

(Research Article)

Improving the Quality of Tahfidz Learning Outcomes in Early Childhood through Teacher Management in PAUD Al-Qur'an Bekasi

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Abstract: Early Childhood Education (PAUD) holds a very important role in shaping children's character, moral values, and foundational knowledge. As an effort to support the success of education, good quality learning outcomes are required as a benchmark for children's holistic development. In this context, educator management becomes one of the keys to improving the quality of learning outcomes. PAUD Al-Qur'an (PAUDQU) is an early childhood education institution that prioritizes Al-Qur'an education and Al-Qur'an memorization (tahfidz) as its institutional uniqueness. The findings of this research show that the educator management implemented in PAUDQU in Setu Bekasi District is quite good, as almost all elements within the scope of educator management have been carried out by the school. However, there are several obstacles found in its implementation, such as the educators' competencies that have not been maximized, particularly in Al-Qur'an recitation (tahsin) and tahfidz, as well as the promotion, compensation, and educator assessment systems that are not yet well-structured. KIPAS EVA, an acronym for Competence Implementation Evaluation Appreciation, was developed with the expectation of being easier to remember, thus supporting the process of applying educator management in the future. This management strategy emphasizes educator planning by strengthening competencies, professional learning implementation by educators, continuous educator evaluation, and providing appreciation to increase educator motivation.

Keywords: Al-Qur'an Memorization (Tahfidz); Early Childhood Education; Educator Management; Educators; PAUDQU.

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1. Introduction

Education, as the main key in preparing a qualified generation in intellectual, emotional, and spiritual aspects, needs to begin from early childhood, since development in this age range progresses much more rapidly compared to the following stages. Empirical experience has proven that nations which enjoy prosperity and welfare for their people are those that begin their development through education, even when they do not possess sufficient natural resources (Muhardi, 2004: 479). The quality of these human resources can be formed starting from education since birth in the form of home education (family education), then followed by school education (formal/informal school-based education) such as PAUD, basic and secondary education (elementary–junior high–senior high school), and higher education.

Children, as the assets of a nation's advancement, need to be well-prepared in terms of education to become a qualified next generation. The early childhood period takes place when the child is in the womb up to early age, namely 0–6 years, as explained in Presidential Regulation No. 60 of 2013 on Holistic-Integrative Early Childhood Development (Presidential Regulation No. 60/2013, Article 1).

Along with their growth and development, early childhood children have rights that must be fulfilled both while still in the womb and after birth. The rights that must be fulfilled in a child, as mentioned by Abdul Rahim in Syaidah, are ten fundamental rights, namely: the right to life, the right to have valid genetics, the right to a good name, the right to affection, protection and breastfeeding from the mother, the right to have their own bed, the right to obtain education and knowledge, the right to be raised in an Islamic environment, the right to obtain everything provided from halal sources, the right to learn life skills and self-defense, and the right to receive careful services (Syaidah, 2016: 190). Concerning these child rights, there are aspects that can be supported by external parties such as educational institutions, especially in providing the right to obtain education and knowledge, as well as the right to learn life skills and self-defense.

Al-Qur'an can be introduced to early childhood with learning adjusted to their needs. Considering the significant changes and developments in the current era, the introduction of Al-Qur'an is expected to become the foundation for protecting children's faith in the future from inappropriate behaviors such as harassment, bullying, and violence. In recent years, parents' interest in encouraging their children to memorize Al-Qur'an has increased, even when the parents' background is not from religious education. Like a trend, this has grown very rapidly. For parents, having a child who memorizes Al-Qur'an is an extraordinary pride. In fact, more than one television channel has broadcasted talent shows if not called competitions showcasing the memorization achievements of early childhood children (Hidayah, 2018: 51–70). Qur'an memorization (tahfidz) learning for early childhood is expected to help them not only memorize the verses of Al-Qur'an, but also instill religious values from an early age and introduce religious traditions that will influence their character and morality in the future.

The presence of Early Childhood Education (PAUD) plays a very important role in shaping children's character, morals, and foundational knowledge. As part of the efforts to support the success of education, good quality learning outcomes are required as benchmarks for holistic child development. However, one of the main challenges in the education field is the low quality of learning outcomes in some PAUD institutions, which may be affected by various factors, including the role of educators as the spearhead of the learning process.

