Mainstreaming Child-Friendly Mosques In Banda Aceh, Yogyakarta, and Batam

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Abstract

The study aims to reveal informants' perspectives and interpretations regarding their involvement in mainstreaming the concept of child-friendly mosques. This research is a follow-up to our previous study on the idea of child-friendly mosque management. Therefore, this research explores the informants' experiences during the process of mainstreaming this concept and reveals how they interpret their lived experiences within that process. Consequently, this study employs a phenomenological qualitative approach to explore informants' interpretations of their life experiences. Data was collected through three well-known qualitative methods: observation, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. The findings show that informants hold different views, experiences, and understandings regarding the presence of children in mosques and the mainstreaming process in which they participate. The presence of children in mosques, as part of the process of familiarizing them with places of worship, presents its own challenges for mosque management and congregations. Mentoring children, strengthening mosque management, and maintaining communication with the congregation can reduce emerging resistance and reinforce the positive value of children's presence in mosques.

Keywords: mainstreaming, child-friendly, mosque.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengungkapkan perspektif dan interpretasi informan terkait keterlibatan mereka dalam mengarusutamakan konsep masjid yang ramah anak Penelitian ini merupakan tindak lanjut dari penelitian kami sebelumnya tentang konsep pengelolaan masjid yang ramah anak.. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi pengalamam para informan selama proses pengarusutamaan konsep tersebut dan mengungkap bagaimana mereka menafsirkan 'lived experience' mereka dalam proses itu. Konsekuensinya, penelitian ini dilakukan dengan pendekatan kualitatif fenomenologis, yaitu pendekatan yang menggali interpretasi informan terhadap pengalaman hidup mereka. Data dikumpulkan melalui tiga metode yang dikenal dalam penelitian kualitatif: observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan diskusi kelompok terfokus. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa para informan memiliki pandangan, pengalaman dan pemaknaan yang berbeda terkait kehadiran anak di masjid, dan tentang proses mainstreaming yang melibatkan mereka. Kehadiran anak di masjid sebagai bagian proses membiasakan anak dengan dekat dengan rumah ibadah ternyata menawarkan tantangan tersendiri bagi pengelola masjid dan jamaah. Pendampingan terhadap anak, penguatan terhadap pengurus masjid, dan komunikasi dengan jamaah dapat mereduksi resistensi yang muncul dan menguatkan nilai positif kehadiran anak di masjid.

Kata Kunci: *mainstreaming, ramah anak, masjid*

Background

As international concern for the fulfillment of children's rights continues to grow, attention to child-friendly environments, including places of worship, is also increasing. Violence against children occurs not only in homes and schools, but has also been reported. In various public places, both in urban and rural areas, including mosques.[1]

When efforts to protect children and advocate for their rights have reached cities and villages through the Child-Friendly City/Regency

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[1] . Bustamar and Dahyul Daipon, 'Pencegahan Kekerasan Seksual Terhadap Anak Berbasis Masjid di Kota Bukittinggi', *Turast: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengabdian*, 9.1(2021) <https://doi.org/10.15548/turast.v9i1.2249>.

(KLA) programs, and have been actively implemented in schools through the Child-Friendly School (SRA) programs, mosques have remained largely unaddressed. They seem to be considered free from acts of violence, whether in the form of shouting, intimidation, marginalization, or physical harm. In reality, many children avoid mosques because they are chased away, perceived as disruptive, and often made to feel unwelcome.[2]

In the context of child-friendly mosques, the occurrence of violence against children in mosques becomes counterproductive, as mosques, being places of worship, should provide a safe environment for children. Research indicates that violence against children in mosque settings can encompass various forms, including physical, psychological, and sexual abuse.[3] This research shows that children often become targets of verbal or physical violence that may be perpetrated by adults in positions of authority, such as mosque administrators or even parents who view such actions as a form of discipline.

