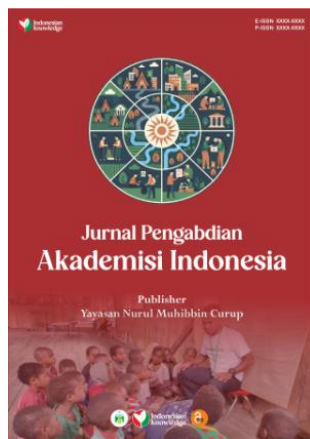


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Optimalisasi Fungsi Masjid Sebagai Pusat Pendidikan Islam Melalui TPA di Masjid Nur Qolbi Kota Bengkulu

Tio Bagindo Saputra, Fernandes Dwi Putra, Dafit Alfurqan Nur Araf, Vivian Revalina, Erwin Suryaningrat, Muhammad Azizullah Ilyas

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Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to:

Tio Bagindo Saputra. UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu. Raden Fatah Street, Pagar Dewa, Selebar, Bengkulu City, Bengkulu, Indonesia

Email: tiobagindos@gmail.com



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Optimalisasi Fungsi Masjid Sebagai Pusat Pendidikan Islam Melalui TPA di Masjid Nur Qolbi Kota Bengkulu



Tio Bagindo Saputra*, Fernandes Dwi Putra, Dafit Alfurqan Nur Araf, Vivian Revalina, Erwin Suryaningrat, Muhammad Azizullah Ilyas

UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu

*Corresponding Author: tiobagindos@gmail.com

ABSTRAK

Tujuan: Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis peran Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPA) di Masjid Nur Qolbi Kota Bengkulu dalam mengoptimalkan fungsi masjid sebagai pusat pendidikan Islam serta mengidentifikasi faktor pendukung dan penghambat pelaksanaannya. **Metode:** Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam, dan analisis dokumen, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña. Keabsahan data dijaga melalui triangulasi, member checking, dan peer debriefing. **Hasil:** Program TPA berhasil menghidupkan kembali fungsi masjid sebagai pusat pendidikan Islam melalui peningkatan kemampuan membaca Al-Qur'an, pembinaan akhlak, penguatan pemahaman keislaman, pembentukan karakter religius, dan peningkatan partisipasi generasi muda. Keberhasilan didukung oleh kepemimpinan ta'mir, keterlibatan orang tua, dan dukungan komunitas, meskipun masih terdapat kendala berupa keterbatasan tenaga pengajar, sarana, pendanaan, dan kehadiran santri. **Implikasi:** Optimalisasi fungsi masjid melalui TPA merupakan investasi sosial dan pendidikan jangka panjang bagi generasi Muslim.

Kata Kunci: Masjid; Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an; Pendidikan Islam; Optimalisasi Fungsi Masjid

ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to analyze the role of the Qur'anic Learning Center (Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an/TPA) at Nur Qolbi Mosque, Bengkulu City, in optimizing the mosque's function as a center of Islamic education and identifying supporting and inhibiting factors in its implementation. **Methods:** A qualitative case study approach was employed. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. Data validity was ensured through triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing. **Findings:** The TPA program successfully revitalized the mosque's educational function by improving children's Qur'anic reading skills, moral development, Islamic understanding, religious character formation, and youth participation. Success was supported by active mosque leadership, parental involvement, and community support, despite challenges related to limited teachers, facilities, funding, and student attendance. **Implications:** Optimizing mosque functions through TPA represents a long-term social and educational investment for Muslim generations

Keywords: Mosque; Al-Qur'an Education Center; Islamic Education; Optimization of Mosque Function

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of Islamic civilization, the mosque has never merely stood as a physical building for performing prayers. Rather, it has served as the epicenter of Muslim life in various dimensions-ritual, intellectual, social, and even political. During the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the Prophet's Mosque (Masjid Nabawi) in Madinah bore witness to how a place of worship could simultaneously function as a center of education (shuffah), a meeting hall, a defense post, and a community consultation institution (Zulkifli, 2021). Unfortunately, this rich legacy of functions has gradually eroded due to modern developments that have confined mosques primarily to their ritual role. Current realities reveal a significant gap between the ideal potential of mosques and their actual utilization. Many mosques in Indonesia, including those in Bengkulu City, are crowded only during prayer times particularly Friday prayers while remaining largely inactive in terms of educational and community empowerment activities. Given that Indonesia's Muslim population exceeds 231 million people, mosques should ideally play a more productive role as socio-educational institutions (BPS, 2022). This situation presents an interesting paradox worthy of academic investigation.

