



### THE INTERPRETATION OF RELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING OF HEARING AND SPEECH-IMPAIRED CHILDREN

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#### Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini yaitu: mengetahui interpretasi paham keagamaan anak usia dini penyandang tuna rungu wicara apakah sudah sesuai dengan teori berfikir dalam psikologi agama menurut Piaget, Salkind, Hurlock dan Zakiah. Penelitian kualitatif ini menggunakan wawancara untuk memperoleh hasil interpretasi paham keagamaan anak. Delapan aspek yang digali adalah agama, Tuhan, sholat dan do'a, pahala dan dosa, malaikat dan setan, surga dan neraka, kematian dan kiamat. Hasil penelitian ini adalah Anak usia 7 dan 8 tahun penyandang tuna rungu wicara menginterpretasikan kedelapan aspek agama tersebut dengan simbol keagamaan, dan dengan sesuatu yang dijadikan nyata bagi mereka hal ini sesuai dengan teori Piaget, Salkind, Hurlock, dan Zakiah Daradjat; Anak tuna rungu total dapat menginterpretasikan agama, neraka dan kematian lebih detil dibanding dengan anak yang masih memiliki sisa pendengaran yang sangat baik. Dari penelitian ini diperoleh pula faktor yang mempengaruhi serta kendalanya, yaitu usia dan ketuna runguannya menjadi salah satu alasan bagi orang tua dan guru untuk belum memberikan informasi yang mendalam dan tepat tentang agama karena keterbatasan dalam berkomunikasi. Sehingga peneliti memberikan saran berupa pendekatan komunikasi dua arah yang baik antara orang tua dan anak serta media visual menjadi salah satu media komunikasi yang baik dan tepat untuk membantu berkomunikasi dengan anak tuna rungu wicara.

#### Abstract

*This study aimed to find out the interpretation of the religious understanding of hearing and speech-impaired children whether it is in accordance with thinking theory in religious psychology according to Piaget, Salkind, Hurlock and Zakiah Daradjat. This qualitative research used interviews to obtain the interpretation of children's religious understanding. The eight aspects that are explored are religion, God, prayer, merit and sin, angels and demons, heaven and hell, death and doomsday. The results of this study indicated that 7 and 8 year old children with hearing impairments interpreted the eight aspects of the religion with religious symbols, and with something that is made real to them. This is in accordance with the theories of Piaget, Salkind, Hurlock, and Zakiah Daradjat; Children who are totally deaf could interpret religion, hell and death in more detail than children who still have very good hearing. From this study, it was also obtained the factors that influence and the constraints, namely age and its hearing impairment, were the reason for parents and teachers not to provide in-depth and precise information about religion due to limitations in communication. Therefore, the researcher provide advice in the form of a good two-way communication approach between parents and children and visual media become one of the good and appropriate communication media to help communicate with hearing and speech-impaired children*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Religion in the modern era is now seen as an essence in the pattern of human attitudes, especially in building a religious perspective of children. Therefore, religion becomes the most important foundation and main influence in the behavior of one's life (Paul Davies, 2002). Religion is believed to grow by children through guidance, education and training from the environment and will continue to develop along with the increase of experience and insight (Zakiah Daradjat, 1970).

Beliefs that someone has will affect their behavior. The spiritual aspects of hearing and impairment children also experience a gap amid the limitations of knowing their God and interacting through worship and realizing religious norms (Gerungan, 2004). Meanwhile, children with hearing and speech impairments have the same opportunities as normal children in general. They have the right to grow well especially spiritually (Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 2, 12, 13,14, 15, 17 by the United Nations in 1989 and Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning

Amendment to Law No. 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection Article 1, 21, 24, 26, 49, 56, 64 and 70).

