

Parents Role in Cultivating Religious Practices among Muslim Students

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Abstract: This study is the investigation on the parental role in cultivating religious practices among Muslim students. This study was carried out in a national type primary school in the District of Dungun in Terengganu. As many as 79 standard four students from that school were involved as respondents in the study. This study also aims to investigate the methods used by parents to cultivate religious practices that children practice at home and the effect the parents teaching approach has on these children. The data collection used a set of questionnaires and interview sessions. The data was then first analysed using the SPSS version 14.0 and later the descriptive statistics. The findings show that parents play the main role in ensuring that their children adhere to the religious teachings, especially practices pertaining to the solat and reciting of the Al-Qur'an. Parents who are strict with their children and inculcate a culture of practicing the solat and reciting of the Al-Qur'an would eventually bring up children who adhere to religious practices.

Key words: Al-Qur'an, religious practices, inculcate, solat, Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

Humans can not escape life void of religion which is an eternal need for humans. The mutual needs of humans and religion are inseparable, just like the body and its soul and if separated life would be intolerable. This is because the feeling of a need for a religion is a natural inclination or habit in every human being (Mohammad, 2012).

However, there are people who do not believe in religion and this group is called mulhid or atheist. This occurs when these people feel overawed with the wisdom of their own intelligence, so much so that they feel God is not needed in their lives. To them, human intelligence is enough to ascertain the difference between good and bad while helping them to continue living on this earth.

From an Islamic perspective, religion is a natural inclination in humans and helps to put human life on the right path. The integrity and utter adherence to religiosity makes every individual's life harmonious. Hence, it is clear here that the role of religion is to assure the happiness of human lives on earth and the after world (Asl *et al.*, 2008).

The human nature or natural inclination pertaining to religion that is found in every human is the natural inclination for being pious towards Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) had instructed the Prophet and his followers to guide people to a path acknowledged by Him but the people had rejected those teachings because they were

influenced and corrupted by the surrounding situation. They were deceived and misled by the promise worldly riches. The surrounding situation with the greatest influence was the parents themselves. The Prophet exhorted which meant:

Each child is born with a natural inclination (the Islamic faith), hence, the parents are responsible, as to what he eventually becomes be it a Jew, a Christian or a Pagan (Hadith narrated by al-Bukhari)

The life of each Muslim is not complete by just believing in the religion but needs to be spruced up by knowledge, piety and practice which are all interrelated. Knowledge and practice without being pious would corrupt the staunch belief. Knowledge that leads to piety, God-consciousness and religious practices is the legacy of the prophets. People who are truly pious to Allah (SWT) are people who increase their knowledge, establish their God-consciousness and increase their practices by leaps and bounds. These are the people who would eventually become successful in this world and in the after world too (Salleh, 1998).

In developing a human being, the most important aspect is education. Parents are the main individuals responsible for educating and shaping their children even from the time the foetus is formed. Nurturing and up bringing needs to be as simulated gradually until it

becomes a practice in life. A practice can not be implemented, as a routine if it is not nurtured from an early age. In Islam, parents are responsible in nurturing and bringing-up their children (Gulen and Erdogan, 2008).

Problem statement: Religious practices are usually looked upon, as factors that determine the negative or positive virtuous of an individual. Those who have done wrong are looked upon, as individuals who have neglected their religious practices. Those who are steadfast (istiqamah) in conducting religious practices would enhance themselves with virtuous characteristics and shield themselves from bad omens. As Allah (SWT) had exhorted:

The solat keeps you away from bad omens and wrongdoings (Al-Quran, 2:80)

However, the current problem is the reluctance to perform religious practices among students. There are students who do not perform the solat at all even though they are 12 years old. In Islam, each child has to be familiarised with the practices of the solat, since they are 7 years old. When they are 10 years, they should be caned if they are reluctant to perform the solat. Thus if every parent practices these teachings of Islam why are there instances where students are reluctant to solat even though they are already 12 years old. Besides, there are even students who do not know how to recite the Al-Quran.

Found that the level of reciting the Al-Quran among students was not satisfactory. From 250 respondents, only 62 students (24.8%) could recite the Al-Quran though not fluently and some could not command the tajwid. Meanwhile, 132 respondents (5.2%) knew absolutely nothing about the Al-Qur'an.

There were also problems regarding the performing of the solat. According to only 53 students (21%) performed the mandatory solat five times a day while 103 students (41%) only performed the solat three times a day which was during Zohor, Asar and Maghrib. They performed the solat because the school authorities made it compulsory to solat in order to fulfil the basics of Fardhu Ain (PAFA), as deemed compulsory by the Department of Islamic and Moral Education in the Ministry of Education, Malaysia. The study also found that 20 students (8%) did not perform the solat at all.

