

Parents' Knowledge About Teaching Prayer among Students with Learning Difficulties

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Abstract

Parents need to ensure that every child, including those with disabilities, receives a complete education, whether it is worldly knowledge or religious education. Parents with limited awareness of the importance of religious education at home, such as performing prayers, fasting, and reading the Quran, lead to an increase in behavioural problems among teenagers. Therefore, if parents practice prayer in their daily lives at home, then these children with disabilities are exposed to establishing prayer after observing their parents as models and gradually imitating the movements. The objective of this study is to examine parents' awareness of teaching prayer among students with learning difficulties. In this study, the researcher used a quantitative research method with a survey design. Using a simple random sampling technique, the study population and sample were parents of children with special educational needs and learning difficulties studying in the Integrated Special Education Program (PPKI) in the Petaling Jaya district. A total of 78 respondents completed the questionnaire survey using 5-point Likert Scale. Data were analysed using Descriptive Statistic in Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. The findings indicate that the level of parents' knowledge about teaching prayer is very high (mean=4.47, sd=0.3). It is hoped this study is expected to raise awareness among parents about the importance of teaching prayer to children with special needs so that their lives are more guided as they grow older. Among the further studies that can be suggested is to identify the relationship between prayer education and morals of students with special needs.

Keywords: Prayer Education, Parent's Perception, Special Education

Introduction

Solat is a term derived from the Arabic language, meaning prayer or supplication towards goodness (Zuhayli, 2012). Additionally, solat signifies specific actions and words that begin with takbir (saying "Allahu Akbar" or "God is the Greatest") and end with salam (concluding greetings) (Mustafa, 2007). Performing the five daily prayers is an obligatory worship for every individual following the Islamic faith after meeting certain criteria. Prophet Muhammad

(peace be upon him) emphasized the importance of teaching prayer to every Muslim family, as narrated in a Hadith by Imam Abu Dawud R.A :

مُرُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَهُمْ أَبْنَاءُ سَبْعِ سِنِينَ وَاصْرِبُوهُمْ عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ أَبْنَاءُ عَشْرِ سِنِينَ وَفَرَّقُوا بَيْنَهُمْ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ
(Sunan Abi Dawud, v.1, no. 495, p185)

Translation : "Command your children to perform prayer (salat) at the age of seven, and discipline them for neglecting it at the age of ten, and separate their beds."

Based on evidence from the Quran and Hadith, the obligation of this worship will not be easily waived even if the individual is from the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) community. The PWD group in this country can be divided into 6 categories: visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical disabilities, speech impairments, learning disabilities, and multiple disabilities (Special Education Division, 2016). Compared to those with visual and hearing impairments, the learning disabilities category refers to cognitive (intellectual) disabilities, but these disabilities still allow these children to be educated with minimum learning abilities (Yusmini and Azura, 2019). Therefore, prayer education for PWD children, especially those with learning disabilities, should start early due to their various incapacities and challenges they face. Parents should realize that early prayer education can shape children with dynamic, progressive, resilient, pious, and righteous traits (Azmi and Abdul Halim, 2007).

As parents, they should be aware that their primary responsibility entrusted to them regarding their children, besides providing shelter, food, and clothing, also includes education. Parents need to ensure that every child, including those with disabilities, receives a complete education, whether it is worldly knowledge or religious education. Problems arise when some parents do not pay attention to teaching prayer to their children because they do not know how to teach, especially if the child has a disability (Begum and Hanafi, 2012). If these victimized children experience negative effects as they grow older, children with disabilities will face even more severe consequences and marginalization.

Furthermore, the problem of the local community's perception also poses a challenge for parents with children with disabilities in exposing them to prayer education. Close family members and neighbors are part of the local community that can influence the thoughts and actions of every parent. Their stigma views children with disabilities as special children. Parents often face external perceptions that children with disabilities do not need serious guidance and are not accountable in the afterlife (Farhana and Manisah, 2020). Moreover, some perceive children with disabilities as incapable of contributing to others and burdensome (Yusmini and Azura, 2019).

Parents of children with disabilities should also realize that while their children may mature physically as they grow older, their spiritual, emotional, and intellectual development may not progress at the same pace. They may have empty souls, leading to a decline in values and morals. As a result, they may be more susceptible to involvement in crimes and free association (Muhibah and Nurzuliana, 2020). Therefore, a study should be conducted to examine parents' knowledge of prayer education, especially among children with disabilities, particularly in the category of learning disabilities.

