

# Exploration of Early Childhood Education Management in Pesantren: A Case Study of Salafiyah Karangpandan Pesantren

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose** – This research aims to explore the management of early childhood education (PAUD) within the context of pesantren, specifically at the Salafiyah Karangpandan Pesantren in Pasuruan. This study addresses a gap in previous research by focusing on the planning, organization, implementation, and supervision of early childhood education management in a pesantren environment, providing both theoretical and practical insights.

**Design/methods/approach** – This study employs a qualitative case study design to understand the phenomena of PAUD management at Salafiyah Karangpandan Pesantren, Pasuruan Indonesia contextually and empirically. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observations, and document analysis. Participants included caregivers of the pesantren, the headmaster, coordinators, educators, and administrative staff, selected through purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Data were analyzed using an interactive analysis model that encompasses data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

**Findings** – The study found that effective PAUD management in pesantren involves strategic planning focused on the vision of promoting Quranic reading with tartil. An organizational structure based on competence, trust, familial relationships, and welfare creates a productive work environment. Implementation is guided by charismatic leadership and a supportive religious atmosphere, adhering to the Qira'ati system. Supervision through scheduled and conditional evaluations ensures continuous quality improvement.

**Research implications** – These findings highlight the importance of a holistic approach in the management of early childhood education within the pesantren environment, suggesting that effective planning, organization, implementation, and supervision are crucial. This research can serve as a guide for policymakers, educators, and pesantren administrators to enhance PAUD quality by adopting the Qira'ati system and ensuring charismatic leadership.

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## 1. Introduction

Early childhood education (PAUD) plays a crucial role in shaping the character and personality of children for their future (Retnaningrum, 2019; Sujana et al., 2023). Within the context of pesantren-based education, this role becomes even more significant as pesantren not only provide formal education but also instill strong religious values (Alam, 2018; Suminto et al., 2023). The Salafiyah Karangpandan Pesantren in Pasuruan Regency is one such institution focusing on early childhood education. Despite its urban location and proximity to the new Pasuruan-Probolinggo toll road, this pesantren maintains its distinct, serene, and comfortable atmosphere.



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Several previous studies have examined various aspects related to early childhood education and curriculum development (Apriana, 2009; Indrawati, 2010; Soenaryo, 2010). One study investigated the relationship between PAUD and cognitive development in preschool children, highlighting the importance of early education in cognitive development (Apriana, 2009). Another study developed an entrepreneurial-oriented learning model, which was found to be effective in improving learning outcomes for PAUD children (Indrawati, 2010). Additionally, learning through play and the development of multiple intelligences in preschool children were explored, finding that play stimulates various types of intelligence in children (Soenaryo, 2010).

Research findings indicate that early childhood education significantly contributes to children's cognitive and character development (Apriana, 2009; Indrawati, 2010; Soenaryo, 2010). The positive impact of PAUD on children's cognitive development was highlighted (Apriana, 2009), while the effectiveness of an entrepreneurial learning model in improving learning outcomes was demonstrated (Indrawati, 2010). Furthermore, the role of play in stimulating the development of multiple intelligences was identified (Soenaryo, 2010).

Despite the extensive research conducted, several limitations remain in previous studies (Apriana, 2009; Indrawati, 2010; Soenaryo, 2010). For example, aspects of educational management in the context of pesantren were not addressed (Apriana, 2009), and there was more focus on learning models than on practical implementation in the pesantren environment (Indrawati, 2010). Additionally, the application of educational management within the pesantren setting was not deeply explored (Soenaryo, 2010).

Given these limitations, there are several research gaps that need to be filled. First, research on the management of early childhood education within the context of pesantren is still limited. Second, studies exploring the role of educational management in enhancing the effectiveness of early childhood education in pesantren are also lacking. This study aims to address these gaps by focusing on the management of early childhood education in the Salafiyah Karangpandan Pesantren, Pasuruan.

