

Strengthening The Islamic Identity of Indonesian Migrant Children in Malaysia Through Learning The Al-Quran

Della Monica¹, Kuliyatun², Iswati³, Siti Nur Azizah^{4*}, Atika Putri Chairani⁵, Azzahra Arimbi Kamila⁶, Avrielle Mauliaraudhah Farmudya⁷

¹⁻³Universitas Muhammadiyah Metro, Indonesia

⁴Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto, Indonesia

⁵Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol Padang, Indonesia

⁶Universitas Aisyiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia

⁷Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Indonesia

sitinurazizah@ump.ac.id

Abstract

This research examines efforts to strengthen the Islamic identity of Indonesian immigrant children in Malaysia through learning the Koran through International Volunteer Delegations. Cross-border immigration often brings new challenges, including maintaining religious and cultural identity. The focus of this research is how learning the Koran can be an effective tool in strengthening the Islamic identity of Indonesian immigrant children in Malaysia. The research method used is qualitative research with a case study approach. Data was collected through participant observation, interviews, and document analysis. The respondents of this research were children of Indonesian immigrants in Malaysia and educators involved in the Al-Quran learning process. The research results show that Al-Quran learning is essential in strengthening the Islamic identity of Indonesian immigrant children in Malaysia. Through learning the Koran, children can gain a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings, moral values, and Islamic culture. They may also develop a sense of pride in their religious and cultural identity. In conclusion, learning the Koran can be an effective means of strengthening the Islamic identity of Indonesian immigrant children in Malaysia. However, strong support is needed from various parties, including families, schools, and the environment, to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of this effort.

Keywords : Malaysia, Islamic Religious Education, Al-Quran Learning

1. INTRODUCTION

Islam is one of the largest religions, spread worldwide, including Indonesia and Malaysia. These two countries have a population that is predominantly Muslim. Many Indonesians are migrant workers in Malaysia, and almost all of them are Muslim. Malaysia is a country where there are many immigrants, not only from Indonesia but from India, Bangladesh, China, etc. They bring their customs and habits to the countries where they work now (Setiadi et al., 2023).

Because of this factor, the Indonesian people appear to have a lack of their Islamic identity as migrant workers (Setiadi et al., 2023), Therefore, this research discusses Islamic education and learning the Koran. They must study Islamic education to know more deeply about the Islamic religion. *Islamic education* is an educational system that teaches Islamic values as a basis for forming a personality with character. In Islamic religious education, it is necessary to know about the Al-Qur'an, where the Al-Qur'an is the primary source for Muslims, containing the words of Allah SWT (Yulia Syafrin, Muhiddinur Kamal, Arifmiboy, 2021). This learning focuses on the children of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) because they need religious knowledge that must be studied for a promising future (Putri et al., 2024). Islamic religious education and learning the Koran for children has a significant influence in the social, cultural, and religious contexts of many countries, especially in countries with a majority Muslim population. Usually, in various countries, there are

immigrants whose Islamic identity is minimal due to different social and cultural factors, including Indonesian Immigration in Malaysia. Many are migrant workers who brought their families and built new lives there (Azizah, Pramana, et al., 2023).

The main problem for Indonesian immigrant children living in Malaysia is their existence in an environment that may be different from their country of origin because Malaysia is a country rich in cultural and religious diversity. Children of Indonesian immigrants may face pressure to adapt to a culture and values that are different from their culture of origin, so they may experience difficulties in maintaining and strengthening their Islamic identity due to the limitations of being an immigrant (Azizah, Pramana, et al., 2023).

Living a diverse life in another country can confuse religious learning among immigrant children. The process of integrating into Malaysian society can be complicated for children of immigrants, especially in maintaining their Islamic identity. They may need help balancing their Islamic identity and exposure to different cultures there. As in many modern societies, cultural influences and globalization can cause immigrant children to be exposed to values that conflict with Islamic teachings (Usama et al., 2023). Mass media, technology, and modern lifestyles often do not align with the religious values they study. In facing this challenge, religious education becomes essential. Learning the Koran not only provides an understanding of religious teachings but also strengthens immigrant children's spiritual closeness to their religion and helps them find a solid Islamic identity (Setiadi et al., 2023).

One way to improve the Islamic religion for Indonesian immigrant children in Malaysia is by holding volunteer or service activities, where delegates are sent from Indonesia to serve for several days there and must provide teaching about education, including Islamic religious education, such as teaching about practices. Prayer services, daily prayers, and learning the Koran are essential tools in strengthening the Islamic identity of Indonesian immigrant children in Malaysia (Azizah, Pramana, et al., 2023). In this volunteer program, religious learning, especially Al-Quran learning, children are taught to read, understand verses of the Al-Quran, and memorize several letters and the contents of these letters. Through learning the Koran, Indonesian immigrant children in Malaysia can strengthen their knowledge of their religion, thereby gaining a deeper understanding of Islamic values that may help them face challenges and temptations in a new environment and provide a strong foundation for identity. The Islamic faith of Indonesian immigrant children in Malaysia (Rudiansyah, 2018). Through good religious education, they can better understand Islamic teachings and integrate them into their daily lives (Amalia & Fadillah, 2023).

