

Evaluation of the Implementation of the "Madrasah Ramah Anak" Program in Raudhatul Athfal in Sleman Regency

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Abstract: This study evaluates the implementation of the "Madrasah Ramah Anak" (Child-Friendly Madrasah, MRA) program at Raudhatul Athfal (RA) institutions in Sleman Regency. The MRA program aims to foster a safe, inclusive, and supportive educational environment that respects children's rights. The qualitative approach used a case study method, involving observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The study involved informants such as principals, teachers, parents, and students from selected RA institutions. The study findings revealed that although most RAs in Sleman Regency have taken steps to implement MRA principles—such as building safe play areas and promoting children's participation in learning—challenges remain, including limited educator training, funding, infrastructure, and parental support. The study suggests that improving teacher training, expanding child-friendly facilities, and strengthening partnerships between RAs, parents, and local governments are critical to achieving MRA goals. This evaluation is intended to guide policy development and improve the quality of child-centered education at RA institutions in Sleman Regency.

Keywords: Madrasah Ramah Anak, Raudhatul Athfal, Early Childhood Education, Sleman Regency.

Introduction

The "Madrasah Ramah Anak" (Child-Friendly Madrasah, MRA) program is a significant educational initiative in Indonesia that aims to create safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments for children, particularly in early childhood education settings such as Raudhatul Athfal (RA). This program aligns with the global principles of children's rights as articulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), emphasizing the necessity of nurturing and protective educational spaces for young learners (United Nations, 1989). The MRA program seeks to promote a holistic approach to education that prioritizes children's physical, emotional, and cognitive well-being, allowing them to thrive in their formative years.

In the context of early childhood education in Indonesia, the implementation of the MRA program is becoming increasingly important. The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture

recognizes the importance of building a child-friendly educational environment that fosters inclusivity, respect for diversity, and active participation of children in the learning process (Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia, 2018). MRA is a form of collaboration between the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture in realizing Child-Friendly Schools (SRA), namely schools that are able to protect children's rights and carry out teaching and learning activities that are oriented towards children. Raudhatul Athfal institutions, which primarily serve Muslim children aged 0 to 6 years, play an important role in providing early childhood education that is culturally relevant and sensitive to the needs of their communities. However, the effectiveness of the MRA program depends largely on how well its principles are translated into practice in these institutions.

Research indicates that while many RAs in Indonesia are adopting child-friendly practices, various challenges hinder the effective

implementation of the MRA program. These challenges include insufficient training for educators, limited financial resources, inadequate facilities, and a lack of engagement from parents and the community (Ghazali, 2019; Sari et al., 2020). Additionally, studies have shown that educators often struggle to fully grasp the concepts underlying child-friendly education, leading to inconsistent application of MRA principles in daily teaching practices (Mujib & Sadiyah, 2021). Such barriers can significantly affect the quality of early childhood education and the overall learning experiences of children, thereby undermining the goals of the MRA program.

The current study aims to evaluate the implementation of the MRA program in Raudhatul Athfal institutions across Sleman Regency, focusing on the extent to which the program's principles are being realized in practice. This research will employ a qualitative approach, utilizing observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis to gather comprehensive data from various stakeholders, including educators, parents, and community members. By exploring the experiences and perceptions of these key informants, the study seeks to identify successful practices as well as obstacles encountered in the implementation process.

The findings of this evaluation are expected to provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the MRA program and to inform policymakers and educators about strategies for improving child-centered education in the region. Furthermore, this research aspires to contribute to the broader discourse on early childhood education in Indonesia, highlighting the importance of creating educational environments that are not only child-friendly but also responsive to the needs and rights of all children.

In summary, the evaluation of the MRA program in Raudhatul Athfal institutions in Sleman Regency is crucial for understanding its impact on children's educational experiences and outcomes. As Indonesia continues to advance its commitment to child-friendly education, this research will serve as a reference for future policy development and the enhancement of early

childhood education practices throughout the country.