The problem faced by the Salafiyah Karangpandan Pesantren is how to effectively manage early childhood education within the pesantren context. Therefore, this study poses the following questions: 1) How is the planning of pesantren-based early childhood education conducted at Salafiyah Karangpandan Pesantren, Pasuruan? 2) How is the organization of pesantren-based early childhood education structured at Salafiyah Karangpandan Pesantren, Pasuruan? 3) How is the implementation of pesantren-based early childhood education carried out at Salafiyah Karangpandan Pesantren, Pasuruan? 4) How is the supervision of pesantren-based early childhood education managed at Salafiyah Karangpandan Pesantren, Pasuruan?

This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the field of early childhood education management. Theoretically, it aims to enrich perspectives on the management of early childhood education within pesantren settings. Practically, the findings of this study can be used as a reference for policymakers, organizers, and administrators of early childhood education to improve the quality of pesantren-based education.

## 2. Methods

This study employs a qualitative case study design to deeply understand the management of Early Childhood Education (PAUD) at Salafiyah Karangpandan Pesantren, Pasuruan Indonesia. This design was chosen to examine the phenomena of PAUD management contextually and empirically, where the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly defined, utilizing various sources of evidence (Moleong, 2000; Yin, 1994).

Participants in this study were selected using purposive sampling techniques. Participants included the Caregiver of the Pesantren/Foundation Head, School Principal, institution leaders, pond

coordinators, educators/ustad ustadzah, and educational staff/caregivers of the students. This technique was chosen to ensure that the data obtained were relevant to the research focus and derived from informants who truly understand PAUD management in the pesantren. Additional information was also gathered through snowball sampling techniques to extract further insights from the main participants.

Data were collected through three primary methods: in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis.

In-depth interviews were conducted with key participants such as the Caregiver of the Pesantren/Foundation Head, School Principal, and educators/ustad ustadzah. Interview questions covered aspects of planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision in pesantren-based PAUD management. Participatory observation was carried out by meticulously recording daily activities in the pesantren. The researcher also used image recording tools and notebooks to document activities of the students and teachers, as well as interactions among various parties in the educational institution. In the process of document analysis, a comprehensive approach was employed to gather essential materials, including the vision, mission, goals, both long-term and short-term plans, leadership policies, organizational structures, daily activity records, and monitoring and evaluation reports.

The collected data were subjected to an interactive analysis model as proposed by Miles & Huberman (1994), which encompasses several stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. To begin with, data condensation involved a meticulous process of selecting, focusing, and simplifying the information obtained. This step was crucial in identifying patterns and relationships within the data. Following this, the data display stage presented the information in a variety of formats, including narrative descriptions, matrices, and graphs, all aimed at facilitating a clearer understanding and aiding in the drawing of conclusions.

Finally, the conclusion drawing and verification phase was conducted gradually. Conclusions were carefully developed and validated through a process of triangulation, which involved cross-checking the data against various sources and methods to ensure accuracy and reliability. This systematic approach allowed for a comprehensive analysis, ultimately leading to well-supported findings.

This research was conducted in strict adherence to ethical standards, ensuring the integrity and reliability of the study. Permission was obtained from the authorities at Salafiyah Karangpandan Pesantren Pasuruan and the Graduate School of Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Participants were clearly informed about the purpose of the research, and their participation was voluntary. All obtained data were kept confidential and used only for research purposes. The researcher also conducted member checking to ensure data validity by returning interview and observation results to participants for their review and approval.

Data validity was ensured through four main criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, as proposed by Lincoln & Guba (1985). Credibility was maintained through source and method triangulation, continuous observation, and member checking. Transferability was achieved by providing a detailed description of the research context, allowing the findings to be applied to similar contexts. Dependability was ensured through an evaluation of the research process by experts in qualitative research, ensuring methodological rigor and consistency. Confirmability was maintained by grounding the research findings in the collected data and conducting the analysis transparently, making the entire process auditable.