A mosque that functions solely as a place for the five daily prayers is analogous to a university that only opens its rectorate building. Most of its potential remains neglected, most of its rooms remain locked, and much of its human resources remain underutilized. The paradigm that "mosques are only for worship," which has become deeply rooted among some contemporary Indonesian Muslim communities, is in fact a product of historical distortion rather than a reflection of authentic Islamic tradition. Correcting this distortion requires a systematic and evidence-based approach rather than merely religious rhetoric (Nata, 2020). One concrete effort that has proven effective in revitalizing the educational function of mosques is the establishment of Qur'anic Learning Centers, commonly known as Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPA). This mosque-based non-formal educational institution targets children aged 4-12 years, aiming to teach them how to read the Qur'an, understand the fundamentals of Islamic creed (aqidah), and develop Islamic character from an early age (Rohmawati, 2020). The presence of TPA programs does not merely fill unused space within mosques; rather, it revives the scholarly traditions that have long been a hallmark of Islamic civilization.

As the capital city of a province with a Muslim-majority population, Bengkulu City is home to hundreds of mosques distributed across its districts and neighborhoods. However, the extent to which these mosques activate their educational functions varies considerably. Some mosques operate active and well-managed TPA programs, while others conduct only minimal educational activities. Within this context, Nur Qolbi Mosque has attracted attention as one of the mosques that consistently develops its TPA program as a foundation for community-based Islamic education. Located in an urban residential area of Bengkulu City, Nur Qolbi Mosque represents an interesting case for study. Amid increasingly individualistic and digitally oriented urban lifestyles, the mosque continues to operate its TPA program as a primary vehicle for providing Islamic education to children in the surrounding community. However, the extent to which this program successfully optimizes the mosque's role as a center of Islamic education-rather than merely functioning as a routine activity without comprehensive evaluation-remains an important academic question deserving further investigation.

Numerous studies have examined TPA programs and the educational functions of mosques. However, most have focused partially on curriculum development or instructional methods (Mukhlis, 2021; Hidayat, 2022). Few studies have adopted a holistic perspective to examine how TPA programs contribute to optimizing the mosque's educational function across multiple dimensions, including Qur'anic learning,

moral development, the enhancement of Islamic knowledge, and the cultivation of children's religious character. This research gap provides the primary justification for the present study. Specifically, this research seeks to address four main questions: (1) How is the TPA program at Nur Qolbi Mosque in Bengkulu City implemented? (2) How does the TPA contribute to optimizing the mosque's function as a center of Islamic education? (3) What tangible impacts does the TPA program have on the development of children's Islamic education? and (4) What factors support and hinder the optimization of mosque functions through the TPA program? By answering these four questions, this study is expected to make both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of mosque-based Islamic education in Indonesia

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a single case study design. The selection of this methodology is based on the consideration that the research object the optimization of mosque functions through the Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPA) is a contextual, dynamic social phenomenon that cannot be adequately measured solely through statistical figures (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A case study approach enables the researcher to explore the depth and complexity of the phenomenon within its specific context, namely Nur Qolbi Mosque in Bengkulu City. This approach is chosen because it facilitates a holistic and in-depth exploration of "how" and "why" the TPA program can or cannot optimize the functions of the mosque questions that cannot be satisfactorily answered through statistical data alone.

The paradigm underlying this study is interpretivism, a perspective based on the belief that social reality is subjective, socially constructed, and can only be understood through an in-depth interpretation of the meanings attributed by the individuals involved (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this context, the researcher does not seek to discover a "universal law" regarding TPA programs; rather, the aim is to gain a comprehensive understanding of how the TPA operates and acquires meaning within the specific context of Nur Qolbi Mosque, with all its unique situational characteristics.

