Problems in Implementing Asr Congregational Prayer to Enhance the Worship Quality of Students

Jesi Tria Paliban¹, Rita Yulia Anggraini²

¹, ² Program Studi Pendidikan Agama Islam, Fakultas Ilmu Tarbiyah dan Keguruan, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah Kota Pagar Alam, Jl. Lesung Batu, Ulu Rurah, Kec.Pager Alam Sel., Kota Pagar Alam, Sumatera Selatan 31521 jessytria12@gmail.com

Abstract

Worship has the primary purpose of devotion to Allah and simplicity in intention towards Him, whether in times of joy or hardship, with the hope of attaining happiness in the Hereafter. One example is prayer. Additionally, worship aims to distance oneself from wrongdoing and evil deeds and can achieve other objectives through the performance of prayer. The aim of this research is to identify issues in the implementation of congregational Asr prayer in an effort to enhance the quality of Asr prayer worship and to find solutions to these issues at SMP Muhammadiyah Kota Pagar Alam. This study uses a qualitative method with a purposive sampling technique, and data collection is done through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study indicate that the issues in the implementation of congregational Asr prayer in improving the quality of worship include various excuses, negligence in bringing prayer garments, inadequate facilities, lack of discipline in maintaining prayer, insufficient cooperation with parents, and lack of concentration in performing congregational prayer.

Keywords: Asr Prayer, Problems, Worship

INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental need for humanity, and it serves as the path for individuals to acquire worldly and spiritual knowledge, leading to goodness in both this world and the hereafter. In today's era, education is particularly crucial for students, especially religious education, as we observe numerous criminal cases arising due to a lack of education in schools and at home. Education is not merely a means of imparting knowledge; it is also vital for shaping the character or behaviour of students. Education is deemed successful when teachers effectively convey its objectives, and students benefit from what is imparted. In education, it is also crucial to cultivate a person's religious character. Therefore, Islamic religious education, particularly in schools, has significant and essential strategies to develop such character. Schools need to pay attention to the quality of students' worship, which
influences their religious character, especially in prayer. Worship, etymologically derived from Arabic, means serving, submitting, and obeying everything Allah Subhanallahu Wa Ta’ala commands. Alternatively, according to another viewpoint, worship encompasses all actions done with the intention of goodness and receiving the rewards of our deeds in this world. (Auliani & Arini, 2019).

The primary goal of worship is to surrender oneself to Allah and to always be humble in intention towards Him, regardless of the situation, whether in times of happiness or hardship. With this goal, one will achieve high rewards in the hereafter. Prayer, for example, serves as a manifestation of this. Additionally, worship aims to steer clear of wrongdoing and evil, among other objectives that can be realised through prayer. Based on the above description, it is evident that if we seek goodness in this world and the hereafter, we must prioritise worship, especially prayer, to achieve our desires and avoid wrongdoing. Worship is also a product of the education process, where students are instilled with awareness to obey their Lord, Allah Subhanallahu Wa Ta’ala. Students who have been introduced to worship through education should be obedient in performing worship, especially prayer. Prayer is one of the obligatory acts of worship for every Muslim, serving as a means for a servant to communicate with their Lord. It begins with the Takbiratul Ihram and concludes with the Salam. Prayer consists of obligatory (fard) and voluntary (sunnah) prayers, with the obligatory prayers encompassing five daily prayers: Fajr, Zuhr, Asr, Maghrib, and Isha. Prayer is the foremost act of worship for a Muslim, distinguishing them from non-Muslims. It is the first act of worship to be held accountable for on the Day of Judgment and serves as a deterrent against various immoral behaviours and evils. Schools, as educational institutions, play a significant role in this regard.

To realise quality human resources (HR), schools play a crucial role as they serve as the second home for students. It is where they receive education and instruction, shaping their character. Schools have a significant role in instilling habits like performing obligatory prayers, both individually and congregationally.

Therefore, the implementation of prayer is vital for students. When students become accustomed to performing prayers, especially congregational prayers, it is hoped that they will also develop the habit of maintaining the five daily prayers, even while at school, thereby enhancing the quality of their worship. However, there are difficulties in implementing congregational Asr prayers for all students in school. This is due to several problems or challenges faced by the school, such as inadequate prayer facilities that cannot accommodate all students. As a result, prayer schedules are created per class in the prayer room, which also leads to issues like a lack of awareness among students about the importance of prayer, even without a set schedule.

**METHOD**

In this study, the type of research used is quantitative research. The sampling method employed in this research is the purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique based on specific considerations. The reason for using the purposive sampling technique is that not all
samples meet the criteria relevant to the phenomenon under investigation. Data collection methods include three techniques: interviews, observations, and documentation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The Challenges of Implementing Asr Congregational Prayer to Improve the Quality of Worship Among Students at Muhammadiyah Junior High School in Pagar Alam

Based on the results of observations, structured interviews, and documentation with several parties involved in the implementation of congregational Asr prayer at Muhammadiyah Junior High School in Pagar Alam City, several explanations can be obtained:

During the interview with Mr. Bursah, the principal of Muhammadiyah Junior High School in Pagar Alam City, regarding the background of the congregational prayer in the school, he stated, "The implementation of congregational prayer is to encourage students to maintain the five daily prayers even while at school, as prayer is an obligation for us Muslims which should not be neglected or abandoned."

