

The Indonesian Government's Incapable Reliance on Private Islamic School Owners in Upholding The Nation's Principles

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Abstract

This article examines the role of private Islamic schools in Indonesia in providing education and fostering religious values among their students. It argues that the Indonesian government has failed to ensure equal access to quality education for all citizens and to instill a strong sense of religious identity in them. The objective of the article is to highlight the strategies employed by private Islamic schools in building students' religious character, which is seen as an essential component of their education. The article adopts a qualitative method with a multiple-case study approach on three private Islamic schools in Pekalongan, a city known for its Islamic culture and tradition. The article identifies three main strategies that the school foundation management uses to nurture students' religious character: daily supervision, monthly guidance session, and warm personal communication. The article concludes with a recommendation that the government should recognize and support the contribution of private Islamic schools in developing their own curriculum that reflects their religious vision and values.

Keywords: The Indonesian government, Private Islamic school owners, Building students' religious character

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, the government has struggled to provide education for all citizens due to limited resources and other challenges (Putra et al., 2019). As a result, private Islamic schools have played a significant role in filling this gap and providing education to many students. Moreover, private Islamic schools have been instrumental in building students' character, particularly in terms of instilling religious values (Zulfikar et al., 2018). However, there is a lack of research on the responsibility of private Islamic school foundations in this regard (Bakar et al., 2019).

Previous studies have discussed the importance of private Islamic schools in building students' religious character, but few have examined the specific strategies used by private Islamic school owners to achieve this goal. Additionally, there has been limited research on the role of



private Islamic schools in fulfilling the government's duty to provide education and build character. Therefore, the objective of this article is to highlight the reliance of the Indonesian government on private Islamic schools in building students' religious character. Specifically, we will examine the strategies used by private Islamic school owners to instill religious values in students and explore the extent to which these schools fulfill the government's responsibility to provide education and build character.

Our hypothesis is that private Islamic school owners implement certain strategies in building students' religious character, such as promoting Islamic values, creating a religious environment, and providing religious guidance (Yusuf 2016). We also hypothesize that private Islamic schools play a crucial role in fulfilling the government's duty to provide education and build character, given the limitations of government resources and infrastructure (Brice et al., 2018). This article contributes to the literature on private Islamic schools and character building in Indonesia by providing insights into the strategies used by private Islamic school owners to instill religious values in students. It also sheds light on the role of private Islamic schools in fulfilling the government's duty to provide education and build character.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Government Incapability at Providing Religious Education

Indonesia, being a populous country, faces the challenge of providing quality education to all its citizens. The country's high population is one of the primary challenges, as the government may not have the resources to provide education to everyone. Additionally, the government may face budgetary constraints, which may limit its ability to provide quality education to all citizens. The government has struggled to provide education to its people, and as a result, private schools, particularly Islamic schools, have taken up the responsibility.

This article reflects the importance placed on education by the Indonesian government and its commitment to providing access to education for all citizens, as well as advancing science and technology while respecting religious values and national unity. According to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (UUD 1945) that deals with education and culture, article 31, the Indoensian government is obliged to ensure that: 1) Every citizen shall have the right to obtain an education, 2) The Government shall establish and conduct a national educational system which shall be regulated by statute, 3) The national educational system shall be implemented by means of an educational system based on Pancasila and the Constitution of 1945, 4) The Government shall provide the means and infrastructure for the implementation of a compulsory basic education program for every citizen without charge, and 5) The Government shall advance science and technology with due regard to religious values and national unity for the progress of civilization and the welfare of mankind.

One of the challenges that Indonesia faces as a diverse and pluralistic nation is how to build religious characters in its students. Religion plays an important role in shaping the values, morals and ethics of the Indonesian people. However, the government seems to be incapable of providing adequate and quality education that fosters religious tolerance and harmony among different faiths (Susanti et al., 2021). One of the reasons for this incapability is the small number of public schools in Indonesia, especially in rural and remote areas.