Research Site and Participants

This study was conducted at Nur Qolbi Mosque in Bengkulu City during the second semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The selection of this research site was based on several considerations. First, the mosque has consistently implemented a Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPA) program over a considerable period of time. Second, its location within a densely populated residential area reflects the typical context of an urban mosque. Third, the mosque management (ta'mir) demonstrated openness and willingness to facilitate the research process. Fourth, the diversity of TPA students provides an opportunity for a more comprehensive analysis of the program's impact.

The research participants were selected purposively and consisted of the chairman and administrators of the mosque management board (2 individuals), TPA teachers (4 individuals), parents of TPA students (10 individuals), and TPA students from various age groups (8 children). In total, 24 informants participated in the study. The selection of informants was based on the diversity of their roles, experiences, and perspectives regarding the TPA program. The inclusion criterion for TPA teachers was a minimum of one year of teaching experience at Nur Qolbi TPA. For parents, the inclusion criterion was having a child who had actively participated in the TPA program for at least the previous six months.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through three complementary techniques. First, participant observation was conducted over a period of eight weeks to directly observe the Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPA) learning process, interactions between teachers and students, the management of activities, as well as the physical condition and atmosphere of the mosque. Observations were carried out during TPA sessions, which took place in the afternoon after the Asr prayer. Field notes were systematically recorded during and after each observation session, including factual descriptions of events, analytical reflections, and emerging questions for further exploration.

Second, in-depth interviews were conducted with all informants using a semi-structured interview guide, allowing for flexible and comprehensive exploration of information. Interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim. The duration of interviews ranged from 45 to 90 minutes for adult informants and from 20 to 30 minutes for child participants, employing child-friendly interviewing techniques. Third, document analysis was undertaken to examine relevant materials, including TPA activity schedules, student progress records, attendance lists, and mosque program documents. These documents provided supplementary data and served to support the findings obtained through observations and interviews.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020), which consists of four stages: data condensation, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification. This process is cyclical and occurs simultaneously throughout the data collection phase rather than only after all data have been gathered. Data condensation involved thematic coding of interview transcripts and field notes to identify significant patterns of meaning. Through this process, relevant data were selected, focused, simplified, and organized to facilitate interpretation. Data display was conducted through thematic matrices and narrative presentations, enabling the coherent synthesis of findings derived from multiple data sources. The final stage involved drawing conclusions and continuously verifying them against the collected data to ensure their consistency and validity.

The trustworthiness of the data was ensured through four strategies. First, source triangulation was employed by comparing information obtained from informants with different roles and perspectives. Second, method triangulation was used to confirm observational findings through interview data and documentary evidence. Third, member checking was conducted by returning the researcher's interpretations to key informants for confirmation and validation. Fourth, peer debriefing involved discussing data interpretations with fellow researchers to minimize subjective bias and enhance analytical rigor. Collectively, these four strategies contributed to establishing the trustworthiness of the study, ensuring that the findings are credible, dependable, and relevant to stakeholders.

Ethical Considerations

The entire research process was conducted in accordance with established research ethics principles. Informed consent was obtained from all adult participants prior to their involvement in the study. For child participants, consent was obtained from their parents or legal guardians. The confidentiality and anonymity of all participants were strictly maintained throughout the research and reporting process. The researcher also ensured that data collection activities did not disrupt the implementation of the Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPA) program or interfere with the broader activities and daily life of the mosque.

community. Furthermore, participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the research at any stage without any negative consequences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of the Qur'anic Learning Program at Nur Qolbi Mosque

Nur Qolbi Mosque is located in a densely populated residential area of Bengkulu City. Qur'anic learning activities for children are conducted daily after the Maghrib prayer. However, these activities have not yet been formally organized as a Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPA) institution, as commonly found in many mosques. Instead, they are carried out on a voluntary basis by university students participating in the Community Service Program (Kuliah Kerja Nyata/KKN) who are serving within the mosque community. Consequently, the program operates only during the period of the students' KKN placement.

