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The Utilization of Mushala in the Development of Islamic Values in Non-Formal Education Environment: A Case Study of Mushola Ar-Rahmah in Salamnunggal Village

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Abstract: This study examines the use of prayer rooms as a means of fostering Islamic values in the context of non-formal education. Prayer rooms serve a strategic role not only as places of worship, but also as centers for educational, spiritual, and social activities. These functions make prayer rooms effective institutions for instilling Islamic values in society. This research aims to: (1) identify the various forms of prayer room utilization in developing Islamic values, (2) analyze the challenges and obstacles faced in optimizing prayer rooms as non-formal education centers, and (3) formulate optimization strategies to enhance the effectiveness of prayer rooms in instilling Islamic values in the community. This research uses a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation which was carried out at the Ar-Rahmah Mosque, Salamnunggal Village, Cibebur District, Cianjur Regency over a period of three months. The study involved 15 informants consisting of 3 religious leaders, 4 prayer room administrators, 3 Madrasah Diniyah administrators, 2 TPQ administrators, and 3 community members, selected through purposive sampling based on their active involvement in prayer room activities. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive analytical techniques through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, with data validity ensured through triangulation of sources and methods. The results of the study show that prayer rooms play a role as a center for fostering Islamic values through various activities such as routine recitation, Qur'an learning, practical worship training, and socio-religious activities. Forms of utilization include the implementation of congregational worship, religious extracurricular activities, and community social development. However, the use of prayer rooms faces obstacles in the form of limited human resources, infrastructure, and low community participation. The optimization strategies needed include the development of varied programs, strengthening organizational management, increasing management capacity, and collaboration with

various parties. This research confirms that well-managed prayer rooms can be an effective non-formal education center in forming a generation of faith, noble character, and becoming agents of positive change in society.

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INTRODUCTION

Mushalas as places of worship for Muslims have a very strategic role in fostering Islamic values, especially in the non-formal education environment. Mushala not only functions as a place for prayer, but also as a center for religious activities such as recitation, learning the Qur'an, and taklim assemblies that can strengthen the understanding and practice of Islamic teachings in society (Farhan & Suhartini, 2022). Islamic religious institutions, particularly mosques and prayer rooms, have historically served as the primary centers for religious knowledge transmission and community development in Muslim societies (Nata, 2012). In the context of non-formal education, prayer rooms are an important alternative for people who want to obtain religious education outside the structured formal education system and play a crucial role in providing lifelong learning opportunities that complement formal schooling (Muhaimin, 2012).

Non-formal Islamic education carried out in the prayer room has advantages in the form of time flexibility and learning methods that adapt to the needs of students and the surrounding community. The participatory and contextual nature of non-formal education in religious settings allows for more meaningful learning experiences that directly address the spiritual and social needs of participants (Daradjat, 2014). Mushala also acts as a medium for building Islamic character and morals that can be accessed by various age groups, ranging from children to adults. Character education rooted in Islamic values is essential for developing individuals who possess both religious commitment and social responsibility (Tafsir, 2013). This is very important considering that strong religious education is the foundation in forming a generation of noble and faithful character. Moreover, community-based Islamic education through prayer rooms contributes significantly to social cohesion and the preservation of Islamic identity in contemporary society (Azra, 2012; Suprayogo, 2013).

Previous studies have examined various aspects of non-formal Islamic education in mosques and prayer rooms. Farhan and Suhartini (2022) highlighted the role of mosques as bases for non-formal education, emphasizing their function beyond mere worship spaces. Hamdani (2023) investigated the implementation of non-formal education in building educational values and community economic empowerment at the Kapal Munzalan Mosque in Banjarbaru. Surachman et al. (2023) explored the utilization of prayer rooms as facilities for religious development in residential areas. Wijaya (2024) focused on the role of Islamic Youth Organizations in fostering religious values at prayer room-based Qur'an learning centers. However, these studies predominantly focus on specific aspects such as youth roles, economic empowerment, or general religious development, without comprehensively examining the multifaceted utilization patterns, systematic challenges, and integrated optimization strategies in the context of non-formal education. Furthermore, limited research has been conducted in rural areas where prayer rooms serve as the primary center for Islamic education and community development. Therefore, this study aims to fill this knowledge gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of prayer room utilization forms, identifying systemic obstacles faced by prayer room management, and formulating holistic optimization strategies specifically in the rural non-formal education context.

