



The Role of Fiqh Teachers in Enhancing the Implementation of Congregational Dhuhr Prayer at Madrasah Tsanawiyah An Nuur Sengon Sari Asahan Regency

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of congregational Dhuhr prayer in Islamic educational institutions plays a strategic role in shaping students' religious character and discipline. However, its effectiveness is highly dependent on the role and professionalism of Fiqh teachers as key agents of religious habituation. This study aims to analyze the role of Fiqh teachers, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, examine the impact of congregational Dhuhr prayer on students' character development, and formulate strategies for optimizing the contribution of Fiqh teachers in strengthening religious practices at school. The research employs a qualitative approach with a field research design conducted at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Annur Sengon Sari, Asahan Regency. Data were collected through observation, indepth interviews, and documentation studies. Data analysis used descriptive qualitative technique supported by triangulation to ensure validity. The findings indicate that Fiqh teachers play a pivotal role as educators, role models, and facilitators of religious culture through exemplary behavior, integration of Fiqh instruction with practical worship, persuasive guidance, and collaborative engagement with the school community. Congregational Dhuhr prayer contributes significantly to strengthening students' religious character, discipline, social cohesion, and moral awareness.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is not merely a process of knowledge transfer but a fundamental mechanism for maintaining the continuity of human civilization and elevating human dignity. In the Islamic perspective, education aims to produce individuals who are faithful, devoted to Allah SWT, possess noble character (akhlāq al-karīmah), and are capable of contributing to the welfare of society (Bashori, 2017). This comprehensive vision demands that educators,

particularly in Islamic institutions, go beyond the transmission of academic content and actively participate in the moral and spiritual formation of their students. Teachers, in this context, serve not only as instructors but as role models whose conduct directly shapes students' behavioral and religious orientation (Lamatenggo, 2016a).

Among the various subjects taught in Islamic secondary schools (Madrasah Tsanawiyah), Fiqh occupies a particularly central position because it governs the practical dimensions of Islamic worship and daily conduct. Fiqh teachers are therefore responsible for ensuring that students not only comprehend the juridical foundations of worship but also demonstrate consistent religious practice in their daily lives. One of the most visible and assessable forms of this practice is the implementation of congregational Dhuhr prayer, which serves as a key indicator of students' religious discipline and spiritual maturity (Huda, 2020).

Empirically, congregational prayer in Islamic schools has been recognized as a powerful instrument of character education. Research by Ridwan (Ridwan et al., 2023) demonstrates that consistent congregational prayer supervision by teachers significantly improves student discipline and religious commitment. Similarly, Yulita and Murniyetti (Zakia & Murniyetti, 2023) found that teacher led habituation of congregational prayer at the secondary school level fosters intrinsic motivation and reduces deviant behavior among adolescents. These findings reinforce the theoretical premise that religious habituation, when systematically implemented, produces lasting behavioral transformation rather than superficial compliance (Budianto, n.d.).

However, various challenges complicate the effective implementation of congregational Dhuhr prayer in school settings. Studies reveal that adolescent psychological instability, the pervasive influence of digital culture, and inconsistent parental religious habituation at home are among the primary obstacles encountered by teachers (Budianto, n.d.).

Furthermore, dense academic schedules often limit the time available for structured worship activities, requiring creative scheduling and interdepartmental coordination to ensure that religious programs are sustainably integrated into the school routine (Budianto, n.d.). These challenges are particularly pronounced in rural and semi rural madrasah environments, where resource constraints and limited teacher training further complicate the implementation of comprehensive religious education programs.

At Madrasah Tsanawiyah An-Nuur Sengon Sari, Asahan Regency, the implementation of congregational Dhuhr prayer has been established as a compulsory daily activity. Nevertheless, the rotating system currently in place

whereby only one class participates per day limits the frequency of each student's exposure to congregational worship and may impede the achievement of optimal religious character formation. This condition reflects a broader institutional challenge in which the structural design of religious programs does not fully align with the pedagogical objectives of Islamic character education (Asha, 2020). Moreover, the effectiveness of this program is largely contingent upon the quality and consistency of Fiqh teachers' engagement, supervision, and motivational strategies.

