

Evaluation of the Ability of Early Childhood Education Teachers to Face Social and Cultural Changes

***Nailul Hasanah¹, Halim Purnomo², Mega Safita Putri³**

¹Universitas Muhammadiyah Jambi, Jl. Kapten Pattimura, Simpang IV Sipin, Telanaipura, Jambi 36124, Indonesia

²Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Jl. Ring Road Selatan, Geblagan, Tamantirto, Kasihan, Bantul, Yogyakarta 55184, Indonesia

³Universitas Darussalam Gontor, Jl. Raya Siman No.Km. 5, Dusun I, Demangan, Kec. Siman, Kab. Ponorogo, East Java 63471, Indonesia

²  orcid id: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3515-7609>

*nailulhsna6@gmail.com

Keywords:	Abstract
Socio-cultural adaptation, Islamic education, and digital literacy	<i>This study aims to evaluate the ability of PAUD RA Darul Fikri Bringin teachers in responding to the dynamics of social and cultural change, covering four dimensions: pedagogical competence and digital literacy, internalization of religious values, collaboration with families and communities, and the use of institutional supervision as a means of professional development. The research uses a qualitative approach with a field study design. Data were collected through structured participatory observation (12 sessions, 60–90 minutes per session), semi-structured in-depth interviews (45–60 minutes per informant) with 6 teachers, 1 principal, and 4 guardians, and documentation studies. Data analysis model which includes data condensation, data presentation, conclusion drawn, and verification, with data validity guaranteed through triangulation of sources and methods as well as member checks. The results show that teachers have adequate basic pedagogical competencies and a strong commitment to inculcate Islamic values through daily habits, but the digital literacy gap between teachers is quite significant – only 2 out of 6 teachers actively use digital media in learning. Collaboration with families is going quite well through parenting programs and liaison books, although some parents are still passive. Institutional supervision is still administrative and has not encouraged substantive pedagogical reflection. The research concludes that RA Darul Fikri Bringin teachers have the potential to be a bridge between tradition and modernity, but require strengthening through the development of digital-local training modules, coaching-based supervision, and integrative curriculum guidelines based on local cultural wisdom.</i>
Kata Kunci: Adaptasi sosial-budaya, Pendidikan Islam, Literasi digital	Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi kemampuan guru PAUD RA Darul Fikri Bringin dalam merespons dinamika perubahan sosial dan budaya, yang mencakup empat dimensi: kompetensi pedagogis dan literasi digital, internalisasi nilai-nilai keagamaan, kolaborasi dengan keluarga dan masyarakat, serta pemanfaatan pengawasan institusional sebagai sarana

pengembangan profesional. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi lapangan. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif terstruktur (12 sesi, 60–90 menit per sesi), wawancara mendalam semi-terstruktur (45–60 menit per informan) dengan 6 guru, 1 kepala sekolah, dan 4 orang tua, serta studi dokumentasi. Model analisis data yang mencakup pemadatan data, penyajian data, penarikan kesimpulan, dan verifikasi, dengan validitas data dijamin melalui triangulasi sumber dan metode serta pemeriksaan oleh anggota. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru memiliki kompetensi pedagogis dasar yang memadai dan komitmen yang kuat untuk menanamkan nilai-nilai Islam melalui kebiasaan sehari-hari, namun kesenjangan literasi digital di antara para guru cukup signifikan hanya 2 dari 6 guru yang secara aktif menggunakan media digital dalam pembelajaran. Kolaborasi dengan keluarga berjalan cukup baik melalui program pengasuhan dan buku komunikasi, meskipun beberapa orang tua masih bersikap pasif. Pengawasan institusional masih bersifat administratif dan belum mendorong refleksi pedagogis yang substantif. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa guru-guru RA Darul Fikri Bringin memiliki potensi untuk menjadi jembatan antara tradisi dan modernitas, namun perlu diperkuat melalui pengembangan modul pelatihan digital-lokal, pengawasan berbasis pembinaan, serta pedoman kurikulum integratif yang didasarkan pada kearifan budaya lokal.