In this context, educator management becomes one of the key elements in improving the quality of education. Effective management includes strengthening educator competencies through training, guidance, and support in implementing innovative learning methods. However, in several areas, the management of educators has not been optimally implemented, including in PAUD Al-Qur'an institutions in Setu District, Bekasi. This condition potentially affects educators' ability to create effective and enjoyable learning experiences for children.

The need for professional educators becomes essential, as mandated in Law Number 14 of 2005, Article 8:

Teachers are required to have academic qualifications, competencies, educator certificates, physical and mental health, and the ability to realize the goals of national education.

Further details regarding academic qualifications are explained in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia Number 16 Year 2007, Appendix A on Academic Qualifications of Teachers, which states:

Teachers in PAUD/TK/RA must have a minimum academic qualification of a Diploma Four (D-IV) or Bachelor's degree (S1) in Early Childhood Education or Psychology obtained from an accredited study program.

Meanwhile, the required competencies include pedagogic, personality, social, and professional competencies. Professional educators possess special expertise in education, enabling them to perform their duties optimally and in a well-directed manner. In this regard, tahfidz educators with adequate competencies are those who have expertise and can produce students who achieve the expected learning outcomes.

Early Childhood Education of Al-Qur'an (PAUDQU) is a formal educational institution that teaches Al-Qur'an to early childhood under the authority of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. According to the national education standards for PAUD Al-Qur'an, the graduate competency standards and the educator standards are prioritized in the

implementation of PAUDQU. In accordance with the 2020 PAUDQU curriculum, tahfidz learning as one of the unique characteristics of this institution has the standard target of memorizing Surah Al-Fatihah and Surah An-Nas to Surah Al-Alaq (Decision of the Director General of Islamic Education No. 6091/2020).

PAUDQU in Setu District is the pioneering PAUDQU in Indonesia. There are 27 active PAUDQU institutions under this district in the academic year 2024–2025. Based on the preliminary study conducted by the author in the academic year 2023–2024 in the form of a questionnaire distributed to PAUDQU principals in Setu District, it was found that only 64% of students successfully achieved the curriculum target. In addition, the results indicated that educator-related factors contributed 59%, placing them as the second most influential factor after parents in achieving the tahfidz target. This situation is further confirmed by another questionnaire distributed to PAUDQU educators. The results showed that 95% of educators in PAUDQU Setu District do not yet meet the academic qualification standards for PAUD teachers and 71% have not completed tahsin training until certified as proficient in Qur'anic recitation. This condition does not yet align with the mandates stated in Law Number 14 Year 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers Article 8 and the Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 16 Year 2007, as previously mentioned.

Considering the above problems, educators as individuals who directly interact with students in the field need to be properly managed, not only to improve the quality of learning outcomes by ensuring curriculum achievement, but also to fulfill the educational goals set in the school's vision and mission.

2. Research Methode

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method, which, according to Sugiyono Sugiyono, (2023), is based on the philosophy of postpositivism or interpretive. The research was conducted to examine natural object conditions, where the researcher serves as the key instrument. The data collection techniques were carried out through triangulation, consisting of a combination of observation, interviews, and documentation. The data obtained will tend to be qualitative data, and data analysis is inductive. The results of research using this method are expected to enable the readers, especially the researcher, to better understand meaning, uniqueness, construct phenomena, and discover hypotheses.

3. Results and Discussion

The Definition of Educators and Educator Management

According to the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), the term “pendidik” (educator) comes from the word “didik,” which means maintaining and providing training (teaching, guidance, leadership) regarding moral values and intellectual intelligence. Meanwhile, an educator is a person who performs educational activities.