Children aged 3-6 years are very identical to concrete thinking rather than abstract thinking (Jean Piaget, 2010) while children are very close to abstract things such as in religious matters (Ramayulis, 2011). Various limitations that exist in families that have children with hearing and speech disabilities make family difficult in providing services in handling these children. Likewise, the officers and providers of hearing and speech disabilities services are often constrained by the limited ability and skills that lead to not optimal service and social rehabilitation of children with hearing and speech impairments (Ministry of Social Affairs, 2008).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Hearing and Speech-Impaired Children**

The classification of hearing-impaired children is in accordance with the level of hearing impairment (Somad and Hernawati, 1996) as follows:

1. 0-26 dB shows that someone still has normal hearing.
2. 27 - 40 dB shows that someone has difficulty in hearing distant sounds, requires a seat that is strategically located and requires speech therapy (mild hearing loss).
3. 41-55 dB shows that someone understands the language of conversation, cannot take class discussions, requires hearing aids and speech therapy, (moderate hearing loss).
4. 56 - 57 dB shows that someone can only hear sound from a short distance, still has the remaining hearing to learn language and talk using hearing aids and in a special way (a little heavy hearing loss).
5. 71 - 90 dB shows that someone can only hear very close sounds, sometimes deaf, require special hearing aids and exercises (severe hearing loss).
6. 91 dB above shows that someone may be aware of the sound or sound with vibration, depend much on the vision of the hearing for the process of receiving information, and the person concerned is deaf (heavy hearing-loss).

### **Thinking Theory**

Diane Papalia (Diane, 2008) describes the stages of children's thinking, as follows:

1. Prenatal Period; Ability to learn, remember and respond to sensory stimuli begin to develop
2. Infants and toddlers (from 0 to age 3 years); in the first week, the ability to learn and remember already exists. The use of symbols and the ability to solve problems is developed at the end of the second year. The understanding and use of languages develop rapidly.
3. Early childhood (3 to 6 years); his thinking to a certain extent is still egocentric, but his understanding of other people's perspectives is increasing. Cognitive immaturity leads to illogical ideas about the world. There is an increase in memory and language. Intelligence becomes more predictable. Entering preschool is a common thing even more kindergarten.

4. Childhood (6 to 11 years), egocentrism disappears, children begin to think logically but concretely. There is an increase in memory and language skills. Cognitive excellence allows children to benefit from formal schooling.

Meanwhile, Piaget said that a child changes thinking systematically according to age changes. At least there are four stages of a child's thinking (Piaget and Inhelder trj 2010, and Salkind, 2009), namely:

- a. Sensorimotor (from 0 to 2 years). At this stage, the baby builds an understanding of the world by coordinating sensor experiences in the form of 'sensorimotor' physical actions, such as inserting objects into the mouth, touching and seeing things. Children at this stage begin to understand the existence of a real object but have a fear of new things.
- b. Pre-operational (ages 2-7 years). A child begins to be able to paint the world by using words, images, and symbols. The characteristic of this stage is

egocentrism. Children see and interpret things only from their own perspective. Children do not want to accept the perspective of others, have not been able to think logically and make rational reasons. This is because children are not ready to engage in operations or mental manipulation that requires logical thinking. The characteristics of this stage are the expansion of the use of symbolic thinking, or representational abilities.

- c. Operational concrete (ages 7-11 years). This stage is characterized by the ability of children to start thinking logically and make classifications. But it is still limited to real objects and events, not an abstract concept. A child at this stage has also been able to make rational reasons but has not been accompanied by the ability to synthesize.
- d. Formal operational (age 12 years above). This stage is a development full of mental capacity and thinking. Someone at this stage has the ability to

synthesize, abstract and make complex concepts.

Zakiah Daradjat also states that children will receive all the answers given to all their questions and what children believe is very dependent on what is taught by the people around them, both parents, teachers and the environment because the child has still not have logical thinking (Zakiah, 1970).

### **Theory of Religuity**

According to Elkind, the development of child religuity is in line with cognitive development. Three stages of development of religuity in children according to Elkind (Elkind, 1970) include:

- a. Search for representation, starting at preschool ages (ages 5-7 years). At this stage the child's acceptance of God is accompanied by the search for real representation of Him. God must be 'real' in their minds so that religion is regarded as an absolute gift from God that really cannot be changed.
- b. Search for relations, starting in the middle of childhood (age 7-9 years). In this stage, the idea of

religion becomes 'very real' in a child's mind. Children who receive ideas about God and the holy book feel they have real relationships with both that are realized through the practice of worship. They feel confident when worshipping or praying and really talking with God, often asking for things that are real like toys, clothes, food, and so on. Children begin to build relationships with the wider social world and see religion as something inherited from the family. For example, at this stage children believe that animals that are nurtured by Christians are also Christians.

