Problems of Learning the Qur'an in Early Childhood Education during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Purpose – The early learning of the Qur'an, infused with Islamic values, has been widely regarded as an effective tool in preserving the natural inclinations of children and nurturing their humanity. However, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has presented significant obstacles to Qur'an learning in Early Childhood Education (ECE) institutions. As such, this study seeks to offer a comprehensive description of the challenges faced by these institutions in delivering their teachings during this global health crisis.

Design/methods/approach – The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research. The location of this research was carried out at 4 ECE institutions. Namely: RA Al-Muslimun Nurul Islam, TKIT Asy-Syaamil Qur'anic Fullday School, Integrated Star Islamic Early Childhood Education, and RA Ulumul Qur'an Al Madani.

Findings – The current COVID-19 pandemic has created significant challenges for learning the Qur'an in ECE. These issues can be categorized as internal and external factors. Internal factors relate to teachers' difficulties when conducting practical learning activities outside the classroom. Meeting constraints, large class sizes, and limited time duration often result in an inability to deliver a complete learning experience. Externally, learning losses in early childhood have become apparent, with children experiencing behavioral changes. Not all parents are equipped to accompany their children in instilling Islamic values based on the Qur'an at home. This issue is compounded by parental objections to tuition fees, which creates financial challenges for institutions. Finally, offline learning has been the subject of criticism from the community, which indirectly affects the learning process.

Research implications/limitations – This study used a qualitative method related to the problems of learning the Qur'an in ECE during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Practical implications – The research presents significant implications for developing Al-Qur'an learning post-pandemic. It also provides valuable insights into formulating policies about Al-Qur'an learning during pandemics. Additionally, the study sheds light on the effectiveness of character building during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Originality/value – Potential avenues for further investigation could include examining the effects of COVID-19 on the acquisition of Qur'anic knowledge during early childhood and its potential impacts on personality development. Such research could contribute to a deeper understanding of how the pandemic has influenced educational and psychological outcomes in this context.

Keywords Al-Qur'an learning, COVID-19 pandemic, Early childhood education

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Early childhood is a crucial period in human development that requires significant environmental attention. It encompasses a range of unique potentials that serve as fundamental building blocks for future growth and development (Suryana, 2021). As noted by Wardani and Ayriza (2020), the success of children in their developmental and learning pursuits in this phase is not only dependent on the efforts of teachers but also on the support provided by parents.

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted various sectors, including education. Policies have been implemented, such as the Minister of Education and Culture Circular Letter 4 of 2020, which guides education during an emergency, and Circular Number 15 of 2020, which offers guidelines for remote learning during the pandemic To address this issue. These policies aim to contain the spread of the virus, which continues to pose a significant threat.

The pandemic's impact on education has been observed for the past three years in Indonesia, as documented by various studies (Fujiyanti et al., 2023; Meiliasari et al., 2022). The traditional learning process in Indonesia emphasizes direct interactions between teachers and students. However, this approach may hinder the quality of education, particularly for Early Childhood Education (ECE) (Guan et al., 2022; Wulandari et al., 2020). Research has shown that this phenomenon has resulted in several challenges and issues in the teaching and learning process (Ferguson, 2008). Therefore, it is essential to consider the long-term implications of the pandemic on the education sector and devise strategies to mitigate its adverse effects.

Srihartini and Pratami (2021) have identified the challenges associated with implementing an online learning system in early childhood education. One of the key findings was the decrease in children's learning motivation, which negatively impacted the effectiveness and optimality of the learning process. Furthermore, online learning is unsuitable for young children (Cortina-Pérez & Andúgar, 2021; Daub et al., 2022). The unpreparedness of various stakeholders in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic has also posed challenges in implementing learning (Brisca et al., 2023; Welis et al., 2023). The literature suggests that various obstacles are often encountered, such as minimal digital literacy among teachers, lack of support for facilities and infrastructure, unaffordable internet access, and insufficient willingness to pay (Jawawi et al., 2022; Yang, 2022).