Teaching prayer to children with learning disabilities requires teaching strategies that are suitable for their ability to receive information. Effective prayer education methods for them include role modeling and drill training. Parents need to be guides and perform prayer rituals together with their children, not just giving instructions. Furthermore, teaching them about prayer is not enough with just one-time teaching; it takes a long time to be understood

due to their varying abilities (Yusmini and Azura, 2019). Therefore, the objective of this study is to identify parents' knowledge of prayer education in terms of suitable implementation methods among students with learning disabilities.

Literature Review

Parents' awareness of prayer education

Prayer is an act of worship that shapes one's morals, character, and self. Introduction to prayer education should start from the family institution, which is the role of parents (Suhaila et al., 2018). Studies have found that parents who emphasize prayer education will raise well-behaved children, while children with moral and social problems are often traced back to parents who do not emphasize comprehensive prayer education (Zainuridin & Nurazmah, 2011). Many parents and the general public lack awareness of Islamic teachings. Parents with limited awareness of the importance of religious education at home, such as performing prayers, fasting, and reading the Quran, lead to an increase in behavioral problems among teenagers (Faridah and Zurina, 2015).

According to Nadiah et al (2022), among the responsibilities of parents in Islam is to be a good example and role model to their children by engaging in permissible actions and avoiding prohibited ones. Parents also need to implement the concepts of reward and punishment for their children's actions at home. Some studies have found that parents never perform prayers at home and only expect their children to do so. Additionally, a few parents completely delegate the task of educating their children to teachers at school. This shows that parents are not being good "role models" for their children in terms of implementing prayer education, especially at home (Faizal et al., 2017).

Studies conducted abroad also emphasize the importance of spiritual and religious aspects in establishing balance either within the family institution or within the individual with special needs themselves. Parents who in still high spiritual values at home are associated with positive mindsets, self-esteem, and strong social support. Conversely, low spiritual values result in parents experiencing depression, emotional stress, isolation, and even suicide (Hodge and Reynolds, 2023). Parents who do not emphasize spiritual and religious values starting from home also lead to teenagers with special needs distancing themselves from religious activities outside, such as attending congregational ceremonies, joining religious classes, and participating in recreational and volunteer activities (Carter and Boehm, 2019).

The importance of prayer for persons with disabilities (PWD)

The act of praying (solat) for individuals with disabilities, including those with learning difficulties, is based on their level of capability. The obligation for an OKU individual to perform prayer remains as long as they have sound mind (awareness) and understand the actions of prayer to the best of their ability (Adnan, 2016). Islam greatly considers their disabilities in performing this worship by providing concessions (rukhsah) according to their capability and capacity. This is in line with the words of Allah in the Quran:

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ
فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

Translation : "Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth, saying, 'Our Lord, You did not create all of this without purpose. Glory be to You! Protect us from the torment of the Fire.'" (Quran, Surah Al Imran 3:191)

The word "remember Allah" in the verse, according to Ibn Kathir, refers to prayer (solat). The act of praying remains necessary for every accountable individual (mukallaf), but the perfection of its implementation depends on the individual's level of capability, especially those with disabilities such as learning difficulties (Asmak et al., 2017). Consistent performance of prayers by individuals with disabilities will result in a holistic development of their ethical and moral values because it creates a balance between intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence within them (Izuli & Asmawati, 2018).

Additionally, PWD who deeply experience prayer in their lives are capable of preventing themselves from engaging in actions that contradict religion and humanity. This is based on the words of Allah:

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ

Translation : "Indeed, prayer prevents immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows what you do." (Quran, Surah Al-Ankabut 29:45)

According to Ibn Kathir (1353), there are three characteristics of prayer that can prevent a person from committing sins and wrongdoing: sincerity in worship, a sense of fear of Allah, and a mind that remembers Allah (Ibn Kathir, 1999). Parents who engage in prayer as a way of remembering Allah will have a positive impact on their children, especially those in the special needs category, making life more valued and compassionate. Prayer education that starts at home will result in individuals with disabilities being motivated to do good and less prone to behavioral issues (Kamal and Hafizhah, 2021).