Concerns about cases of violence against children in mosques highlight the need for studies on mosque management that are more child-friendly. Research conducted by Nurban[4] Emphasizes the importance of providing social services for child victims of violence, including those in mosque environments, to ensure they receive necessary support and protection. In addition, it is essential to develop educational models that help parents and caregivers recognize acts of violence. Halimah proposes the *Mini Book Series Smart Mindful Parenting* model, which parents and teachers can use to understand and prevent violence against children. This demonstrates that

education and awareness among adults are crucial for creating a safe environment for children, including in mosques.

Sözeri and Altinyelken conducted a study on the role of mosques in children's social integration. They found that mosques serve as a medium for Muslim immigrant children, bridging traditional Islamic education with the broader non-Muslim communities in which they live.[5]

This indicates that mosques can serve as educational centers that not only impart religious knowledge but also foster a sense of belonging and support the formation of children's identity.

Furthermore, the role of mosques extends beyond education; they also promote community engagement and social cohesion. Jaffar et al. emphasize that mosques are favored public spaces that significantly contribute to social sustainability by providing comfortable, accessible environments for community interaction.[6]

On the other hand, Elhefnawy analyzed the relationship between mosque design and a child-friendly atmosphere. The study reveals that user preferences, including those of children, must be considered in the design process to ensure that mosques meet the functional needs of their communities.[7]

In addition to educational and architectural considerations, the management of mosque activities is also crucial in creating a child-friendly atmosphere. Hasanah's research indicates that effective management of religious activities, including youth programs and educational initiatives, is essential for engaging children and

[2] Rustam Pakpahan, 'Konsep Masjid Ramah Anak Dalam Pandangan Badan Kemakmuran Masjid (BKM)', *Jurnal Penelitian Medan Agama*, 9.2 (2018).

[3] La Jamaa, 'Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga Perspektif Fikih', *AHKAM : Jurnal Ilmu Syariah*, 13.1 (2013) <https://doi.org/10.15408/ajis.v13i1.952>.

[4] Nurban Nurban, Muhammad Rusli and Aryuni Salpiana Jabar, 'Pelayanan Sosial Terhadap Anak Korban Tindak Kekerasan Di Dinas Sosial Kota Kendari', *Welvaart : Jurnal Ilmu Kesejahteraan Sosial*, 3.1 (2022) <https://doi.org/10.52423/welvaart.v3i1.27388>.

[5] Hülya Kosar Altinyelken and Semiha Sözeri, 'Mosque Pedagogy as a Travelling Policy between Turkey and the Netherlands: An Analysis of Contextual Factors Shaping Re-Contextualisation Process', *Comparative Education*, 0.0 (2018).

[6] Najiha Jaffar, Nor Zalina Harun and Alias Abdullah, 'Enlivening the Mosque as a Public Space for Social Sustainability of Traditional Malay Settlements', *Planning Malaysia*, 18.2 (2020) <https://doi.org/10.21837/pm.v18i12.750>.

[7] Semiha Sözeri and Hülya Kosar Altinyelken, 'What Are Children Being Taught in the Mosque? Turkish Mosque Education in the Netherlands', *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction*, 22 (2019) <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lcsi.2019.100326>.

ensuring their active participation in mosque life.[8] This management includes planning and organizing activities that align with the interests and needs of children, thereby enhancing their overall experience in the mosque.

In order to address violence against children in mosques, a community-based approach also needs to be implemented. Lestyoningsih emphasizes that efforts to address violence against children must involve all elements of the community, including mosque administrators, to create a safe and supportive environment for children. In this way, efforts to prevent and respond to violence against children in mosques can be carried out more effectively.[9]

Research on child-friendly mosques also indicates that mosques can serve as spaces that support children's development through various educational and social activities. A study by Nurhadi emphasizes that mosques function not only as places of worship but also as educational facilities for children, where they can learn to read the Quran and understand Islamic values from an early age.[10]

In addition, mosques also serve as gathering places for the community for various social activities, which can help children develop their social skills and interactions.[11]

In this context, the design and facilities of the mosque should take into account the needs of children, such as safe play areas and comfortable learning spaces. Additionally, research by Haryanto indicates that traditional values, such as

togetherness and mutual respect, can be reinforced through activities, contributing to children's character development.[12]

Thus, child-friendly mosques not only provide adequate physical facilities but also create a social environment that supports the growth and development of children within the framework of Islamic values. To create child-friendly mosques, it is important to involve the community in the planning and development of mosque facilities. Familiarizing children with the mosque from an early age is an effective form of education for shaping a younger generation that feels connected to the mosque and its community, in accordance with Islamic teachings.