- c. Search for comprehension, starting at the end of childhood to adolescence (ages 10-14 years). At this stage, a child begins to be able to understand the complexity of religious rituals and practices. They began to understand that someone could move from one religion to another. This is because they believe that religion comes from themselves, not because of external things. They begin to be able to think abstractly and accept

the concept of religion as something that does not always seem real like the existence of heaven, hell, God that has never been seen, and so on.

Ernes Harmar as quoted by Ramayulis concludes three stages of the development of children's thinking about God (Ramayulis, 2011), namely:

- a. Fairness stage that occurs in children aged 3 to 6 years. At this stage, children perceive God like characters in cartoon stories.
- b. The realistic stage occurs at the age of 6 to 11 years. Children at this stage perceive God in a form that is more real or more similar to humans. They are also used to using religious symbols.
- c. Individualist stage, which occurs in adults. At this stage, the relationship between God and humans is very personal so that the concept of God for each individual is different.

The concept of child religion according to Hurlock (Hurlock, 2000) is:

1. God: a large figure dressed in a long white robe, bearded and

long haired, with a good face, able to see humans and punish those who do evil and send good ones to heaven and God can be approached by praying

2. Heaven: it is in the clouds, a place where God lives, full of happiness, peace and eternity, where everything you want can be obtained.
3. Hell: it is far in the bowels of the earth, full of suffering, for those who do evil.
4. Angels: good people who have died and lived in heaven, dressed in white.
5. Satan: ruler of hell, bad person.
6. Prayer: a way to approach God or get something important from God.
7. Destiny: something that only God can do.

The concept of children about scripture and life after death is described by Zakiah Daradjat (Zakiah, 1970) as follows:

1. Scripture: the ultimate truth book written by God and does not believe in it is considered as sin.

2. Life after death: people who will go to heaven or hell depend on their deeds before they die.

## **METHOD**

This research is a descriptive qualitative study. The data collection technique in this study was used by observation and interview. Observations were made to find out the learning process, behavior and attitudes of informants of hearing and speech impaired children, to check, and to explore the meaning of the answers to the subject through facial expressions, behavior and gesture.

Interviews used are in-depth interviews that are focused and are open, explorative, creative, flexible, and use simple language that is easily understood by children. Before conducting an interview, the researcher first composed interview guidelines or the framework of the questions asked. Topics and outlines of the questions asked: 1) Religion, 2) God, 3) Worship and Prayer, 4) Reward and Sin, 5) Heaven and hell, 6) Angels and Satan, 7) Life and Death, 8) Judgment Day.

The researcher selected data from interviews, observation, and documentation studies by focusing on data that is more interesting, important, useful and new. Based on these considerations, the subsequent data were grouped into various categories according to the qualifications of the questions and the existing theories. From the results of the selection later, the researcher began to carry out the core focus to be analyzed.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the research that has been done so far, there is a new picture of hearing-speech impaired children. In grades 1 and 2 of Sekolah Dasar Luar Biasa, the learning process used thematic models emphasizing more on the introduction of the environment. This means that children already recognize themselves and accept their differences with others. This is as explained by the Religion Teacher at the interview on November 24, 2017.



**Figure 1** Hearing-Speech Impaired Children's Spatial Layout

The layout of the classrooms is arranged into one. This means that grade 1 and 2 children are in the same room. This is done because of the limitations of educators. The table also looks different, the bench in this class is arranged to form the letter U. This is done so that the child can see the teacher's face clearly. This is in accordance with the results of interviews with grade 1 and 2 Teachers at Sekolah Dasar LB on November 27, 2017.

In grade 1 and 2 hearing-speech impaired students, the majority of them experienced total right and left hearing loss. Even so, there were

some children who only have total left or right hearing loss while others still have the remaining hearing even if only a few percent. However, there is one student of grade 2 elementary school who still has a very good hearing left so that the child can communicate well.

