



The Existence of Early Childhood Islamic Education in a Multicultural Society: A Field Introductory Study at Al Banna PAUD Bali

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the existence of early childhood Islamic education in a multicultural society through a Field Introduction Study (SPL) at Al Banna Early Childhood Education (PAUD) in Bali. The study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation of the principal, teachers, and the school's learning environment. The results of the study indicate that the presence of Islamic education in a non-Muslim-majority environment can be sustained by strengthening Islamic school culture, adaptive Qur'an learning, religious habits, and building harmonious social relationships with the surrounding community. The school implements various Islamic habits such as reciting prayers, memorizing the Qur'an, praying in congregation, and instilling good manners in children's daily lives. In addition, the school also builds synergy with parents through various family involvement programs in learning activities. In Bali's multicultural society, the school demonstrates a tolerant, open attitude while maintaining its Islamic identity. The results of this study indicate that early childhood Islamic education can develop in a moderate, inclusive, and adaptive manner in a pluralistic society by strengthening school culture, teacher role models, and collaboration among the school, family, and community.

1. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is a fundamental stage in the formation of a child's character, morals, and religious identity. Early childhood is often referred to as the golden age because during this period, children's cognitive, social, emotional, and spiritual development occurs rapidly (Daradjat, 2014). From an Islamic educational perspective, this phase is a crucial opportunity to instill religious values through habits, role models, and a conducive educational environment. Islamic education for early childhood is not only oriented towards developing academic abilities, but also directed towards the formation of morals, a love of the Quran, and the development of Islamic behavior in daily life.

Amid the development of modern society, Islamic education faces increasingly complex challenges, particularly in a multicultural context. The diversity of religions, cultures, languages, and traditions demands that Islamic educational institutions maintain their Islamic

identity while fostering a tolerant and open attitude toward social differences. Multicultural education is a crucial approach to creating an educational process that values diversity and instills values of mutual respect among individuals. In this context, Islamic education plays a strategic role in shaping moderate, peaceful religious character, capable of living harmoniously in a pluralistic society (Fauzi, 2024). The multicultural nature of society is evident in Bali, a region with strong cultural and religious diversity. The majority of Balinese are Hindu, with local culture strongly influencing social life. This situation places Islamic educational institutions as part of a minority group facing challenges in maintaining their religious identity. However, this situation also presents a strategic opportunity for Islamic educational institutions to demonstrate their presence through strengthening Islamic school culture, teaching Quranic values-based learning, and instilling a religious character that respects the cultural diversity of the surrounding community.

One interesting educational institution to study is the Al Banna Bali Early Childhood Education Center (PAUD). This school develops Islamic values-based education through Quranic recitation, worship practices, character education, and a religious school culture for early childhood. The existence of an Islamic school within Bali's multicultural society demonstrates an effort to maintain Islamic identity adaptively and in a moderate manner (Hayati, 2024). The habit of reading the Quran, the practice of Islamic manners, the use of teacher role models, and the reinforcement of religious values are part of the educational strategy implemented in daily school life.

Previous research has shown that multicultural Islamic education plays a significant role in shaping religious character and tolerance in early childhood. Research on the implementation of multicultural Islamic education explains that instilling religious values can be achieved through habituation, school culture, and inclusive social interactions (Mahfud, 2018). Furthermore, research on Islamic education in Bali's multicultural environment shows that Islamic educational institutions can maintain their identity through strengthening school culture and adopting a moderate educational approach. However, research specifically addressing the existence of early childhood Islamic education in Bali's multicultural society remains limited, with a particular focus on educational practices in Islamic early childhood education institutions.

Based on this description, this research is crucial for exploring the presence of early childhood Islamic education in a multicultural society through educational practices at the Al Banna Early Childhood Education Center (PAUD) in Bali. This research is expected to provide insight into the school's strategies for instilling Islamic values, building a religious school culture, and adapting the educational process to the socio-cultural context of the surrounding community. Furthermore, this research is also expected to serve as a reference in developing moderate, adaptive, and relevant early childhood Islamic education in a multicultural society.

2. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. A qualitative approach is used to understand social phenomena in depth through observations of natural situations that occur in the field (Moleong, 2018; Sugiyono, 2020). Descriptive research aims to systematically describe the existence of Islamic early childhood education in a multicultural society through the educational practices implemented at PAUD Al Banna Bali. The research was conducted during the Field Introduction Study (SPL) activities of students of the University of Science Al-Qur'an at PAUD Al Banna Bali. The selection of the research location was based on the characteristics of the school that implements education based on Islamic values in a multicultural society with a majority-Hindu population. These conditions make this

school interesting to study in the context of Islamic early childhood education in a Muslim minority area.

The research subjects consisted of the principal, teachers, and the early childhood learning environment at the Al Banna Bali Preschool. The research focused on the school's strategies for instilling Islamic values, implementing Quranic learning, instilling religious culture, and adapting to Bali's multicultural social environment. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to directly observe learning activities, school culture, worship practices, and social interactions within the school environment. Interviews were conducted directly with the principal and teachers to obtain information on the Islamic education strategies implemented at the school. Documentation was used to supplement the research data, including photos of activities, school profiles, lesson schedules, and other supporting documents.

The data analysis technique in this study uses the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction is carried out by selecting and focusing data relevant to the research objectives. Next, the data is presented descriptively in narrative form to facilitate understanding of the research results. The final stage is carried out by drawing conclusions based on the results of the data analysis obtained during the study. To obtain data validity, this study uses source triangulation and technical triangulation techniques. Source triangulation is carried out by comparing data from interviews with several informants, while technical triangulation is carried out by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation to make the data obtained more valid and reliable.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on observations and interviews during the Field Familiarization Study (SPL) at Al Banna Early Childhood Education Center (PAUD) in Bali, the school is strongly committed to maintaining Islamic early childhood education in a multicultural society. As an Islamic educational institution in a predominantly non-Muslim environment, the school focuses not only on children's academic development but also on instilling Islamic values through school culture, religious practices, and consistent Quranic learning throughout daily activities.

3.1 Islamic School Culture as an Educational Identity

One of the primary strategies implemented by schools to maintain their Islamic identity is through strengthening an Islamic school culture (Susanto, 2017). This school culture is reflected in various daily activities for children, such as greeting one another, reciting prayers before and after activities, performing congregational prayers, learning etiquette, and practicing reading and memorizing the Quran. These habits are repeated so that they become part of children's daily behavior. Teachers play a crucial role as role models in shaping children's religious character. Teachers' exemplary behavior is evident in their communication, dress, interactions with students, and overall conduct. Early childhood is often characterized by imitation, making role modeling an effective way to instill religious values. This demonstrates that Islamic school culture is manifested not only through formal religious instruction but also through social interactions within the school environment. Furthermore, the school maintains an open attitude toward the surrounding social environment. The values of tolerance and respect for Balinese cultural diversity are an important part of school life. This is evident in the school's efforts to build harmonious relationships with the surrounding community without losing its Islamic identity. This attitude reflects the implementation of multicultural Islamic education, which instills religious values while respecting social and cultural differences.

3.2 Quran Learning for Early Childhood

Quranic learning is one of the flagship programs at Al Banna Bali Preschool. Observations show that Quranic learning is conducted through a fun approach appropriate to the characteristics of early childhood (Suwendra, 2023). Teachers use the Wafa method to help children memorize short surahs (chapters). Teachers also incorporate habituation, repetition, singing, educational games, and individual approaches to help children recognize the hijaiyah alphabet, recite daily prayers, and memorize short surahs. Learning is conducted in stages according to the child's developmental abilities. Teachers not only emphasize Quranic reading skills but also instill a love of the Quran in children through a comfortable, enjoyable learning environment. This approach aligns with the principles of early childhood education, which prioritize play as the primary learning method. Thus, the religious learning process does not put pressure on children but instead becomes a meaningful learning experience. Making Quranic reading a daily habit also strengthens children's religious identity in a multicultural environment. This activity not only aims to improve Quranic reading skills but also fosters discipline, good manners, and a habit of worship from an early age. Through consistent learning, the school strives to shape a generation with a strong religious foundation who can live harmoniously in a diverse society.