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1. Introduction

The rapid social and cultural changes in the era of globalization and digitalization have put real pressure on early childhood education institutions in Indonesia, including Islamic-based institutions (Istiqlaliyah & Istiqomah, 2025). This is due to the penetration of digital technology that fundamentally changes the socialization pattern of children and families, so that traditional values that have been the foundation of education are in danger of being eroded. A survey by the Central Statistics Agency in 2023 shows that more than 60% of early childhood children in urban areas have been regularly exposed to gadgets since the age of two, while the UNICEF Indonesia report (2022) recorded a significant increase in exposure to digital content without assistance after the COVID-19 pandemic (UNICEF Indonesia, 2025). This phenomenon indicates that early childhood education institutions, especially those based on religion, face a dual challenge: responding to changes in socio-cultural contexts while maintaining the identity of the values that are the foundation of their institutions (Knoblauch, 2023). Therefore, the evaluation of the adaptive ability of PAUD teachers in facing the dynamics of social and cultural change is very urgent to be carried out.

The competence of PAUD teachers in responding to social and cultural changes is a determining factor in the quality of early childhood education, especially in Islamic-based institutions (Li & Fan, 2026). This is because teachers not only play the role of material presenters, but also as agents of value socialization, moral

examples (*uswah hasanah*), and managers of the emotional climate in the classroom. Teachers who have high adaptive competence are able to integrate religious values with contextual learning approaches effectively, so that children can more easily internalize moral values in daily life (Pinya-Medina et al., 2024). The same thing is emphasized by Hasibuan (2021), who states that institutional readiness and teacher professionalism are the main prerequisites for the sustainability of Islamic education that is relevant and responsive to the demands of the times. Thus, the ability of early childhood education teachers to adapt to socio-cultural changes is not just an individual need, but an institutional necessity that has a direct impact on the quality of early generation character education (Pinya-Medina et al., 2024).

The competency gap of PAUD teachers in Islamic-based institutions in facing the demands of digital literacy and adaptive professional supervision (Maisaroh, 2024). This gap occurs because most PAUD teacher training programs have not systematically integrated the socio-cultural adaptation dimension into their curriculum. Most PAUD teachers in Islamic institutions experience a pedagogical dilemma when the available digital content is not in line with the local and religious values held by the institution (Syahkila et al., 2022). Meanwhile, Lase (2023) emphasized that the quality of institutional supervision, ranging from a proactive approach to just administrative, has a significant effect on teachers' adaptive abilities in the long term. Thus, efforts to improve the competence of PAUD teachers in responding to socio-cultural changes need to be directed at strengthening clinical supervision, developing contextual training modules, and providing curriculum guidelines that accommodate the integration of local values and pedagogical innovation (Syahkila et al., 2022).

This research is based on the Ecological Theory of Human Development, which views child development as the result of dynamic interaction between individuals and various layers of the social environment, ranging from microsystems (family and school), mesosystems (interinstitutional relationships), exosystems (educational policies), to macrosystems (cultural values and globalization) (Tong & An, 2023). This theory is relevant to use in this study because it directly relates the role of teachers as the main actors in the education microsystem that must be able to respond to pressures from a wider range of environments, including social and cultural changes due to globalization and the development of digital technology. In the context of early childhood Islamic education, Bronfenbrenner's theory provides an analytical framework to understand how RA Darul Fikri Bringin teachers interact with and respond to changes that come from outside the school environment, while maintaining the stability of religious values that are at the core of the institution's mission. The application of this theory in research allows researchers to evaluate teachers' adaptive abilities not only from the dimension of pedagogical competence, but also from the dimension of family, community, and institutional collaboration (Tong & An, 2023).