Implementation of Qur'anic Learning Activities

The Qur'anic learning activities at Nur Qolbi Mosque are conducted in a relatively simple manner. The instructional materials are limited to two levels: *Iqra'* for children who are still learning the fundamentals of reading the Arabic alphabet (*hijaiyah* letters), and the Qur'an for those who have already achieved basic reading fluency. The Community Service Program (Kuliah Kerja Nyata/KKN) students serve as instructors, providing direct guidance to the children during the learning process. They listen to the children's recitations, identify reading errors, and provide individual corrections based on each child's level of ability and learning progress.

Islamic Educational Materials Taught

The TPA program at Nur Qolbi Mosque does not limit itself solely to teaching children how to read the Qur'an. Instead, the curriculum encompasses a broader spectrum of basic Islamic education. Memorization (*tahfizh*) activities focus on short surahs from Juz 30 (*Juz 'Amma*), which are taught gradually and through continuous repetition. Memorization targets are adjusted according to age groups: lower-level students (aged 4–6 years) concentrate on Surah Al-Fatihah and other very short surahs; middle-level students (aged 7–9 years) are encouraged to memorize approximately 10–15 surahs; while upper-level students (aged 10–12 years) are expected to master the entirety of Juz 30.

Islamic creed (*aqidah*) is taught contextually. For example, when teaching Surah Al-Fatihah, instructors simultaneously explain the meanings and messages of its verses using simple language that children can easily understand. This applied interpretative approach is considered more effective than teaching *aqidah* through the memorization of abstract definitions, as children are able to connect their beliefs with the Qur'anic texts that they read and memorize daily. Moral education (*akhlaq*) and Islamic etiquette (*adab*) are taught through practical habituation. Children are encouraged to greet others with *salam*, recite prayers before and after learning sessions, respect teachers and peers, and maintain the cleanliness of the mosque environment. This habituation approach is considerably more effective than merely delivering lectures on moral values, as value internalization occurs through repeated actions that gradually develop into lasting habits (Rohmawati, 2020).

Basic Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh al-'ibadah*), particularly purification (*thaharah*) and prayer (*shalat*), also forms part of the curriculum and is taught through direct practice within the mosque. Teaching prayer in the mosque provides an authentic and meaningful learning context. Children not only learn the movements and recitations of prayer theoretically but also practice them directly in the place where prayer is actually

performed. One particularly noteworthy aspect of the program is the integration of national values and local wisdom into the learning process. Some instructors, especially those with formal Islamic educational backgrounds, occasionally relate Islamic teachings to the local culture of Bengkulu and the spirit of national identity. This practice reflects an understanding that effective Islamic education should not be detached from the socio-cultural context in which it is rooted (Nata, 2020). Children who learn that Islamic values are compatible with appreciation for their culture and nation are more likely to develop a holistic identity as Muslims—one that harmoniously integrates religious commitment and civic responsibility, rather than viewing them as conflicting dimensions of life.

The Role of Ustaz and Ustazah in the Learning Process

The ustaz and ustazah at Nur Qolbi TPA occupy a role that extends far beyond that of merely serving as technical instructors of Qur'anic reading. They function as moral role models who, consciously or unconsciously, become examples for their students. In Islamic educational theory, exemplary conduct (*uswah hasanah*) is regarded as one of the most powerful educational methods because children learn more from what they observe than from what they are told (Nata, 2020). Consequently, the moral integrity and consistency of the teachers' character are not merely added values but fundamental components of the overall quality of TPA education.

One parent stated:

"My child is now more disciplined in performing the five daily prayers. He says that his ustaz always reminds him. The ustaz has a very strong influence on the children."

This statement confirms what has been demonstrated by numerous studies: warm and trusting personal relationships between teachers and students constitute a primary medium for value transformation (Widyastuti & Fauzan, 2022). At Nur Qolbi TPA, the teacher–student relationship is not merely transactional, involving only the transfer of knowledge; rather, it is relational in nature, built upon affection, trust, and mutual respect.