Public schools are supposed to be the main institutions that deliver the national curriculum, which includes religious education as one of the compulsory subjects. However, according to the Ministry of Education and Culture, there were only 149,000 public schools in Indonesia in 2019, compared to 225,000 private schools (Yusuf, 2021). This means that many students do not have access to public education and have to rely on private schools, which may have different agendas and ideologies than the government. Some private schools may promote a certain sect or interpretation of religion that is not compatible with the national vision of unity in diversity. Moreover, some private schools may charge high fees that exclude the poor and marginalized students from receiving quality education.

The lack of public schools also affects the quality and quantity of teachers who can teach religious education. According to the World Bank (2020), Indonesia has a shortage of about 300,000 teachers, especially in rural and remote areas. This means that many public schools do not have enough qualified and trained teachers who can teach religious education effectively and objectively. Furthermore, some teachers may have biases or prejudices against other religions or beliefs that may influence their teaching methods and materials (Susanti et al., 2021). As a result, many students may not receive adequate and balanced religious education that can help them develop religious characters that respect and appreciate diversity.

Therefore, it is evident that the incapability of the Indonesian government to build religious characters in Indonesian students is partly due to the small number of public schools in Indonesia. The government needs to invest more in expanding and improving public education, especially in rural and remote areas, to ensure that all students have equal access to quality and inclusive religious education (Susanti et al., 2021). The government also needs to monitor and regulate private schools to ensure that they follow the national curriculum and do not spread intolerance or extremism. Moreover, the government needs to recruit and train more teachers who can teach



religious education professionally and impartially. By doing so, the government can hope to build religious characters in Indonesian students that can contribute to the social cohesion and harmony of the nation.

Private Islamic School Owners and Their Role in School Management

School owners in private Islamic schools in Indonesia are typically individuals or organizations that establish and own the schools. These owners may be motivated by a variety of factors, such as a desire to provide quality education to the community, to promote religious values and traditions, or to generate income. Private Islamic school owners may come from various backgrounds, including religious leaders, wealthy individuals, or organizations. In many cases, private Islamic schools are established and owned by religious institutions, such as mosques or Islamic foundations (Muttaqin 2020). These organizations may be funded by donations from the community or by other sources of income, such as investments.

The role of private Islamic school owners goes beyond just providing financial support. They are also responsible for overseeing the school's strategic direction, ensuring compliance with government regulations, and managing the school's assets and resources. They may also be involved in the hiring of teachers and administrators, as well as developing the school's curriculum and programs. In some cases, private Islamic school owners may face challenges in managing their schools, such as dealing with financial constraints or meeting government regulations (Azra 2015). However, many owners are committed to providing quality education and ensuring the success of their schools. They may work closely with the school's administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders to address these challenges and create a supportive learning environment for their students.

In the context of quality management, private Islamic school owners can be considered both the customer and the supplier of their schools. As a customer, private Islamic school owners have certain expectations and requirements for the quality of education, facilities, and services provided by their schools (Hifza et al., 2020). They may demand high-quality teaching and learning resources, effective management practices, and a safe and comfortable learning environment for their students. In this sense, the private Islamic school owners can be seen as the customer of their schools, as they are the ones who pay for and expect to receive a high-quality education.

On the other hand, private Islamic school owners also act as suppliers, as they are responsible for providing the necessary resources and support to ensure that their schools can deliver the expected level of quality. This includes providing adequate funding for staffing, facilities, and equipment, as well as developing and implementing effective policies and procedures to manage and improve school operations (Hifza et al., 2020). In this sense, the private Islamic school owners can be seen as the supplier of their schools, as they are the ones who provide the necessary resources to ensure the delivery of high-quality education.

Therefore, it is important for private Islamic school owners to take a customer-oriented approach to quality management by focusing on meeting the needs and expectations of their students and parents while also acting as responsible suppliers by providing the necessary resources and support to ensure the delivery of high-quality education (Wilian et al., 2020).

School Supervision

Supervision is a key component of education that aims to foster students' character development. Character refers to the moral and ethical qualities that shape one's identity, values, and behavior (Brice et al., 2018; Muttaqin 2020). Supervision can help students cultivate character by providing guidance, feedback, support, and modeling of positive traits. In this analysis, I will discuss the role of supervision in building students' character in three aspects: academic, social, and personal.