Phenomenon like this makes religious life increasingly unstable. Subsequently, these situations would create social ills among school students such as vandalism, bullying, absenteeism, disrespect to the elders and numerous other juvenile malfeasants. A study carried out

by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia on the misconduct of primary and secondary school students in 1993 found that 41% or 172,615 out of 4,207,381 students were involved in some form of misconduct such as:

- Criminal offences such as theft, gambling, fighting with teachers, gangsterism, drugs, extortion, rape, murder and molestation
- No regards to time management coming late to school, loitering, illegal racing
- Being rude and impolite to teachers and school prefects
- Absenteeism from school and class during co-curriculum activities
- Not dressed in proper attire, long hair, wearing make-up and jewellery
- Dishonest and irresponsible when handling class collections

Based on the list of misconducts earlier, absenteeism from school and class is the most frequent misconduct by students. According to a study by the Social Welfare Department, juvenile cases are on the rise from 5284 cases in 2000-6056 cases in 2004. Among the main reasons associated with numerous problems of misconduct of students or adolescents today is the lack of religious education given by parents at home and the poor practice of religious practices (Hamjah *et al.*, 2012).

Hence, this study is carried out to observe the extend of the parents role in encouraging children to implement religious practices, especially the solat and reciting of the Al-Qur'an when these children are at home with their parents.

Objectives of the study: The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To identify the parents role in educating their children on implementing religious practices
- To identify the methods used by parents to ensure their children implement religious practices at home
- To observe whether the methods used by parents leave a positive effect on the children or otherwise

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sample of the study: The study sample comprised 79 standard four students chosen randomly among 197 students. The standard four students were chosen because the age of ten is the beginning age for assuming responsibility towards religious practices.

The instruments of study: This study used the questionnaire as the study instrument. The questionnaire distributed to respondents consisted of four sections, name:

- Section A: Demographics
- Section B: Questions related to the role of parents in directing children to implement religious practices
- Section C: Questions related to the role of parents in directing children to implement religious practices
- Section D: Questions related to effects of the approach used by the parents

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data analyses used the descriptive method to observe the frequency and percentage of every item studied.

Table 1 shows the number and percentage of respondents according to gender. Out of 79 respondents, 49.4% (39 respondents) were male while 50.6% (40 respondents) were female. Thus from the gender analysis, it can be said that male and female respondents were approximately equal with a rate of difference of one.

Table 2 is pertaining to the parent’s vocation. From the analysis of the data, it is found that 41 respondent’s fathers (51.9%) worked in the private sector while 29 (36.7%) worked in the public sector and 8 (10.1%) were self-employed. Thus, leaving 1 (1.3%) to be unemployed. Meanwhile, among the mothers, 41 (51.9%) were homemakers while 25 (36.1%) were in the public sector, 9 (11.4%) were self-employed and 4 (5.1%) were in the private sector.

Table 3 is pertaining to the parent’s education level. The findings show that 34 (43%) of fathers have a bachelor’s degree while 20 (25.3%) have diplomas, 9 (11.4%) have certificates, 5 (6.3%) have SPM certificates and 11 (13.9%) have other form of certificates, such as standard 6 certificates, lower religious school certificates (sekolah pondok) and informal education. Meanwhile for the mothers, 17 (21.5%) had a bachelor’s degree while 17 (21.5%) had diplomas, 7 (8.9%) had SPM certificates and 7 (8.9%) had PMR certificates. The remainder of 27 (34.2%) had various levels of other types of education.

Table 4 is pertaining to the aspect of the parent’s income. The analysis shows that 20 fathers (25.3%) had an income of RM4001 and above, 17 (21.5%) had an income of RM3001-4000. Next, 18 (22.8%) had an income of RM2001-3000, 14 (17.7%) had an income of RM1001-2000 and 10 (12.7%) had an income of <RM1000.