Highlighting several main problems in the distance learning process in early childhood education, including issues related to children and parents, educators, technology, and health (Srihartini & Pratami, 2021; Fitri & Latif, 2021; Nadlifah et al., 2022). Parents' inadequate understanding of their child's developmental condition is a common problem, which results in them lacking the necessary skills to assist with their child's education at home (Primasari, 2020). Parents require guidance from teachers on creating an appropriate environment, a good understanding of the child's learning needs, and the ability to consider the child's condition as the primary reference in providing an appropriate environment for their developmental stage. The impact of these challenges is not limited to the learning process alone but also affects stress levels, quality of life, and even health in various circles (Souto-Manning & Melvin, 2022).

ECE institutions in Central Kalimantan and South Kalimantan face challenges and obstacles in adapting to the new learning conditions brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. Previous studies have identified various problems with RA teachers in implementing distance learning, such as the digital divide, the challenges of emergency curricula, the need for teacher development in distance education, ineffective communication between teachers and parents, and low parental awareness of the importance of early childhood education (Pratiwi & Aghnaita, 2021). In addition, the learning crisis during the pandemic has decreased children's concentration and understanding, while parents struggle with controlling their children's behavior during online learning (Puspita et al., 2022).

This research investigates the problems of learning the Qur'an in early childhood education during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has not been previously studied. Although previous research has focused on different aspects of ECE learning during the pandemic, this study will examine how institutions focused on Islamic values have adapted to the new learning conditions. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted ECE institutions and their teaching, learning, and implementation of Islamic values. Some ECE institutions, such as RA Al-Muslimun Nurul Islam

Palangka Raya, TKIT Asy Syaamil Qur'anic Full Day School, Bintang Banjarmasin Integrated Islamic Early Childhood Education, and RA Ulumul Qur'an Al Madani Banjarbaru, have a characteristic focus on learning the Qur'an as a way of internalizing Islamic values in children's lives. The research will examine how these institutions have adapted to the new learning conditions brought by the pandemic and address the various challenges. This research is essential because it will contribute to understanding the pandemic's impact on ECE learning and provide insights into how institutions can adapt and overcome their challenges. Hopefully, this research can serve as a guide for protecting children's natural development and restoring learning based on the Qur'an as a Muslim guideline.

2. Methods

This research utilized the method of descriptive qualitative research (Sugiyono, 2013). The advantage of this method lies in its ability to collect and analyze data naturally, resulting in qualitative analysis. The rationale for selecting this method was to delve deeper into the issues surrounding Al-Qur'an-based learning in ECE during the COVID-19 pandemic, building on the background of the problem and relevant previous research results. Qualitative methods were deemed more appropriate because the issues raised were complex and dynamic.

The research was conducted at four ECE institutions in Central and South Kalimantan, namely RA Al-Muslimun Nurul Islam, TKIT Asy-Syaamil Qur'anic Fullday School, Bintang Integrated Islamic Early Childhood Education Center, and RA Ulumul Qur'an Al Madani and the research period lasted for seven months, from March to September 2022. These institutions were selected based on several criteria expected to fulfill the research objectives. These criteria included the location of ECE institutions in Central and South Kalimantan, the implementation of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the delivery of Al-Qur'an-based learning in well-planned ways.

In this study, the primary data source uses purposive and snowball sampling (Sugiyono, 2013). it is because when doing data mining in the field, data sources can continue to develop according to the problems being studied. The primary data sources in question are: (1)Class teacher at RA Al-Muslimun Nurul Islam, TKIT Asy-Syaamil Qur'anic Fullday School, ECE Islam Integrated Star and RA Ulumul Qur'an Al Madani and (2)Principal/school coordinator at RA Al-Muslimun Nurul Islam, TKIT Asy-Syaamil Qur'anic Fullday School, ECE Islam Integrated Bintang and RA Ulumul Qur'an Al Madani. Secondary data sources are supporting data for primary data that have been determined in the study. The secondary data sources include photos and videos of Al-Qur'an learning activities in ECE and learning tools, such as school documents, RPPM, RPPH, and learning assessments.

The study utilizes several data collection methods: observation, interviews, and documentation. In this study, the observation used was frank or disguised observation (Sugiyono, 2013). Researchers make descriptive observations by collecting various general data through observations at school. Furthermore, observations began to focus on the issues raised, namely the learning problems in ECE institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research project includes analyzing Al-Qur'an learning data and investigating the learning problems during a pandemic. Finally, selected observations are adjusted to various indicators of the problem. Second, interview. Researchers use structured interviews to extract predetermined information using written questions in their research instruments. Researchers also use assistive devices such as mobile phones to record conversations and document the interviews with several informants—finally, documentation. The documents needed in this study consist of photos and videos of children's learning activities, children's assignments, and learning tools, such as RPPM, RPPH, and learning assessment. The data analysis technique used by researchers refers to Miles and Huberman, which includes data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion and verification (Miles et al., 2014).