Normatively, children's rights are specifically regulated in international instruments, particularly the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Indonesia is among the countries that have ratified the CRC, which was later enacted into national law through Law No. 23 of 2002 on Child Protection. Thus, Indonesia is obligated to implement the CRC and protect children from all forms of violence wherever they may be.

Among the rights that must be fulfilled and protected are children's rights to growth and development, as well as their social and cultural rights. Introducing children to the mosque and familiarizing them with it constitutes an effort to help them realize these rights. Within the mosque, children not only have the right to mental and spiritual development but also gain opportunities to socialize and engage with the cultural life of the Muslim community in which they grow and develop.[13]

This study aims to uncover the experiences of informants involved in the process of mainstreaming the child-friendly mosque concept

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[8] Pakpahan.

[9] Ika Harni. Lestyoningsih and Sri. Lindawati, 'Literature Review: Analisis Pelayanan Kesehatan Anak Usia Sekolah Dan Remaja Di Masa Pandemi Covid-19', *Prosiding Seminar Nasional" Sport Health Seminar With Real Action"*, 19 (2021).

[10] Juniana Husna, M. Hindra Fadhliadin and Basrul, 'Designing of E-Voting Application for Mosque Youth Leader Election (Case Study in Masjid Al-Ishlahiyah Gampong Lambhuk)', *Transformasi: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 19.2 (2023) <https://doi.org/10.20414/transformasi.v19i2.7467>.

[11] Riri Chairiyah and Indah Pujiyanti, 'Fasilitas Pendukung Protokol Kesehatan Untuk Ibu Dan Anak Pada Era Normal Baru Di Masjid Al Amanah', *JCOMENT (Journal of Community Empowerment)*, 3.1 (2022) <https://doi.org/10.55314/jcoment.v3i1.219>.

[12] Nurhadi Nurhadi, 'Concept Of The Mosque As An Education Means Faith And The End Of Children In The Modern Era', *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 2.2 (2019) <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v2i2.333>.

[13] M TAUFIQ and Muklisin Purnomo, 'MODEL PEMBERDAYAAN ASET WAKAF MASJID SECARA PRODUKTIF DI MASJID JOGOKARIYAN YOGYAKARTA', *PERADA*, 1.2 (2018) <https://doi.org/10.35961/perada.v1i2.18>.

in three cities: Batam, Banda Aceh, and Yogyakarta. It also examines how the informants interpret and make sense of their experiences throughout this process.

The present research adopts a qualitative phenomenological approach, which enables the researcher to explore the subjective experiences of informants within their specific social and cultural contexts. This approach seeks to understand the meaning individuals assign to their experiences related to the implementation of the child-friendly mosque concept in their community.

This study uses a phenomenological approach that aims to reveal lived experiences from the perspective of those who undergo them. In this approach, the researcher's interpretation is minimized, while the informants' interpretations are given prominence. The main focus of this research is on experiences related to the process of mainstreaming the child-friendly mosque concept. The data were derived from the accounts of informants who participated in the stages of this mainstreaming process, which is generally divided into three main stages.

The first stage, referred to as the problem identification stage, was conducted through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) sessions in three different cities. These sessions involved 8 to 12 participants, including the chairman of the Mosque Management Board (BKM), mosque administrators, and congregation members. In these FGDs, the researcher, acting as the facilitator, posed several key questions to explore the participants' views, particularly their experiences and perspectives regarding the presence of children in the mosque.

The next stage was the sensitization stage, which aimed to increase participants' sensitivity toward the presence of children in the mosque. At this stage, FGD participants were encouraged to better understand how adult attitudes need to be adjusted in order to minimize potential negative impacts associated with children's presence. Through this process, participants were expected to realize that while the presence of children is

important, it must be accompanied by proper management to ensure that worship activities remain undisturbed.