Materials and Methods

Study area

This study employs a qualitative research approach, utilizing a case study methodology to evaluate the implementation of the "Madrasah Ramah Anak" (Child-Friendly Madrasah, MRA) program across selected Raudhatul Athfal (RA) institutions in Sleman Regency. The qualitative approach is particularly well-suited for this research as it allows for an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, perceptions, and practices regarding child-friendly education (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Research Design

A case study design was adopted to gain comprehensive insights into the implementation of the MRA program. This design is appropriate for examining complex phenomena within their real-life context, enabling researchers to capture the richness and diversity of experiences in early childhood education settings (Yin, 2018). The focus on selected RAs within Sleman Regency allows for a detailed exploration of local practices, challenges, and successes in implementing child-friendly educational principles.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using a combination of three primary methods, ensuring a multi-faceted understanding of the MRA program's implementation:

1. **Observation:** Systematic observations were conducted in the selected RAs to assess the physical environment, learning activities, and interactions between educators and children. The observations focused on key aspects such as the safety and accessibility of play areas, the organization of classroom settings, and the implementation of activities that promote children's participation and well-being. This technique allowed researchers to gather direct

evidence of how child-friendly principles were put into practice (Patton, 2015).

2. **In-depth Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants, including madrasah principals, teachers, parents, and students. The interviews were designed to elicit rich qualitative data regarding the participants' experiences with the MRA program, perceived challenges, successes, and suggestions for improvement. Open-ended questions encouraged participants to share their thoughts in detail, providing depth and context to the findings (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).
3. **Document Analysis:** Relevant documents were reviewed to supplement observational and interview data. This included program implementation reports, training materials for educators, and policies related to child welfare and education. Analyzing these documents provided a broader understanding of the structural and procedural elements of the MRA program, helping to contextualize the qualitative data collected from participants (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis focused on assessing the alignment between the stated goals of the MRA program and actual practices observed in the RAs.

Research Informants

The research informants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure that participants had direct experience and knowledge regarding the MRA program. The criteria for selection included the informants' roles within the madrasah and their involvement in implementing child-friendly practices. The informants included:

- **Madrasah Principals:** To provide insights into administrative strategies, leadership practices, and the overall vision for implementing the MRA program within their institutions.
- **Teachers:** To explore their pedagogical practices, methods of engaging children, and perceptions of the effectiveness of the MRA program. Teachers' experiences were crucial for assessing the application of child-friendly principles in daily learning activities.
- **Parents:** To evaluate their perceptions of the MRA program's impact on their children's

education and well-being. Parental involvement is vital for creating a supportive educational environment, and their feedback provided valuable insights into community engagement.

- **Students:** To gather feedback on their experiences and satisfaction with the learning environment. Understanding students' perspectives is essential for assessing the success of the MRA program in promoting a child-centered educational approach.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, a method suitable for identifying patterns and themes within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process involved several stages, including familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, identifying themes, and reviewing themes to ensure they accurately represented the data. The analysis aimed to uncover insights related to the implementation of the MRA program, the challenges faced by educators, and the overall impact on children's experiences in the selected RAs.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical standards for research involving human participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection, ensuring that they were fully aware of the study's purpose and their right to withdraw at any time. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained by assigning pseudonyms to participants and securely storing data.

Results and Discussion

The evaluation of the "Madrasah Ramah Anak" (Child-Friendly Madrasah, MRA) program in Raudhatul Athfal (RA) institutions across Sleman Regency revealed a mixture of successes and challenges in its implementation. Data collected from observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis provided comprehensive insights into the practices and experiences of educators, parents, and students involved in the program.

1. Training and Implementation of “Madrasah Ramah Anak” Program

The findings revealed that most teachers in Raudhatul Athfal (RA) schools reported limited access to training that specifically focused on the “Madrasah Ramah Anak” (Child-Friendly Madrasah, MRA) program. This lack of training has led to varying levels of understanding and implementation among teachers regarding child safety policies and practices. In particular, without comprehensive training, many teachers lack the skills necessary to effectively manage emergency preparedness and response, which are essential components of a safe and child-friendly learning environment.

