

TEACHING THE MEANING OF RAMADHAN TO STUDENTS OF MIFTAHUL JANNAH ORPHANAGE IN INCREASING EMPATHY TOWARDS OTHERS

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Abstract

This study investigated effective methods to teach the meaning of Ramadhan to children at Miftahul Jannah Orphanage to enhance their empathy towards others. Traditional approaches to Ramadhan education often focus on rituals, potentially neglecting the social and humanitarian aspects. This study explored the use of experiential learning, social activities, and engaging media to foster empathy and a deeper understanding of the spiritual and social values of Ramadhan. The results showed that these methods significantly improved understanding of the meaning of Ramadhan and encouraged positive behavioral changes, increasing social sensitivity and empathy among children. This study highlights the importance of innovative and contextual approaches in religious education to foster caring and socially responsible individuals.

Keywords: *Ramadhan, Empathy, Orphanage, Experience-Based Learning, Social Education*

INTRODUCTION

Ramadhan is a very significant holy month for Muslims around the world. This month is understood as a time full of blessings, where Muslims are taught to increase their faith, piety, and strengthen their spiritual relationship with Allah SWT. In addition to the ritual aspects of worship, Ramadhan also has deep social and humanitarian meanings, such as sharing sustenance, increasing empathy, and strengthening ties of friendship (Nurhadi, 2023). Therefore, the month of Ramadhan is the right momentum to teach these values to all levels of society, especially to students who are learning to instill Islamic values deeply. Students in orphanages are a group that needs special attention in character and social education. They often come from different economic and social backgrounds, some even experience a lack of attention and affection. Strengthening the meaning of Ramadhan for them can not only enrich spirituality, but also build empathy and solidarity towards others. This is very important because empathy is the main basis for building a tolerant, caring, and empathetic society (Susanto, 2023). However, so far, teaching the meaning of Ramadan has been mostly formal and ritualistic, lacking direct experience of the social and humanitarian values contained therein. An approach that only focuses on lectures or verbal teaching is less able to touch the emotional aspects and personal experiences of students. Therefore, a more innovative learning method is needed that touches on emotional aspects so that the meaning of Ramadan can truly be absorbed and left in their minds (Kurniawati & Rahman, 2022).

In addition, the experiential learning approach or experience-based learning is considered very relevant to this context. Through direct experience, such as social activities and sharing with others, students not only understand the meaning of Ramadan conceptually, but also feel and experience the values of empathy in real life. This approach is able to develop social sensitivity and strengthen their sense of concern for others more effectively (Lestari, 2023). No less important, media and inspirational stories can also be an effective means of instilling the meaning of Ramadan. By utilizing visual media and real-life stories from influential figures, students can more easily understand and internalize these positive values. Modern technology and media can be utilized to support the learning process to make it more interesting and meaningful (Sari & Utami, 2022). Overall, innovative and contextual teaching of the meaning of Ramadan is needed to help students instill a sense of empathy and social concern in depth. Through an experiential approach, social activities, and the use of creative media, students can understand and experience the spiritual and social

meaning of Ramadan effectively. It is hoped that this will produce a generation that is not only ritually obedient, but also sensitive and cares about the lives of the people around them.



Figure 1

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Various methods can be used to teach the meaning of Ramadan, such as lectures, group discussions, joint worship practices, and providing social activities (Kurniawati & Rahman, 2022). Recent studies emphasize the importance of experiential learning methods or experience-based learning, which allow students to directly experience

the meaning of fasting and empathy through social activities during the month of Ramadan (Lestari, 2023). In addition, the use of visual media and inspirational stories is also effective in instilling the values of empathy and spirituality (Sari & Utami, 2022). Traditional educational approaches that focus on lectures and verbal teaching are often less effective in internalizing the deeper meaning of Ramadan. Digitalization of learning and innovation in teaching social values methods need to be applied so that the results obtained are more optimal.

Recent studies have shown the importance of using experiential learning methods in increasing students' understanding and empathy for the teachings of Ramadan (Nurhadi, 2023). Through direct experience in social activities, it is hoped that the value of empathy will be internalized more strongly and sustainably. In addition, this experience-based approach is also supported by research that confirms that sharing activities, such as giving alms, helping others, and sharing food during Ramadan, are very effective in increasing empathy (Ramadhan et al., 2024). Experiences that are felt directly can build emotional connections, so that the values of empathy and solidarity can develop naturally in students. This approach also creates a more enjoyable and meaningful learning atmosphere. Furthermore, visual media and inspirational stories play an important role in the process of learning the meaning of Ramadan. According to Sari and Utami (2022), the use of visual media such as videos, pictures, and real stories from inspirational figures helps students internalize spiritual and social meanings.