From a theoretical standpoint, the role of the Fiqh teacher in Islamic education extends across multiple dimensions: as an instructor (*mu'allim*), a moral educator (*murabbi*), a spiritual guide (*mursyid*), and a community facilitator (*qudwah*) (Abrar, 2019). Each of these roles requires distinct competencies and a sustained commitment to integrating knowledge, values, and behavior in classroom and extra classroom settings. The effectiveness of these roles is further determined by the degree of institutional support, the coherence of school policies, and the quality of collaboration between teachers, school administrators, and parents (Asha, 2020).

Given this multifaceted context, this study is conducted with the following objectives: (1) to analyze the strategies employed by Fiqh teachers in improving the implementation of congregational Dhuhr prayer; (2) to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence worship guidance; (3) to examine the impact of congregational prayer implementation on students' character and discipline; and (4) to formulate evidence-based strategies for optimizing the role of Fiqh teachers in Islamic secondary school settings. By addressing these objectives, this research aims to provide a contextually grounded and empirically supported framework for enhancing religious education practice in Indonesian madrasah institutions.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a field research design, selected to enable an indepth and holistic exploration of the Fiqh teacher's role in improving congregational Dhuhr prayer at Madrasah Tsanawiyah An Nuur Sengon Sari, Asahan Regency (Craswell, n.d.) . The qualitative paradigm is appropriate for this study because it allows the researcher to capture the complexity of contextual meanings, social interactions, and lived experiences that underlie religious habituation practices in a specific institutional setting. Unlike quantitative methods that seek to generalize from statistical patterns, this approach prioritizes contextual understanding and interpretive depth (Asha, 2020).

The research was conducted at Madrasah Tsanawiyah An Nuur Sengon Sari, Asahan Regency, North Sumatra, during the academic year 2023/2024. This site was selected purposively because it represents a madrasah that has institutionalized congregational Dhuhr prayer as a formal daily program, making it a relevant and information-rich setting for investigating the dynamics of Fiqh teacher involvement in worship guidance.(Sugiono, n.d.). The research subjects were selected through purposive sampling, comprising the school principal, two Fiqh teachers, and eight students from different class levels. These informants were chosen based on their direct involvement in or knowledge of the congregational prayer program.

Data collection was executed through three primary and complementary techniques. First, systematic observation was conducted over a period of four weeks, during which the researcher directly observed the congregational Dhuhr prayer activities, including teacher supervision practices, student participation patterns, prayer procedures, and the physical environment of the prayer hall. Observational notes were recorded immediately following each session using a structured observation guide to ensure consistency and comprehensiveness. Second, in depth semistructured interviews were conducted with all research subjects, with each interview lasting approximately 45 to 60 minutes. The interview protocol covered themes including teachers' pedagogical strategies, motivational approaches, institutional support mechanisms, encountered challenges, and perceived impacts of the prayer program. Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim for analysis. Third, documentation studies were undertaken to examine institutional records, including the school's vision and mission statement, academic calendar, school regulations, teacher attendance records, student discipline reports, and mosque and prayer facility inventories. These documents provided corroborating evidence for the observational and interview data, enhancing the overall reliability of the findings (Fuad, A, n.d.).

The researcher assumed the role of the primary human instrument (human instrument), engaging actively in the field to develop rapport with informants and ensure that data collection was conducted in an ethical, respectful, and culturally sensitive manner (Fuad, A, n.d.). The researcher's positionality as an outsider to the institution was managed through reflexive journaling and member-checking with key informants to minimize interpretive bias.

Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which involves three concurrent processes: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Matthew B. Miles, 2014). During data

reduction, the voluminous raw data from observation notes, interview transcripts, and documents were systematically condensed through open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The data display phase involved organizing the coded data into thematic matrices and conceptual diagrams that facilitated pattern recognition across the three data sources. Conclusions were drawn iteratively, with verification conducted through continuous comparison of emerging findings with the original data sources.