3.3 School Strategies in a Multicultural Environment

The existence of Al Banna Bali Early Childhood Education (PAUD) as an Islamic educational institution in a predominantly Hindu area demonstrates positive social adaptation. Based on interviews, the school employs a moderate approach in building relationships with the surrounding community. The school does not isolate itself from local culture but maintains Islamic educational principles in its learning activities and school culture (Yaqin, 2016). This adaptive strategy is evident in the school's respect for local traditions and its maintenance of harmonious communication with the surrounding community. In practice, the school involves the Pecalang community, a traditional Balinese security guard group, in certain activities such as school parades. Furthermore, the school employs local Hindus as security guards and parking attendants on its grounds. This local community involvement demonstrates a positive social relationship between the school and its surrounding community and demonstrates the implementation of the value of tolerance in community life. Through this approach, the school strives to strengthen its standing as an Islamic educational institution that coexists harmoniously in a multicultural society. This open and collaborative attitude also reflects universal Islamic values such as tolerance, discipline, cleanliness, compassion, and noble character. This approach is crucial because Islamic education in a multicultural environment requires a balance between strengthening religious identity and fostering harmonious social relationships with people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds.

Furthermore, parental support is crucial to the school's continued existence. Parents' high awareness of the importance of religious education for children from an early age fosters strong collaboration between schools and families in fostering Islamic habits. This involvement is evident in Father's Day-themed activities, where fathers from diverse professional backgrounds participate in a parent-teaching program in their respective fields. This activity not only strengthens the relationship between school and family but also provides meaningful learning experiences for children. This synergy between schools and parents strengthens the internalization of religious, social, and character values in children's daily lives. It demonstrates the family's active involvement in supporting children's development within the school environment. The results of this study indicate that early childhood Islamic education in a multicultural society can be sustained by strengthening Islamic school culture, adaptive Quranic learning, teacher role models, and harmonious social relationships with the surrounding community. This condition proves that Islamic education can develop moderately

and inclusively without losing its religious identity even in a Muslim minority environment. Figure 1 presents the Al Banna Early Childhood Education School.



Figure 1. Al Banna Early Childhood Education School

4. CONCLUSION

Based on research conducted at the Al Banna Early Childhood Education Center (PAUD) in Bali, it can be concluded that the presence of Islamic early childhood education in a multicultural society can be maintained by strengthening Islamic school culture, implementing adaptive Quranic learning, and fostering harmonious social relationships with the surrounding community. Schools serve not only as formal educational institutions but also as a means of instilling religious values and developing Islamic character in children from an early age through the practice of worship, teacher role models, and a conducive school culture. Quranic learning at school is implemented using the Wafa method, a fun method suited to the characteristics of early childhood, through activities such as familiarization, singing, educational games, and role models in daily life. This strategy fosters children's love for the Quran while strengthening their religious identity in a pluralistic society. Furthermore, the active involvement of parents through various school programs supports the internalization of Islamic values in children's lives, both at school and within the family. In a predominantly non-Muslim environment, the school also demonstrates the ability to adapt socially without losing its Islamic identity. This is evident in the school's efforts to build positive relationships with the surrounding community through tolerance, respect for local culture, and community involvement in various school activities. This demonstrates that early childhood Islamic education can develop in a moderate, inclusive, and harmonious manner within a multicultural society. This research demonstrates that the success of Islamic education in minority communities is determined not only by formal religious instruction but also by the strength of the school culture, the synergy between the school and the family, and the educational institution's ability to build positive social relationships with the surrounding community. Therefore, the educational model implemented at Al Banna Early Childhood Education Center (PAUD) in Bali can serve as an example of good practices in early childhood Islamic education within a multicultural society.

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