Strengthening the Islamic identity of Indonesian immigrant children in Malaysia is not only crucial for their personal development. However, it can also contribute to better social integration between immigrant communities and Malaysian society. It can help create an inclusive and harmonious environment where cultural and religious differences are valued and respected (Nidia et al., 2022). By strengthening the Islamic identity of Indonesian immigrant children in Malaysia through learning the Koran, it can be hoped that they will own their religious beliefs and values, which will help them face challenges and guide them in making good life decisions. in Malaysia (Nur Azizah et al., 2023).

2. METHOD

The appropriate methods are needed to achieve the learning objectives and improve the Al-Qur'an reading quality. A method is used to carry out activities to achieve specific goals. The success of a program cannot be separated from the choice of method (Azizah, Pramana, et al., 2023). Introducing learning the Qur'an is, of course, very beneficial, especially for children. Memorizing and reading with suitable methods will bring happiness, peace of mind, and satisfaction and can eliminate fear because the heart becomes peaceful by remembering Allah. Before studying the Koran, you must be able to read and write the

Hijaiyah letters. So, an exciting and regular method for learning the Qur'an is needed. The international volunteer delegates in the field of education created Al-Qur'an learning methods such as qiro'at, which turned out to have a positive impact and had a good influence to be continued by delegates who will serve in the future.

The factor influencing the strong desire to learn the Koran for children is that it is difficult to find a place to study the Koran or a Qur'an Education Park (TPQ) because their status is immigrants, so it is minimal (Azizah, Setiadi, et al., 2023). Therefore, in the study studio, international volunteer delegations in the field of education held an Al-Qur'an learning process so that they could understand the Islamic religion more deeply, starting from the basics. Namely learning the Koran using the following methods:

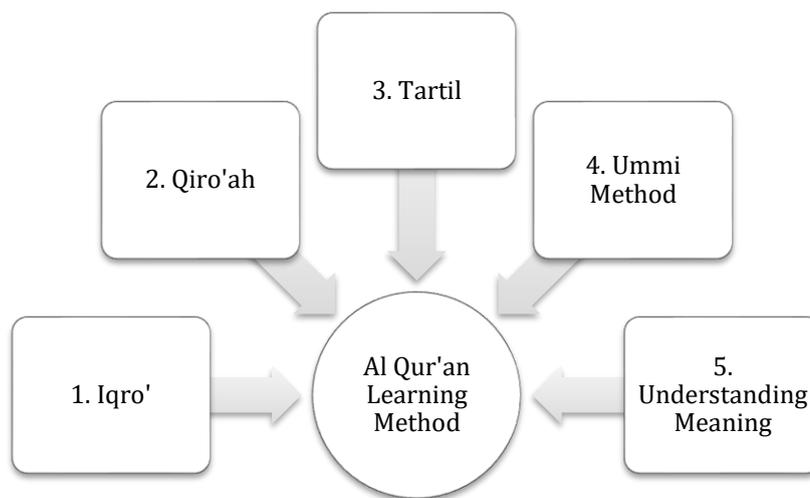


Figure 1. *Concept*

In the Iqro method, PMI children are taught to recognize letters and punctuation marks and be able to write and read clearly. Apart from the iron method, using the qiro'ah method is also relatively easy to learn (Samsukadi, 2022). Initially, the teacher gives examples of reading first, and after that, the children start to follow and practice it themselves, accompanied by the teacher (delegates). This method is used to examine the recitation of tajwid and its length and shortness.



Figure 2. *Practice*

In one nonformal school, there are many children whose ages, study classes, and learning methods differ. Therefore, the partial method is needed, namely reading with

correct recitation and directly practicing reading the Al-Quran with different portions of the qiblah method. At this stage, it is used and practiced by teachers with children whose age and pronunciation of letters are already mature (Nur Azizah et al., 2023). Next, the final method, namely the Ummi method, is suitable for children who need special attention, which must be done repeatedly, based on love and sincerity, accessible and pleasing, and has a good impact on memory.

The delegation continued with activities by exemplifying several methods of teaching the Koran. (Some can understand a little, but some still cannot.) Namely, they sing the Hijaiyah letters together to make the children more enthusiastic. This method effectively gets children to learn together and respond more quickly when introducing Hijaiyah letters. The stages of implementing activities are depicted in the following illustration:

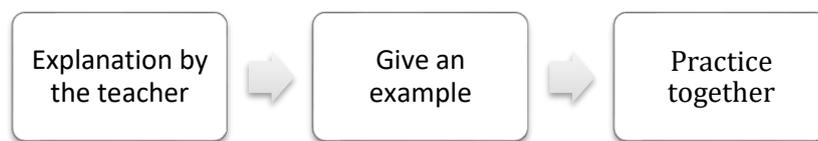


Figure 3 : *Method*

Explanations by teachers (volunteer international delegates) are carried out so that children can understand the learning material that will be practiced and focus on the topics that will be explained later. The purpose of this explanation is to help children know that the material that will be presented is about learning the Al-Qur'an (Hijaiyah letters). Apart from that, this technique explains the sound of each hijaiyah letter, where it comes from, and the position of our tongue when pronouncing it. This explanation influences children's ability to understand the topic being discussed and invites them to learn to speak and convey the correct answers to the questions given by the teacher on that theme.