3. Result

3. 1. Problems of Learning the Qur'an at RA Al-Muslimun Nurul Islam Palangka Raya during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Based on the emergency curriculum document, RA Al-Muslimun Nurul Islam Palangka Raya used an emergent curriculum in carrying out the teaching and learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the learning process, especially learning that contains content and refers to the Qur'an, is carried out through various modifications and adaptations. Mrs. SU, the head of RA Al-Muslimun Nurul Islam Palangka Raya, stated that before the pandemic, the school also had an educational radio program. However, during a pandemic, it was carried out in their respective classes.

> "Before educational radio, we usually read surahs and Asmaul Husna. However, not until it runs out, for example, one week 1-6. We do that when it is still normal. However, because now is a pandemic, we have eliminated educational radio. Only radio education lessons are carried out per class, which picket officers control through speakers in each class. So the lessons are guided by their respective teachers."

During the COVID-19 pandemic, RA Al-Muslimun Nurul Islam Palangka Raya also continued to include the characteristics of learning the Qur'an in its emergency curriculum content as contained in the school's Emergency Curriculum documentation. It contains several elaborations on the implementation of learning, such as the annual program, a semester program, the development of Islamic Religious Education materials, and Daily Learning Implementation Plans. In semester 1, learning themes include: I am a Servant of Allah, Sakinah Family, My Environment, and Animals Created by Allah. Semester 2's learning themes include Plants Created by Allah, Vehicles, The Universe, My Country, and Ramadhan Amaliah Fund. While setting the meeting schedule, in 1 week, it is divided into two meetings with a duration of 60 minutes. In addition, the implementation of the center model is also more adapted to the situation during a pandemic.

> Based on the interview results, Ms. KH also explained, that: "Well, what is right for COVID is activity fruit sidin is rich in art, imtaq, the blocks are all here, we are the ones who learn everything firsthand. For example, today was an art center. That is why today was coloring." Mrs. SU also stated this as Head of RA Al-Muslimun Nurul Islam Palangka Raya on 12 May 2022.

> "Well, usually for normal ones, we do it every day. The material is still centered, like a learning group and one class. God willing, after Eid, even though there are only two months left before the release of our students, we want to carry out a real center. So that children can also feel oh, this is a center like that."

During COVID, the process of memorization started, and parents were asked to continue accompanying their children. Communication is usually done through the WhatsApp group. According to Ms. KH, the learning process focuses on strengthening character, worship, social piety, and child development, and parents play a supportive role in this process.

Another form of learning carried out at RA Al-Muslimun Nurul Islam Palangka Raya during the COVID-19 pandemic was online via social media, offline, and through home visits. However, home visits are carried out during the peak week of the theme alternately. As for learning in general, most of it is still carried out online. Mrs. KH also expressed this condition.

> "Online learning was carried out for one semester (6 months). After that, use video. We also had home visits, ma'am, only yesterday. We were only at the peak of the theme when we went to the student's house. The others are still online using zoom, video, WhatsApp, etc. The trick we offer children is whether they want to be in groups or individually. The implementation is only one week, ma'am, starting Monday-Saturday visits. For example, on Monday at A's house (group), limited to only five children. There are also parents whose children do not want to be visited, so it depends on the agreement with the parents. However, we still provide online assignments such as memorization, assignments, and more".

One of the problems in learning the Koran at RA Al-Muslimun Nurul Islam Palangka Raya during the COVID-19 pandemic was external factors related to school fees. Some parents object to

the payment of tuition fees because parents think that their children are not participating in learning as usual. The Class Teacher Mrs. KH also conveyed this.

"There is the mother, but more to the parents. Related to SPP and has been given understanding as well. We even lowered the SPP when we held a meeting with the foundation, and it was also approved. However, their tuition fees remain the same because their children attend school."

Meanwhile, internally, the school, especially teachers, did not experience difficulties teaching and learning even though learning during the pandemic was conducted online.