Therefore, increasing training opportunities is an important area for development. Building teacher capacity through structured training programs will equip them with knowledge and skills in MRA principles and emergency management. Structured programs can cover core aspects of child-friendly policies, such as positive discipline, mental health support, physical safety practices, and inclusive learning strategies, as well as practical emergency preparedness techniques, such as first aid, risk assessment, and crisis communication. Building this capacity among RA teachers will also strengthen overall compliance with MRA standards in schools.

Although some RA schools have received official certification as “Madrasah Ramah Anak” (MRA), the actual level of program implementation varies widely. Certification status among these schools is uneven, as shown in the table below, with 60% of schools reported to be certified while 40% still lack formal recognition. Teachers in schools without certification face challenges in meeting the standards set by the MRA program, ranging from limited resources to infrastructure constraints. Certified schools, while generally more aligned with MRA guidelines, still face implementation challenges, often related to budgetary or material support, that impact their ability to maintain comprehensive safety standards.

These differences underscore the need for technical and financial support to help non-certified schools meet CFS standards. For example,

supportive resources could include safety equipment, such as fire extinguishers and emergency kits, and materials to facilitate inclusive learning environments, such as accessible classroom layouts and sensory learning tools. Further research and attention to local needs in RA schools are essential to ensure that the ideals of the CFS program are not only recognized in certified institutions but also effectively integrated and supported in all schools across the region.

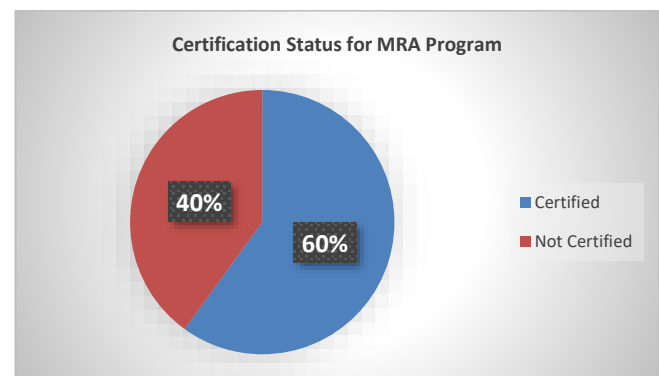


Figure 1. Certification Status for CFS Program

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2. Safety Risk Management Preparedness

In the context of ensuring a safe and child-friendly learning environment, respondents consistently acknowledged the critical role of safety risk management in schools. Effective risk management involves identifying, assessing and mitigating risks to prevent accidents and efficiently handle emergencies. Teachers recognise that a proactive approach to risk management is essential, especially given the age and vulnerability of the children in their care. This approach includes measures such as regular safety drills, first aid

training, emergency response protocols and a physical environment that minimises hazards. However, despite this awareness, several challenges hinder the practical implementation of safety management protocols in Raudhatul Athfal (RA) schools.

One of the main barriers to effective safety management is the lack of adequate training opportunities for teachers. Approximately 75% of respondents stated that limited training in emergency preparedness and risk management is a significant challenge. Many teachers have not received structured training on how to respond to emergencies, such as fires, earthquakes or other crises that may occur in the school environment. Without such training, teachers may feel unprepared and less confident to take swift and effective action when an emergency occurs. Furthermore, emergency preparedness training programs are often not prioritized in school budgets, exacerbating the gap in teacher preparedness to effectively manage crises.

Another major barrier to effective safety management identified by 60% of respondents was inadequate infrastructure in RA schools. Many facilities lack essential safety features, such as emergency exits, fire extinguishers, or child restraint mechanisms that help minimize risks to young children. Additionally, the physical environment in some RA schools may not have been designed with emergency scenarios in mind, leaving schools vulnerable to natural disasters or accidents. These infrastructure deficiencies are often due to funding constraints, leaving schools struggling to allocate resources for safety improvements without external support or government funding.