To ensure data validity and trustworthiness, four criteria were applied: (1) credibility was established through source triangulation, involving the cross verification of data from observation, interviews, and documentation; (2) transferability was addressed through the provision of thick and detailed contextual descriptions that enable readers to assess the applicability of findings to comparable settings; (3) dependability was maintained through systematic documentation of the research process, allowing for external audit; and (4) confirmability was ensured by demonstrating that findings and interpretations are grounded in data rather than in the researcher's subjective assumptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checking was additionally conducted by sharing preliminary findings with key informants to verify the accuracy and completeness of the data interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Research Site and Congregational Prayer Program

Madrasah Tsanawiyah An Nuur Sengon Sari is a formal Islamic secondary education institution located in Asahan Regency, North Sumatra, Indonesia, operating under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kementerian Agama). The madrasah serves approximately 180 students across three grade levels, with a teaching staff of 22 educators, of whom two hold specialization in Fiqh instruction. Based on documentation review, the institutional vision explicitly states the goal of producing graduates with strong religious character (*akhlāq al-karīmah*) and academic competence, reflecting the dual mission of Islamic secondary education in Indonesia.

Observational data confirmed that the madrasah has established congregational Dhuhr prayer as a mandatory daily program embedded within the official school schedule. Prayer time is allocated from 12.00 to 12.30 WIB, immediately preceding the afternoon learning session. Documentation of the school calendar and daily schedule verified that this allocation is consistent throughout the academic year, with adjustments only made during examination periods or national holidays. The prayer hall (*musalla*) is located within the school compound and has a capacity for approximately 60

worshippers. Observation of the physical environment revealed that the musalla is equipped with sufficient prayer mats, ablution facilities accommodating 10 simultaneous users, Quran copies, and an audio system for the call to prayer (aẓān).

However, observational data also documented that the current implementation follows a rotating class schedule, whereby only one class (approximately 30–35 students) participates in congregational Dhuhr prayer on each designated day. This means that each class participates in the congregational prayer program approximately two to three times per week rather than daily. Interview data with the school principal confirmed that this system was adopted due to musalla capacity limitations and overlapping schedule constraints. Student interview data revealed a mixed perception of this arrangement, with several students expressing that the infrequent rotation reduced their sense of personal obligation toward daily congregational prayer.

Strategies Employed by Fiqh Teachers in Improving Congregational Dhuhr Prayer

Observational data showed that Fiqh teachers at MTs An-Nuur consistently participated in congregational Dhuhr prayer alongside students, arriving at the musalla before the aẓān and assuming the role of prayer leader (imām) or senior congregant. This consistent physical presence was observed on all prayer days during the four week observation period. During three post prayer sessions, the Fiqh teacher was observed providing brief reflective reminders (tausiyah) to students regarding the spiritual and social benefits of congregational prayer.

Interview data with Fiqh Teacher A revealed that the contextual integration of jurisprudential content into prayer guidance is a deliberate pedagogical strategy: "We try to make sure that whatever we teach in the classroom about prayer procedures, the conditions and pillars of ṣalāh, and the rewards of congregation, students can see and experience directly when we perform Dhuhr together. The classroom and the musalla should not be two separate worlds." Fiqh Teacher B corroborated this approach, adding that she regularly uses post prayer discussions to connect students' experience of congregational worship with the Fiqh curriculum, particularly lessons on jamā'ah prayer, Islamic brotherhood (ukhuwwah), and time management in worship.

Documentation of lesson plans and weekly teaching schedules confirmed that both Fiqh teachers systematically incorporate prayer-related topics into their Fiqh units, with lesson objectives explicitly referencing students' behavioral application of prayer jurisprudence in the school setting. Teacher

attendance records showed a 94% rate of Fiqh teacher participation in congregational prayer supervision over the observed academic semester, indicating a high level of professional commitment.