Teaching Prayer to Students with Learning Disabilities Based on Bandura's Modeling Theory

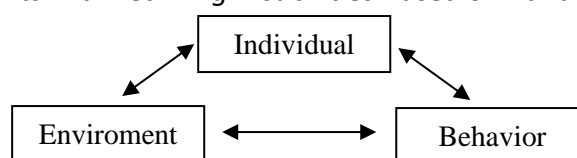


Diagram 1 : Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory

This study uses the above theory as a reference for the research. Based on this theory, Bandura (1963) explained that children's behavior at home is influenced by their personality and environmental factors such as parental involvement (Hafizar et al., 2017). The environmental component, individual, and behavior mutually influence each other in a child's learning process. Bandura also described that children's behavior results from observation and imitation of others (Sarimah et al., 2011). Therefore, if parents practice prayer in their daily lives at home, then these children with disabilities are exposed to establishing prayer after observing their parents as models and gradually imitating the movements. On the contrary, neglecting prayer starting from home may lead these children to grow up with weak spiritual values and discipline issues at school (Kamal & Hafizah, 2021).

There are several characteristics that parents need to fulfill to become good models for their children. Among them, the model needs to be competent in behavior, have influence and prestige, maintain gender norms, and be skilled in adapting behavior to the observer's situation (children). Teaching prayer through modeling theory is highly suitable for parents to implement at home as it allows for quality time spent with their children while focusing on complex behaviors generated by the children during teaching (Salbiah et al., 2014). Every parent, especially those with children with learning disabilities, should realize that their

children's prayer practices will be more ingrained if parents set a good example and foster a good relationship at home.

Methodology

The study utilizes a quantitative research method with a survey research design. According to Kerlinger (1986), the survey research design has two main objectives: to find answers to research questions and to control variables. The quantitative research method is suitable for this study as data are obtained from primary and raw sources. Additionally, the study employs a 5-point Likert Scale and can test hypotheses, determine cause and effect, and make predictions (Munirah, 2021).

Population and Sample

The population refers to the entire set of subjects for a study, while the sample refers to the respondents selected to represent the population (Adnan, 2016). The population for this study consists of all parents with special needs children registered in the Integrated Special Education Program (PPKI) with Learning Disabilities in national schools (SK), national-type schools (SJK), and national secondary schools (SMK) in the Petaling Utama district. Based on information from the Petaling Utama District Education Office, there are 1882 parents of children with special needs registered and studying in the Petaling Utama district. Therefore, to determine the sample size for this population, the researcher used the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table and listed the corresponding sample size. According to the table, with a population of 1882, the required sample size is 320 respondents. Simple random sampling technique is used in this study, where respondents are selected randomly with equal probability. This method is suitable as the respondents are homogeneous in nature.

Research Instrument

The research instrument refers to the measurement tool used to gather information. This study utilizes a questionnaire instrument. The questionnaire was developed by adapting and modifying a study by Munirah (2021) regarding parents' knowledge and involvement in personal hygiene care for children with special needs. The questionnaire was modified to meet the research objectives, incorporate feedback from supervisors, and align with Bandura's modeling theory. The questionnaire received language validation from a Malay Language teacher with nearly 18 years of experience, Puan Noor Hayati Binti Mat Abdullah, at the researcher's workplace. The questionnaire is divided into three sections: Section A covers demographics, Section B covers parents' knowledge about prayer education, and Section C covers parents' practices related to prayer education. Information in the questionnaire is measured using a 5-point Likert Scale: strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), uncertain (U), agree (A), and strongly agree (SA).

Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire was distributed electronically to the study population, i.e., parents of children with learning disabilities registered in schools in the Petaling Utama district, via the Google Form platform. Respondents filled out the data by clicking the Google Form link shared through online messaging apps like WhatsApp and Telegram. Feedback was collected over one week. The advantage of electronic data collection is cost and time efficiency in conducting research. The Google Form data collected were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. This software identifies Cronbach's Alpha values and the

reliability of the distributed questionnaire. Additionally, SPSS assists in testing normality and provides descriptive data analysis quickly and easily (Munirah, 2021). After collecting and transferring data to Excel and SPSS, the data were analyzed to find mean, minimum, and standard deviation. Data from a pilot test of 10 respondents showed an average Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.883, indicating the questionnaire's reliability. Subsequently, data were analyzed and scores interpreted using a table developed by Nor Anieqah and Suziayani (2010) with 5 levels.