Low awareness among the wider school community, including non-teaching staff, parents, and even local government, is another significant challenge, highlighted by 45% of respondents. Collective involvement of the school community in safety management is critical, as teachers themselves may struggle to enforce safety measures without a shared commitment to risk management principles. Parents and community members may not be fully informed about the importance of emergency preparedness and safety

protocols, limiting their ability to reinforce these practices outside of school. Engaging the entire school community in safety initiatives through awareness programs, workshops, and regular communication can help create a cohesive approach to safety, ensuring that everyone understands their role in preventing accidents and responding to emergencies.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that integrates training, infrastructure improvements, and awareness-raising. Training teachers in emergency response and response skills, even on a small scale, will significantly increase their capacity to manage risks in the school environment. Investing in basic infrastructure improvements, such as installing emergency exits and securing equipment, will also reduce physical hazards. Finally, engaging the school community by promoting a culture of safety can strengthen these efforts and foster an environment where everyone is prepared to prioritize and participate in effective risk management practices.



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3. Role of Teachers in Ensuring a Safe School Environment

Teachers in Raudhatul Athfal (RA) schools play an indispensable role in fostering a safe and supportive learning environment for young children. As primary caregivers during school hours, teachers are responsible not only for delivering educational content but also for ensuring the physical and emotional safety of their students. This dual role becomes even more significant in early childhood education settings, where children may lack the maturity to recognize or respond to risks independently. Teachers thus serve as frontline protectors, managing daily interactions with children while overseeing various aspects of their safety.

However, numerous respondents highlighted challenges that limit their ability to fully safeguard their classrooms. A majority expressed concerns over **gaps in emergency preparedness training**; many teachers have not received formal instruction on safety protocols, emergency response procedures, or the principles of risk management. This lack of training leaves some educators uncertain about how to act effectively in emergencies, which is particularly concerning given the unique vulnerabilities of young children in crisis situations. Among the respondents, 70% indicated they would benefit from comprehensive emergency preparedness programs that cover critical topics such as evacuation procedures, first aid, and psychological support for children during crises.

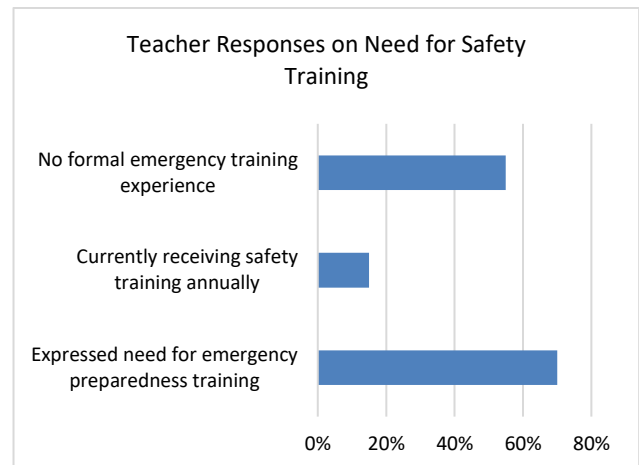


Figure 3. Teacher Responses on Need for Safety Training

Additionally, **resource limitations** emerged as a prominent concern. Many teachers cited an insufficient supply of safety equipment, such as fire extinguishers, first-aid kits, and emergency alarms, which are essential tools for mitigating risks. For instance, only 40% of the surveyed teachers reported that their classrooms were equipped with fire extinguishers, and just 35% stated that first-aid kits were readily available and properly stocked. These figures indicate a shortfall in basic safety provisions, compromising the teachers' ability to act quickly and effectively during incidents.

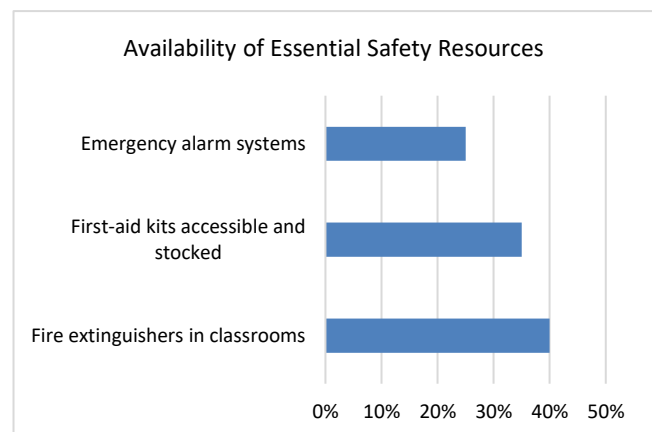


Figure 4. Availability of Essential Safety Resources

In terms of policy support, respondents highlighted the need for clear and well-defined safety policies to guide their efforts to protect students. While some RA schools have implemented basic safety guidelines, the lack of standardized and comprehensive policies leaves many teachers without a consistent framework for