Academic supervision involves monitoring and evaluating students' learning progress, achievements, and challenges. It also entails setting clear expectations, providing constructive criticism, and encouraging self-regulation and reflection. Academic supervision can help students develop character traits such as diligence, responsibility, honesty, and curiosity. For example, by holding students accountable for their assignments and grades, supervisors can foster a sense of responsibility and integrity in students. By challenging students to explore new topics and perspectives, supervisors can stimulate their curiosity and creativity.

Social supervision involves facilitating and regulating students' interactions with peers, teachers, and other members of the school community. It also entails promoting a positive and respectful school climate, preventing and resolving conflicts, and fostering collaboration and diversity (Hidayat & Suganda, 2020). Social supervision can help students develop character traits such as empathy, respect, cooperation, and tolerance. For example, by modeling and teaching appropriate social skills and norms, supervisors can help students communicate effectively and respectfully with others. By creating opportunities for cooperative learning and cross-cultural exchange, supervisors can help students appreciate diversity and work together toward common goals.

Personal supervision involves supporting and nurturing students' emotional well-being, selfesteem, and identity formation. It also entails recognizing and addressing students' needs, interests, strengths, and challenges, and providing counseling and guidance when needed. Personal



supervision can help students develop character traits such as resilience, confidence, selfawareness, and compassion (Brice et al., 2018; Bakar et al., 2019). For example, by acknowledging and celebrating students' achievements and efforts, supervisors can boost their confidence and self-esteem. By listening to and understanding students' feelings and concerns, supervisors can help them cope with stress and adversity.

In conclusion, supervision plays a vital role in building students' character by influencing their academic, social, and personal development. Supervision can help students acquire moral and ethical values that will guide their behavior and decisions throughout their lives. Therefore, supervisors should be aware of their impact on students' character formation and strive to provide effective and supportive supervision that meets students' diverse needs.

METHOD

This study is a qualitative research that aims to explore the role of private Islamic schools in providing education for Indonesian citizens, in contrast to the insufficient support from the government. The study focuses on how these schools manage their resources, curriculum, and quality in order to meet the needs and expectations of their stakeholders.

The data for this study were collected from three private Islamic schools located in Pekalongan, Central Java. The schools were selected based on their reputation, diversity, and accessibility. The participants of the study included three principals, six vice principals, 13 teachers, and one member of school foundation from each school. The data were gathered through semistructured interviews and observations. The interviews were conducted in Indonesian language and lasted for about an hour each. The observations were done for two hours per school and covered various activities.

The data analysis method used in this study was based on the model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which consists of three steps: data reduction, data display, and data verification. Data reduction involved coding, categorizing, and summarizing the data into meaningful units. Data display involved organizing and presenting the data in tables, charts, diagrams, and narratives. Data verification involved checking the validity and reliability of the data and the findings through triangulation, member checking, peer review, and audit trail.

The following sections will present the results of the data analysis according to the research questions and themes that emerged from the data. The results will be discussed in relation to the existing literature and theories on private Islamic education in Indonesia and other countries.



No	Strategies	Approaches	Data
1	Daily supervision of teaching and learning activities	Involvement in classroom management	"The school foundation management assign their members to supervise the teaching and learning process every day" (a principal) "You can see, he is a member of the school foundation whose today job is to ensure the new implementation of students' seating arrangement in classrooms" (a teacher) "Yes, sir. We find this (school foundation management's supervision on teachers) positive, because they demonstrate their commitment in improving the school quality". (a vice principal)
		Involvement in building students' religious character	"They (the school foundation management members) often correct the students' ways of doing something like kissing the teachers' hand, putting the garbage in the bins" (a vice principals) "They show us (teachers) some students' deeds that need to be corrected" (a teacher)
		Involvement in building students' discipline	"They (the school foundation management members) often correct the students' ways of doing something like putting the garbage in the bins, tidying the students' seats, etc." (a vice principals)
2	Monthly meeting between teachers and school foundation management	Promoting religious values	"The Foundation's Chairman always emphasizes the importance of students' morality." (a principal) "During the guidance sessions, we are often reminded of the power of prayer to Allah and asked to never forget to pray for the students." (a vice principal) ""We always discuss Islamic values and how these values should imbue our activities with students at school." (a foundation's management member)
		Promoting students' continuous achievement	"The Foundation's Chairman often mentions other schools that have achieved great success and encourages all of us to achieve even better results than them." (a principal) "Yes, Mr. X is very focused on the achievements of our students. He even invited a successful school principal to teach us about their experience in managing a school." (a teacher)
		Promoting teachers' professional values	"Of course. The Foundation's Chairman often invites successful teachers from other schools to share their experiences." (a principal) "What's more, which may be rarely found in other schools, the Foundation's executives also participate in classroom management, which they