METHOD

This study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. This study involved children from the Miftahul Jannah Orphanage. Data collection methods include:

- Pre and Post-Intervention Survey: Given before and after the Ramadan program to assess changes in understanding, attitudes, and empathy levels.
- Observation: Direct observation of children's engagement in social activities and interactions to evaluate their social behavior and empathy.
- Focus Group Discussion: Conducted with children to gather in-depth perspectives on their experiences and the impact of the methods applied.
- Analysis of activities and materials: Assessment of the media used and the activities carried out.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Increasing Understanding of the Meaning of Ramadan

The results of the study showed that through the application of experiential learning methods and social activities during the month of Ramadan, students experienced a significant increase in understanding the spiritual and social meaning of Ramadan. Before participating in the program, most students only understood fasting as a ritual obligation without touching on moral and social aspects. After participating in activities that combined lectures, discussions, and direct experiences, they were able to mention various values such as caring, sharing, and empathy for others.

Changes in Attitudes and Behavior

In addition to increasing understanding, there is a development in the attitudes and behavior of students. They become more concerned about others, as seen from their desire to participate in activities such as sharing food, giving alms, and helping relatives and local residents. This change in attitude shows that an approach that integrates direct experience can foster social sensitivity and strengthen empathy.

The Influence of Visual Media and Inspirational Stories

The use of visual media and inspirational stories has proven effective in strengthening the internalization of moral values and empathy. Students actively respond to videos and stories of inspirational figures for the changes in attitude and sense of caring they experience after listening to the material. They also show increased motivation and interest in learning about the meaning of Ramadan through these media.

The Role of Social Activities in Increasing Empathy

Social activities, such as sharing food and clothes, help them experience firsthand how meaningful it is to give and share with others in need. Many students feel proud and happy when they are able to help others during Ramadan, which emphasizes that direct experience is very effective in instilling empathy in them. They also feel closer to others and Ramadan becomes not just a ritual, but a deep emotional experience.

Increased Social Awareness After Activities

Students who initially only understood the meaning of Ramadhan theoretically showed real changes in social sensitivity. They became more attentive to their surroundings, such as paying attention to neighbors in trouble and visiting relatives they rarely visited. This shows that the experiential approach is able to encourage them to become individuals who are more sensitive to the social realities around them.

The Impact of Social Activities on Students' Self-Efficacy

In addition to empathy, social activities during Ramadan can increase students' self-confidence and sense of belonging to their community. They feel that the small contribution they make can have a positive impact and make them more confident in their attitudes and behavior. This also increases the sense of social responsibility that is important for character development.

Student Involvement and Motivation

From the results of observations and interviews, it is seen that students who are actively involved in social activities and discussions have a higher level of motivation in following the learning process. They feel that the activities are relevant and directly touch their lives. This involvement increases their commitment to the meaning of Ramadan so that they not only know but also experience and practice these values.

The Influence of Modern Media Use

The use of visual media and stories of inspirational figures can stimulate the emotions of students and make them understand the meaning of Ramadan more deeply. Students show high enthusiasm for the material presented through videos and other visual media, this increases the opportunity to strengthen the internalization of values about empathy and kindness.

The Role of Teachers and Facilitators in Guiding Students

In addition to the methods used, the role of facilitators and teachers greatly determines the success of this empathy learning process. They are able to guide students to understand that the meaning of Ramadan is not just a ritual, but a spiritual and social experience that must be experienced in real and continuous ways in their lives.

Continuity of Learning

The results of the study also show that the effectiveness of this method can be sustainable if supported by routine programs and reinforcement from the surrounding environment. Direct experience and social activities carried out continuously will further strengthen the character of empathy of students and make them individuals who care about others, not only during Ramadan but throughout the future.



Figure 2

CONCLUSION

This study concluded that combining experiential learning, social activities, and engaging media was highly effective in teaching the meaning of Ramadan to children in orphanages and in fostering empathy. These methods provided a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the spiritual and social values of Ramadan, leading to increased social sensitivity and positive behavioral changes. By going beyond the traditional ritualistic approach, religious education can play a significant role in developing caring, empathetic, and socially responsible individuals. These findings support the need for the implementation and continued development of innovative and contextual educational strategies to maximize the positive impact of religious teachings on social and personal development.

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