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## The Role of the Surau Education System for Elementary School Children

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### Abstrak

Surau merupakan lembaga pendidikan masa awal penyebaran Islam di Indonesia, artinya selain memiliki nilai sejarah, surau juga terus menampilkan eksistensi kelembagaan dalam mencerdaskan generasi bangsa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan peran sistem pendidikan surau bagi anak sekolah dasar. Adapun jenis penelitian ini termasuk kualitatif, dengan metode studi historis. Pengumpulan data penelitian melalui upaya mempelajari pustaka seperti buku, jurnal, dan regulasi tentang lembaga pendidikan surau sepanjang sejarah. Dalam menyajikan hasil penelitian, peneliti melakukan empat tahap utama, yakni mengumpulkan sumber melalui heuristik, melakukan verifikasi dan seleksi data melalui kritik sumber, menafsirkan fakta-fakta sejarah melalui interpretasi, dan menyusun kronologi fakta melalui tahapan historiografi. Hasil penelitian ini menemukan peran pendidikan surau sebagai berikut: (1) menanamkan pendidikan karakter kepada anak, (2) menanamkan ajaran Islam sejak dini, (3) meningkatkan kualitas moral dan akhlak, (4) memberikan pemahaman tentang ajaran Islam, dan (5) Mengembangkan kemampuan beribadah, belajar, serta berkumpul dan berorganisasi. Dengan demikian, disimpulkan bahwa sistem pendidikan surau penting untuk diadopsi pada sistem pembelajaran era kontempore, karena berdampak bagi pembentukan kepribadian religius sejak dini kepada anak.

**Kata Kunci:** Anak Usia Dasar, Lembaga Surau, Sistem Pendidikan.

### Abstract

*Due to its role as an educational facility throughout the early stages of Islam's development in Indonesia, Surau demonstrates institutional existence in educating the country's youth in addition to historical relevance. This study aims to describe the advantages of the surau educational system for elementary school children. Techniques from qualitative and historical research are used in this type of study. Accumulating knowledge was through time by studying literature, such as books, magazines, and rules controlling surau educational institutions. Heuristics were used to acquire sources, source critique was used to validate and select material, interpretation was used to interpret historical facts, and historiography stages were used to put the information together into a chronology. The study's conclusions indicate that the following functions of surau education are important: (1) fostering moral and ethical qualities in children; (2) fostering an understanding of Islamic teachings; (3) enhancing moral and ethical qualities; (4) fostering an understanding of Islamic teachings; and (5) fostering the capacity to worship, study, and gather and organize. In light of the fact that the surau education approach influences how kids form their religious identities at an early age, it was decided that it should be incorporated into the contemporary educational system.*

**Keywords:** Elementary Age Children, Surau Institution, Education System.

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## INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, the Minang region of West Sumatra is renowned for producing a large number of academics and scientists. Outsiders are drawn to Ranang Minang for reasons other than just the cuisine, local tourism, and the friendliness of the Minang people. Moreover, the adat is based on syara, and syara is founded on the book of Allah (al-Qur'an) philosophy and mangato adat ma makai (the law determines, the custom applies). This demonstrates how culture and religion have a significant impact on the values of the Minang people in the West Sumatra region (Yusutria & Febriana, 2018).

A balanced order of life in the ukhrawi world is based on the Minang people's ordered pattern of existence or life system, which is influenced and defined by religion and culture. Religious and cultural values continue to underpin the Minang community's determination to uphold, protect, and advance social culture. By evaluating how successfully one's religion and customs are practiced in this way, the identity and legitimacy of the Minang community are determined. This causes the inhabitants of West Sumatra (the Minang region) to catch the attention of outsiders because the region has a history and development of Islam that has never stopped producing esteemed scientists and scholars on a national and worldwide level (Akhiruddin, 2015).