Table 1: The number and percentage of respondents according to gender

| Gender | Number (n) | Percentage |
|--------|------------|------------|
| Male | 39 | 49.4 |
| Female | 40 | 50.6 |
| Total | 79 | 100.0 |

Table 2: Parents vocation

| Vocational category | Father (n) | Percentage | Mother (n) | Percentage |
|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Public | 29 | 36.7 | 25 | 36.1 |
| Private | 41 | 51.9 | 4 | 5.1 |
| Self-employed | 8 | 10.1 | 9 | 11.4 |
| Unemployed | 1 | 1.3 | 41 | 51.9 |
| Total | 79 | 100.0 | 79 | 100.0 |

Table 3: Parent’s level of education

| Education level | Father (n) | Percentage | Mother (n) | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| PMR | 9 | 11.4 | 7 | 8.9 |
| SPM | 5 | 6.3 | 7 | 8.9 |
| Diploma | 20 | 25.3 | 17 | 21.5 |
| Bachelor’s degree | 34 | 43.0 | 17 | 21.5 |
| Others | 11 | 13.9 | 27 | 34.2 |
| Total | 79 | 100.0 | 79 | 100.0 |

Table 4: Parent’s income

| Income | Father (n) | Percentage | Mother (n) | Percentage |
|---------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Below RM1,000 | 10 | 12.7 | 5 | 6.3 |
| RM1,001-2,000 | 14 | 17.7 | 13 | 16.5 |
| RM2,001-3,000 | 18 | 22.8 | 10 | 12.7 |
| RM3,001-4,000 | 17 | 21.5 | 12 | 15.2 |
| Above RM4,001 | 20 | 25.3 | 2 | 2.5 |
| No income | - | - | 37 | 46.8 |
| Total | 79 | 100.0 | 79 | 100.0 |

Table 5: No. of siblings

| No of siblings | Frequency (n) | Percentage |
|---------------------|---------------|------------|
| 1-3 persons | 28 | 35.4 |
| 4-6 persons | 44 | 55.7 |
| 7-9 persons | 6 | 7.6 |
| 10 persons and more | 1 | 1.3 |
| Total | 79 | 100.0 |

As for the mothers, 37 (46.8%) had no source of income. Only 2 (2.5%) had an income of >RM4001. Meanwhile, 12 (15.2%) had an income of RM3001-4000, 10 (12.7%) had an income of RM2001-3000, 13 (16.5%) had an income of RM1001-2000 and only 5 (6.3%) had an income of <RM1000.

Hence from the analysis of the study, most of the mothers (respondents) had no income, i.e., full-time homemakers. It can be said that these homemakers have more time with their children and this situation should help them monitor the movements and religious practices of their children in a more planned and careful manner. Hence, this does not mean that working mothers are absolved of their responsibility to monitor the state of their children. Actually, children who are continuously monitored would become good mannered and successful children compared children who are beyond the control of the family.

Table 5 shows the respondent’s background based on the number of siblings. From the analysis of the data

Table 6: The mother's role in religious practices of their children

| Items | CNA | NA | A | CA |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| My mother wakes me up to perform the dawn prayers | 5 (6.3%) | 6 (7.6%) | 30 (38.0%) | 38 (48.1%) |
| My mother reminds me to perform prayers 5 times a day | 2 (2.5%) | 3 (2.8%) | 29 (36.7%) | 45 (57.0%) |
| My mother reminds me to recite the Al-Qur'an | - | 5 (6.3%) | 35 (44.3%) | 39 (49.4%) |
| My mother performs the solat 5 times a day | - | 1 (1.3%) | 8 (10.1%) | 70 (88.6%) |
| My mother recites the Al-Quran | 2 (2.5%) | 6 (7.6%) | 20 (25.3%) | 51 (64.6%) |
| My mother teaches me to recite the Al-Quran | 4 (5.1%) | 9 (11.4%) | 27 (34.2%) | 39 (49.4%) |
| My mother teaches me to recite the doa | 3 (3.8%) | 4 (5.1%) | 42 (53.2%) | 30 (38.0%) |
| My mother soft-spokenly reminds me to fulfil my religious obligations | 6 (7.6%) | 2 (2.5%) | 27 (34.2%) | 44 (55.7%) |
| My mother scolds me if I do not perform the solat | 2 (2.5%) | 8 (10.1%) | 28 (35.4%) | 41 (51.9%) |
| My mother scolds me if I do not recite the Al-Quran | 5 (6.3%) | 13 (16.5%) | 33 (41.8%) | 28 (35.4%) |
| My mother canes me if I do not perform the solat | 12 (15.2%) | 14 (17.7%) | 28 (35.4%) | 25 (31.6%) |
| My mother praises me if I fulfil my religious obligations | 1 (1.3%) | 10 (12.7%) | 30 (38.0%) | 38 (48.1%) |
| My mother gives me a gift if I fulfil my religious obligations | 16 (20.3%) | 19 (24.1%) | 27 (34.2%) | 17 (21.5%) |
| My mother gives me a kiss before I go to school | 16 (20.3%) | 19 (24.1%) | 27 (34.2%) | 17 (21.5%) |