Furthermore, Mr. Rahman Khalil, the vice principal, added to the explanation of the background of implementing the congregational Asr prayer, stating, "The background of implementing congregational prayer at the school is that after the COVID-19 pandemic and students started returning to school, they seemed to forget their obligation, which is the obligatory prayer. So, that's what underlies the implementation of congregational prayer.

Based on the results of the two interviews above, the author can conclude that the background of implementing congregational prayer is to ensure that students always fulfil their obligation, which is obligatory prayer.

The implementation of congregational prayer is conducted on the third floor in turns according to the schedule from Monday to Thursday, as explained by Mr. Romi, the congregational prayer supervisor, and Mr. Rahman Khalil, the vice principal. They stated, "Due to the large number of students and limited space, congregational prayer is conducted in shifts for two classes per day from Monday to Thursday."

Moreover, the implementation of congregational prayer at Muhammadiyah Junior High School is carried out on the third floor and conducted in shifts according to the predetermined schedule set by the school.

However, there are challenges in implementing congregational Asr prayer to enhance the quality of students' worship, as revealed in interviews with Mr. Bursah, the principal, and Mr. Rahman Khalil, the vice principal. They mentioned, "During congregational prayer time at school, it coincides with the break time when students tend to wander around, such as going to the canteen, and forget their prayer schedules."

Based on these interviews, it can be concluded that the problem in implementing congregational prayer is the lack of awareness among students about their obligation to perform congregational
prayers. When the congregational prayer time arrives, students roam around instead of going straight to the mosque.

Furthermore, according to Mr. Rahman Khalil, the lack of cooperation with the parents of the students is another problem in implementing congregational prayer. He stated, "The problem in implementing congregational Asr prayer is the lack of cooperation with the parents of the students. When the school implements congregational prayer, but the students are not used to praying at home due to lack of parental supervision, it will be difficult for the students to realise their obligation to perform prayers."

Based on these interviews, it can be concluded that cooperation between parents and the school is crucial in implementing congregational prayer. When parents encourage their children to pray at home, they will also be accustomed to praying even when they are not at home, such as at school.

Furthermore, Mr. Romi, as the supervisor of congregational prayer, added the following points: "In implementing congregational prayer at school, not all students can participate due to the small prayer room. During prayer times, there are female students who claim to have excuses for not praying, even though they do not have valid reasons, and some female students forget to bring their prayer garments. Additionally, there are occasional issues with water supply, especially during hot weather since we pray on the third floor."

Moreover, Mrs Era, an Islamic education teacher, mentioned: "The problems in implementing congregational prayer include some female students pretending to have their menstrual period when they don't, requiring thorough supervision from me as an Islamic education teacher and their class teacher. As for male students, after performing ablution, some go to the prayer room but then suddenly leave and return to the classroom. However, upon attendance check, they are not found in the prayer room."

Based on these interviews, it can be concluded that one of the challenges in implementing congregational prayer is the lack of facilities and infrastructure, such as limited prayer space, insufficient water supply during hot weather, and students’ lack of awareness to bring prayer garments for female students.

Additionally, the researcher interviewed students to obtain their perspectives. Hanifah from class VII.5 stated, "We cannot perform congregational prayer together because there is not enough space." Naura Ramadania from class VII.2 mentioned, "I sometimes forget to bring my prayer garment when I want to perform congregational prayer."

Furthermore, according to Mr. Rahman Khalil and Mr. Romi, some students are still not focused during congregational prayers. They stated, "Some students are already focused during congregational prayers, while others are not. During congregational Asr prayer, some students still play around, such as pushing each other and laughing."

Based on these interviews, it can be concluded that the quality of students' worship is relatively good, although some students are still not fully focused during congregational prayers due to
problems in implementing asr congregational prayer to enhance the worship quality of students, jesia tria paliban, rita yulia anggraini

problems

Moreover, Mrs. Era mentioned that some students are not punctual during congregational prayer times. She stated, "Some students are still not punctual during congregational prayer times. They play around during ablution and push each other during congregational prayers, indicating a lack of seriousness in performing congregational prayers."

In conclusion, the challenges in the quality of congregational prayer among students include punctuality issues and lack of focus due to students' distractions, emphasizing the need for students' awareness and commitment to performing congregational prayers.

Efforts to Address the Issues of Implementing Afternoon Congregational Prayer to Improve the Quality of Student Worship at Muhammadiyah Junior High School in Pagar Alam

Based on the interview with the school principal, Mr. Bursah, regarding efforts to address the issues of implementing congregational prayer to improve the quality of student worship at Muhammadiyah Junior High School in Pagar Alam City, it was stated that: "The solution is that the vice principal will provide advice and train students to understand the meaning of prayer, including its recitations and the virtues of congregational prayer."