However, the use of prayer rooms as a means of fostering Islamic values still faces various obstacles, such as limited facilities and infrastructure, lack of competent educators, and lack of support from the community and the government. In addition, the lack of optimal management

of prayer rooms as non-formal educational institutions is also a challenge in developing the educational function of prayer rooms to the maximum. Therefore, a study on the use of prayer rooms in fostering Islamic values in the non-formal education environment is very important to provide an overview of best practices, challenges, and strategies for managing prayer rooms in order to play a more effective role in supporting non-formal Islamic education in the community.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to examine the use of prayer rooms in fostering Islamic values in the non-formal education environment. The research was carried out at the Ar-Rahmah Mosque located in Kp. Pajagan 003/002 Salamnunggal Village, Cibeber District, Cianjur Regency. The selection of this location is based on the following objective criteria: (1) the prayer room has been operating for more than 10 years, indicating sustainability and stability of religious activities; (2) the prayer room manages at least three types of non-formal Islamic education programs (recitation, Madrasah Diniyah, and TPQ) that operate regularly; (3) the prayer room has an organized management structure with clear division of tasks and responsibilities; and (4) the prayer room is located in a rural area where it serves as the primary center for Islamic education, representing typical conditions faced by prayer rooms in similar contexts across Indonesia.

The subjects of the study include religious leaders, prayer room administrators, Madrasah Diniyah administrators, TPQ administrators, and the general public involved in prayer room activities. A total of 15 informants were selected through purposive sampling technique based on their active involvement and length of engagement in prayer room activities (minimum 2 years). Data collection techniques are carried out through participatory observation conducted over a period of 12 weeks (September-November 2024) with a total of 36 observation sessions, each lasting 2-3 hours, covering various activities including daily congregational prayers, recitation sessions, Qur'an learning classes, and community religious gatherings; in-depth semi-structured interviews with key informants using an interview guide consisting of four main themes: (1) forms and patterns of prayer room utilization, (2) Islamic values instilled through various activities, (3) obstacles and challenges faced in prayer room management, and (4) strategies for optimizing prayer room functions, with each interview lasting 45-60 minutes and recorded with informants' consent; and documentation to collect supporting data including photographs of activities (worship, learning, and social activities), organizational structure documents (management composition, job descriptions, and work programs), activity program documents (annual schedules, curriculum for TPQ and Madrasah Diniyah, recitation materials), administrative records (attendance lists, financial reports, and activity evaluation reports), and prayer room infrastructure data (facilities inventory and building layout).

Data analysis is carried out with a descriptive analytical approach through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The collected data was analyzed inductively to understand the patterns that emerged in the use of prayer rooms as a means of fostering Islamic values. The validity of the data is ensured through triangulation of sources and methods, as well as member checking with informants to ensure the accuracy of data interpretation. This research also refers to the theory of non-formal education and the management of educational institutions to strengthen the analysis of field findings.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Based on research conducted at the Ar-Rahmah Mosque, it was found that the prayer room has a multifunctional role as a center for fostering Islamic values in a non-formal education environment. The mosque not only functions as a place of worship, but also becomes a strategic center of educational, spiritual, and social activities for the surrounding community. The educational function of the prayer room is realized through various activity programs such as routine recitation, Qur'an learning, practical worship training, taklim assembly, and da'wah that are tailored to the needs of worshippers from various ages.

The forms of use of prayer rooms in fostering Islamic values are very diverse and comprehensive. Congregational worship activities such as mandatory prayers, sunnah prayers, Qur'anic tadarus, and joint dhikr are the main forms that not only instill the habit of worship, but also strengthen the spiritual and togetherness aspects among the congregation. Religious extracurricular programs include speech exercises, religious lectures, Islamic discussions, and Qur'an literacy training which are routinely held to improve students' Islamic insight and social skills. Community social development activities such as Jamiyah Yasin, taklim council, zakat collection and distribution, and social services are also routinely carried out involving all elements of society.

However, this study also identifies various obstacles faced in the use of prayer rooms as a means of fostering Islamic values. Limited resources are the main challenge, both in terms of funding, educators, and infrastructure. The quality and number of educators who do not have adequate qualifications or training also affect the effectiveness of learning and fostering Islamic values. In addition, the low awareness and participation of the public on the importance of non-formal education in prayer rooms, as well as the lack of policy and regulatory support from the government, are obstacles in optimizing the function of prayer rooms.

Discussion

The findings of this study show compatibility with the theory of non-formal education which emphasizes the importance of institutions outside the school as a means of forming the character, knowledge, and religious skills of the community. Mushala as a non-formal educational institution is able to meet the learning needs of the community that are not served in the formal pathway, as well as develop programs that instill values and skills that are not covered in the formal curriculum. This is in line with the research of Nur Asyiah (2017) which emphasizes that prayer rooms can function as a center for spiritual and social development that is able to improve the quality of faith and piety of the community as a whole.