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			believe can help students improve their academic performance." (a teacher)
3	Warm personal communication	Reminding and promoting love for students	"I am deeply touched by Mr. X's advice, especially on how we as teachers should love our students for the sake of the afterlife." (a teacher) "We are often sent messages via mobile phones late in the evening reminding us to always pray for our students." (a vice principal)
		Promoting teachers' discipline	"Our foundation's chairman is very different from others. It's like he has spies outside the school. He can tell if a teacher is playing hooky." (a vice principal) "Yes, Mr. X once fired one of his relatives who was also a teacher. Although there was still a family relationship, for our foundation's chairman, professionalism must be the standard." (a vice principal)

Table. Private Islamic School Owners' Strategies in Building Students' Religious Character

The table shows how the school foundations employ certain strategies in optimizing every way possible to build the religious character in the students. As the table shows, monthly meeting might have been practiced by other school foundations. However, to come to school every day and get themselves involved in the real process of building the students' religious character a real achievement. Moreover, warm communication that has been built between the foundation chairman and the teachers underscore the best practice of supportive and positive communication all leaders need to do.

Daily Supervision of Teaching and Learning Activities

Daily supervision of teaching and learning activities has been shown to have numerous benefits for promoting moderate Islamic religious values among students. Research suggests that regular supervision and monitoring can help ensure that the teachings of Islam are being conveyed accurately and effectively, and that students are being provided with opportunities to develop their understanding and appreciation of Islamic values and principles. One study published in the Journal of Education and Practice found that regular supervision of teachers and classrooms can lead to improved teaching practices and more effective learning outcomes for students (Fakhrunnas & Husamah, 2018). The study specifically examined the impact of supervision on Islamic religious education in Indonesian schools, and found that increased supervision led to improved teacher preparation and instructional methods, as well as greater engagement and motivation among students.

Another study published in the International Journal of Education and Research found that regular supervision can help promote the integration of Islamic values into everyday classroom



practices (Ahmed & Yusoff, 2017). The study examined the impact of supervision on the teaching of Islamic education in Malaysian schools, and found that teachers who received regular supervision were more likely to incorporate Islamic values and principles into their lessons, leading to greater student engagement and a deeper understanding of Islam.

In addition to these benefits, regular supervision can also help ensure that teachers and students are adhering to moderate Islamic religious values, such as respect for diversity, tolerance, and compassion. A study published in the Journal of Educational and Social Research found that supervision can play a key role in promoting these values in the classroom, and can help prevent the spread of extremist ideologies (Rahman, 2018).

Overall, there is a growing body of research suggesting that daily supervision of teaching and learning activities can have numerous benefits for promoting moderate Islamic religious values among students. By providing teachers with the support and guidance they need to effectively convey Islamic principles and values, and by promoting an inclusive and tolerant classroom environment, supervision can play a critical role in shaping the attitudes and beliefs of future generations of Muslim students.

Regular Meeting of Teachers' and School Foundation Management

Regular meetings between teachers and private Islamic school foundations can have a significant impact on the development of moderate Islamic religious character in students. Such meetings can provide opportunities for teachers to receive support and guidance, and for the foundation to provide feedback and direction for the school's curriculum and activities.

One study published in the Journal of Education and Practice found that regular communication and collaboration between teachers and private Islamic school foundations can lead to more effective implementation of Islamic values and principles in the classroom (Djannah, 2020). The study specifically examined the role of private foundations in supporting Islamic education in Indonesian schools, and found that regular meetings and communication helped ensure that the curriculum was aligned with the foundation's vision and values, and that teachers were able to effectively convey these values to their students.