From the perspective of professional competence, the teachers at Nur Qolbi TPA come from diverse educational backgrounds. Some are graduates of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), while others are students or graduates of Islamic higher education institutions. On the one hand, this diversity enriches the program with a variety of perspectives and pedagogical approaches. On the other hand, it also creates inconsistencies in teaching standards, a challenge similarly identified by Pratama (2023) in a different context. Therefore, pedagogical training for TPA teachers represents an urgent need that deserves greater attention. Without clear competency standards and continuous professional development programs, the quality of TPA instruction will largely depend on individual circumstances—namely, whether a mosque happens to have access to competent teachers.

One aspect worthy of appreciation is the dedication of the teachers, who are not primarily motivated by financial compensation. Most ustaz and ustazah receive honoraria that are far from sufficient, and some serve entirely on a voluntary basis. Their primary motivation is worship and community service, a spirit that aligns with the Islamic scholarly tradition in which teaching the Qur'an is regarded as a form of *sadaqah jariyah* (ongoing charity) whose rewards continue to benefit the individual even after death (Husni, 2022).

Nevertheless, from the perspective of program sustainability, relying entirely on volunteerism without providing an adequate incentive system constitutes a significant risk that must be anticipated. Pure idealism, however noble, cannot fully substitute for the practical material needs that arise over the long term.

Therefore, ensuring the sustainability of TPA programs requires not only the preservation of spiritual commitment but also institutional support that enables teachers to continue their educational service effectively and consistently.

The Mosque as a Center of Islamic Education: A Multi-Dimensional Analysis

The presence of the TPA program at Nur Qolbi Mosque has operationalized the function of the mosque as a center of Islamic education through four interconnected and mutually reinforcing dimensions. First, the dimension of Qur'anic learning. The mosque is no longer merely a place where adults recite the Qur'an after prayers, but has become a vibrant learning space where the voices of children reciting and spelling out *hijaiyah* letters can be heard every afternoon. This acoustic transformation—from a mosque that was previously quiet into a mosque filled with the sounds of learning—is the most visible indication of the implementation of the mosque's educational function. This finding strengthens Ramdhani's (2021) argument that the presence of TPA programs literally transforms the atmosphere of mosques into spaces that are more educational and empowering. Beyond being merely symbolic, this change in atmosphere has tangible psychological effects: the mosque becomes a place that feels alive, dynamic, and relevant to the everyday lives of the community.

Second, the dimension of moral development (*akhlak*). The mosque, as a sacred physical environment, provides a unique context for character formation. Children learn that certain places require particular behaviors, such as speaking softly, maintaining cleanliness, respecting elders, and practicing modesty. The habituation of these behaviors within the mosque environment gradually shapes an Islamic *habitus* that continues to influence children's daily lives (Bourdieu, in Khoiriyah, 2021). In Bourdieu's perspective, *habitus* refers to a system of dispositions formed through repeated experiences within a particular social field. In this regard, the mosque represents one of the strongest social environments in shaping a Muslim's religious dispositions.

Third, the dimension of Islamic knowledge development. Through a curriculum covering *aqidah* (faith), *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), and *adab* (Islamic manners), TPA transforms the mosque into the first place where children receive systematic religious instruction. The knowledge they acquire is not merely memorization without meaning; rather, when delivered through contextual and engaging methods, it becomes an understanding that leaves a lasting impression and contributes to the formation of a strong Islamic worldview (Mukhlis, 2021). For example, a child who understands the meaning of Surah Al-Fatihah that they recite daily in prayer will develop a much more meaningful relationship with their worship compared to a child who only memorizes it without comprehension.

Fourth, the dimension of religious character formation. This represents the deepest dimension and has the most long-term impact. Children who grow up with the mosque as their "second home" tend to develop stronger emotional attachment and religious identity. The mosque is no longer perceived as a foreign or formal place, but rather as a familiar, enjoyable, and meaningful space. This psychological attachment becomes an important foundation for religious commitment in adulthood (Widyastuti & Fauzan, 2022). Furthermore, children who are accustomed to the atmosphere of the mosque from an early age are more likely to actively participate in religious activities as they grow into adolescents and adults—an invaluable long-term effect that is difficult to measure in the short term.