addressing safety risks. For example, only 50% of respondents reported that their school has a documented safety policy. This gap highlights the need for improved implementation and oversight of policies to ensure that all teachers have the guidance needed to address safety-related issues. Clear policies outlining procedures for risk management, emergency response, and child protection would provide teachers with a structured approach to maintaining a safe environment, reducing the ambiguity they currently face.

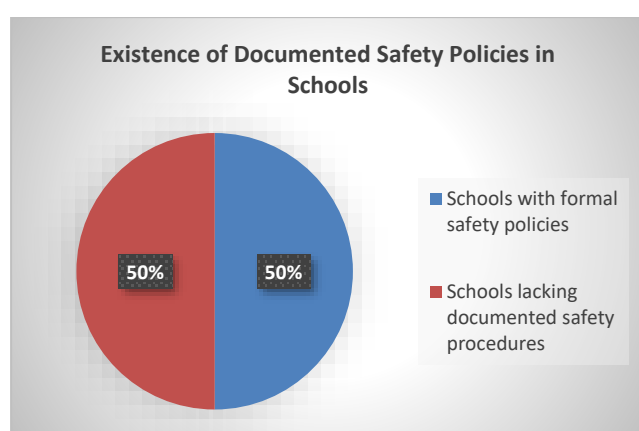


Figure 5. Existence of Documented Safety Policies in Schools

Overall, the data points to the essential role of teachers in creating and maintaining safe school environments, balanced against the pressing need for additional training, resources, and policy support. Addressing these gaps would empower teachers to act with confidence in emergencies and to foster an atmosphere of safety and security, ultimately benefiting the well-being and development of all children under their care.

Discussion

1. Gaps in Training and Skill Development

The evaluation data highlights a significant gap in the training and skill development available to teachers in Raudhatul Athfal (RA) schools, particularly concerning safety risk management. Early childhood educators play a crucial role in safeguarding young learners, yet many teachers lack the formal training necessary to respond confidently and effectively in emergency situations. Currently, most RA teachers have not undergone comprehensive emergency

preparedness or risk management training, limiting their ability to create secure learning environments. This shortage in structured training directly impacts their ability to implement preventive safety measures and effectively address emergencies should they arise (Jones et al., 2020).

Evidence from previous studies indicates that teachers' emergency preparedness has a strong influence on school safety outcomes. For example, teachers who have received training in basic emergency response skills—such as first aid, evacuation planning, and risk assessment—are more likely to act swiftly and effectively, reducing potential harm to students (Lai et al., 2019). Moreover, structured training programs can help teachers develop skills for creating and implementing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), a critical component of school safety plans. SOPs provide a clear, step-by-step protocol for responding to specific emergencies, helping teachers act in an organized and methodical manner during crises (Smith & Adams, 2018).

Regular, mandatory training would address these gaps by providing RA teachers with foundational knowledge in safety protocols and emergency management. Training programs should cover a range of relevant topics, including fire safety, first-aid procedures, evacuation routes, communication during emergencies, and psychological first aid to support children in distress. Requiring teachers to undergo periodic refresher training would ensure that they remain prepared and that safety skills remain current. Additionally, implementing simulation exercises or safety drills can improve teacher response times and reinforce practical applications of their training (Levine & Brooks, 2021).

Another essential aspect of skill development in safety risk management is **interdisciplinary training**. Collaborative programs that bring together RA teachers, administrators, and local emergency responders—such as fire departments, medical personnel, and law enforcement—can help develop cohesive and well-coordinated school safety strategies. This approach enables teachers to understand the roles and resources of different emergency services, equipping them with a comprehensive view of emergency response and

facilitating smoother collaboration in actual crises (Huang et al., 2022).