*n = 79

Table 7: Father's role in religious practices

| Items | CNA | NA | A | CA |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| My father reminds me to perform the solat 5 times a day | 6 (7.6%) | 5 (6.3%) | 26 (32.9%) | 42 (53.2%) |
| My father performs the solat 5 times in a proper manner | 2 (2.5%) | - | 12 (15.2%) | 65 (82.3%) |
| My father teaches me the compulsory verses to be recited during the solat | 5 (6.3%) | 12 (15.2%) | 28 (35.4%) | 34 (43.0%) |
| My father invites me to perform the solat collectively (berjemaah) | 3 (3.8%) | 12 (15.2%) | 26 (32.9%) | 38 (48.1%) |
| My father is the imam when the family performs the solat collectively (berjemaah) | 4 (5.1%) | 5 (6.3%) | 22 (27.8%) | 48 (60.8%) |
| My father recites the Al-Quran | 5 (6.3%) | 5 (6.3%) | 25 (31.6%) | 44 (55.7%) |
| My father teaches me to recite the Al-Quran | 8 (10.1%) | 13 (16.5%) | 29 (36.7%) | 29 (36.7%) |
| My father softly reminds me to fulfil my religious obligations | 7 (8.9%) | 8 (10.1%) | 26 (32.9%) | 38 (48.1%) |
| My father reprimands me if I do something wrong | 3 (3.8%) | - | 31 (39.2%) | 45 (57.0%) |
| My father scolds me if I do not perform the solat | 4 (5.1%) | 10 (12.7%) | 24 (30.4%) | 41 (51.9%) |
| My father canes me if I do not perform the solat | 14 (17.7%) | 15 (19.0%) | 20 (25.3%) | 30 (38.0%) |
| My father takes me to the mosque/surau to listen to religious sermons | 4 (5.1%) | 23 (29.1%) | 22 (27.8%) | 30 (38.0%) |
| My father teaches me to recite the doa | 7 (8.9%) | 15 (19.0%) | 29 (36.7%) | 28 (35.4%) |
| My father praises me when I fulfil my religious obligations | 10 (12.7%) | 5 (6.3%) | 31 (39.2%) | 33 (41.8%) |
| My father gives me a gift if I fulfil my religious obligations | 16 (20.3%) | 18 (22.8%) | 32 (40.5%) | 13 (16.5%) |
| My father gives me a kiss before I go to school | 11 (13.9%) | 11 (13.9%) | 20 (25.3%) | 37 (46.8%) |

*n = 79

55.7% of the respondents have between 4-6 siblings while 28% have 1-3 siblings, 7.6% have between 7-9 siblings and 1 (1.3%) respondent had >10 siblings. This situation shows that most of the families these days have 6-8 family members including their parents compared to families of yesteryears who had >10 family members. This could be consequence of the level of education and a smaller source of income compared to the cost of living.

Next, the analysis of the study looks at the role of mothers in the religious practices of their children. There are 14 items related to the role of mothers. Each statement is followed by 4 scales such as Completely Not Agree (CNA), Not Agree (NA), Agree (A) and Completely Agree (CA). Hence to facilitate data analysis, the researcher has combined the four scales into two scales. The completely not agree and not agree scales were combine into the not agree scale while the agree and completely agree scale was combined into the agree scale.

Based on the analysis shown in Table 6, it was found that most of the respondents agreed that their mothers had played a role in ensuring that they performed the solat and recited the Al-Qur'an. The 74 (93.7%) of the respondents agreed that their mothers had frequently reminded them to perform the solat five times a day.

Only 5 (6.3%) respondents said that their mothers did not do that. It was similar with the recitation of the Al-Qur'an whereby 74 (93.7%) respondents said that their mothers had frequently reminded them to recite the Al-Qur'an and only 5 (6.3%) respondents said that their mothers did not do this.

Therefore if researchers look at the item, the mother scolds or canes for not performing the solat or reciting the Al-Qur'an, the findings show that the percentage for this item is not as high as the item reminds the respondents to perform the solat or recite the Al-Qur'an. For the item to cane if did not perform the solat, 69 (67%) respondents agreed that their mother would cane them if they did not perform the solat. For the item the mother scolds them if they did not perform the solat, 69 (87.3%) respondents agreed that their mother scolded them and only 10 (12.6%) respondents did not agree. For the item my mother scolds me if I do not recite the Al-Qur'an, 61 (77.2%) respondents agreed and only 18 (22.8%) did not agree. This shows that more mothers scold their children if they do not perform the solat compared to mothers who cane for the same reason.