The Impact of the TPA Program on Children's Islamic Education

Based on the results of observations and interviews, the impact of the TPA program at Nur Qolbi Mosque can be categorized into four main areas. First, the improvement of Qur'anic reading skills. The majority of students demonstrated measurable progress in their reading abilities, as reflected in their advancement through *Iqra'* levels and improvements in Qur'anic recitation quality. Students who had participated in the program for more than one year were generally able to read the Qur'an fluently, although they were still in the process of developing proper *tajwid* skills. An analysis of student progress records showed that, on average, students who attended consistently were able to complete one volume of *Iqra'* within 3-4 months, which can be considered a relatively good achievement compared to general TPA standards.

Second, the improvement of basic Islamic understanding. Children participating in the Nur Qolbi TPA program demonstrated better abilities in answering basic questions related to *aqidah* (faith), the pillars of Islam, and the procedures of worship compared to their peers who did not participate in TPA. A primary school teacher who was also a parent of a TPA student stated, "There is a clear difference between children who join TPA and those who do not. Those who participate in TPA are more fluent when asked to memorize short surahs and have a better understanding of Islamic manners." This finding is consistent with Mukhlis (2021), who found significant differences in basic religious knowledge between TPA students and non-TPA students of the same age group.

Third, the formation of Islamic attitudes and behaviors. Behavioral changes were the impact most frequently recognized by parents. Children became more consistent in performing prayers, more polite in their speech, more accustomed to greeting others with *salam*, and more concerned about cleanliness. Interestingly, several parents reported that their children even reminded them to perform prayers on time a role reversal that demonstrates the strength of value internalization occurring through the TPA program. This phenomenon of "students becoming agents of change within the family" represents an impact that exceeds the initial expectations of the program. It also demonstrates that TPA does not merely shape individuals but can transform families and communities as well.

Fourth, increased participation in religious activities. TPA students tended to be more active in participating in other mosque activities, such as congregational prayers (particularly Maghrib and Isha prayers), Islamic commemorative events, and youth religious study sessions. This finding supports the argument that TPA functions as a gateway connecting children with a broader ecosystem of religious activities within the mosque (Mubarak, 2022). In other words, TPA not only produces individuals with stronger religious commitment but also contributes to the development of more active mosque community members an impact that is highly significant for the long-term sustainability of the mosque's overall functions.

Supporting Factors in Optimizing Mosque Functions through TPA

The success of the TPA program at Nur Qolbi Mosque is supported by several interacting factors. From an institutional perspective, the visionary and committed leadership of the mosque management (*ta'mir*) serves as the backbone of the program. The chairman of the *ta'mir* actively participates in program monitoring, facilitates the needs of the ustaz and ustazah, and maintains communication with students' parents. This transformative leadership creates an institutional culture oriented toward quality improvement rather than merely maintaining routine activities. Such institutional support, as also found by (Husni, 2022), represents an essential prerequisite that cannot be replaced by any other factor.

From the community perspective, parents in the Nur Qolbi Mosque environment demonstrate a high level of enthusiasm toward their children's religious education. This is reflected in their consistency in accompanying and picking up their children, their willingness to contribute to TPA operational costs, and their active involvement in evaluation activities and religious parenting programs occasionally organized by the mosque management. Parental participation is not merely a supporting factor but rather a foundation for the sustainability of the program (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022). A community that is concerned about children's religious education provides the most supportive environment for the development of a high-quality TPA program. The religious social environment surrounding the mosque also contributes significantly to the success of the program. The residential area around Nur Qolbi Mosque has a relatively strong religious tradition, as indicated by the active participation of community members in congregational prayers and socio-religious activities. This religious environment creates positive social pressure that encourages parents to enroll their children in TPA social dynamic that aligns with the concept of positive peer pressure in the formation of community norms (Anggraini & Haris, 2023).