The existence of the surau as an educational institution at the beginning of Islam's entry into the archipelago cannot be distinguished from the history of the development of Islam in the Minang realm (especially the Minang region). In order for a surau to reach all the communities in the West Sumatra region, it does not actually need to be pricey or unique facilities. Internal encouragement for the glory of Islam in Minang up to this point is part of the internal dissemination of Islamic teachings through the surau institution. Nonetheless, the surau, which serves as a focal point for gathering, counseling, spending the night (staying), as well as a venue for group learning, is actually the oldest educational institution in Minangkabau that has existed since the Hindu-Buddhist era in Indonesia. Hence, the development of Islam in Indonesia, particularly in the Minang realm, and the existence of a historical surau are both inextricably linked (Manaf, 2012; Arsil, *et.al.*, 2023).

The surau continued to exist after Islam arrived in Minangkabau, but it was modified to comply with Islamic law rather than being altered in terms of shape or design. This indicates that Islam is here to respect traditional culture and introduce innovation that has positive effects based on the Qur'an and hadith. The history of Indonesian Islamic education growth includes the development of Surau education. The wali songo introduced Islam to Indonesia at the beginning of the 15th century and constructed mosques and surau as centers of learning and devotion for the populace. Surau at this time evolved into one of the most significant educational institutions for the Muslim community, particularly in terms of comprehending Islamic doctrine and having the capacity to engage in worship (Yusutria, 2021).

In contrast to modern education, which has a convoluted formal bureaucracy, education in Surau operates under a distinct method. Education in a surau places more emphasis on interpersonal relationships among surau residents than on complicated administrative procedures and formalities. As a result, there is more latitude for discipline in the surau, and corporal punishment is rarely used. If a violation occurs, counsel is frequently given rather than punishment. This benefits learners by hastening their maturation, independence, and responsibility. The primary objective of education in the surau is to develop the learner's character and personality, not merely their intellectual capacity. This is possible due to the surau community's high level of contact, which is actually a learning community (Khairuddin, 2019).

Studying at Surau as a university is highly fascinating. Religious and moral instruction are prioritized in Surau schooling. As one's character and personality are developing during this time, moral teaching through surau from an early age is crucial. The surau offers a positive environment for developing morality and character by offering guidance, setting positive examples, and fostering interpersonal connections with teachers and other surau members. Surau is a tool for presenting Islamic teachings to children at a young age so that they can grasp

religious principles deeply and deeply. Surau's moral education also fosters discipline and responsibility while enhancing leadership qualities and self-assurance. This is helpful for developing generations of morally upright people who will contribute to and benefit from their environment (Furqan, 2019).

Notwithstanding the challenges, surau schooling persisted during the colonial era. Surau education developed quickly following the declaration of independence and was eventually a significant component of the overall national educational system. Surau education continues to be crucial in Indonesia's development of a new generation of quality Muslims. Recitations, lectures, and other worship-related educational activities are still regularly conducted in the surau to aid in understanding and putting Islamic principles into practice (Satria, 2019).

In reality, pertinent studies from a range of scientific fields have been conducted on the function of surau educational facilities for young children. Highlighting features of the religious and character education in Surau is one of them (Zein, 2011), surau as a traditional educational institution (Natsir, 2013), the existence of surau and schools in Minangkabau (Mursal, 2018), the history of surau as an Islamic educational institution in Minangkabau (Mukhlis, 2017), the transformation of Islamic education in Minangkabau (Fadhil, 2007), the surau and its role in the life of the Minangkabau people (Yunas, 2005), the dynamics of surau education in Minangkabau (Afdayeni, 2018), the surau and its contribution to the educational thinking of Mahmud Yunus (Manti, *et.al.*, 2016), implementation of the surau system in contemporary modern Islamic educational institutions (Alfurqan, *et.al.*, 2019), and modernization of contemporary Indonesian Islamic education (Rahman, 2015).

As can be seen from the summary of the literature study above, surau educational institutions have up to this point been discussed in terms of historical studies, presence, and their contribution to Islamic education in Indonesia. There is a gap analysis on the subject that will be covered, which is the function of surau educational institutions for students in primary school, a subject that hasn't been specifically researched before. In light of this, the goal of this study was to ascertain how the surau education system—particularly Islamic religious education—influences children's character, mental development, and spiritual growth.