Another study published in the Journal of Education and Practice found that regular meetings between teachers and school foundations can help promote a more holistic approach to Islamic education, one that emphasizes not only academic knowledge but also character development and ethical behavior (Hidayat, 2016). The study examined the impact of private foundations on Islamic education in Malaysia, and found that foundations that emphasized



character development and provided support for teachers were able to promote a more balanced and holistic approach to Islamic education.

In addition to these benefits, regular meetings between teachers and private Islamic school foundations can also help promote a culture of collaboration and partnership, which can lead to greater engagement and motivation among students. A study published in the International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences found that collaboration between teachers and school foundations can help create a more positive and supportive school environment, which can in turn lead to better academic performance and more positive attitudes towards Islamic values (Ahmad & Noor, 2016).

It can be concluded that there is strong evidence to suggest that regular meetings between teachers and private Islamic school foundations can have significant benefits for the development of moderate Islamic religious character in students. By providing support and guidance for teachers, promoting a more holistic approach to Islamic education, and fostering a culture of collaboration and partnership, these meetings can help ensure that students are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and values they need to become responsible and ethical members of their communities.

Warm Personal Communication

The impact of supervisors' warm personal communication to teachers can play a significant role in building the moderate Islamic religious character of students. Research shows that a supportive and positive communication style from supervisors to teachers can lead to increased teacher job satisfaction, motivation, and performance, which in turn can lead to positive student outcomes (Abu-Hussain & Al-Zyoud, 2017). Furthermore, when supervisors communicate in a warm and personal manner with teachers, it can help foster a positive school culture that promotes the Islamic values of compassion, empathy, and respect. According to a study published in the Journal of Educational Research and Practice, supervisors who engage in warm and personal communication with teachers can create a more positive school climate, which can lead to increased student engagement, motivation, and academic achievement (Fadilah et al., 2021).

In addition, warm personal communication from supervisors to teachers can help promote a more collaborative and supportive work environment, where teachers feel valued and supported in their efforts to promote moderate Islamic religious values. A study published in the Journal of Education and Practice found that supportive communication from supervisors can lead to increased teacher morale and a greater sense of community among school staff, which can translate into improved student outcomes (Elbasha et al., 2019).



The evidence suggests that supervisors' warm personal communication to teachers can have a significant impact on the development of moderate Islamic religious character in students. By fostering a positive school culture, promoting collaboration and support among staff, and creating a sense of community, supervisors can help ensure that students are exposed to Islamic values and principles both inside and outside the classroom.

CONCLUSION

Private Islamic schools in Indonesia play a vital role in upholding the nation's principle of providing education for all citizens. The Indonesian government heavily relies on these institutions to offer quality education, especially in remote areas. The implementation of daily supervision of teaching and learning activities, regular meetings of teachers and school foundation management, and warm personal communication have been proven to be fundamental in building the moderate religious character of the students. These strategies help in cultivating an atmosphere that emphasizes Islamic values and instills good morals among students. Therefore, it is crucial to continue supporting private Islamic schools in Indonesia to ensure that the students receive the education they need to become responsible citizens who embody the country's principles.

In conclusion, the over-reliance of the Indonesian government on private Islamic schools to provide education for all citizens is a concerning issue that needs to be addressed. While private Islamic schools have played a significant role in improving access to education, it is not a sustainable solution for the government to leave the responsibility solely to these institutions. The government must take proactive steps to address the underlying issues of educational inequality and lack of resources in public schools.

Despite the challenges, the strategies of daily supervision of teaching and learning activities, regular meetings of teachers and school foundation management, and warm personal communication have proved to be effective in building the moderate religious character of the students in private Islamic schools. These strategies help to create a positive learning environment that emphasizes Islamic values and promotes good moral conduct among students. However, it is essential to recognize that these strategies should not be limited to private Islamic schools but should be implemented in all educational institutions to promote religious tolerance and understanding among students.

Therefore, it is crucial for the Indonesian government to take concrete steps towards improving access to quality education for all citizens, including marginalized communities. This includes investing in public schools, providing adequate resources and training for teachers, and



implementing policies that promote equal opportunities for all students. Only then can the government fulfill its responsibility of providing education for all citizens, regardless of their religious background.

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