The active role of the community in managing and utilizing prayer rooms as a center for fostering religious values shows the importance of community participation in non-formal education. Wijaya's research (2024) at the Miftakhul Jannah Mosque confirms this finding, that Mosque Islamic Youth play an important role in instilling the values of faith and morals in children and adolescents through various religious activities. The success of the use of prayer rooms is greatly influenced by the collaboration between administrators, religious leaders, and local residents in creating an environment conducive to the development of Islamic values.

The strategy of optimizing the use of prayer rooms requires a comprehensive and planned approach. The development of religious programs that are varied and relevant to the needs of the congregation is the main key, such as the integration of congregational prayer activities,

reciting the Qur'an, mentoring, and structured Islamic discussions. Strengthening the management and organization of the mushala through the preparation of a clear organizational structure, effective division of tasks, and periodic evaluation of the implementation of the program is also very necessary. The use of information technology for congregational data collection, administrative management, and publication of activities can increase the effectiveness of communication and promotion of mushala programs.

Collaboration with various parties, including formal educational institutions, religious organizations, and local governments, needs to be strengthened to expand networks and obtain resource support. This is in line with the findings of Hamdani (2023) at the Munzalan Ship Mosque in Banjarbaru which highlights the importance of systematic and structured management in the development of non-formal education based on mosques or prayer rooms. Community support through socialization and active involvement of residents in every mushala activity must also continue to be improved to create a sense of belonging and shared responsibility in prospering the mushala as a center for fostering Islamic values.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that prayer rooms have a strategic role in fostering Islamic values in the non-formal education environment. Mushala not only functions as a place of worship, but also becomes a center for educational, spiritual, and social activities that are effective in instilling and developing Islamic values in society. Various forms of the use of prayer rooms, such as recitation, learning the Qur'an, worship training, and social religious activities, have been proven to be able to strengthen the character, morals, and *ukhuwah Islamiyah* among worshippers, especially children and adolescents.

However, the use of prayer rooms still faces a number of obstacles, including limited human resources, infrastructure, and low community participation. To overcome these challenges, optimization strategies are needed through strengthening management, developing innovative programs, building management capacity, and collaborating with various parties, including formal educational institutions, religious organizations, and the government. Active community support is also a key factor in the sustainability and effectiveness of the role of prayer rooms as non-formal education centers.

Optimizing the use of prayer rooms as a means of fostering Islamic values is very important to form a generation that has faith, noble character, and is able to become agents of positive change in society. Mushala that is well managed and supported by all elements of society will be more effective in creating a religious, harmonious, and Islamic environment.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted at a single prayer room (Ar-Rahmah Mosque) in a rural area of Cianjur Regency, which may limit the generalizability of findings to prayer rooms in urban areas or other regions with different socio-cultural contexts. Second, the three-month data collection period may not capture seasonal variations or long-term dynamics in prayer room activities and programs. Third, this study relied primarily on self-reported data from informants, which may be subject to social desirability bias, particularly regarding the effectiveness of programs and community participation levels. Fourth, the research did not include quantitative measurements of the impact of prayer room activities on the character development or religious knowledge of participants, limiting the ability to assess program effectiveness objectively. Finally, the study

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did not explore in depth the perspectives of inactive community members or those who choose not to participate in prayer room activities, which could provide valuable insights into barriers to engagement.

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several directions for future research are recommended. First, comparative studies involving multiple prayer rooms across different geographical contexts (urban vs. rural) and socio-economic backgrounds would provide a more comprehensive understanding of prayer room utilization patterns and contextual factors affecting their effectiveness. Second, longitudinal research examining the long-term impact of prayer room-based non-formal education on participants' religious commitment, character development, and community engagement would strengthen the evidence base for best practices. Third, mixed-methods studies incorporating quantitative assessments of learning outcomes, behavioral changes, and community participation alongside qualitative exploration of experiences and perceptions would provide more robust evidence of program effectiveness. Fourth, action research involving the implementation and evaluation of specific optimization strategies identified in this study would generate practical knowledge for prayer room management improvement. Fifth, research exploring innovative approaches to prayer room management, including the integration of digital technology for administration, learning, and community engagement, would be valuable in the contemporary context. Finally, studies examining the role of government policies, funding mechanisms, and inter-institutional collaboration in supporting prayer room-based non-formal education could inform policy development and resource allocation decisions.

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