By adhering to these standards, the study aims to provide a deep understanding of pesantren-based early childhood education (PAUD) management at Salafiyah Karangpandan Pesantren in Pasuruan, and to contribute to the development of early childhood education management theory.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. *Planning of Pesantren-Based Early Childhood Education*

The educational planning at Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPQ) Salafiyah Karangpandan Pasuruan is deeply rooted in the vision of fostering a culture of reading the Qur'an with tartil. This vision is supported by a comprehensive mission that addresses multiple aspects of Qur'anic education. Central to this mission is the provision of Qur'anic education aimed at preserving the honor and sanctity of the Qur'an through proper tartil reading. To ensure that this objective is met, the institution conducts examinations using the Qira'ati book, with participation limited to institutions and teachers who demonstrate obedience, compliance, and trustworthiness, and who meet the conditions set by the coordinator.

In addition to these examinations, the mission emphasizes the importance of caution and diligence among teachers when instructing students in the Qur'an. To further enhance the quality of education, the institution regularly conducts training sessions for teachers and teacher candidates, focusing on improving their teaching skills and knowledge. A significant part of this mission is also the organization of objective Tashih (certification) for teacher candidates, followed by providing methodological guidance to those who pass the certification process.

To maintain the spiritual and professional growth of its educators, TPQ Salafiyah Karangpandan Pasuruan organizes tadarus (group recitation) sessions for teachers, which are held at the institutional level or within the framework of the Majelis Mu'allimil Qur'an (MMQ), overseen by the coordinator. Furthermore, the institution places great importance on the appointment and selection of coordinators, principals, and teachers who are not only trustworthy and professional but also exhibit good character.

Motivating these educators to continuously seek guidance and assistance from Allah is also a vital part of the institution's mission, with the ultimate goal of advancing the institution and gaining divine pleasure. The strategy employed to achieve these goals is the internalization of the Qira'ati system, ensuring that all aspects of the institution's vision and mission are reflected in its educational activities. This alignment with the values upheld by the Qira'ati center in Semarang ensures consistency and quality in the educational process.

Nyai Mas'udah explains:

"This TPQ aims to produce students who can read the Qur'an correctly and well, in line with the goals of Qira'ati's founder, KH Dahlan Salim Zarkasyi. This goal is certainly not easy to achieve with young children like those in kindergarten, requiring patience, diligence, and utmost effort." (Khoiriyah, Interview, September 20, 2023).

#### 3.2. *Organization of Pesantren-Based Early Childhood Education*

The organization of education at TPQ Salafiyah Karangpandan operates on a work system that is firmly rooted in competence, trust, familial relationships, and the welfare of its members. The human resources at this institution are characterized by several key qualities: piety, indicating a high level of devotion to Allah; obedience, which reflects a commitment to complying with the orders of superiors; discipline, demonstrated through the diligent performance of duties; and sincerity, which involves working with complete dedication without expecting worldly rewards.

Within this organizational structure, the head of TPQ is directly responsible to the caregiver of the pesantren, ensuring a close and accountable relationship. The head is supported by a teaching team composed entirely of alumni from the pesantren, reflecting a continuity of values and practices. The organizational framework also includes coordinators, treasurers, operators, and

teachers, all of whom hold certified teaching credentials from the Qira'ati central institution in Semarang, ensuring that the quality of education meets the established standards.

Khoiriyah elaborates on the work system:

"The work system here follows the central Qira'ati rules, from the institution's regulations, the *ustadzah*, and including the students. The essence is that, overall, the teacher's orders must be followed." (Khoiriyah, Interview, September 20, 2023).

### **3.3. Implementation of Pesantren-Based Early Childhood Education**

The implementation of education at Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPQ) Salafiyah is guided by a strict adherence to the Qira'ati system, under the leadership of the highly respected figures, *Kiai* and *Nyai*. Their charismatic leadership is central to the educational process, providing direct guidance and direction to ensure that all activities align with the established goals. This leadership style creates a work environment that is both child-friendly and deeply rooted in religious values, fostering a conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning within the *pesantren*.