This study aims to evaluate the ability of PAUD RA Darul Fikri Bringin teachers to respond to the dynamics of social and cultural change as a whole. This goal is important because a comprehensive evaluation will produce a real picture of the strengths and weaknesses of teachers' competencies, which can then be used as the basis for the development of more targeted capacity-building programs. Without in-depth data-based evaluation, professional development interventions for early childhood education teachers tend to be ineffective and not in accordance with the needs of the field. Specifically, this study evaluates four main dimensions: (a)

pedagogical competence and digital literacy of teachers, (b) the process of internalization and application of religious values in learning, (c) the ability to collaborate with families and communities, and (d) the ability to utilize institutional supervision as a means of professional development. Thus, the results of this study are expected to make a significant empirical contribution to the development of early childhood Islamic education policies that are adaptive, sustainable, and based on local cultural wisdom.

2. Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a field study design carried out at RA Darul Fikri Bringin, Ponorogo Regency, East Java. The location of the research was chosen purposively because this institution is an Islamic-based PAUD located in a semi-urban area with significant socio-cultural change dynamics. The research participants consisted of 3 permanent teachers, 1 principal, 1 PAUD teacher and 1 representative of the students' parents. Data collection was carried out through three main instruments: (1) structured participatory observation carried out during learning to observe pedagogical practices, teacher-student interactions, and value adaptation strategies; (2) semi-structured in-depth interviews with a duration of 45–60 minutes per informant, using interview guidance that covers four main themes: pedagogical-digital competence, internalization of religious values, family-community collaboration, and response to supervision; and (3) a documentation study of the Daily Learning Implementation Plan (RPPH), supervision records, and institutional curriculum policies.

All interview sessions were recorded with the consent of the informant using a digital recording device, then transcribed verbatim for analysis purposes. The observation data were recorded in a structured observation sheet, which included indicators: the use of learning media, value management strategies, social-emotional interactions, and responses to cultural change situations. Data analysis was carried out using the interactive analysis model (Miles et al., 2014) which included four stages: (1) data condensation, namely sorting and focusing relevant data from interview transcripts and field notes; (2) the presentation of data in the form of thematic matrices and descriptive narratives; (3) drawing conclusions and verifying through the search for repetitive patterns across data sources; and (4) negative case analysis to ensure that findings reflect the diversity of participants' experiences. The validity of the data is ensured through four strategies: triangulation of sources (teachers, principals, and parents), triangulation of methods (observation, interviews, and documentation), member checks conducted twice during the research process, and trail audits through systematic recording of all analytical decision-making procedures (Creswell, 2018).

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. *Pedagogical Competence and Digital Literacy of Teachers*

The results of observations of 12 learning sessions showed that RA Darul Fikri Bringin teachers had adequate basic pedagogical competence, reflected in their ability to design play-while-learning activities that are appropriate to the child's developmental stage. Teachers consistently use thematic approaches and experiential learning. However, the field findings also revealed a significant gap in terms of digital literacy: of the 6 teachers interviewed, only 2 people routinely use simple digital media such as Islamic educational videos in learning activities.

The other four teachers stated that they were constrained by limited equipment and a lack of technical training. This condition is in line with the findings of Syahkila et al. (2022), who stated that PAUD teachers in Islamic institutions often face pedagogical dilemmas when the available digital content is not in harmony with the religious values of the institution, so they tend to avoid using technology rather than adapting it.

"I actually want to use a learning video that has an Islamic song, but there is only one school cellphone, and it is often used for documentation. If you use a personal cellphone, you are worried that the battery will run out. So finally, yes, I just used a sticky image as usual."