In the third stage, participants were introduced to the concept of a child-friendly mosque, including its core characteristics and the steps required to implement it. This stage was intended to enrich participants' understanding of how to manage a mosque in a more child-friendly manner. Finally, in the fourth stage, participants were invited to design a follow-up plan for managing a more child-friendly mosque, which involved changes in attitude and the acquisition of the skills needed to address the challenges.

The data collection methods employed in this study included observation, focus group discussions (FGD), and in-depth interviews with active mosque management members and relevant stakeholders, such as BKPRMI and women's study groups in the three cities. These methods provided rich data and offered a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives on the implementation of the child-friendly mosque concept.

The benefits of this research are particularly significant for the mainstreaming of child-friendly mosques in Indonesia. The findings of this study are expected to broaden public awareness and knowledge, while also strengthening the capacity of communities to develop child-friendly mosques in their respective cities. Additionally, this research is hoped to contribute to raising public awareness about the importance of child-friendly mosques, which in turn can help mitigate the negative impacts experienced by children growing up in environments that do not adequately support their development.

Mainstreaming Children's Rights

Mainstreaming the child-friendly concept can be understood as an approach that encourages mosques to integrate child-friendly practices into their management systems.[14] Mainstreaming

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[14] Apin Fitri Amalina, Rufia Andisetyana Putri and Tendra Istanabi, 'Kesesuaian Taman Stadion Joyo Kusumo Terhadap Konsep Taman Kota Ramah Anak Pada Elemen Fisik', *Region : Jurnal Pembangunan Wilayah Dan Perencanaan*

means embedding key elements into all aspects of the existing system, including the processes and parameters that shape it. This implies that planning, implementation, financing, staffing, management, supervision, monitoring, and evaluation will intrinsically embrace the child-friendly model.[15]

Therefore, mainstreaming involves a 'systemic approach' rather than a 'project approach,' which is typically used to scale up initiatives. This systemic approach is often carried out through simulation modeling, allowing national standards to be established in key areas to serve as guidance. The main advantage of mainstreaming is its sustainability. This model becomes an integral part of the educational system rather than a temporary project that must later be fully reintegrated into the system, as is commonly done in schools.[16]

Several points that should be considered in efforts to mainstream child-friendly mosques include: (a) Efforts to enhance public understanding of children's issues comprehensively, including among policymakers; (b) Mobilizing resources to maximize the movement for mainstreaming child-friendly mosques; and (c) Improving community welfare to enhance children's overall well-being.

So far, efforts to mainstream children's rights have often been carried out in a partial manner, without addressing other related aspects. Issues concerning children will not be resolved solely through the enactment of the Child Protection Law or local regulations on child protection. The most fundamental aspect is ensuring that children's rights become the central focus for all stakeholders. Drawing on past experience, a strategic approach is needed to transform the mainstreaming of children's rights into a collective movement.[17]

In its concept, the characteristics of a child-friendly environment include: (a) Reflecting and recognizing the rights of every child; (b) Viewing and understanding all children in a broad context; (c) Being child-centered; (d) Being gender-sensitive and supportive of girls; (e) Enhancing the quality of learning outcomes; (f) Providing education based on the realities of children's lives; (g) Being flexible and responsive to diversity; (h) Ensuring inclusion, respect, and equal opportunities for all children; (i) Promoting mental and physical health; (j) Providing affordable and accessible education; (k) Strengthening the capacity, morale, commitment, and status of teachers; (l) Focusing on families; and (m) Being community-based.