Research has also shown that such training programs can boost teachers' confidence in their ability to handle emergencies, which in turn improves overall school morale and strengthens a culture of safety. According to Brown et al. (2020), when teachers feel prepared and supported in their role as protectors, they are more likely to take proactive steps to improve the school environment and address potential hazards. Furthermore, by involving teachers in risk assessment and safety planning, schools can leverage their frontline insights to create more effective policies and procedures that align with daily classroom realities (Green & Taylor, 2021).

In terms of policy implications, investing in teacher training for safety management aligns with global recommendations on child protection in educational settings. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other child-focused organizations emphasize the importance of well-trained educators in promoting child-friendly, safe school environments (UNICEF, 2020). Integrating these global standards into RA teacher training initiatives would not only improve safety outcomes but also reinforce the mission of creating child-friendly schools that are nurturing and secure.

Table 1. Summary of Recommended Training Topics for RA Teachers.

Summary of Recommended Training Topics for RA Teachers	
Basic Emergency Procedures	First aid, fire safety, and evacuation protocols
Crisis Communication	Clear guidelines for communicating during emergencies
Psychological First Aid	Techniques to support young children emotionally in emergencies
Safety Drills and Simulations	Practical exercises to reinforce theoretical knowledge
Interdisciplinary Collaboration	Coordinating with local emergency services

Overall, filling the training and skill development gaps identified in this evaluation will require a structured, multi-faceted approach. By ensuring that all RA teachers undergo regular,

comprehensive safety training, these schools can achieve greater consistency in their safety practices, improve teachers' confidence, and ultimately create a more secure and nurturing environment for early childhood education.

In conclusion, while the MRA program has made commendable progress in establishing child-friendly practices within Raudhatul Athfal institutions, there are substantial challenges that need to be addressed. This evaluation serves as a valuable reference for policymakers and educators seeking to enhance the quality of early childhood education and to ensure that all children in Sleman Regency benefit from a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment.

2. Policy and Infrastructure Needs

The successful implementation of child-friendly school policies in Raudhatul Athfal (RA) institutions depends heavily on the presence of robust infrastructure and clear regulatory support. Child-friendly policies aim to ensure a safe, supportive, and conducive environment for young learners; however, without the necessary infrastructure, these policies fall short of their intended impact. Essential infrastructure includes **earthquake-resistant buildings, fire safety equipment, first-aid stations, and emergency exits**, which are critical to minimizing risks and protecting children and staff in the event of emergencies (Johnson et al., 2019).

Data from the evaluation reveal that many RA schools face considerable challenges in meeting these infrastructure needs. For instance, a large proportion of respondents noted that their schools lack basic safety equipment like fire extinguishers and smoke detectors, which are indispensable in a child-friendly learning environment. In many cases, classrooms are not constructed to withstand natural disasters, such as earthquakes or floods, putting children at heightened risk, especially in disaster-prone regions. Only 40% of surveyed schools reported having access to emergency equipment, and less than half had earthquake-resistant features, underscoring a significant gap in infrastructure that jeopardizes the safety of the school environment (Liu et al., 2020).

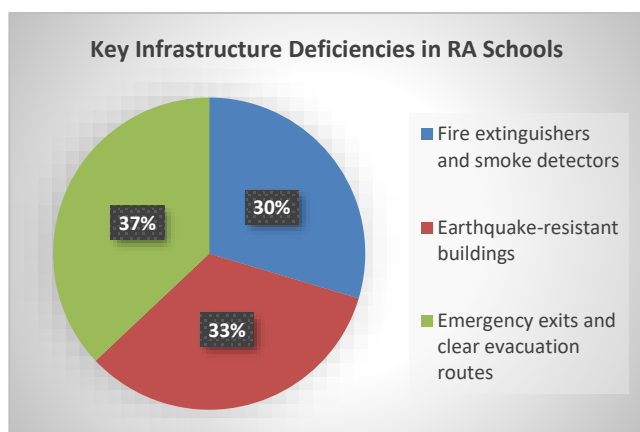


Figure 6. Key Infrastructure Deficiencies in RA Schools

Government funding and local regulation play pivotal roles in bridging these infrastructure gaps. Adequate funding enables schools to invest in essential safety measures and emergency response tools, ensuring that child-friendly policies are both practical and enforceable. However, budgetary limitations remain a significant barrier. Many RA schools operate with limited financial resources, which affects their ability to implement safety upgrades and access necessary equipment (Kumar & Albright, 2020). Respondents indicated that current funding allocations are often insufficient to meet even basic safety standards, pointing to the need for more targeted funding initiatives aimed at improving school infrastructure for early childhood education settings.