In terms of the age of all informants (7 and 8 years), Piaget 2010 and Salkind 2009 categorize the two ages in two groups, namely pre-operational (2-7 years) in which children begin to be able to paint the world using words, operational images and symbols and concrete (7-11 years) children begin to think logically and make classifications that are limited to real objects and events.

Diane 2008 classifies all informants in the classification of childhood (6-11 years) in which children of this age are egocentrically lost, children begin to think logically but concretely, memory skills and language skills increase. The fact that is obtained in the field is that the child shows strong memory ability. This is corroborated by the results of interviews with the classroom teacher but the language skills have not



increased. This is due to his disability which results in both teachers, parents and the environment.

Related to abstract material proposed by the researcher, both parents and teachers indicated that it was only teaching things that were outward in nature such as prayer and prayer movements. Because the limitations in communicating and transferring abstract things to hearing and speech-impaired children in small classes are added to the limitations of the media and the method of learning which causes parents and educators not to freely provide sufficient information to children such as normal children in general. This is as explained by the Teacher and Parents at the interview on November 27, 2017.

All informants, both ages 7 and 8 years old, have attained their religion even though they still use symbolic languages such as Prayer, Church, Mosque as interpretations of religious identity. This is in accordance with Elkind 1970's statement that children aged 3-6 years are familiar with religious identity through religious symbols.

All informants did not have any description of God so there was no interpretation of it. This is not like the theory of Hurlock 2000, Harmer 2011 which states that children describe God as humans.

All informants can interpret the forms of worship such as prayer as taught by parents. In addition, informants could provide reasons for praying to get money, food and toys. This is in line with what is stated by Zakiah Daradjat 1970, Long, Elkind and Spilka 1970, Hurlock 2000 which states that prayer, worship is a prayer with movements taught by parents and the environment as a way to approach or ask for something real to God

All children show the same interpretation of heaven and hell as a beautiful and ugly and frightening place, this is what Hurlock 2000, Elkind 1970 states. This is in line with Zakiah Daradjat 1970 and Piaget 2010 that heaven is a place of God full of goodness whereas hell is a place of suffering .

Informants cannot interpret angels because children obtain this information from parents, teachers

and the environment. This statement contradicts Hurlock 2000's theory in which children are able to interpret angels as the spirit of good people.

However, the informant can interpret Satan as a frightening figure. The informant's ability gives this interpretation because the informant obtained information from TV. This is in line with the statement of Zakiah Daradjat 1970 and Elkind 1970 that the child will receive all the information given from his environment.

The informant interpreted *dead* as a condition of long sleep in the ground. This is similar to Hurlock 2000 statement stating it as the condition of sleep and never wake up again. The findings indicated that informants rearranged different symbols and experiences of death based on concrete objects because the information was still in the pre-operational stage as described by Piaget 2010. Experience and influence from the environment influenced the interpretation, the condition of informants in accordance with of Zakiah Daradjat in 1970.

Three informants said that the apocalypse was a natural disaster until the destruction of the earth. Judgment day interpretation based on the results of information obtained comes from the environment and gadgets as described by Zakiah Daradjat 1970, Piaget 2010 and Diane 2008 that this interpretation uses symbolic thinking by relating one situation to another based on experience. This situation or experience is concrete so it is attached to it.

Based on the results of these studies, it can be concluded that even hearing-impaired children can get information from anywhere even though it is an abstract matter. Because today there are many videos/films that visualize abstract things such as demons, angels, heaven, hell and doomsday. For example, as stated one of the informants who obtained this information from the shows on Youtube.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the research and discussion conducted on the abstract interpretation of hearing

and speech impaired children on religion, it can be concluded that:

1. Children aged 7 and 8 years old with hearing impaired interpret the eight aspects of the religion with religious symbols, and with something that is made real to them. This is in accordance with the theories of Piaget, Salkind, Hurlock, and Zakiah Daradjat.
2. Total hearing-impaired children could interpret religion, hell and death in more detail than children who still have very good hearing.
3. Early age and disability is one reason for parents and teachers not to provide in-depth and precise information about religion.
4. The limitations in communicating with hearing impaired children are the biggest obstacles in the introduction and implementing of religion.
5. A good two-way communication approach between parents and children and visual media is one of the good and appropriate communication media to help communicate with hearing and speech-impaired children.

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