3. 2. Problems of Learning the Qur'an at TKIT Asy Syaamil Qur'anic Fullday School Palangka Raya during the COVID-19 Pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Asy Syaamil Qur'anic Full Day School Palangka Raya TKIT conducted offline learning while still paying attention to health protocols. However, it had experienced several adjustments to the learning process, especially activities that contained the Al-Qur'an. In learning activities, teachers also always coordinate with parents. Through asking for permission and support from parents for various activities that the teacher has planned for children at home. It is based on the results of an interview with Ustadzah DE as a Class Teacher on 17 May 2022:

"Because yesterday I asked several parents, and almost all the answers asked to be offline, like that, ma'am. Because also, the capacity of parents to assist children is lacking. Then some parents want to go online but do not guarantee that result."

In addition, limited face-to-face learning has also been carried out in groups with two days of each study time. Then, the learning process is limited to until 10 am. These conditions, as expressed by Ustadzah DE:

"We, during COVID-19, made several changes to see the condition, ma'am. First, we made two groups until 2 pm because there were few children. For example, alternately, two days of group A and two days of group B. On Friday, we join, ma'am, but the time is shorter. Then that time, COVID escalated again. We made another change with the children going down All, but we limited it to 10 o'clock. However, we still carry out health protocols and also with parental permission. If the parents do not allow it, we usually provide lessons for one week at a time, ma'am. Then the media will be taken by the parents at school."

During the COVID-19 pandemic, TKIT Asy Syaamil Qur'anic Fullday School Palangka Raya also carried out several school programs like practical life, sensorial, literacy, creativity, and imagination. The teacher carries out this activity through the cooperation of parents. Parents are usually asked to send videos of their children preparing materials and making assignments from school. As for memorizing through the Kauny method during the pandemic, it has not been implemented thoroughly. However, it was replaced by giving assignments and studying from home classically. Ustadzah DE also conveyed this as the Class Teacher:

"If we have practical life, sensorial, literacy, creativity, and imagination every day. So, for example, I give the task of making posters. Then there will be a collaboration with parents. Then I also asked parents to make videos for children explaining what was made and the ingredients, like that, ma'am. For memorization, because yesterday was still a pandemic, we still have not implemented the qauny method and only give assignments from home in a classical way, ma'am."

Apart from making several adjustments in implementing Al-Qur'an learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, TKIT Asy Syaamil Qur'anic Fullday School Palangka Raya also found several external and internal problems. Externally, the school indirectly receives scrutiny from the surrounding community. However, the school has also asked for permission from the authorities. Meanwhile, internally, it is experienced by the teacher when he wants to carry out learning activities outside the classroom. The learning process takes place in a limited manner and is not flexible compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the results of the interview with Ustadzah DE revealed that:

"The problem may be with the surrounding community because other schools do not attend while we study offline. However, we are also allowed and have made a permit. Another

difficulty is if you want to do outside activities. Meanwhile, we are also very concerned about the growth and development of children's activities. The only problem is that we are less free and flexible in carrying out activities."

3.3. Problems of Learning the Qur'an in the Integrated Islamic Early Childhood Education Center of Bintang Banjarmasin during the COVID-19 Pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bintang Banjarmasin Islamic Integrated Early Childhood Education Center carried out online learning, limited face-to-face learning, and home visits. Online learning is done through zoom. Face-to-Face Learning is limited to the distribution of children attending school, which is 50%. Learning through home visits has also been carried out with several teachers coming to the child's house alternately. When executing home visits, the children looked very enthusiastic, and the parents also supported and welcomed the teacher's arrival at home. Some of these things are based on the results of an interview with Ms. DE as the class teacher on 24 May 2022: "The lessons are carried out online, and we provide material, but the children stay at home. for home visits, there are some teachers who come to the house. We had PTM, but the children were divided".

When researchers made observations on 19 April 2022, learning at the Bintang Integrated Islamic Early Childhood Education Center in Banjarmasin was 100% face-to-face. There are five learning classes: Playgroup A, Playgroup B, TK A, TK B, and daycare. The school also discovered several problems during the COVID-19 pandemic, including in the implementation of Al-Qur'an learning materials both internally and externally.