Additionally, **local regulation and policy enforcement** are crucial for maintaining and standardizing safety across all RA institutions. Strong regulatory support can set minimum infrastructure standards, ensuring that all schools adhere to basic child safety requirements. Local government mandates that address infrastructure, such as building codes for earthquake resistance or provisions for emergency resources, can significantly impact the implementation of child-friendly policies. Nevertheless, findings suggest that these policies lack enforcement at the local level, leading to inconsistent safety practices across schools. For example, while some RA schools comply with child-friendly policies by conducting regular safety inspections, others lack regulatory oversight, which compromises the overall efficacy of these policies (Williams & Brown, 2021).

Teachers and administrators alike emphasized the importance of building **strong community partnerships** to improve infrastructure, especially in resource-constrained areas. Collaborations with local businesses, non-profits, and community groups can supplement government funding by providing materials, labor, or funding support. In some regions, schools have successfully partnered with local fire departments or health organizations to receive free safety equipment or emergency training for teachers, thus addressing critical infrastructure needs through community involvement (Gomez et al., 2022).

Table 2. Proposed Solutions to Address Infrastructure Needs.

Proposed Solutions to Address Infrastructure Needs	Description
Increased government funding	Targeted funding for RA school infrastructure improvements
Stronger regulatory oversight	Mandatory safety standards for RA institutions to ensure uniform child safety
Community partnerships	Collaboration with local organizations for equipment donations and emergency training
Regular safety audits and inspections	Routine checks to assess infrastructure adequacy and ensure compliance with safety policies

Ultimately, aligning policy with infrastructure is critical to realizing the goals of child-friendly schools. As Williams and Brown (2021) highlight, “without adequate infrastructure, child-friendly policies cannot deliver the desired levels of safety and programmatic success.” This alignment not only ensures children’s physical safety but also fosters an environment where they feel safe and supported, which is essential for their emotional and social development. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2020), child-friendly schools, including “Madrrasah Ramah Anak”, are schools that prioritize a holistic approach to safety, combining physical readiness with psychological well-being to create optimal learning spaces.

Strengthening infrastructure to support child-friendly policies will require a multi-layered approach that includes increased funding, strong policy enforcement, and community engagement. By addressing these infrastructure and policy gaps, RA schools can better implement child-friendly policies, promoting safe and inclusive environments where children can thrive.

Conclusions

This evaluation highlights the significant potential for improving the "Madrasah Ramah Anak" (MRA) program in Raudhatul Athfal (RA) institutions through focused training, enhanced infrastructure, and active community engagement. Teacher training is essential, equipping educators with skills in safety and emergency management, enabling them to create secure, child-friendly environments. Regular, comprehensive training ensures that teachers can implement MRA principles effectively, helping prevent accidents and fostering a culture of safety in schools.

Infrastructure support is equally critical. Essential facilities—like earthquake-resistant buildings, emergency exits, and fire safety equipment—form the foundation of a safe school environment. Strengthening infrastructure conveys a commitment to safety and reassures both families and the community that children's welfare is prioritized.

Additionally, community partnerships play a crucial role in advancing MRA goals. Collaborations with local organizations, emergency services, and parents contribute resources and raise awareness, extending a safety network beyond the school. Community involvement reinforces a shared commitment to child protection, fostering a holistic, child-centered environment.

Implementing these recommendations—enhanced training, infrastructure improvements, and community partnerships—would better align RA schools with child protection standards, creating an environment conducive to children's learning, growth, and overall well-being.

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Conflict of Interest: The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this research. The research was conducted independently, and the findings and conclusions presented in this study are solely those of the author. No financial, personal, or professional relationships have influenced the conduct or reporting of this research.

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