Educational activities at TPQ Salafiyah begin with *tadarus* sessions specifically for teachers, which serve as a spiritual foundation for the day. Following this, teaching activities are conducted using an individual classical method, allowing for personalized instruction tailored to each student's needs. The educational process culminates in evaluation activities through IMTAS (Final Student Examination), which are organized annually by the district and branch coordinators to assess the students' progress and mastery.

Khoiriyah further elaborates on the implementation process:

"Everything done by the TPQ team is in accordance with the orders of *Kiai* and *Nyai*. Since this TPQ adheres to the central Qira'ati system in Semarang, as long as we follow the central orders, *Kiai* and *Nyai* will certainly approve." (Khoiriyah, Interview, September 19, 2023).

### **3.4. Supervision of Pesantren-Based Early Childhood Education**

Educational supervision at Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPQ) Salafiyah is carried out through a combination of scheduled and conditional evaluations. These evaluations are an integral part of maintaining the quality of education and ensuring adherence to the Qira'ati system. Scheduled evaluations are systematically organized through MMQ (*Majelis Mu'allimil Qur'an*) activities, which take place at various levels: twice a month at the institutional level, once a month at the district level, and every three months at the branch level.

In addition to these regular evaluations, conditional evaluations are conducted as needed, depending on specific circumstances and requirements. These may include monthly evaluation meetings at the institutional level and preparations for upcoming examinations. The evaluators involved in this process are known for their objectivity and positive mindset, ensuring that evaluations are carried out fairly and constructively, in line with the regulations set by the central Qira'ati and the guidance of the *pesantren* caregivers.

Khoiriyah explains how the supervision is typically implemented:

"The implementation from the leadership is usually carried out by me as the TPQ head and *Nyai* as the foundation chair. The timing is not fixed, sometimes once a week or once a month." (Khoiriyah, Interview, September 19, 2023)

The educational planning at TPQ Salafiyah heavily focuses on the internalization of the Qira'ati system to ensure the achievement of the institution's vision and mission. This approach helps instill strong religious educational values from an early age, resulting in students who can read the Qur'an with *tartil* and understand and practice Islamic teachings comprehensively.

The organization, based on a competent work system and good HR characteristics, creates a harmonious and productive work environment. This system ensures that each teacher and staff member has high responsibility and trust in their duties, supported by adequate welfare.

The implementation of education, led by charismatic figures and supported by a child-friendly work environment, ensures the education process runs well and aligns with pesantren values. The strong leadership of Kiai and Nyai and the supportive religious environment of the pesantren are key factors in the successful implementation of education at TPQ Salafiyah.

Scheduled and conditional supervision allows for proper evaluation and continuous improvement. The objective and positive-thinking characteristics of evaluators help maintain education quality. Evaluations guided by the central Qira'ati regulations and the directions of the pesantren caregivers ensure that high educational standards are consistently maintained.

The pesantren-based early childhood education management approach at Salafiyah Karangpandan Pesantren, Pasuruan, shows that good planning, proper organization, consistent implementation, and objective supervision can create an effective and efficient education system in the pesantren context. The comprehensive implementation of the Qira'ati system and the charismatic leadership of Kiai and Nyai are key success factors in managing education at this pesantren. This approach not only produces students capable of reading the Qur'an with tartil but also shapes students with good character and the ability to practice Islamic teachings in daily life.