Inhibiting Factors in Optimizing Mosque Functions through TPA

This study also identified several significant obstacles affecting the optimization of mosque functions through the TPA program. First, the limitation and inconsistency of teacher quality. Not all ustaz and ustazah have adequate formal educational backgrounds in Qur'anic studies or child pedagogy. Some of them teach based on their personal learning experiences without undergoing structured training. This condition has the potential to result in inaccuracies in *tajwid* instruction and less-than-optimal teaching methods. Furthermore, without clear competency standards, it becomes difficult for the mosque management (*ta'mir*) to objectively select and evaluate the performance of instructors. Second, limitations in facilities and infrastructure. The TPA learning activities still utilize the main area of the mosque, which was not specifically designed for teaching and learning activities. This condition becomes particularly problematic during hot weather, as inadequate ventilation causes discomfort among students and reduces their concentration. The limited availability of high-quality visual learning media also presents a challenge, especially for younger students who require rich visual stimulation to maintain their learning interest.

Third, inconsistency in student attendance. Fluctuating attendance rates—particularly during school examination periods, Ramadan, or extended holidays—disrupt the continuity of the learning process. Some students who are absent for extended periods experience a decline (*regression*) in their reading abilities and must repeat previous learning materials. This phenomenon emphasizes the importance of a consistent support system between the TPA and students' families (Widyastuti & Fauzan, 2022). Attendance inconsistencies caused by family commitments, lack of student motivation, or competition with other activities—including digital screen usage need to be addressed through more creative and innovative strategies.

Fourth, limited funding. Nur Qolbi TPA operates with a very limited budget, relying mainly on community donations (*infaq*) and voluntary contributions from students' parents. These financial limitations restrict the mosque management's ability to improve program quality, including teacher capacity development, procurement of learning materials, and enhancement of facilities and infrastructure. This issue is consistent with the findings of the Directorate of Islamic Early Education of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2022), which identified funding as one of the major challenges faced by TPA programs nationally. Full dependence on informal funding sources (*infaq* and voluntary contributions)

without diversification of financial resources represents a structural vulnerability that requires immediate attention.

Fifth, the challenge of competition with digital media. Today's generation of children grows up in an environment filled with digital stimulation, including games, YouTube, and social media, which offer instant entertainment that is often more attractive than sitting and learning *hijaiyah* letters. This competition for attention with digital media represents a new challenge that previous generations of TPA programs did not face (Anggraini & Haris, 2023). In responding to this challenge, Nur Qolbi TPA as with many other TPA programs has not yet developed a systematic and evidence-based strategy. Several ustaz and ustazah attempt to make learning more engaging through educational games and storytelling methods; however, these efforts remain individual initiatives and have not yet become standardized program policies.

Comparative Analysis: Nur Qolbi TPA in the National Context

When the findings of this study are placed within the broader context of national TPA studies, several interesting similarities and differences can be identified. Nur Qolbi TPA demonstrates relative strengths in terms of active mosque management (*ta'mir*) leadership and high levels of community participation two factors that, according to (Mukhlis, 2021) and (Husni, 2022), consistently distinguish developing TPA programs from those that remain stagnant. These strengths provide a strong foundation for program sustainability, although they have not yet been accompanied by a more formal and standardized institutional system. On the other hand, the challenges faced by Nur Qolbi TPA such as limitations in teaching human resources, inadequate facilities and infrastructure, and fluctuations in student attendance are also experienced by many TPA programs across Indonesia, particularly those located in urban environments with high levels of social mobility. The report from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2022) confirms that teacher quality and funding sustainability are two of the most universal issues affecting TPA programs throughout Indonesia, regardless of geographical location or socio-economic context.

What distinguishes Nur Qolbi TPA from the average TPA in large urban areas is the continued preservation of community cohesion surrounding the mosque. In many urban TPA programs, one of the greatest challenges is social fragmentation—a society that is increasingly individualistic and less connected to local mosque communities. This condition is less prominent at Nur Qolbi Mosque, which still maintains a relatively strong tradition of community involvement. However, if trends of urbanization and individualism continue to increase, this community cohesion may face challenges in the medium term. Therefore, the mosque management (*ta'mir*) needs to anticipate this possibility through proactive community maintenance strategies that strengthen social relationships and sustain collective participation.