Interview data with the school principal indicated that Fiqh teachers also function as coordinators of the broader worship supervision team, providing guidance to homeroom teachers and subject teachers assigned to prayer supervision on non Fiqh days. Additionally, documentation of communication records showed that Fiqh teachers periodically issue written reminders and guidance notes to parents through the school's student agenda books, reinforcing congregational prayer habits at home. Eight of the ten students interviewed expressed that the Fiqh teachers' direct participation in prayer was the most influential factor motivating them to attend congregational prayer consistently.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Congregational Prayer Implementation

Observational data identified several prominent supporting factors. The availability of a dedicated musalla within the school compound, equipped with functioning ablution facilities and prayer equipment, was directly observed to facilitate orderly and dignified prayer performance. The school bell system and timetable were observed to be synchronized with prayer time, allowing smooth transitions from academic sessions to worship activities. Documentation of the school's Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) confirmed that congregational prayer is classified as a compulsory non-academic program with attendance tracked through a dedicated prayer monitoring sheet signed by the supervising teacher.

Interview data with the principal revealed that the school administration has formalized congregational prayer supervision as part of teachers' non-teaching duties, ensuring institutional accountability beyond individual teacher initiative. Parental interview data indicated that a majority of parents (six out of eight interviewed) expressed strong support for the school's prayer program, with several reporting that their children had begun performing Dhuhr prayer at home following participation in the school program. This suggests a positive spillover effect of school-based religious habituation into the family environment.

Conversely, observational data documented several inhibiting factors. On multiple occasions, students were observed arriving late to the prayer area, with some requiring repeated reminders from the supervising teacher before joining the congregation. Observation field notes recorded that digital device use including smartphones was evident among some students during transition periods preceding prayer time, contributing to delays in preparation. Interview

data with students attributed tardiness primarily to extended socializing during the transition between the final lesson and prayer time, as well as to disinclination on days when the prayer schedule conflicted with students' preferred activities.

Documentation of student discipline records for the observed semester revealed 34 recorded instances of late arrival or absence from congregational prayer across all classes, representing approximately 5.8% of total scheduled prayer attendances. Interview data with Fiqh teachers identified inconsistent supervision by non Fiqh teachers as a recurring challenge, with Teacher A noting: "On days when I am not directly supervising, I sometimes receive reports that prayer starts late or some students slip away. Not all teachers feel equally responsible for the prayer program."

Impact of Congregational Dhuhr Prayer on Students' Character and Discipline

Observational data over the four week period revealed a gradual improvement in students' self organizational behavior during prayer activities. By the third and fourth weeks, students in the observed classes demonstrated greater initiative in organizing prayer rows (şaff), performing ablution without prompting, and maintaining silence during the iqāmah. This behavioral progression suggests that consistent participation produces observable improvements in students' procedural discipline in worship.

Interview data with students yielded qualitative evidence of internalized values. Six of the eight interviewed students articulated an understanding of congregational prayer that went beyond procedural compliance, linking the practice to personal discipline, punctuality, and social responsibility. Student C stated: "Since we do Dhuhr prayer together here regularly, I feel more aware that prayer is not something you can delay. I also feel closer to my classmates because we pray together." Documentation of the school's disciplinary records for the observed period indicated that students with higher congregational prayer attendance rates demonstrated lower incidences of tardiness in academic sessions and fewer disciplinary referrals.

Interview data with Fiqh teachers and the school principal consistently reported a perceived positive correlation between consistent participation in congregational prayer and students' overall moral comportment within the school environment. Teacher B observed: "Students who are disciplined in prayer tend to be more responsible in other aspects they complete assignments on time, they are more respectful to teachers, and they get along better with peers." Documentation of teacher evaluation reports from the previous two semesters corroborated this observation, noting improvement in collective

religious behavior among students following the intensification of prayer supervision in 2023.