Rustam, in "The Concept of Child-Friendly Mosques from the Perspective of Mosque Management," found that the presence of children in mosques is viewed by some mosque management boards (BKM) as normal and positive for both the children and the mosque, as they represent the next generation. However, other BKMs perceive the presence of children in the mosque as disruptive due to noise, playing during prayers, running around, and occasional fighting. Nevertheless, the presence of children is generally still tolerated. For many BKMs, children's rights in the mosque include receiving religious education and participating in worship alongside adults as a form of learning and habituation. However, there are also BKMs that believe children do not have specific rights within the mosque. [18]

According to Rustam, there is no specific written policy from mosque management boards (BKM) regarding children in the mosque. Existing policies tend to be verbal, conditional, and based on the personal discretion of each BKM administrator or the judgment of the adults

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Partisipatif, 19.1 (2024) <https://doi.org/10.20961/region.v19i1.63646>.

[15] Tri Na'imah, Yuki Widyasari and Herdian Herdian, 'Implementasi Sekolah Ramah Anak Untuk Membangun Nilai-Nilai Karakter Anak Usia Dini', *Jurnal Obsesi : Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 4.2 (2020) <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v4i2.283>.

[16] Hani Sholihah, 'PEMENUHAN HAK-HAK PENDIDIKAN ANAK PADA MASA PANDEMI COVID-19 PERSPEKTIF UNDANG-UNDANG PERLINDUNGAN ANAK', *Ta'allum: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 9.1 (2021) <https://doi.org/10.21274/taalum.2021.9.1.53-90>.

[17] Ayu Dina Rahma Sembada and M. Faiz Nashrullah, 'Pemenuhan Hak Anak Tunanetra Pada Masa Pandemi Covid-19', *Sakina: Journal of Family Studies*, 6.4 (2022) <https://doi.org/10.18860/jfs.v6i4.1392>.

[18] Pakpahan, 'Konsep Masjid Ramah Anak Dalam Pandangan Badan Kemakmuran Masjid (BKM)'.

present. Some BKM have not provided special facilities for children due to certain limitations or because they believe that children are not yet required to perform prayer. Meanwhile, other BKM have already provided special facilities for children, particularly for learning and playing.

From the perspective of some mosque management boards (BKM), the mosque can be a comfortable and safe place for children, but it can also pose risks. The discomfort experienced by children in the mosque is related to several factors: regulations and policies that are not child-friendly, the physical structure of the mosque and its surroundings that are not designed with children in mind, and the lack of facilities that support the best interests of the child.[19]

According to Rina, it is hoped that through this approach, children's religious values will develop properly. If this is genuinely practiced, it is highly likely that deviations from religious teachings, moral decay, and character issues will be minimized, and children will carry a comprehensive understanding of their spiritual beliefs into adulthood.[20]

Indicators of Child-Friendly Mosques

The MRA (Child-Friendly Mosque) indicators include written commitments that can be considered policies regarding MRA; the implementation of worship and educational processes in the mosque that are child-friendly; mosque administrators who are trained in children's rights and child protection; child-friendly facilities and infrastructure in the mosque; children's participation; and the participation of parents, the Indonesian Mosque Council (DMI), the business community, and other stakeholders, including the government.[21]

One important indicator of a child-friendly mosque is the participation of children. Children should be involved in mosque management activities and have their opinions heard in decision-making processes related to their interests in the mosque, particularly those who are at the junior high school level, rather than elementary school children. It is inappropriate to assume that children do not understand or to treat their expressed opinions as mere protests. If they wish to sit with the mosque management boards (BKM) and are instead shooed away or scolded, this discourages their engagement. Additionally, many mosques do not provide designated seating areas for children, nor do they offer pavilions or spaces where children can discuss, joke, or play.[22]

Another indicator of a child-friendly mosque is the protection of children from all forms of violence, whether physical or psychological/verbal. Adults who attempt to correct a child's behavior, which they consider inappropriate, by resorting to anger or shouting demonstrate a lack of emotional intelligence. This means that adults who resort to violence against children, even with good intentions, fail to seek wiser ways to guide a child's attitude and behavior without hitting, scolding, cursing, throwing sandals, or other forms of violence. Using violence to discipline children is outdated; there are many more intelligent and thoughtful methods available. For example, strategies can be employed to help children transition from being noisy to being calm, or from running around to behaving in an orderly manner.[23] Teachers in schools or religious instructors sometimes carry a cane, not merely to intimidate children but even to strike them. In today's context, such actions could lead to legal consequences. Adults need to find gentle ways to interact with children, rather than demonstrating that they are stronger or more powerful. A child's small face is not meant to withstand the slap of an adult's hand.[24]

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[19] Somariah Fitriani, Istaryatiningtias and Lelly Qodariah, 'A Child-Friendly School: How the School Implements the Model', *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 10.1 (2021) <https://doi.org/10.11591/IJERE.V10I1.20765>.