### 3.5. Propositions

- a. Planning of Pesantren-Based Early Childhood Education
  - Proposition 1: Pesantren-based early childhood education planning can succeed if it has a vision of preparing a golden generation that is Cheerful (Intelligent, Qur'anic, and Independent).
  - Proposition 2: Pesantren-based early childhood education planning can succeed if it has a mission to develop children who are intelligent in thinking, communication, and creativity through simple language and movements based on Multiple Intelligence, produce Qur'anic children with good character, enjoy reciting, understand Ahlussunah wal Jamaah based on pesantren values, and create independent children who are responsible, caring for themselves, friends, and their environment.
  - Proposition 3: Pesantren-based early childhood education planning can succeed by internalizing the Qira'ati system strategy.
- b. Organization of Pesantren-Based Early Childhood Education
  - Proposition 1: Pesantren-based early childhood education organization will be well realized if the work system is based on competence, trust, familial relationships, and welfare based on the institution's strengths.
  - Proposition 2: Pesantren-based early childhood education organization will be well realized if human resources (HR) possess good personality characteristics, including piety, obedience, discipline, thoroughness, and sincerity.
- c. Implementation of Pesantren-Based Early Childhood Education
  - Proposition 1: Pesantren-based early childhood education implementation will be positively responded to if it has charismatic leaders like Kiai and Nyai.
  - Proposition 2: Pesantren-based early childhood education implementation will be achieved if it has a child-friendly and religious work environment.
- d. Supervision of Pesantren-Based Early Childhood Education
  - Proposition 1: Supervision of pesantren-based early childhood education supporting planning success can be done through intensive and incidental work evaluations.
  - Proposition 2: Supervision of pesantren-based early childhood education can be achieved through objective and positive-thinking evaluators.

- Proposition 3: Supervision of pesantren-based early childhood education can be achieved through evaluation implementation as an authority of leadership.

#### 4. Discussion

This study aims to explore the planning, organization, implementation, and supervision of pesantren-based early childhood education, focusing on the establishment of vision, mission, strategy, and leadership characteristics as key success factors. The findings of this research contribute significantly to the development of a pesantren-based early childhood education model and align with several previous research findings.

The study reveals that successful planning of pesantren-based early childhood education requires a clear vision, such as preparing a golden generation that is Cheerful (Intelligent, Qur'anic, and Independent). This vision is consistent with previous research that emphasized the importance of early education in children's cognitive development (Apriana, 2009). Additionally, planning must include a concrete mission, such as developing children who are intelligent in thinking, communication, and creativity, as well as possessing good character. Furthermore, the internalization of the Qira'ati system strategy is crucial to achieving these goals, supported by findings highlighting the necessity of considering three learning styles—visual, auditory, and kinesthetic—and involving three brain regions in child development (Wartini, 2015).

The organization of education in this study emphasizes hygiene and motivator factors that drive organizational goal achievement. Effective organization involves a work system based on competence, trust, familial relationships, and welfare, aligning with Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, which states that extrinsic and intrinsic factors play crucial roles in achieving job satisfaction and avoiding dissatisfaction. The findings also support the significance of a play-based approach in stimulating various types of intelligence in children, emphasizing the importance of a supportive and child-friendly work environment (Soenaryo, 2010). The importance of good recruitment and selection of human resources in PAUD to achieve effective organization is also highlighted (Zaenab, 2012).

The implementation of pesantren-based early childhood education will be positively received if it features charismatic leadership from Kiai and Nyai and a child-friendly, religious work environment. These findings support Fiedler's Contingency Theory, which asserts that leadership success depends on the appropriate leadership style for the situation. The relevance of a child-friendly work environment is further supported by research showing that an entrepreneurial-oriented learning model can improve learning outcomes for PAUD children (Indrawati, 2010). Additionally, the importance of developing children's religious spirit using methods appropriate to their developmental stages, such as lectures, games, stories, role-playing, habituation, and role modeling, has been emphasized (Noor, 2020).

Effective supervision in pesantren-based early childhood education can be achieved through intensive and incidental work evaluations, with evaluators who are objective and positive thinkers. This supervisory method aligns with 360-degree feedback theory, which emphasizes the importance of honest and constructive evaluation. Intensive and incidental supervision is crucial to ensuring that planning and implementation align with established goals, supporting the success of early childhood education planning. The importance of parental involvement in the evaluation and participation in early childhood learning is also noted (Desyanty, 2015).

Relevant research includes findings on preschool children's competencies in communication, highlighting the development of communication skills in pesantren education (Setiawati, 2012). Teacher compensation management is also crucial, with good planning and management directly impacting teaching quality and welfare (Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019). Research on pesantren-based PAUD curriculum management demonstrates that curriculum implementation involving various stakeholders, including foundations, teachers, and communities, is essential for educational success (Muharrhman, 2017).