Figure 4. *Question and Answer*

The method that must be done before starting to practice reading the Qur'an is to give an example to the children, namely providing a visual experience and seeing their understanding and interest in the Hijaiyah Letters and giving examples to the children so

that they have an understanding of what they are learning. Then, an example was made by volunteer delegates singing together about the Hijaiyah letters in front of the children.



Figure 5. *Give an example*

This method makes learning fun; the high enthusiasm on the faces of the children makes learning go well. After they understand what has been demonstrated, they practice reading one by one according to the teacher's directions. Implementing this method at the end of the lesson increases the child's ability to master the basics of learning the Al-Qur'an. In the learning process following the times, something new at this time is to see things visually so that it becomes easier for today's generation of children to understand and comprehend. The delegates gave examples of the visual style, such as learning from exciting pictures. However, this method does not promise miracles; the most important thing is our efforts to get closer to the Koran. Humans are only required to try to continue the struggle of the Prophet Muhammad and teach the Koran without looking at anyone (Wahyudi, 2023).



Figure 6. *Closing*

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Learning about Islamic Education through the Qur'an to PMI children has an excellent impact. This learning has a good influence on their moral development. In addition, this learning has a broad influence on knowledge about the Islamic religion. It can create a strong sense of faith because it can provide motivation, inspiration, and inner peace that can shape their character and help them face various situations by practicing Islamic values in everyday life. The variety and model of learning the Qur'an can also increase their enthusiasm for learning and enthusiasm to get to know the Islamic religion. By understanding the teachings of Islam contained in the Qur'an, they can feel more steady and strong and feel proud of their Islamic identity.

After the program of explaining the learning material is finished, the children can read short letters along with the contents of the letter, such as the letter Al-Ikhlâs and its contents before they go home. In addition, short letters and prayers are read when they are about to carry out learning activities, it turns out that it greatly affects the process of running the activity well, and calms the soul and mind during the learning process.

This learning activity is supported by several factors that encourage us as a delegation to introduce it to PMI children in Malaysia. The first factor is an effort to form a soul of faith and devotion to Allah SWT in these children. In addition, the lack of educational facilities and infrastructure that facilitate PMI children to learn the Qur'an is also one of the considerations for this activity to be carried out. On the other hand, the need for this activity to be carried out is also an effort to form the Islamic character of Indonesian children so that they can develop their creativity for their own good in the future.

The condition of Islamic education and learning the Quran for Indonesian immigrant children in Malaysia needs more attention because of the difficulty in finding a place, as well as educators for them to study in learning centers. Because as immigrants, of course, they have limitations to move freely in other countries. They have a high desire for social interaction. Interaction with the local community and the local Muslim community also has an impact on the Islamic identity of immigrant children. Children who are actively involved in religious activities, such as attending mosques, attending religious classes, or participating in religious events, tend to have a stronger Islamic identity. However, the location of their residence is quite far from an environment filled with strong religion because there is no Quran Education Park (TPA), which is usually a place for learning religion and the Quran.

In implementing this learning activity, the lack of knowledge of PMI children about Islam through learning the Quran and daily worship practices is a challenge for the delegates. PMI children still need access to learning facilities to be able to recognize Islam more broadly. Strengthening the Islamic identity of Indonesian immigrant children in Malaysia through learning the Quran requires commitment and cooperation from various parties. With quality religious education and a supportive environment, immigrant children can grow into individuals who are strong in their Islamic identity and contribute positively to building a harmonious and tolerant society in Malaysia. The government, educational institutions, and communities need to provide adequate support, such as financial support to purchase learning tools, equipment, and infrastructure, including the development of relevant curricula, training of competent teachers, and building a supportive educational environment to ensure that immigrant children can grow strong in their Islamic identity amid a diverse society.

4. CONCLUSION

The importance of Islamic religious education, especially learning the Quran, in strengthening the Islamic identity of Indonesian immigrant children living in Malaysia is very influential. Islamic religious education has an important role in shaping the Islamic identity of immigrant children because it has an impact on their beliefs and strengths. Learning the Quran is not only about understanding the holy text, but also about forming strong character, morals, and spiritual values. Through a deep understanding of Islamic teachings, immigrant children can identify themselves as Muslims more strongly, even amid a diverse environment, and helps them maintain their Islamic identity, but also prepares them to play an active role in the diverse and multicultural Malaysian society.

Many challenges need to be overcome in strengthening the Islamic identity of immigrant children in Malaysia. Among them are limited access to religious education, lack of support from family and community, and the influence of secular or non-Islamic culture in the surrounding environment. Therefore, joint efforts and concern are needed from the government, educational institutions, Muslim communities, and parents to ensure that immigrant children receive quality Islamic religious education.

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