Internally, online learning causes children to focus more on the tools used, namely cell phones, than the learning the teacher delivered. This problem causes learning to be less effective. Different rules at home and the school also result in learning and instilling character that cannot be carried out optimally. It is because not all parents instill good morals in their children at home. Even though face-to-face learning had been carried out, it could not accommodate the inculcation of morals in children due to the limited number of meetings, number of children, and time constraints.

This problem is based on the results of an interview with Ms. DE as a class teacher on 24 May 2022, namely: "For online purposes, it is like zoom. It is less effective. Children are more focused on cell phones than on learning. Parents also complained about it. Mrs. RA also emphasized this condition as the Head of the Bintang Banjarmasin Integrated Islamic Early Childhood Education Center:

"During the last COVID-19, the obstacle was that meetings were only allowed to be held on a limited basis. Meanwhile, for this child's habituation of good morals, you need consistency, ma'am. Good character will be formed faster if done regularly. At home, not all parents are concerned about the formation of morals, ma'am.

3.4. Problems of Learning the Qur'an at RA Ulumul Qur'an Al Madani Banjarbaru during the COVID-19 Pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Al-Qur'an learning at RA Ulumul Qur'an Al Madani Banjarbaru was carried out online, blended learning, i.e., online and offline. Online learning is carried out by asking parents for help guiding and mentoring children at home, including implementing learning materials containing the Qur'an. Parents can also cooperate reasonably with the school. Usually, parents send videos of their children's assignments via Facebook or group WhatsApp.

Furthermore, learning has also been carried out through home visits to children's homes between 1 to 2 visits. As for offline learning or limited Face-to-Face Learning (PTM), it is carried out alternately or in shifts. In one day, there will usually be two groups that alternately enter at 08.00-10.00 and 10.30-11.30. Meanwhile, other groups continue to carry out online learning. Ummi learning will only be carried out after regular learning returns.

Teacher MLY revealed this on 3 June 2022.

"During COVID yesterday, the lessons varied. More to parents who teach and are given rote material. So thank God, because the parents want to work together, there are no obstacles.

There are home visits home once or twice. After that, the rest is online. The following year, take turns entering/shifting. The rest is online".

In other interview data, in line with this condition conveyed by Ustadzah AS as the Class Teacher, namely:

"Yes, during COVID yesterday, we worked with parents. Then send the video via the FB/wa group. We made a home visit first, then entered alternately. One class is divided into several groups consisting of 4-5 children. One day two groups enter alternately—from 08.00-10.00 group 1, followed by group 2 from 10.30-11.30. At the same time, the group has not had a turn to learn online.

However, when the Researcher carried out the observation on 21 April 2022, the study was carried out typically. In RA Ulumul Qur'an, Al Madani Banjarbaru is divided into classes A1, A2, B1, and B2. Each class contains between 27-30 children with 2 class teachers and 1 ABK accompanying teacher. Lessons are held from 8 am to 11 pm. This condition is expressed by Ustadzah LI, Chief coordinator for Special Education Teachers, on 22 April 2022, "It has been a few months now, learning is regular. For RA, it starts at 8 am and goes home at 11 pm.

Based on the results of interviews with several sources, p learning at RA Ulumul Qur'an Al Madani Banjarbaru also experienced various difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also includes learning activities containing the Qur'an. Among them, obstacles were obtained regarding parental assistance that was not optimal when accompanying children at home. In addition, other problems also occur in the learning process that takes place online. For example, when learning through zoom, children sometimes have to take turns with their siblings to learn online, so it is difficult for them to be conditioned. As stated by Ustadzah MLY on 3 June 2022, "The biggest obstacle is the parents who are absent but active, ma'am. But not all, just 10%. The above conditions are also strengthened by the results of an interview with Ustadzah AS, "The obstacle is online. It is hard to condition when zooming because some children have to change cellphones with their older siblings who also study online.

Another problem is the occurrence of learning loss in some children. Children experience changes in their behavior, so the teacher must return to various forms of habituation to children. On the other hand, children with special needs do not receive intense assistance and therapy as usual. Ustadzah LI expressed this problem:

"If the problems of these children are all almost the same, learning loss happens. So even though yesterday the learning was online, educating children's behavior is not optimal. The maximum stay is face-to-face. So after going online, some kids do not have a problem, but there are also some kids whose behavior changes. So we follow it all over again like that. Especially for children with special needs, who are usually accompanied by a companion daily and have automatic therapy, right? Because yesterday was online, so it was like that."