Theoretical Implications: The Mosque as an Islamic Educational Ecosystem

The findings of this study provide meaningful theoretical contributions to the development of the concept of the mosque as an Islamic educational institution. While previous studies on mosque functions have often tended to separate its functional dimensions (worship, education, social, and economic aspects) into distinct categories, this study demonstrates that, in practice, these dimensions are interconnected and operate within a holistic ecosystem that cannot be separated.

The concept of a "mosque educational ecosystem" emerging from this study refers to a condition in which all elements of the mosque—physical, social, and institutional—work harmoniously to create an environment conducive to comprehensive Islamic development. The TPA is not merely an educational program that "occupies space" within the mosque; rather, it represents an integral component of this

ecosystem that provides input in the form of a younger generation educated in Islamic values and produces output in the form of active worshippers and a cohesive community.

This ecosystem perspective also expands the understanding of TPA "outcomes." If the success of TPA programs has traditionally been measured primarily by children's ability to read the Qur'an and memorize short surahs, the findings of this study indicate that the most valuable outcome is the formation of religious social capital-networks of relationships, norms of trust, and shared commitment to Islamic values that serve as the foundation for long-term cohesion within the Muslim community. This religious social capital is difficult to measure quantitatively, yet its impact on the quality of community life is highly visible and significant (Mubarok, 2022).

These findings further strengthen the argument that investment in TPA programs represents an investment in the socio-religious resilience of Indonesian Muslim communities. Amid various pressures of modernity-such as secularization, materialism, and social fragmentation-a well-managed TPA program operating under an active mosque represents one of the most effective mechanisms for maintaining the continuity of Islamic value transmission from one generation to the next. Understanding TPA within this framework provides a much stronger argument for public investment and policy support aimed at its development and sustainability (Ramdhani, 2021; Fauzan, 2022).



Gambar 1: Foto Kegiatan mengaji di TPA

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the comprehensive analysis conducted in this study, several substantial conclusions can be drawn. First, the TPA program at Nur Qolbi Mosque in Bengkulu City has successfully operationalized the function of the mosque as a center of Islamic education in a concrete and measurable manner. Through a combination of structured Qur'anic learning, the habituation of Islamic morals (*akhlaq*), and the development of basic Islamic knowledge, the TPA has transformed the mosque from merely a ritual space into a living and productive educational ecosystem. This transformation represents not merely a functional change but also reflects the restoration of the original identity of the mosque as an educational institution, which has been a characteristic of Islamic civilization since its early development. Second, the impact of the TPA program on children's religious development is multidimensional. The improvement is not limited to technical Qur'anic reading skills but also involves deeper transformations in children's behavior, religious understanding, and Islamic identity attachment. The phenomenon of "children as agents of change within the family"-where TPA students remind their parents to perform prayers-is one of the strongest indicators that TPA has successfully instilled Islamic values deeply rather than superficially. This finding confirms that TPA functions as an effective character-building institution, not merely as a Qur'anic literacy course.

Third, the success of TPA in optimizing mosque functions is largely determined by the quality of *ta'mir* leadership, the commitment and competence of ustaz and ustazah, and the level of participation from parents and the surrounding community. These three factors operate synergistically and reinforce one another; weaknesses in one factor can quickly affect the overall system. In the case of Nur Qolbi Mosque, strong *ta'mir* leadership represents the most prominent distinguishing factor compared to TPA programs in other mosques that have experienced less development. Fourth, several structural challenges remain, particularly limitations in teacher quality, facilities and infrastructure, funding, and competition with digital media. If these challenges are not addressed systematically, they may limit the potential of TPA programs to fully optimize the educational function of mosques. These obstacles are not merely internal challenges faced by Nur Qolbi TPA but also reflect broader issues affecting TPA programs nationally, requiring more serious and coordinated policy responses.

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