## **METHOD**

This kind of research uses qualitative and historical research techniques. The last ten years' worth of indexed publications from Garuda and Sinta were used to cite research data from literature study efforts on Surau educational institutions throughout history, including books, journals, and regulations. The purpose is to evaluate critically the function of surau educational institutions for kids in elementary school. Four key phases are used to portray the study's findings: gathering sources using heuristics, vetting and choosing data through source critique, interpreting historical facts through interpretation, and building a chronology of facts using historiographic stages (Assingkily, 2021).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Function of the Surau as an Educational Institution**

Because Islamic education is practiced there, Surau can be considered a formal and social educational institution. Yet, after Islam arrived, the surau underwent a process of Islamization without changing its name. The word "surau" is derived from the Hindu-Buddhist religion or from older religions like polytheism, animism, or dynamism. Although they are not exactly the same, the terms "violation" or "mushalla" are also frequently used to refer to a mosque. Before the langgar or mushalla, the surau made an appearance. In Java, Muslims frequently say prayers and the Qur'an while uttering the word langgar (Darmansyah, 2014).

An imam (teacher), who is designated as an educator at the surau, leads the pilgrims as they recite the Qur'an. The surau in Minangkabau, West Sumatra, has a history of serving as a place of worship, a channel for news, and a community gathering spot in addition to serving as one of the first Islamic educational institutions

(Hakim, 2017). Ulakan Pariaman's surau was first introduced by Syeikh Burhanuddin. The surau served as a place of worship and a study space to impart Islamic teachings, particularly tarekat, at that time (suluk). As a result, Sheikh Burhanuddin's pupils had a significant impact on how the surau evolved into a higher education facility for succeeding generations (Rasid, *et.al.*, 2019).

This surau can be regarded as an educational institution, illustrating how the Muslim brotherhood (tarekat) was created in the early days of Islam in response to the community's need to learn Islamic laws from Islamic scholars and to become closer to God. According to Sabarudin (2015), people who follow a tarekat, which are called Sufis, learn the path set by a teacher named a sheikh and often study for years. The tarekat and its schools can easily be accepted as part of the surau system that already exists in Minangkabau without conflict and are well accepted in community life in several rural areas (Moenada, 2011).

Surau serves many purposes as a place of learning, including: (a) serving as a hub for the propagation of Islam; (b) providing a place to study the Koran; (c) fostering moral development; (d) providing social education; (e) fostering skill development; and (e) imparting religious and Islamic teachings (Muslim, 2021). The community and parents play a crucial part in sustaining the surau educational system. They can contribute by giving moral and financial support, helping to create educational programs, and making sure their kids have easy access to educational opportunities and resources. The quality of education that parents and the community provide for their children can be actively monitored and ensured to meet predetermined standards. They can also encourage sound educational principles in the family and local society, aiding in the development of a qualified and educated generation.

Consequently, it may be said that the surau serves as an educational institution by educating children and youth about Islamic beliefs and proper conduct. Children can learn and comprehend Islam, develop morals and good character, and broaden their perspectives and knowledge in the surau. The surau also improves social ties, builds interpersonal relationships, and promotes a sense of camaraderie and respect among community members.

### **Moral and Moral Values Fostered Through the Surau Institution**

The moral standards upheld in the surau are connected to Islamic doctrine and Minangkabau traditions. Honesty, friendliness, tolerance, courtesy, wisdom, and other moral and ethical qualities are some of those that are practiced in surau. These beliefs are put into practice through a variety of surau-sponsored events, including lectures, discussions, and social gatherings. The goal of putting these moral and ethical principles into practice is to help primary school-aged children develop excellent character and integrity in their daily lives. Hence, surau is also regarded as a holy location that imparts manners and devotion to God (Allah SWT). People must therefore maintain their demeanor and speak respectfully in a surau (Isnaini, 2016).

The surau's moral and ethical principles are a crucial component of the institution's instruction and curriculum. Surau places a strong emphasis on fostering moral development in kids and young people from an early age. Some of the principles that are frequently used include: 1) devotion to Allah and piety; 2) adherence to His law and the teachings of His Apostles; 3) pursuit of truth and honesty; 4) concern for the environment and society; and 5) openness and tolerance. As a result, the moral and moral education used in the surau will help mold children and youngsters into people who are virtuous, have noble character, and are able to comprehend and implement religious ideals in daily life (Siregar, 2021).