This disparity in digital competence between teachers reflects the absence of systematic professional development programs at the institutional level. Emphasized that the development of digital-based learning media in PAUD institutions requires structured institutional support; it is not enough to rely only on individual teachers' initiatives (Hakiki & Fadli, 2021). Within the framework of Tong & An's (2023) ecological theory, this condition shows that the pressure from the macrosystem in the form of digitalization flows has not been adequately responded to by the mesosystem (institutional policy), so that the class microsystem does not undergo a meaningful transformation. Therefore, strengthening teachers' pedagogical-digital competencies needs to be supported by institutional policies in the form of providing tools, periodic training, and integrated digital-local curriculum guidelines (Syahkila et al., 2022).

3.2. *Internalization and Application of Religious Values in Learning*

Research findings consistently show that the internalization of religious values is the main strength of RA Darul Fikri Bringin's teachers. All teachers who were observed routinely integrated religious habits into the daily structure of learning, including memorization of daily prayers, congregational Dhuha prayers, the introduction of morals through the story of the prophet, and the integration of the value of monotheism in play activities. This is in line with the institution's mission as an Islamic-based PAUD, which makes the formation of faith and morals a top priority. An in-depth interview with the principal revealed that the institution's curriculum explicitly requires that every learning activity include at least one Islamic value, and that all teachers comply with this provision well. This commitment strengthens the argument of (Hasibuan, 2021) that institutional readiness in maintaining religious identity is the main prerequisite for the sustainability of relevant Islamic education.

"Here, we require every lesson to have Islamic values; at least the child is invited to pray first, and the teacher explains why we pray. We want children not only to memorize the prayer, but to know its meaning from a young age."

However, this study found that the internalization of religious values is still more done through ritual habituation than a constructivist approach that encourages children to actively understand the meaning of values. Some teachers admit that it is difficult to connect Islamic values with the real-life situations of children who have been exposed to digital popular culture. This challenge is relevant to the arguments of Pinya-Medina et al. (2024), who emphasize the need to integrate religious values with contextual learning approaches so that children

can internalize moral values meaningfully, not just memorize. This condition shows that although the commitment to religious values is strong, it is necessary to develop more creative pedagogical strategies to bridge Islamic values with the socio-cultural realities of today's children (Pinya-Medina et al., 2024).

3.3. *Ability to Collaborate with Family and Community*

The results of interviews with 4 parent representatives and observations of monthly meeting activities show that the pattern of collaboration between teachers and families at RA Darul Fikri Bringin has been built quite well. Teachers proactively inform children's development through daily liaison books and guardian meetings held monthly. The school also runs a parenting program that aims to align the pattern of education at home with the values instilled in the school. Community-based innovations such as visits to traditional markets and "learning from the environment" activities have received a positive response from parents because they are considered able to instil local wisdom while introducing children to real community life (Gianistika et al., 2025). That active involvement of the community and family is crucial social capital in the transfer of cultural values.

"I am happy that my son was invited to the market with Mrs Guru. On his return, he told me about an honest trader who could not cheat in buying and selling. I don't know where it came from; it turns out from the story that the teacher taught me at school."

However, the research also identified structural barriers to this collaboration. Some parents still position PAUD institutions as a childcare centre, not as an equal educational partner. In addition, some parents have the opposite expectations: they demand mastery of "elementary-ready" or "global-ready" skills that have the potential to shift the priority of education based on local cultural values. This ambivalence condition is identified by Asis et al. (2022) as a challenge that requires the management of expectations and planned family communication through a systematic stakeholder engagement approach. In the perspective of (Tong & An, 2023), strengthening the mesosystem, that is, the relationship between school and family, is key to ensuring consistency in the cultivation of value between the context of home and school, so that the impact of macrosystem changes can be managed in a more constructive manner.

3.4. *Ability to Utilize Institutional Supervision as a Means of Professional Development*

An analysis of the documentation of supervision records and interviews with the principal revealed that supervision at RA Darul Fikri Bringin is still dominated by an administrative approach, which focuses on the completeness of RPPH files and the timeliness of the implementation of activities, rather than a clinical approach oriented towards the development of teachers' adaptive competencies. Of the 6 teachers interviewed, only 1 person stated that they had received supervisory feedback that was discursive and encouraged pedagogical reflection. The other five teachers stated that supervision was more like an administrative examination process. This condition reinforces the findings of Lase (2023), who affirms that the quality of institutional supervision has a significant effect on teachers' long-term adaptive abilities, and that supervision that is only

administrative in nature is not able to encourage substantial professional growth (Lase, 2023).