The habituation of almsgiving in schools fosters empathy, enhancing children's religious and social values (Rochmani, 2022). Furthermore, character education is essential in developing children's basic potential to become good individuals through center-based learning (Kahar, 2019). Challenges faced by mothers in career families in educating their children, especially in time management and religious knowledge, underscore the importance of family cooperation (Susilawati, 2022).

This study demonstrates that good planning, organization, implementation, and supervision are crucial for the success of pesantren-based early childhood education. These findings align with previous studies that emphasize the importance of early education in children's cognitive and character development (Apriana, 2009; Desyanty, 2015; Indrawati, 2010; Soenaryo, 2010; Wartini, 2015). However, interpreting these results requires caution due to the complexity and variability in the implementation of pesantren-based education. Further research can delve deeper into the implementation of the Qira'ati strategy in various pesantren contexts and its impact on early childhood education outcomes.

## 5. Conclusion

This study explores the management of Early Childhood Education (PAUD) within the context of a pesantren at Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Karangpandan Pasuruan Indonesia, focusing on the key areas of planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising education. Through a qualitative case study approach, this research offers an in-depth understanding of how PAUD is managed in a pesantren setting.

In terms of **planning**, the educational strategy at Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPQ) Salafiyah Karangpandan is centered around a vision that aims to cultivate a culture of reading the Qur'an with tartil. This vision is supported by a mission that encompasses nine core aspects, with the primary strategy being the internalization of the Qira'ati system. This approach ensures that all educational activities align with the values established by the Qira'ati center in Semarang.

The **organization** of education at TPQ Salafiyah Karangpandan is built on a work system that emphasizes competence, trust, familial relationships, and welfare. The human resources developed within this system are characterized by qualities such as piety, discipline, and sincerity, which contribute to a harmonious and productive work environment.

When it comes to **implementation**, the educational activities are led by the charismatic figures of Kiai and Nyai, who provide direct guidance within a child-friendly and religious work environment. The teaching methods strictly adhere to the Qira'ati system, beginning with tadarus sessions for teachers and culminating in evaluations conducted through IMTAS (Final Student Examination).

**Supervision** is carried out through both scheduled and conditional evaluations, ensuring continuous improvement and adherence to educational standards. These evaluations include MMQ activities at various levels and monthly meetings, with evaluators who are known for their objectivity and positive thinking.

This study highlights that effective planning, organization, implementation, and supervision are critical to the success of pesantren-based early childhood education. The role of the Qira'ati system, coupled with the charismatic leadership of Kiai and Nyai, is pivotal in creating an effective educational framework. The findings resonate with existing theories and research, underscoring the significance of early education in the cognitive and character development of children.

However, the study acknowledges certain limitations, such as its focus on a single pesantren and the use of qualitative methods that may not fully capture the diversity of educational contexts in other pesantrens. As a result, further research is recommended to investigate the application of the Qira'ati strategy across different pesantrens and its impact on early childhood education outcomes.



The findings of this study can serve as a valuable reference for policymakers, organizers, and administrators of early childhood education, providing insights into how to enhance the quality of pesantren-based education. The study emphasizes the importance of good organization, a supportive work environment, and effective supervision, all of which can be further developed based on these findings.

Overall, this research enriches the perspective on the management of early childhood education within a pesantren environment. Practically, it offers guidance for other pesantrens looking to implement the Qira'ati system in their PAUD management, as well as for stakeholders seeking to improve the quality of pesantren-based early childhood education.

## Declarations

### Author contribution statement

Endah Tri Wisudaningsih contributed as the primary and corresponding author and thoroughly prepared the draft article. Djunaidi Ghony added analysis and methodology; Sutiah conducted FGD and interviews with the principal researcher.

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### Data availability statement

The datasets generated during and analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

### Declaration of Interest's statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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