Table 7 shows the aspect of the analysis that is related to the father's role in the child's religious

Table 8: The effect to the child due to the role of the parents

| Items | CNA | NA | A | CA |
|---|----------|------------|------------|------------|
| I perform the solat 5 times a day | 2 (2.5%) | 3 (3.8%) | 29 (36.7%) | 45 (57.0%) |
| I recite the Al-Quran every day | - | 8 (10.1%) | 37 (46.8%) | 34 (43.0%) |
| I have finished reading the Muqaddam | 2 (2.5%) | 8 (10.1%) | 17 (21.5%) | 52 (65.8%) |
| I know how to recite the Al-Quran (very well) | 1 (1.3%) | 4 (5.1%) | 21 (26.6%) | 53 (67.1%) |
| I perform the solat collectively with my family members | 5 (6.3%) | 10 (12.7%) | 30 (38.0%) | 34 (43.0%) |
| I help my parents with the household chores | - | 4 (5.1%) | 33 (41.8%) | 42 (53.2%) |
| I respect my parents | - | 1 (1.3%) | 20 (25.3%) | 58 (73.4%) |
| I will complete every task given to me by my parents | 2 (2.5%) | 3 (3.8%) | 31 (39.2%) | 43 (54.4%) |
| I always acknowledge (shake hands) with my parents before going to school | 1 (1.3%) | 2 (2.5%) | 15 (19.0%) | 61 (77.2%) |
| I always pray for my parent's well-being | - | 1 (1.3%) | 26 (32.9%) | 52 (65.8%) |
| I always talk softly with my parents | - | 2 (2.5%) | 31 (39.2%) | 46 (58.2%) |
| I love my parents with all my heart | - | - | 12 (15.2%) | 67 (84.8%) |
| My parents are my idols | 1 (1.3%) | 2 (2.5%) | 9 (11.4%) | 67 (84.8%) |

*n = 79

practices. The findings show that overall, the fathers play a lesser role regarding caning or scolding children who do not perform the solat or recite the Al-Qur'an compared to mothers. Referring to the item my father scolds me if I do not perform the solat, 65 (82.3%) respondents agreed and 14 (17.8%) did not agree. For the item my father canes me if I do not perform the solat, 50 (63.3) respondents agreed and 29 (36.7%) said their father did not cane them if they did not perform the solat. This shows that fathers use less veto power in forcing their children to perform their religious obligations. Hence, based on the statement that says their father became the imam when the whole family performed the solat collectively, 70 (87.3%) respondents agreed and only 9 (11.4%) respondents did not agree. This finding shows that fathers do emphasize on the solat performed collectively as a family which leads to the family often performing the solat as a family.

On the question of whether the father performs religious practices, especially the solat, the findings show that 2 (2.5%) respondents said that their fathers did not perform the solat and 10 (12.6%) respondents said their fathers did not recite the Al-Qur'an. Although, the percentage is small nevertheless as the head of the household, a father should not behave as such as this would inevitably influence the behaviour of the children.

Table 8 is related to the analysis pertaining to the effect on the child due to the parent's role in developing the child to carry out his/her religious responsibilities. Generally, the findings of the study show that parents with a role to help the child become steadfast in performing the solat. The 74 (93.7%) of the respondents said that they performed the solat five times a day compared to 5 (6.3%) who did not. On the practice of reciting the Al-Qur'an every day, 71 (89.8%) respondents did it compared to 8 (10.1%) respondents who did not recite the Al-Qur'an including 5 (6.4%) respondents who did not know how to recite the al-Qur'an.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, it can be concluded that parents have a big role to play in helping children to fulfil their religious

responsibilities. In regards to this, the manner in which children are educated and how they are disciplined is very important. The reciting of the Al-Qur'an should be become a practice and discipline should not be taken lightly as both these initiatives must begin from the moment the baby is conceived. In efforts to encourage and stimulate children towards fulfilling religious obligations, parents need to be affable and adopt a soft stance besides complimenting and rewarding their children.

The characteristics of good leadership need to be portrayed by parents as an example to their children. The practice of collective solat (berjemaah) with the father being the imam would enhance the harmony in the family and become an effective influence to the children. Giving gifts are no less important too in instigating the desire of children regardless of the value of the gift.

A firm financial backing is another factor that imparts a positive impact. This factor would enable parents to provide supplementary aid to enhance the religious appreciation such as interactive cassettes and cds or extra religious and Al-Qur'an reciting classes.

It is natural that a child's development is highly dependent on the loving relationship and attention given by the parents. Positive discipline and adducing good examples is one good initiative that paves the way towards a high level of parenting skills. A high level of knowledge and good interaction skills are valuable assets needed by every parent because educational activities are constantly changing and developing in tandem with changing times and human development.

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