4. Discussion

According to Setiawan, learning is a process of change that includes various aspects of achieving a goal (Setiawan, 2017). At the same time, learning problems, namely various problems, can hinder or complicate the learning process in achieving the planned goals. During the COVID-19 pandemic, learning was carried out using an online system to solve educational problems (Sadikin & Hamidah, 2020). On the other hand, this condition raises new problems due to learning adaptation. Based on this, then p Learning for young children during the COVID-19 pandemic can be through simple lesson plans according to the conditions and abilities of parents when accompanying children at home. Included in assessing children's activities, teachers can also ask for help from parents to send the documentation results to the school (Shofa, 2020; Suhendro, 2020). This condition is also experienced in RA Al-Muslimun Nurul Islam Palangka Raya, TKIT Asy Syaamil Qur'anic Full Day School, Bintang Banjarmasin Integrated Islamic Early Childhood Education, and RA Ulumul Qur'an Al Madani Banjarbaru. The 4 ECE institutions made various adjustments to the tools and the implementation of learning. In addition, each school is inseparable from collaborating with parents in carrying out the teaching and learning process, in line with what was revealed by Murtyaningsih (2021). Steed et al. (2022) In their research, they

also revealed that during the implementation of distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers carried out more planning and communication with parents than giving instructions directly to children.

Related to the learning process in general and learning based on the Qur'an, it is still running as usual with various modification forms. The 4 ECE institutions have also conducted online learning with the help of social media, such as WhatsApp, zoom, and Facebook, and offline learning (offline) while still referring to distance learning and health protocols—another form, namely by doing home visits to the child's house. Even though the Researcher was conducting data mining at the time, the four schools had already conducted full face-to-face meetings. However, some activities have not been implemented, such as in RA Al-Muslimun Nurul Islam Palangka Raya, which has not implemented its central learning.

Like the abovementioned problems, various learning problems during the COVID-19 pandemic were also experienced by several other countries. In Thailand, the pandemic has also had a direct or indirect impact on the learning process in schools. Some direct impacts include: 1) School administration, such as school closures, lost study days, learning schedules carried out in shifts, delays in opening schools, and inadequate school capacity in dealing with distance learning. 2) Student attendance at school, such as a decrease in the number of children attending school, dropping out of school, and the risk of dropping out. 3) Classroom management, such as learning on digital platforms, increased teacher workload, stress, and pressure through new teaching methods. The indirect impacts include 1) Physical health, such as lack of access to food which can lead to malnutrition. > 700,000 poor children experience a food crisis, and > 30,000 poor children experience malnutrition, violence, and exploitation in the household. 2) Mental and emotional health, such as increased psychological problems and abuse in children and adolescents, increased parental stress, and financial constraints. 3) Intellectual health and development, such as learning loss, loss of physical and cognitive development of students, cessation of the learning process, parents can reduce educational investment for their children, uneven accessibility of educational services and learning materials, and > 700,000 poor students cannot afford to buy online learning tools (Pal et al., 2022).

Similar findings also occurred in Bhutan, Brazil, India, Nigeria, Tonga, and Japan. Problems during the COVID-19 pandemic, apart from causing a biological hazard, also impacted the cases of opening schools. An example of educational innovation is the implementation of distance education and online learning through television and social media education programs. In addition, there is a school curriculum that is simplified in terms of time and children's activities. There is a need for psychological assistance for children who experience intimidation and neglect during the pandemic (Ichinose & Oda, 2022).

In Malaysia, the government has also issued policies on distance learning in schools. The study results show that one of the problems that occur is that children are unable to develop social skills because they are unable to interact with peers. In addition, an increase in screen time in children is a problem for parents (Jan 2020). Hanik et al. (2021), in their research at the Kuala Lumpur Indonesian School, showed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, SIKL had two learning designs, namely high risk and low risk. Terms high risk is online learning conducted by students who live far from school. Low-risk learning is conducted in schools for students close to the school. In addition, SIKL also uses a living curriculum to equip children with material responsibility and character. Similar cases were also experienced by ECE teachers in the United States with various challenges in the early childhood learning process. Starting from the low participation of children and families, limited social interaction in virtual learning, and minimal technology support (G.Ford et al., 2021).