Umar, in his book *Pengantar Konsep Keguruan*, explains that Islamic education has various designations that are identical to the term teacher or educator, which can be found in the Arabic language such as ustadz, mudarris, mu'allim, and mu'addib. These four terms have different meanings depending on the contextual usage, although in certain situations, they may have similar meanings. The term ustadz generally means teacher or professor, referring to an academic level of intellectual expertise, namely a person who improves and renews models or working methods according to the demands of the time. Meanwhile, the term mudarris contains the meaning of teacher, instructor, and lecturer, referring to someone who strives to develop the intelligence of students, eliminate ignorance, and train students' skills according to their talents and interests. The term mu'allim means teacher, instructor, and trainer, referring to someone who is required to be able to explain the essence of the knowledge being taught. Meanwhile, the term mu'addib means educator, referring to a well-mannered person with quality for the future (Umar, 2019).

From the various terminologies and explanations mentioned above, a red thread can be drawn that an educator is an intelligent individual, capable of enlightening others, identifying talents, motivating, teaching knowledge, directing, and evaluating students' learning outcomes to achieve educational goals. More profoundly, in Islam, an educator does

not only serve as a teacher who conveys knowledge, but also as someone who continuously learns, is faithful, and through the knowledge they possess, becomes closer and more fearful of Allah SWT. Therefore, in education, a teacher (as a professional educator) is needed not only to carry out the transfer of knowledge to students but also to strive in shaping students' morals and character, enabling them to become more mature, independent, and possessing holistic intelligence (intellectual, emotional, and spiritual), as well as being responsible.

As the central figure in education, educators in reality still have many aspects that need to be managed. As of 2023, more than half of early childhood education (PAUD) educators still do not meet qualifications. Out of 400,000 PAUD teachers in Indonesia, only 41 percent hold a bachelor's degree (Hikmia, 2025). In fact, one of the pedagogical competencies of educators is having a minimum academic qualification of D-4 or S1. This represents only one of the issues faced and becomes a shared responsibility to resolve. Other issues related to educator welfare, motivation, creativity, and professionalism also contribute to the dynamics of educators at the early childhood education level. Therefore, amidst these many limitations, educator management will play a very important role in improving the quality of education to create a conducive learning environment that optimizes students' potential and achieves educational goals.

Scope of Teacher Management

The scope of teacher management outlines what aspects and to what extent these aspects need to be addressed in order to achieve effective management of educators. This scope also serves as a reference for prioritizing the attention of educational institutions regarding the condition of their teaching personnel.

In general, there are three key activities within the scope of teacher management, namely recruitment, development, and dismissal (Aliyyah, 2018). Meanwhile, Mulyasa provides a more detailed scope, which includes: (1) staff planning (teachers and education personnel), (2) staff procurement, (3) staff development and improvement, (4) staff promotion and transfer, (5) staff termination, (6) compensation, and (7) staff evaluation (Mulyasa, 2017).

Teacher Management Strategies

Based on the summarized definition of strategy presented by Ahmad Rusdiana in the book "Manajemen Strategik Berbasis Keunggulan Kompetitif", strategy refers to a plan formulated by top management to achieve desired goals. Such a plan must include objectives, policies, and actions taken by an organization to sustain its existence and succeed in competition (Rusdiana, 2023). Similarly, in early childhood tahfidz learning, an effective teacher management strategy is required, encompassing planning, implementation, teacher evaluation, and competency development to achieve the school's intended goals.

Teacher Planning

Teachers must possess four competencies that have been established as standards according to the attachment of Regulation of the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia Number 16 of 2007 Article 1 concerning Academic Qualification Standards and Teacher Competence.

Teachers in PAUD/TK/RA (early childhood education institutions) must have a minimum academic qualification of a four-year diploma (D-IV) or a bachelor's degree (S1) in early childhood education or psychology from an accredited study program.

Furthermore, within the same regulation, early childhood teacher competencies consist of four components: pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competence. In the context of tahfidz education for young children, in addition to these four competencies, there is an additional requirement that must be included in teacher planning. As stated by Syurgawi in his research, the primary criteria for tahfidz teachers are that they must have completed memorizing the Qur'an and possess fluency in tajwīd recitation (Syurgawi, 2024). This also applies to tahfidz teachers for early childhood learners.