Surau school students engage in activities that are intended to develop good character and manners. A great way for kids to get ready for challenges in their lives is to play Wirid. The outcomes of the execution of this wirid demonstrate that surau school students get more self-assurance when speaking in front of large crowds, comprehend religious regulations, are able to provide prayers correctly, and comprehend how to plan a funeral (Surikno & Basyir, 2020).

The wirid program was implemented for school-aged children through the surau, and it led to an improvement in the child's personality. They grasp the Islamic sciences taught by ustaz and can distinguish

between what is halal and what is not through wirid. As a result, kids are able to change their attitudes and behaviors, uphold moral principles, interact positively with others, respect people who are older than them, and appreciate people who are smaller than them (Remiswal, *et.al.*, 2021). Children in the Surau community who have good character are considered respectable school-age youngsters and are well-liked by their neighbors. They can serve as good role models and be acknowledged as amar ma'ruf bil hal bearers by having these characters. This is one indication that character development in school-age children has been successful.

### **Teaching Approach and Teacher-Student Interaction in Surau**

The existence of a sheikh is crucial to the surau and has an impact on it (Manaf, 2012). Initially, the sheikh himself taught the students his lectures. Nonetheless, the sheikh employed more senior teachers from his students who were already intelligent to help educate because there were more students studying religion in the surau. These senior professors are charged with monitoring students and instructing them in memorization techniques in addition to giving more thorough explanations of the lessons (Afandi & Salam, 2022).

Knowledgeable students are referred to be Siak individuals. Siak people are not required to pay any fees for the education they receive at the surau, including tuition, boarding, or food expenditures. Siak people rarely donate money to sheikhs, and when they do, the family usually does it voluntarily. According to Azra (2017), the living expenses of Siak people are usually borne by the village community adjacent to the surau, and can be picked up directly or sent by their parents.

By sending supplies like rice, veggies, and other essentials to the Siak people every Sunday, residents of nearby cities like Payakumbuh also help to meet their needs. Every Thursday, Siak immigrants from distant locations disperse around the neighborhood with a buntil (a rice container) and return in the afternoon with a bundle of rice and enough cash to cover a week's worth of living expenses. This is a way that the community and the Siak people are supporting the growth of religious knowledge through suraus (Azra, 2017).

Two approaches are employed in the teaching and learning process to accomplish educational goals: the surau technique and curriculum. The first approach, sorogan, is also known as the solitary method and involves pupils studying alone with their teacher. The second approach, halaqah, is also referred to as the collective method and involves the teacher lecturing to a group of students as they are seated around him or her. However the lecture approach is also employed, particularly when teaching moral themes (Akob, 2021).

Islam's early education system only taught religious subjects, at least until the 1990s, in terms of the curriculum. There are no general subjects taught. Studies of the Koran, fiqh, ushuluddin, sharaf/nahwu, and interpretation are all included in the field of religion. The surau curriculum underwent revisions between 1900 and 1908, particularly in the area of book studies, which saw the addition of 12 different categories of books (Nata, 2001).

Hence, it is inferred that the surau's teaching style and teacher-student interactions are more relaxed and family-friendly. In order to comprehend students' needs and abilities, teachers and ustadz frequently collaborate with parents of the pupils. Teachers and ustaz frequently employ engaging teaching strategies like games, dialogues, and storytelling. It is also much easier for students to absorb the subject and communicate with the teacher if they have any issues because of the intimate interaction between the two parties. In the surau educational system in Minangkabau, the title "teacher" is not accepted. They call their guru by the title "sheikh" instead. In Minangkabau social and religious circles, sheikhs play a significant role and exert a significant amount of influence.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the description of the findings and the discussion above, it can be concluded that the role of surau as an educational institution for elementary school-aged children consists of five aspects: (1) developing character education in children, (2) instilling Islamic teachings from a young age, (3) increasing moral and

ethical qualities, (4) providing an understanding of Islamic teachings, and (5) developing the ability to worship, study, gather, and organize.

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