Table 1

Interpretation Levels Based on Mean Score

Mean Score	Interpretation
1.00 – 1.89	Very Low
1.90 – 2.69	Low
2.70 – 3.49	Modarate
3.50 – 4.29	High
4.30 – 5.00	Very High

Findings*Respondent Demographic Profile*

Table 1 shows that 78 respondents of the study answered the questionnaire on the Google Form platform distributed online via WhatsApp and Telegram applications. Based on the table, the majority of the respondents involved were from the mothers' group, with 60 individuals (76.9%) compared to 16 individuals from the fathers' group (20.5%) and 2 individuals from the caretaker's group (2.6%). Most respondents also have special needs sons, with 63 individuals (80.8%), compared to 15 individuals with special needs daughters (19.2%). The majority of the respondents involved have special needs children aged 7 to 12 years old, with 52 individuals (66.7%), compared to 24 individuals aged 13 to 18 years old (30.8%), 2 individuals aged 19 years and above (2.6%), and no respondents with children under 7 years old (0%).

Regarding employment, most respondents work in the government sector, with 33 individuals (42.3%), followed by the private sector with 20 individuals (25.6%), self-employed individuals with 12 individuals (15.4%), and unemployed individuals with 13 individuals (16.7%). Furthermore, the majority of respondents also come from families with incomes ranging from RM 1,000 to RM 6,000, with 50 individuals (64.1%), followed by incomes from RM 6,000 to RM 12,000 with 20 individuals (25.6%), while incomes below RM 1,000 and above RM 12,000 each have a frequency of 4 individuals (5.1%). Regarding the level of education, most respondents hold STPM/Certificate/Diploma qualifications, with 30 individuals (38.5%), while those with SPM and Degree qualifications have the same frequency of 23 individuals (29.5%), and those with UPSR/PMR/SRP education level are 2 individuals (2.9%).

Table 2

Respondent Demographic Profile

Demographic	Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Relationship with child	Father	16	20.5
	Mother	60	76.9
	Caretaker	2	2.6
Child's gender	Male	63	80.8
	Female	15	19.2
Child's age	Under 7 years old	0	0
	7 to 12 years old	52	66.7
	13 to 18 years old	24	30.8
	19 years old and above	2	2.6
Occupation	Government	33	42.3
	Private	20	25.6
	Self-employed	12	15.4
	Unemployed	13	16.7
Family income	Below RM 1,000	4	5.1
	RM 1,000 to RM 6,000	50	64.1
	RM 6,000 to RM 12,000	20	25.6
	Above RM 12,000	4	5.1
Education Level	UPSR/PMR/SRP	2	2.6
	SPM	23	29.5
	STPM/Certificate/Diploma	30	38.5
	Ijazah and above	23	29.5

Parents' Knowledge Level About Prayer Education for Children with Special Needs

Table 3 shows the parents' knowledge level about prayer education for children with special needs in Petaling Jaya based on the average minimum interpretation. Overall, the average minimum for parents' knowledge level about prayer education is $\text{min} = 4.47$ with $\text{sd} = 0.38$, which is very high. There are 9 items indicating a very high average minimum level, namely Item 1, Item 2, Item 3, Item 4, Item 5, Item 6, Item 7, Item 9, and Item 11. Meanwhile, there are 2 items indicating a high average minimum level, namely Item 8 and Item 12. For Item 10, 'Educating children with special needs about prayer is solely the responsibility of teachers in school.' It shows an average minimum level at a moderate level, $\text{min} = 2.76$, indicating that parents acknowledge the importance of providing exposure to prayer education at home as being more crucial than completely relying on teachers in school for this task."

Table 3

Parents' Knowledge Level About Prayer Education for Children with Special Needs

Nu.	Question	Frequency and Percentage Likert Scale					Mean	sd
		SD	D	U	A	SA		
1.	Performing obligatory prayers (solat fardu) is necessary for every individual five times a day.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (10.3%)	70 (89.7%)	4.88	0.3
2.	Performing ablution (wuduk) is necessary before praying.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (12.8%)	68 (87.2)	4.87	0.3
3.	Prayer can make a person's heart calm.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (12.8%)	68 (87.2%)	4.87	0.3
4.	Prayer can prevent a person from committing sins.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	13 (16.7%)	65 (83.3%)	4.81	0.3
5.	Educating children about the prayer ritual is important to keep them away from sinful acts.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	13 (16.7%)	65 (83.3%)	4.79	0.3
6.	School discipline problems, involvement in crimes, and social issues often occur due to weak adherence to prayer.	1 (1.3%)	1 (1.3%)	2 (2.6%)	26 (33.3%)	48 (61.5%)	4.54	0.7
7.	Prayer education for	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (5.1%)	23 (29.5%)	51 (65.4%)	4.53	0.5