Discussion

The Strategic Role of Fiqh Teachers as Religious Habitators

The findings of this study confirm that Fiqh teachers at MTs An Nuur Sengon Sari fulfill a multidimensional role that extends well beyond jurisprudential instruction. Their consistent physical presence in congregational prayer, active supervision of student participation, and contextual integration of Fiqh content with worship practice constitute a coherent and deliberate strategy of religious habituation. This finding aligns with the theoretical framework proposed by Uno and Lamatenggo (Lamatenggo, 2016), who emphasize that effective teachers in Islamic educational settings must function simultaneously as knowledge transmitters, moral exemplars, and facilitators of Islamic living (*ta'dib*). The high teacher attendance rate in prayer supervision (94%) observed in this study provides empirical support for the proposition that teacher consistency is a decisive predictor of students' worship discipline (Huda, 2020).

Compared to previous studies, this research offers a more granular account of the mechanisms through which Fiqh teachers translate their pedagogical roles into practical worship guidance. (Ridwan et al., 2023) documented the general function of PAI teachers in improving prayer discipline but did not specifically address the integration of classroom Fiqh instruction with *musalla* activities. The present study demonstrates that this integration evidenced through lesson plans explicitly referencing behavioral prayer objectives and post-prayer reflective discussions constitutes a critical bridge between cognitive religious knowledge and embodied worship practice. This finding advances the understanding of Fiqh pedagogy as an applied science (*'ilm 'amalī*) rather than a purely normative or theoretical discipline (Abrar, 2019).

The role of exemplary conduct (*uswah ḥasanah*) identified in this study is consistent with classical Islamic pedagogical theory, which positions the teacher's moral conduct as the primary medium of character transmission (Nata, 2016). Contemporary educational research similarly confirms that observational learning from role models is among the most powerful mechanisms of behavioral change in adolescent populations (Bandura, n.d.). The finding that eight of ten interviewed students identified teacher participation as the most influential motivational factor suggests that embodied exemplarity carries greater persuasive force than verbal instruction alone a

conclusion that has significant implications for teacher training and professional development in Islamic institutions.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors: A Systemic Analysis

The supporting factors identified in this study particularly institutional policy formalization, adequate worship facilities, and parental alignment reflect the systemic interdependencies that determine the effectiveness of school based religious programs. These findings are consistent with (Putra daulay, 2012). observation that the quality of Islamic education outcomes is inseparable from the quality of the institutional and social environment in which education takes place. The formalization of congregational prayer as a compulsory non-academic program with documented attendance monitoring represents a significant institutional commitment that legitimizes the Fiqh teacher's supervisory role and creates collective accountability among all teaching staff (Putra daulay, 2012).

The positive parental support documented in this study contrasts with findings from some earlier research that identified parental indifference as a major obstacle to school based religious programs (Roma & Coop, 2017). This difference may reflect the relatively strong religious culture of the Asahan community and the active communication between teachers and parents through written guidance notes a strategy that merits broader adoption. The spillover effect of school prayer habituation into the family environment, reported by six of eight parent informants, suggests that well designed school based religious programs can function as catalysts for broader community religious renewal, a finding that extends the theoretical understanding of madrasah as a center of social and religious transformation (Asha, 2020).

The inhibiting factors identified particularly adolescent digital distraction and inconsistent supervision by non-specialist teachers reflect tensions between the demands of contemporary adolescent culture and the expectations of Islamic religious education. Ahyar (Asha, 2020). analysis of digital culture's impact on adolescent religious practice provides a theoretical framework for understanding the smartphone-related delays observed in this study, arguing that educational institutions must develop adaptive digital literacy strategies rather than imposing blanket prohibitions. The finding that supervision inconsistency among non Fiqh teachers reduces program effectiveness highlights the importance of whole school approaches to religious habituation, in which all staff share responsibility for worship guidance (Fatmawati, 2016).

