literature, as research data. The data was then read, recorded, and analyzed. A literature review is a series of activities that include collecting literature data, reading, recording, and processing research materials (Zed, 2014). The steps in this method include using documents from various sources, including relevant scientific journals and books. After the data was collected, a critical analysis was conducted, presented descriptively, to produce precise and accurate conclusions.

4. Results and Discussion

The essence of children in Islam includes comprehensive spiritual, social and educational dimensions aimed at making them a generation that can bring benefits to religion, family and society. The following are several aspects of the nature of children in the Islamic view:

1. **Children as a Trust from Allah**

   In Islam, children are considered a trust bestowed by God upon parents (Muthma'innah, 2024). Allah affirms in the Quran that children are a gift from God that must be cared for and raised responsibly. Parents are responsible for providing a sound education so that their children grow up with noble morals and become faithful individuals who are beneficial to humanity. In the Quran, Surah Al-Anfal, verse 28, it states:

   وَاعْلَمُوٓا اَنَّمَآ اَمْوَالُكُمْ وَاَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ وَّاَنَّ Allah عِنْدَهٗٓ اَجْرٌ عَظِيْمٌ

   "And know that your possessions and your children are a trial (trial) and that with Allah is a great reward."

2. **Children as a Potential that Needs to be Developed**

   Islam teaches that every child is born with a good innate disposition (fitrah al-islam), a tendency toward goodness and faith. However, to develop this potential, parents and educators have an obligation to provide a proper education. Children must be given the opportunity to develop their talents, skills, and potential, both academically, socially, and spiritually (Erica et al., 2021). Islamic education teaches children to grow into individuals with noble morals and beneficial knowledge.

3. **Children as Successors of the Generation and Bearers of the Future**

   In Islam, children are considered future leaders. They are the next generation expected to continue the struggle for religion and the community. Therefore, Islamic education for children focuses not only on worldly knowledge but also on religious values, morals, and social obligations. Children are taught to understand that they live not only for themselves but also to benefit humanity and the Islamic religion.

4. **Children have the right to a good education**

   Islam affirms that children have the right to receive a good and proper education, both in religious, moral, and scientific aspects (Sukatin et al., 2019). Education provided to children must include character building, instilling moral values, and teaching about relationships with God (habluminallah) and relationships with fellow human beings (habluminannas) (Cikka, 2022). The hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) states, "Seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim." (Narrated by Ibn Majah). Children's education in Islam must also lead to justice, equality, and respect for children's rights.

5. **Children as Subjects Who Have Rights and Roles in Society**

   In Islam, children are not only seen as objects to be educated, but also as subjects who have the right to be respected, protected, and given the opportunity to develop according to their potential (Akmal et al., 2024). Islam teaches that parents and society

must protect children's rights, including the right to education, the right to live in a safe and loving environment, and the right to receive protection from all forms of violence or abuse.

6. **Children as Givers of Happiness and Prosperity**

In Islam, children are considered a source of happiness and blessings. The presence of children can bring joy to parents and families. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "Indeed, your children are a pleasant part of this worldly life." (Narrated by Muslim). Therefore, children are a gift to be cherished, and their presence becomes a blessing if raised properly according to religious teachings.

Children are a gift from God that must be cared for by parents. Not only must they be cared for, but they must also be given love and a proper education so that they will grow up to be useful individuals for their religion, country, and nation (Oktori, 2021). Childhood education in Islam is fundamentally part of Islamic education. Islamic education itself aims to develop a person's personality and become a perfect human being.

Islamic education for children is expected to produce individuals who are useful to themselves and their community and who enjoy practicing and developing Islamic teachings in their relationships with God as Creator and with fellow humans. Such children are considered healthy in the broadest sense, including physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual health. Education should begin early and can be provided within the family, school, and community. Education should encompass three aspects: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor.

There are several methods of educating children in Islam, namely:

a) **Exemplary behavior**

Role modeling is the most important educational tool. This is understandable because children instinctively have the potential to imitate the things around them (Siregar, 2016). At an early age, parental role models have a significant influence on a child's personality. Everything parents do is considered right and best. Therefore, children automatically imitate them easily. Imitation typically occurs in children aged two. This process experiences extraordinary development when the child is five or six years old. However, the process will balance out as the child reaches the end of childhood. This imitation stems from a child's genuine love for their parents. Children learn through role modeling and imitation far more than their parents realize. Children are influenced by their parents' behavior, from communication with neighbors and peers, to things that parents are usually unaware of. Furthermore, parents' psychological tendencies also influence children's tendencies. Therefore, good role modeling from an early age is an appropriate method in children's education.

b) **Rewards and Punishments**

Giving rewards to children is important for children. These rewards must be given while maintaining a balance between material rewards and non-material rewards, because it is a mistake to only give material rewards to children. However, children should also be

given non-material rewards, such as praise given in front of others. There are several media for giving rewards to children, including: a) talking to children according to their intellectual abilities; b) calling them by their preferred names; c) material gifts; d) kind sentences or words; e) apologizing to children for mistakes they have made accompanied by an explanation that the forgiveness was given because they have done something good; and f) giving praise to children in front of others.

Punishment is an educational method given if advice, direction, guidance, and role models have failed to provide a positive influence on children (Siregar, 2016). Punishment must be carried out gradually, starting from the lightest to the most severe, while still paying attention to educational values in its application. Punishment to children can be carried out in several ways, including: with a sharp look, shouting, praising other children in front of them, preventing them from doing things they like, pulling their hair, and hitting. Hitting is a last resort if other methods are unable to correct the child's mistakes.

c) **Story Method**

The story method is one of the educational methods that has an influence on children. This is as Allah says "And all the stories from our messengers, we tell you, are stories with which we strengthen your hearts; and in this letter has come to you the truth as well as teaching and warning for those who believe" (QS Hud: 120). The stories that can be used as a method for children's education are very diverse (Rinaldi & Fuzta, 2022). Educators can provide, among other things, stories of the prophets, stories contained in the Koran, animal stories mixed in the Koran, prophetic stories, such as the story of the Juraij. The story of the Prophet's life journey, the story of the Prophet's companions (Taubah, 2016).

d) **Advice Method**

Advice is one of the most influential forms of education in shaping children so they can fulfill their roles as individuals and social beings (Taubah, 2016). This method is highly influential in education because it has a significant impact on revealing children's thoughts about the essence of things.

5. **Conclusion**

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the essence of children in Islamic education has a very important, strategic and comprehensive position. In the Islamic view, children are not just individuals who need to be guided or cared for physically and intellectually, but are a great trust from Allah SWT who must be looked after, nurtured and educated with full responsibility, affection and sincerity. The position of children in Islam is not only seen from biological aspects, but also from spiritual, social, moral and educational aspects. Therefore, every parent and educator has a moral and religious responsibility to ensure that children grow up to be human beings who are balanced between physical and spiritual, worldly and spiritual.

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