[20] (Rina, 2016)

[21] Renny Anggarani Nur Prasasti, 'IMPLEMENTASI MANAJEMEN MASJID RAMAH ANAK DI MASJID ASY SYUHADA KOTA BONTANG KALIMANTAN TIMUR', *SWATANTRA*, 21.2 (2023) <https://doi.org/10.24853/swatantra.21.2.169-178>.

[22] Muhamad Priyatna and others, 'PEMBINAAN WARGA DAN DKM MASJID DALAM UPAYA MEWUJUDKAN MASJID YANG RAMAH LINGKUNGAN, NYAMAN DAN KONDUSIF SEBAGAI TEMPAT IBADAH DAN PUSAT KEGIATAN UMAT DI KELURAHAN SINDANG BARANG KECAMATAN BOGOR BARAT KOTA BOGOR', *Khidmatul Ummah: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*, 1.01 (2020) <https://doi.org/10.30868/khidmatul.v1i01.987>.

[23] S Sirmayanti and others, *Aplikasi Gma-Net Dan Internet-Care Sebagai Pendukung Program Masjid Ramah Anak (Mra), … Hasil Penelitian & …*, 2021.

[24] Rina Roudlotul Jannah and Jazariyah Jazariyah, 'Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Agama Pada Anak Usia Dini

Then, the availability of facilities and infrastructure is also crucial. However, a limited budget should not be used as an excuse for a mosque not to be child-friendly. The responsibility for providing facilities and infrastructure that support children's growth and development is not solely on the BKM. A community that places the entire burden of creating child-friendly facilities solely on the BKM is acting irresponsibly, especially considering that BKM members are not paid for their work. All facilities and infrastructure in the mosque are the shared responsibility of the entire community and its stakeholders. These facilities do not need to be luxurious, but community participation in collaborating with the BKM is essential. Therefore, achieving a child-friendly mosque does not have to rely on the availability of a large budget. Facilities and infrastructure are only one of the six indicators of a child-friendly mosque, and this aspect can be addressed through community and stakeholder participation, which does not necessarily have to come in the form of financial contributions.[25]

Often, children's behavior in the mosque reflects the behavior they learn from their parents at home. Habits instilled by parents, such as disposing of trash properly, maintaining cleanliness, and behaving in an orderly manner, will naturally appear when their children are in the mosque. If these habits have been nurtured at home, children will not need to be taught again when they enter the mosque. The tradition of violence, including harsh treatment toward children, must be eliminated both at home and in public spaces, including the mosque. Congregants should not blame the BKM, as the presence and behavior of children in the mosque are a shared responsibility among everyone, including the BKM and the children's parents. It is essential for the entire community to work together to create a supportive and nurturing environment for children in the mosque.

Stages Towards Child-Friendly Mosques

The stages toward becoming a Child-Friendly Mosque (MRA) begin with knowledge, which refers to a mindset shaped through communication, information, and education. This is followed by commitment, demonstrated through participation involving all stakeholders. Next comes the process of habituation and the cultural integration, or the mainstreaming of Child-Friendly Mosque principles by adhering to child-friendly indicators. Following this, support and strengthening are needed, both in preparing MRA cadres and in ensuring sustainability.[26]

To move through these stages successfully, a collective commitment is needed, one that includes leaders, intellectuals, scholars, and business actors, including coffee shop owners. Therefore, the responsibility cannot rest solely on the mosque management board (BKM).

In the context of Aceh, the development of a Child-Friendly Mosque cannot be separated from cultural aspects. