EMPOWERING SEBANI'S STREET CHILDREN THROUGH HIJAIYAH LITERACY AND PRAYER: A STEP TOWARD RELIGIOUS LIFE

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Abstract: Community Service Activity (PKM) with the title "Upgrading the Religiosity of Street Children in Sebani Village, Pasuruan City through Reading and Writing Hijaiyah Letters and Learning the Five Daily Prayers" has succeeded in providing a significant impact on increasing the religiosity of street children, both in terms of cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and social aspects. By using the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, this activity involves street children as active subjects who participate in the process of identifying problems, planning, implementing, and reflecting. Collaboration between researchers, communities, and participants creates a participatory and meaningful learning space. The use of various educational and Islamic theories strengthens the results of the activity: Transformative Islamic Theory encourages liberating and empowering spiritual changes. Al-Attas' theory emphasizes the importance of instilling manners and internalizing Islamic values. Maslow's theory provides an understanding of the importance of fulfilling basic needs as a foundation for the growth of spiritual awareness. Bandura's theory supports the social learning process through role models and positive reinforcement. Overall, this activity shows that increasing the religiosity of street children is not only possible, but can also be achieved effectively with the right, collaborative approach, and touching on spiritual aspects as well as their basic needs.*

Introduction

Street children are a vulnerable group that is often neglected in terms of education, including religious education. In Pasuruan City, this phenomenon is a serious concern, considering that many street children do not have adequate access to religious education. This condition has an impact on their low understanding of spiritual and moral values that are essential in everyday life. Data from the Pasuruan Regency Social Service shows that in 2018, 76 street children were successfully secured and returned to their respective families after undergoing guidance at the Bina Hati Shelter.

However, the guidance provided is more focused on social and psychological aspects, while the religious aspect has not received adequate attention. A similar condition also occurs in Pasuruan City, where the local social service faces challenges in dealing with street children who return to the streets after previously being guided. This shows the need for a more holistic approach, including strengthening the religious aspect, to prevent them from returning to street life. One of the efforts that has been made is sending street children to the Metal Islamic Boarding School in Rejoso to receive religious guidance (Cholili et al., 2025; Mahbubi et al., 2021). This

program aims to prevent them from being involved in gangsterism and provide a better understanding of religion. However, the number of children that can be reached is still limited, so a similar program that is broader and more structured is needed. The 'Upgrading Religiosity of Street Children' program in Sebani Village aims to fill this gap by providing learning to read and write the hijaiyah letters and pray five times a day (Mahbubi, 2013, 2025).

Through this approach, it is hoped that street children can understand and practice Islamic teachings in their lives so that better characters are formed and they are kept away from negative behavior. The learning methods used will be adjusted to the conditions and needs of street children, considering their diverse backgrounds. A participatory and contextual approach is believed to be more effective in conveying religious material to them. This program is also in line with the local government's efforts to improve the quality of religious education in the community. For example, Pasuruan Regency has implemented a mandatory madrasah diniyah (madin) program for elementary and middle school students as part of strengthening the religious character of the community. (Although the program does not specifically cover street children, its principles can be adapted to their needs.). With the 'Upgrading Religiosity of Street Children' program, it is hoped that street children in Sebani Village can gain a better understanding of religion so that they are able to live a more meaningful life and avoid deviant behavior. This program is also expected to be a model for other regions in efforts to foster street children through a humanistic and inclusive religious approach.

The general objectives of this Community Empowerment activity are 1. increasing the religiosity of street children through basic Islamic religious education. 2. Providing understanding and skills in reading the hijaiyah letters using the Iqra' method. 3. Training children to perform the five daily prayers correctly, both in terms of reading and movement. 4. Building spiritual awareness in the daily lives of street children through a contextual and humanistic learning approach. Specific objectives: - Providing learning media that are interesting, easy to understand, and in accordance with the cognitive level of street children. - Building self-confidence and worship habits through routine religious activities. - Forming a sustainable religious development community for street children in Sebani Village.III. TheoryIn this Community Empowerment, we use 5 relevant theories to analyze the data: 1. Transformative Education Theory the activities of empowering street children's religiosity can be analyzed through Jack Mezirow's transformative education theory. Mezirow states that education should not only be informative but also transformative, namely changing the way individuals think to be more reflective and critical of their life experiences.

In this context, street children who are accustomed to living in marginal conditions are

given space to reflect on the meaning of life, spiritual goals, and the role of religion in their lives through learning the hijaiyah letters and practicing the five daily prayers.

Second analizise are Islamic Education as, an Agent of Social Transformation Islamic education, especially in the form of teaching the hijaiyah letters and learning to pray, has great potential as an agent of social transformation. According to Al-Attas, the goal of Islamic education is to produce good people (al-insān al-ṣāliḥ), not just intellectually intelligent people. In this activity, a spiritual approach is used to instill the values of goodness, discipline, and responsibility in street children, which in turn can improve their social behavior (al-Attas, 1999).

Third analizise are Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, Religiosity can be placed within the framework of self-actualization in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. After basic needs such as food and safety are met, individuals seek meaning and self-identity, one of which can be realized through spiritual experiences. Through training in reading hijaiyah letters and praying, children begin to realize their existence as spiritual beings and feel inner peace, even though they live in harsh social conditions.

Bandura's Social Learning Theory as fourth analizise, Albert Bandura suggests that learning occurs in a social context through observation and imitation (Bandura, 1986). In this activity, facilitators or volunteers act as models of religious behavior, which are then imitated by street children. Repetition of prayers, prayer movements, and interactions in an Islamic atmosphere provides effective learning stimuli, as well as being a concrete example of how to live based on religious values. And the last, we use Community Empowerment Theory as analizise, from the perspective of empowerment theory by Zimmerman (1995), this activity is a form of strengthening individual and community capacity. Children are not only equipped with the skills of reading and writing hijaiyah letters and practicing prayer but are also psychologically strengthened as valuable members of society. This approach encourages children to feel valued and empowered, which are an important foundation for long-term behavioral change (Bandura, 1977).

Research Method

Street Children are often marginalized groups who receive less attention in the field of education, especially religious education. The lack of access to learning religious values, such as reading and writing the hijaiyah letters and practicing the five daily prayers, is an obstacle in forming their spiritual character. This community service activity aims to empower street children in Sebani Village, Pasuruan City, by increasing religiosity as their social and spiritual capital in facing life. This is in line with Nasution's opinion (2020), which states that religiosity can be a tool of empowerment in

building the character of marginalized children. The Participatory Action Research (PAR) method was chosen because this approach emphasizes active collaboration between the community service provider and the target community, and focuses on concrete solutions based on local needs. PAR allows beneficiaries, in this case street children, to participate in the process of identifying problems, planning activities, implementing, and evaluating. According to McTaggart (1991), PAR is very effective in the context of community empowerment because it fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility for change. The implementation of the activity begins with the stage of identifying needs through open interviews and observations of street children in the Sebani Village area. Furthermore, the activity is carried out periodically through learning to read and write the hijaiyah letters and practicing the five daily prayers. Teaching is carried out contextually and fun, using a thematic and visual approach to make it easier to understand. This strategy supports meaningful learning, as explained by Sugiyono (2017), in that the thematic approach facilitates understanding of concepts through the relationship between materials.

Activities are carried out continuously with a mentoring approach, not just teaching. Each session is closed with a joint reflection to deepen the children's understanding of the material and their spiritual experiences. Mentoring is carried out by students and lecturers as facilitators and mentors. This process aims to build an emotional and spiritual relationship between the devotee and the participants, as conveyed by Freire (2005), that liberating education is dialogical and humanistic education.

Evaluation of activities is carried out through observation of the development of children's abilities in reading hijaiyah letters and performing prayers independently. In addition, simple instruments such as daily journals and oral tests are used. Evaluation is formative and reflective in order to improve the quality of activity implementation in a sustainable manner. According to Arikunto (2019), evaluation based on reflection and feedback is very important in the context of non-formal education to ensure the achievement of learning objectives.

This activity is expected to not only increase the religiosity of street children but also form spiritual independence and strengthen their moral values in everyday life. With the support of the community and local stakeholders such as RT/RW and local mosque administrators, this program can continue as a form of ongoing informal education. According to Haryanto (2018), the success of the empowerment program is highly dependent on the active participation of the community and post-intervention sustainability.

Community Empowerment Activity Flow 1. Preparation and Coordination Stage 2. Problem and Need Identification Stage 3. Program Planning Stage 4. Implementation Stage 5. Reflection and

Evaluation Stage 6. Follow-up and Sustainability Stage.

Activity Objectives	Achievement Indicators	Indicator Type	How to Measure
Improve the ability to read and write the Hijaiyah letters.	80% of participants were able to recognize and read hijaiyah letters correctly.	Quantitative	Oral and written tests every weekend
Improve understanding of the procedures and practices of the five daily prayers.	75% of participants were able to perform the movements and readings of the prayer in an orderly and sequential manner.	Quantitative and Qualitative	Direct observation and simulation of congregational prayer
Instilling the habit of praying five times a day	60% of participants started performing prayers independently without being asked.	Quantitative	Interview and journal of children's daily habits
Cultivating a sense of love for Islamic teachings	There is enthusiasm and active involvement of participants in every activity.	Quantitative	Observation of participation, presence, and expression during the session
The realization of an emotional relationship between the devotees and street children	Children feel comfortable, open, and active in dialogue with the facilitator.	Quantitative	Weekly reflections and small group discussions
Building local community involvement in follow-up assistance	There is a commitment from community leaders to continue the program.	Quantitative and Qualitative	Letters of support, RT/RW involvement, and participation in local companion training.

Table 1. Community Empowerment Activity Achievement Indicators

Research Finding

In Islam, the core tenets include the liberation and elevation of human dignity, which must extend to all, including marginalized groups such as street children. This community service program aims to do more than just impart the formal aspects of Islam. It seeks to build spiritual awareness, alter existing stigmas, and imbue these children with a new sense of purpose in life. Through the program, the street children not only learn to read and write the *hijaiyah* letters and perform the five daily prayers but also experience profound changes in behavior, reflecting a stronger spiritual consciousness. These behavioral transformations indicate the effectiveness of the program, providing the children with a sense of belonging, dignity, and spiritual growth (Cholili et al., 2025; Sholichah, 2020).

One of the key outcomes of this program has been an observable change in the children's behavior. Initially, many of the children were unaware of the religious practices that form a crucial part of daily Islamic life. However, after several months of active engagement with the program, they began to display increased discipline, a better understanding of right and wrong, and a genuine

interest in further exploring their religious knowledge. They were no longer performing religious practices mechanically but rather began to reflect on their meaning. The act of worship transcended mere ritual, transforming into a source of inner peace and fulfillment.

Picture 1. The street children not only learn to read and write the *hijaiyah* letters.

According to Al-Attas, Islamic education should not merely focus on intellectual development but should also instill good manners and noble morals, thereby internalizing true knowledge. In this community service program, the teaching of hijaiyah letters and prayers was not simply a form of rote learning but a process of internalizing Islamic values. The facilitators were not just instructors but role models, embodying the virtues they sought to instill in the children. This exemplification of good character was vital to the program's success. As a result, the children not only learned to recite prayers but also began to imitate the facilitators' behavior, such as greeting others with Islamic salutations and practicing gratitude before meals. These actions represented more than just learned behaviors— they reflected an internal shift in the children's attitudes toward religion (al-Attas, 1999).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory is particularly relevant to understanding how the program impacted the children. According to Maslow, human needs are arranged in a pyramid, with basic physiological needs at the bottom and self-actualization at the top. However, for street children, many of their foundational needs—such as security, affection, and a stable environment—are often unmet. This lack of basic needs presents a significant barrier to achieving spiritual self-actualization. By addressing these basic needs through the program, children gained a sense of security and emotional care. This foundation made it possible for them to engage in spiritual practices like prayer and self-reflection (Asmani, 2024).

As the children experienced more attention and care, they began to engage with the religious content of the program more meaningfully. The impact was evident in their increased self-confidence and openness to participating in religious activities. These changes were not just superficial but represented a deeper transformation. By fulfilling their basic needs, the program made it possible for

the children to explore their spiritual identities, eventually leading to personal growth and self-awareness.

Bandura's social learning theory emphasizes the role of observation, modeling, and reinforcement in the learning process. In this program, facilitators served as role models, and the learning process was structured around observing and imitating the behaviors of these positive role models (Bandura, 1986). The facilitators' actions, including the correct performance of prayers and religious behavior, became a source of learning for the children. Additionally, positive reinforcement through praise and encouragement helped to solidify the behaviors learned.

Picture 2. Studying Together

For example, a child who initially did not know how to perform ablution (wudu) was soon able to teach other children. This process of peer learning enhanced the sense of community within the group, demonstrating that religious education, when modeled effectively, can lead to significant and sustained behavior changes. By learning in a supportive environment where religious values were consistently reinforced, the children internalized religious practices and developed a more positive self-image.

The integration of these four theories—Transformative Islam, Al-Attas' Islamic education theory, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and Bandura's social learning theory—created a holistic approach to empowering street children. These theories worked in harmony to provide a comprehensive learning experience. Transformative Islam guided the program's overarching goal of spiritually liberating and humanizing the children, while Al-Attas' focus on good manners ensured that the educational approach was grounded in ethical and moral principles. Maslow's theory helped to ensure that the children's basic needs were met before attempting to engage with more advanced spiritual concepts, while Bandura's theory emphasized the importance of learning through positive role models and reinforcement.

The program led to significant progress in several key areas:

- **Cognitive Impact**: The children learned to recognize and read basic hijaiyah letters, which is the first step in becoming literate in Arabic and understanding the Quran. This cognitive development helped them build a foundation for further religious education.

- **Affective Impact**: The children's interest in religion grew as they felt more appreciated and cared for. They began to see the value of religious practices, not just as a set of rituals but as a source of spiritual fulfillment. This emotional connection to religion is essential for sustaining long-term behavioral change.

- **Psychomotor Impact**: The children learned to perform the five daily prayers correctly, both in terms of the recitations and physical movements. This was not just about learning the motions but also about understanding the deeper significance of prayer as a form of connection with Allah.

- **Social Impact**: The program helped foster positive interactions among the children, promoting solidarity, cooperation, and self-confidence. They became more integrated into the community and began to take on leadership roles, such as teaching their peers how to perform religious rituals.

These impacts demonstrate that a spiritual approach, grounded in Islamic teachings, can be incredibly effective in transforming the lives of street children. By engaging them in religious practices and providing a sense of community, the program sparked a moral and spiritual awakening that resulted in significant behavioral changes.

The positive impact of the program was further reinforced by Hirschi's social control theory, which posits that individuals' attachment to social values, including religiosity, helps prevent deviant behavior. As the children became more attached to the religious values taught in the program, they showed a marked decrease in behaviors such as swearing and minor delinquency. This decrease in deviant behavior highlights the power of religious teachings as a form of social control, helping to guide children toward more positive behaviors.

One of the significant challenges facing programs like this is ensuring their sustainability. The theory of sustainable development in education, as proposed by Sterling (2001), suggests that programs must involve community leaders, parents, and local institutions to ensure their continued success. This community service program cannot rely solely on volunteers but must build a support system to ensure that the impact lasts beyond the duration of the program. By fostering a sense of ownership among community members and involving them in the program's continuation, the program can create a sustainable model that can be replicated in other areas.

The Upgrading the Religiosity of Street Children program in Sebani Village serves as a powerful example of how religious education can transform the lives of marginalized children. By combining

spiritual, cognitive, and social learning, the program successfully empowers street children and offers them a pathway to a more dignified and meaningful life. With the support of community leaders and continued engagement, this program has the potential to be a lasting force for change, benefiting not only the children but also the wider community.

Conclusion

This community service program, titled "Upgrading the Religiosity of Street Children in Sebani Village, Pasuruan City through Reading and Writing Hijaiyah Letters and Learning the Five Daily Prayers," demonstrates that a religiosity-based approach is not only spiritually effective but also socially impactful. The program's results show significant behavioral transformations in street children, fostering positive identities and elevating their spiritual consciousness. These children, who were once marginalized, have experienced profound changes in their lives through the introduction of Islamic teachings, which offer both spiritual and social benefits.

Through this program, the children have learned not only the formal aspects of Islam, such as reading Hijaiyah letters and performing the five daily prayers, but also internalized spiritual values that have helped shape their behaviors. The impact of these teachings goes beyond mere ritual; it has created a transformative process where the children now understand the deeper meaning of worship. They have begun to associate prayer and other religious practices with personal fulfillment, discipline, and an ethical framework that guides their lives. The behavior changes observed in the children reflect the strength of the program's approach, which combines educational, spiritual, and social learning components.

Al-Attas' theory on Islamic education emphasizes the importance of not only transferring knowledge but also instilling good manners and noble morals. In this community service program, the teachings of Hijaiyah and prayer were not just academic lessons; they were a means of internalizing moral values and fostering exemplary behavior. The facilitators acted as role models, showing the children not only how to pray and read, but how to embody Islamic values in daily life. This model of good character and ethical living was integral to the program's success. The children, inspired by their facilitators, began to imitate behaviors such as greeting others with Islamic salutations and showing gratitude before meals, demonstrating a deeper connection to the values taught.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory provides important insights into how the program supported the children's spiritual growth. According to Maslow, after meeting basic needs such as food, safety, and emotional care, individuals can begin to pursue self-actualization, which includes the pursuit of meaning, identity, and spirituality. For street children, many of whom lacked access to these basic needs, the program created a safe environment that allowed for

spiritual exploration and growth. Once their foundational needs were met, the children were able to engage with the spiritual teachings in a meaningful way, which led to increased self-confidence and openness to participating in religious activities.

By fulfilling their basic needs, the program made it possible for the children to start their journey of spiritual self-actualization. This foundational support enabled them to engage with religious practices such as prayer, which in turn helped them realize their spiritual identity and gain inner peace despite their challenging circumstances.

Bandura's social learning theory highlights the importance of observation, modeling, and reinforcement in the learning process. In this program, facilitators served as role models, and the children learned through observing and imitating the facilitators' behaviors. The program created an environment in which the children not only learned how to perform religious rituals but also internalized the positive values associated with those practices. The facilitators' actions—such as correctly performing ablution and prayer—became a source of learning for the children, who then practiced these behaviors themselves. This process of learning through positive reinforcement and role modeling led to significant behavior changes. For instance, a child who initially didn't know how to perform ablution (wudu) was later able to teach his peers how to do it.

By creating a supportive and encouraging environment, the program allowed the children to learn not only religious rituals but also the values of discipline, respect, and cooperation. The social dynamics of the group helped foster solidarity and a sense of belonging among the children, which further contributed to their positive development.

The integration of the four theories—**Transformative Islamic Theory**, **Al-Attas' Islamic Education Theory**, **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**, and **Bandura's Social Learning Theory**—worked in harmony to create a comprehensive approach to empowering street children. This program did not merely impart religious knowledge but also served as a profound social intervention that addressed the children's spiritual, emotional, and social needs. The program's success lies in its ability to combine spiritual education with behavioral transformation, offering a holistic model for working with marginalized children.

Real Impacts of the Program

The program has led to tangible improvements in several key areas:

- **Cognitive Impact**: The children learned to recognize and read basic Hijaiyah letters, which provided them with the foundational skills needed for further religious education.

- **Affective Impact**: The children developed a deeper interest in learning about religion and felt appreciated and cared for, which enhanced their emotional connection to religious practices.

- **Psychomotor Impact**: The children learned how to perform the five daily prayers correctly, including both the movements and the recitations. This demonstrated that they were not only learning religious concepts but also applying them in real-life situations.

- **Social Impact**: The children showed improved social interactions, stronger solidarity, and greater self-confidence. They became more integrated into the community and began to take on leadership roles, such as teaching their peers how to perform religious rituals.

These impacts highlight the potential of religiosity-based learning to create lasting behavioral and spiritual changes in marginalized children. By providing these children with the opportunity to engage with spiritual practices in a meaningful way, the program opened their eyes to a new world of moral and spiritual awareness.

The program also demonstrated the power of religiosity in reducing deviant behavior among the children. Hirschi's social control theory suggests that individuals who are strongly attached to social values, such as religiosity, are less likely to engage in deviant behavior. As the children grew closer to the religious values taught in the program, they showed a noticeable decrease in behaviors such as swearing and minor delinquency. This decrease in deviant behavior underscores the role of religious education as an effective form of social control, guiding children toward more positive behaviors and helping them avoid negative influences.

One of the main challenges in this type of program is ensuring its sustainability. To ensure long-term success, the program needs the involvement of community leaders, parents, and local institutions, as suggested by the theory of sustainable development in education (Sterling, 2001). The program cannot rely solely on volunteers but must be supported by a broader community network to maintain its impact. By creating a support system involving all stakeholders, the program can become a lasting and replicable model for other regions.

The Upgrading the Religiosity of Street Children program in Sebani Village proves that a spirituality-based approach to education can transform the lives of marginalized children. By combining spiritual, cognitive, and social learning, the program successfully empowers street children, helping them build a brighter future. With continued support from the community, this program has the potential to provide long-lasting positive impacts, not only for the children directly involved but also for the wider community. The success of this program serves as a powerful example of how religious education can be used as a tool for both personal and social empowerment.

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