From the above interview results, the researcher can conclude that the efforts made to address the issues of implementing congregational afternoon prayer in improving the quality of worship involve providing advice to the students.

Furthermore, based on the interview with Mr. Rahman Khalil regarding efforts to address the issues of implementing congregational afternoon prayer, it was stated: "Before the congregational prayer time, we will collaborate with the class teachers or teachers who are currently teaching in class to remind students to pray according to their schedule, so that after the time for Asr prayer arrives, students will immediately go to the prayer area instead of the cafeteria. For students who frequently do not perform congregational prayers, we will call their parents to come to school."

Based on these interview results, the researcher can conclude that efforts to address the issues of implementing congregational afternoon prayer involve cooperation between teachers teaching in class to remind students to pray and go to the prayer area once the Asr prayer time arrives.

Additionally, Mr. Romi, as the supervisor of congregational prayers, added efforts to address the issues of implementing congregational afternoon prayer in improving the quality of worship as follows: "For congregational prayers, since we cannot pray together immediately, a rotational prayer schedule will be created. To address students who lie about having excuses not to perform congregational prayers, we will collaborate with female teachers to check whether the students are genuinely excused or not. If they lie, we will impose punishments such as cleaning the garbage on the field and requiring them to submit memorisation tasks. Regarding students who do not bring prayer garments (mukena), we have provided mukenas, although not in large quantities."

Furthermore, Mrs Era, as the Islamic Education teacher and homeroom teacher, also added efforts to address the issues of implementing congregational afternoon prayer in improving the quality
of worship as follows: "To address students who pretend to be menstruating, as a female teacher, I will inquire and check whether the students are genuinely menstruating or not. If it turns out they are not menstruating and being dishonest, I will instruct them to perform the Asr prayer first and then impose sanctions such as providing prayer tools and cleaning the field."

Based on several interview results above, the researcher can conclude that the efforts to address the issues of implementing congregational afternoon prayer involve rotational prayers, and those who lie will be punished.

Based on interviews with students such as Nur Fatimah from class VII.2 and Muhammad Gianizhar from class VII.5, efforts to address the issues of implementing congregational prayer are described as follows: "If we do not perform congregational prayer, we will clean the field." Additionally, "If we do not perform congregational prayer, we will be advised by the teacher and given sanctions."

Based on several interviews with students above, it can be concluded that teachers' efforts to address students who do not pray involve advising them on the importance of prayer and imposing sanctions such as cleaning the field.

Furthermore, based on the interview with Mr. Rahman Khalil, the vice principal, regarding efforts to improve the quality of congregational prayer among students at Muhammadiyah Junior High School in Pagar Alam City, it was stated that: "Regarding students who are not focused or play around during congregational prayer, the teacher leading the prayer at that time will provide advice or lectures to the students not to play around during prayer and inform them of the rewards we will receive when praying congregationally, such as receiving rewards 27 times greater."

Furthermore, based on the interview with Mr Romi, the supervisor of congregational prayers, regarding efforts to improve the quality of students' worship, it was stated that: "To enhance the quality of congregational prayers among students, we provide an understanding of the importance of obligatory prayers by giving lectures to students after performing congregational prayers."

Based on several interview results above, it can be concluded that efforts to improve the quality of students' worship involve providing advice and imparting knowledge about prayer to students, thereby enhancing the students' prayer worship.

Interviews with student Nur Fatimah Ulfa from class VII.2 regarding the efforts of teachers to address the issues of implementing congregational afternoon prayer in improving the quality of worship revealed: "When some of us joke around and play during congregational prayer, we will be advised that during prayer, we should not joke around because indirectly, we are facing Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala."

Similarly, interviews with student Iqbal Anugerah Ramadhan from class VII.2 revealed efforts by teachers to address the issues of implementing congregational afternoon prayer in improving the quality of worship: "If someone jokes around during prayer, they will be asked to pray again with concentration."
Based on the results of these two interviews with students, it can be concluded that teachers' efforts to address the issues of implementing congregational prayer in improving the quality of students' worship involve advising and instructing students who are not focused or joking around during congregational prayer to pray again with concentration.

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the issues regarding the implementation of congregational afternoon prayer in improving the quality of worship include students making excuses for not attending, not bringing prayer garments, inadequate facilities, lack of discipline among students in maintaining prayer, insufficient cooperation with parents, and lack of concentration among students during congregational prayer.

Efforts to address these issues in improving the quality of worship among students at SMP Muhammadiyah Kota Pagar Alam include conducting congregational prayers on a rotational basis daily, performing ablution in the teacher's room if there is a shortage of water, collaboration among teachers, imposing sanctions on students such as purchasing prayer tools, cleaning up trash on the field, calling parents to school, and providing advice and knowledge to students on the importance of maintaining obligatory prayers.

**REFERENCES**