Impact on Character Formation: Toward a Comprehensive Model

The character development outcomes documented in this study encompassing improved time discipline, enhanced social cohesion, and greater

moral responsibility provide empirical support for the Islamic educational philosophy that positions worship (*ibādah*) as the primary medium of character formation (*tarbiyah*). Surahyo (Surahyo & Nurwahyudi, 2024) similarly found that consistent congregational prayer participation is positively associated with students' emotional intelligence and social adaptability, suggesting that the benefits of prayer habituation extend beyond the spiritual domain into the affective and social dimensions of student development. The present study adds to this body of evidence by demonstrating that these outcomes are most pronounced when prayer habituation is combined with reflective post-prayer guidance by Fiqh teachers.

The correlation between high prayer attendance and reduced disciplinary referrals observed in the institutional documentation of this study is consistent with broader research on the relationship between religious practice and prosocial behavior in adolescents (Budianto, 2020). This finding challenges purely behaviorist interpretations of school discipline that focus on punitive measures and instead supports a virtue ethics approach in which religious habituation is understood as a process of character cultivation rather than compliance enforcement. The sustainability of this character development, as evidenced by students' continuation of prayer habits at home, further demonstrates that internalization rather than mere institutional compliance is achievable through well supported religious education programs (Zakia & Murniyetti, 2023).

Compared to Nuha's (Nuha, 2024) analysis of Fiqh teacher roles in improving students' prayer, which primarily emphasized guidance and monitoring functions, this study reveals a more comprehensive picture that includes the affective and relational dimensions of teacher student interaction in congregational prayer settings. The qualitative data gathered through indepth interviews and sustained observation in this research reveal that students' spiritual development is deeply influenced not only by structured programs but by the quality of interpersonal relationships with their Fiqh teachers a dimension that quantitative studies are less equipped to capture.

Optimization Strategies: Implications for Practice

The evidence gathered in this study supports several practical recommendations for optimizing the role of Fiqh teachers in congregational prayer programs. First, the integration of prayer behavioral objectives into formal Fiqh lesson plans should be systematized and made a standard requirement in Islamic secondary school curricula, ensuring that classroom instruction and worship practice are explicitly and consistently connected (Fatmawati, 2016). Second, the whole-school approach to prayer supervision in

which all teaching staff assume shared responsibility for worship guidance should be formalized through school regulations and teacher performance evaluation criteria, addressing the inconsistency issues identified in this study (Putra daulay, 2012).

Third, strategies for engaging parents as active partners in religious habituation including regular written communication, parent-teacher meetings focused on worship guidance, and shared religious education resources should be strengthened and institutionalized (Putra daulay, 2012). Fourth, teacher professional development programs should explicitly address the competencies required for effective religious habituation, including knowledge of adolescent psychology, digital literacy, reflective communication techniques, and community engagement strategies (Mustafa, 2024). These recommendations are grounded in the findings of this study and are corroborated by a substantial body of Islamic education research, providing a practical and evidence based framework for improving congregational prayer programs in Indonesian madrasah institutions.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Fiqh teacher at MTs An-Nuur Sengon Sari functions as a pivotal agent in the religious character formation of students, operating through a strategic integration of exemplary conduct (*uswah ḥasanah*), contextual Fiqh instruction, persuasive guidance, and institutional collaboration. The triangulation of observational, interview, and documentary data demonstrates that the effectiveness of congregational Dhuhr prayer as a character education program is directly contingent upon the consistency, professionalism, and pedagogical creativity of Fiqh teachers. Supporting factors including strong institutional policy, adequate facilities, and parental engagement significantly amplify teacher effectiveness, while inhibiting factors such as digital distraction, inconsistent multi teacher supervision, and the rotating prayer schedule require targeted institutional and pedagogical responses.

The theoretical contribution of this research lies in its articulation of an integrated model of Islamic religious habituation that connects jurisprudential pedagogy, behavioral exemplarity, and systemic institutional support as interdependent components of effective character education. Practically, this study provides evidence-based recommendations for Islamic secondary school administrators and educators seeking to strengthen worship habituation programs within resource constrained environments. Future research should extend this framework to comparative multi site studies across different

regional and socioeconomic contexts to assess the transferability and generalizability of these findings.

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