	persons with disabilities (MBK) should be introduced at an early age, before the age of seven.							
8.	Persons with disabilities (MBK) should still perform prayers even with varying disabilities.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	11 (14.1%)	29 (37.2%)	38 (48.7%)	4.28	0.7
9.	Exposure to prayer should start from home.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (3.8%)	21 (26.9%)	54 (69.2%)	4.61	0.5
10.	Educating persons with disabilities (MBK) about prayer is solely the responsibility of teachers in schools.	11 (14.1%)	36 (46.2%)	8 (10.3%)	15 (19.2%)	8 (10.3%)	2.76	1.2
11.	Persons with disabilities (PWD) should be exposed to group prayers at home.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (2.6%)	34 (43.6%)	42 (53.8%)	4.50	0.5
12.	Persons with disabilities (PWD) should also receive exposure to group prayers at mosques or suraus.	3 (3.8%)	0 (0%)	10 (12.8%)	32 (41.0%)	32 (41.0%)	4.17	0.8
Overall Mean Score							4.47	0.38

Discussion

The discussion section of this study aims to identify the level of parents' knowledge about prayer education among children with special needs. Based on the findings of the questionnaire, the level of parents' knowledge about prayer education is very high. This

finding is also consistent with the study by Hidris et al (2020) regarding parental involvement in prayer education at home, where 85% of the study's respondents showed full cooperation in building students' spirituality. Their findings indicate a significant relationship between parental involvement in teaching about prayer and the level of mastery of prayer practices. The findings also show that 90% of parents establish communication with their children at home regarding prayer implementation and religious matters.

Furthermore, this is evidenced by the item "Educating children with special needs about prayer is solely the responsibility of teachers at school," which indicates a moderate level where parents are aware that their responsibility to provide prayer education at home is more important than delegating this task entirely to teachers at school. These study findings are also consistent with the study by Kamal and Hafizhah (2021) on elementary school students' understanding of prayer. Their study findings show that students perform prayers at home because of strong encouragement from their parents. This finding also aligns with the findings of the study by Zainoriza et al (2019), which examined public perception of children with Autism. Their study results show that parents take full responsibility for providing spiritual education to their children with Autism. They are also aware of the importance of continuing learning activities at home, similar to what they have learned in school.

These study results are also supported by the findings of Faqih et al (2020) regarding the level of religious compliance among parents of teenagers. The study shows a high level of compliance among parents. Based on Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1961), parents who demonstrate good role modeling at home by performing prayers perfectly and engaging in other religious practices will educate their children to do the same. Overall, parents play an important role in providing stimulus and encouragement to children with special needs to perform prayer by providing the necessary provisions and environment at home.

The finding of a very high level of parents' knowledge about prayer education is contributed by several factors. Parental influence at home is a major factor in shaping and changing children's behavior. Although children with special needs spend a long time with teachers and peers at school, parenting practices such as communication and interaction with children contribute to the implementation of prayer education at home (Hidris et al., 2020). Additionally, another contributing factor to the very high level of parents' knowledge is personal traits. Parents who make efforts by attending courses, seminars, and scholarly gatherings will be more skilled in educating their children, especially those with special needs, in religious knowledge (Syah et al., 2017). Similarly, according to Munirah (2021), parents who implement systematic training at home also contribute to their high level of knowledge. Although educating children with special needs about prayer is a challenging task and takes a long time, continuous training will enable them to master a skill better, especially in performing prayers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the level of knowledge among parents regarding prayer education for children with special needs, especially those with learning difficulties, is very high. Parents who have children with special needs and who are capable of learning should set a good example in practicing prayer at home. There are various sources that can serve as references and motivation for parents in educating their children with special needs about the significance of prayer. Family members and the community, especially mosque and surau institutions, should also provide support and opportunities to enhance understanding and practice of

prayer and religious aspects. Among the further studies that can be suggested is to identify the relationship between prayer education and morals of students with special needs.

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