More specifically, Syurgawi emphasizes that tahfidzul Qur'an teachers must also possess specialized skills to guide and support students in the memorization process. They should have a deep understanding of tajwīd (rules of Qur'anic recitation), effective and student-friendly memorization methods, as well as comprehensive knowledge of the meanings and interpretation of the Qur'an. Tahfidzul Qur'an teachers also serve as role models for their students in Islamic ethics and character. They encourage learners to apply

Qur'anic values in daily life and emphasize maintaining proper manners and respect in social interactions (Syurgawi, 2024).

Implementation of Tahfidz Instruction in Class by Teachers

Memorizing the Qur'an is not an easy task, yet it is far from impossible. Effective strategies and appropriate methods are required in the process. Methods play a crucial role for Qur'an memorizers. By implementing suitable instructional methods, tahfidz teachers can monitor the progress and achievements of their students (Qolbiyyah, 2022). The use of appropriate memorization methods offers many advantages, including facilitating the memorization process, enhancing understanding, and strengthening retention.

Evaluation and Supervision of Teacher Performance in Tahfidz Instruction

Assessment of learning and teacher evaluation are closely linked. Learning evaluation helps determine the effectiveness of the instructional system, while teacher evaluation measures performance and professional development within the learning process. Learning evaluation provides essential information for teacher performance assessment, such as children's learning outcomes, the effectiveness of teaching methods, and the need for instructional improvement. It also helps identify students' strengths and weaknesses and provides valuable feedback for both teachers and learners (Fuadiy, 2021). The results of learning evaluation become a basis for reviewing teacher performance in designing and delivering more effective instruction.

A crucial component of early childhood tahfidz teacher management is continuous evaluation and supervision by authorized parties. The purpose of teacher evaluation and supervision is to ensure quality and effectiveness of the teaching process, while improving teacher performance and overall educational operations. As stated in the Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology Number 47 of 2023 concerning Management Standards in Early Childhood Education, Primary Education, and Secondary Education, Article 19:

Educational supervision aims to ensure that education is conducted in a transparent and accountable manner while continually improving the quality of learning processes and outcomes to ensure that educational implementation is effective and efficient.

Teacher Motivation

In addition to the three strategies previously discussed (teacher planning, instructional implementation, and performance evaluation), teacher motivation is an equally essential aspect. One of the philosophical principles emphasizing the centrality of teachers states:

Methods are more important than material, teachers are more important than methods, and the teacher's inner spirit is more important than the teacher themselves." (Saihu, 2020).

This principle highlights that the motivation within a teacher plays a significant role in improving learning quality, fostering student enthusiasm, and creating a positive learning environment. Motivated teachers can inspire, guide learners, and support students in achieving their full potential.

Teachers' motivation is crucial for ensuring optimal learning outcomes. A sense of security, comfort, and motivation may come from internal factors as well as external support and fulfillment of teachers' rights.

- a. Internal motivation includes elements related to the teacher's personal condition, such as teaching goals, teaching abilities, and personal well-being.
- b. External motivation includes conditions outside the teacher that influence their performance, such as adequate income, coaching and supervision, legal protection, supportive and collaborative work environments, appreciation in the form of incentives or promotion, and other forms of recognition.

4. Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it is known that teacher management in PAUD Al-Qur'an, Setu District, Bekasi, in relation to improving tahfidz learning outcomes, has been carried out adequately; however, there remain several aspects that are not yet ideal in its implementation, such as: teachers who are not entirely aligned with the required educational qualifications and related expertise certifications, teacher coaching and professional development that have not been fully optimized, as well as evaluation, compensation, and promotion systems that are not yet well-systematized.

A teacher management strategy to improve the quality of tahfidz Al-Qur'an learning outcomes in early childhood education is necessary to optimize the achievement of each PAUDQU's objectives. This is because educating early childhood learners requires teachers who not only love young children, but also possess pedagogical, social, professional, and personal competence. As the spearhead of education in the field, teachers are expected to be more optimal when managed effectively, using the KIPAS EVA strategy, which is an acronym for Kompetensi PelakSanaan Evaluasi Apresiasi (Competence, Implementation, Evaluation, Appreciation). This acronym is designed to be memorable, assisting the future application of teacher management practices. This management strategy emphasizes teacher planning through competency strengthening, professional instructional implementation by teachers, continuous teacher evaluation, and providing appreciation to enhance teacher motivation.

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