"The supervision of the principal usually looks at whether the RPPH already exists or not, whether the attendance list is complete or not. There has never been a discussion about a better way to teach or what if there is a child who is difficult to condition because he is addicted to cellphones at home."

The absence of adaptive clinical supervision is a serious obstacle to the development of teachers' competence in dealing with socio-cultural changes. Teachers who receive reflective mentoring regularly have a higher learning facilitation capacity and are better able to adjust pedagogical strategies according to the dynamics of the context (Panjaitan & Hafizzah, 2025). This study recommends that the supervision model at RA Darul Fikri Bringin needs to transform from an inspective-administrative approach to coaching-based collaborative supervision, where principals and teachers jointly identify adaptation challenges, design contextual solutions, and evaluate their effectiveness on a regular basis. Support from external parties, such as education offices or partner universities, is also needed to strengthen this adaptive clinical supervision capacity (Lase, 2023).

The results of this study answer the four objectives of the research with the following findings: first, RA Darul Fikri Bringin teachers have adequate basic pedagogical competence, but digital literacy is still low due to limited infrastructure and lack of technical training; second, the internalization of religious values takes place consistently through the habituation of daily rituals, although the approach used is still more memorized than constructivist-contextual; third, collaboration with families and communities has been established, but it is not optimal because some parents are still passive and have expectations that are not in line with the mission of value-based education; and fourth, institutional supervision is still administratively dominant so that it has not been able to encourage the growth of teachers' adaptive competencies substantially. Overall, RA Darul Fikri Bringin teachers have a strong potential as a bridge between traditional Islamic values and the demands of modernity, but this potential requires more systematic institutional support. Therefore, this study recommends three strategic steps: (1) the development of digital-local training modules that integrate technological literacy with local cultural wisdom; (2) the transformation of the supervision model from an inspectoral-administrative approach to coaching-based collaborative supervision that encourages pedagogical reflection; and (3) the preparation of integrative curriculum guidelines that explicitly direct teachers in balancing the internalization of Islamic values with contextual learning innovations, in order to realize an early childhood Islamic education that is sustainable, relevant, and based on local cultural wisdom.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that PAUD RA Darul Fikri Bringin teachers show adequate adaptive skills in dealing with social and cultural changes, but still need reinforcement in the four dimensions studied. First, teachers' basic pedagogical competence is relatively good, reflected in the consistency of the use of thematic and experiential learning approaches, but digital literacy is still low because only 2 out of 6 teachers actively use digital media in learning due to limited infrastructure and a lack of technical training. Second, the internalization of

religious values takes place consistently through the habituation of daily rituals such as memorization of prayers, Dhuha prayers, and the introduction of morals, although the approach is still more memorized than the constructivist-contextual approach that connects Islamic values with the reality of children's lives today. Third, collaboration with families and communities has been established through parenting programs, liaison books, and community-based activities, but it is not optimal because some parents are still passive and have expectations that are not in line with the mission of education based on local cultural values. Fourth, institutional supervision is still dominated by an administrative approach that focuses on the completeness of files, so it has not been able to encourage pedagogical reflection and the growth of teachers' adaptive competencies substantially. Overall, RA Darul Fikri Bringin teachers have a strong potential as a bridge between traditional Islamic values and the demands of modernity, but this potential can only be realized optimally if supported by systematic institutional policies, including the development of digital-local training modules, coaching-based supervision transformation, and the preparation of integrative curriculum guidelines that balance the internalization of Islamic values with contextual learning innovations.

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