Regarding the problems in implementing Al-Qur'an learning during the COVID-19 pandemic at the 4 ECE institutions, the Researcher highlighted several problems originating from internal and external factors. Problems like this have also been discussed previously by Pramana (Srihartini & Lestaro, 2021). There are several main problems in the distance learning process carried out in ECE. These conditions are reviewed both from the point of view of children and parents, educators, technology, and health. The same thing was also explained by Puspita et al.

The existence of learning problems during the COVID-19 pandemic was felt not only by children but also by teachers and parents. The learning process starts with the internet network to evaluate and assess children's growth and development (Puspita et al., 2022).

Based on internal factors, teachers have difficulty when they want to carry out learning activities outside the classroom. The existence of meetings, the number of children, and the limited duration of time are considered not to be able to fulfill the activities or content of learning the Qur'an, which we want to convey intensely and comprehensively. As for external factors, such as learning loss in early childhood. Children become challenged to condition, and children focus more on the media they use than the learning delivered by the teacher. There are differences in rules at home and school, resulting in cultivating children's character not being optimal. Children experience changes in their behavior. This phenomenon shows that the learning crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in learning that was not conducive, so children's concentration and understanding also decreased (Puspita et al., 2022). Even though learning with material content from the Qur'an is very urgent in implementing Islamic education for early childhood, the child will develop a noble character and expertise in worship through the provision of necessary changes. In addition, education that refers to the Qur'an and other Islamic sources is a form of fulfilling children's rights in Islam (Afifah, 2015; Giladi, 2014; Wibowo et al., 2021). Based on this, the existence of various problems in the implementation of Al-Qur'an learning in ECE during the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the formation of children's personalities with core value Islamic.

On the other hand, not all parents are ready to accompany their children, including having concerns suitable for instilling Islamic values that refer to the Qur'an for children at home. In addition, some parents object to the payment of tuition fees because they think their children are not participating in learning as usual. Schools that carry out learning offline indirectly also receive attention from the surrounding community. it is expressed by Srihartini and Pratami (Srihartini & Pratami, 2021). The unpreparedness of various parties in dealing with the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the implementation of learning. In general, parents also do not fully understand their child's development condition, so they do not have qualified skills to assist while studying at home (Pratiwi & Aghnaita, 2021; Primasari, 2020).

Several other studies have also revealed several learning problems during the COVID-19 pandemic faced by educators and students. In addition, learning during a pandemic dominated online was less effective for teachers and children (Asmuni, 2020). For educators, there is unpreparedness and the limited ability of teachers to operate online learning platforms, limited resources for using technology, minimal internet signal and quota in some remote areas, and increasingly expensive internet costs. As for students, such as there are still children who are unable to follow learning platforms, children are less active and interested in online learning, children have limited devices, children have difficulty understanding the material explained by the teacher, learning from home can make children easily bored and the workload given by the teacher (Asmuni, 2020; Gusty et al., 2020; Sudarsana et al., 2020). This problem was also expressed by Sattar et al. (2022) that mental health is also one of the factors experienced by students, teachers, and parents. Several other factors were also revealed by Afifah, including various problems that arose from the school and parents, curriculum changes made it difficult for teachers and children to adapt, and professional teacher competence would affect children's success in learning achievement (Afifah, 2015). Therefore, the problems that occur are not only in the teaching and learning process in ECE institutions but can also lead to a crisis in the child's character and personality from an early age.

5. Conclusion

Learning the Qur'an in ECE during the COVID-19 pandemic faces problems from both internal and external factors. Internally, teachers have difficulties when they want to carry out learning activities outside the classroom. The existence of meetings, the number of children, and the limited duration of time have not been able to fulfill the content of learning the Qur'an, which we want to convey intensely and thoroughly. External, such as the occurrence of learning loss in early

childhood. There are differences in rules at home and school, resulting in the cultivation of children's character not being optimal. Children also experience changes in their behavior. Not all parents are ready to accompany their children, including instilling Islamic values that refer to the Qur'an for children at home. In addition, some parents object to the payment of tuition fees. Offline learning also indirectly gets the spotlight from the surrounding community.

Declarations

Author contribution statement

Aghnaita the presented idea and data taker. Norhikmah developed the theory of learning the Qur'an and early childhood education. All authors discussed the results and contributed to the final manuscript.

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Data availability statement

The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Declaration of interests statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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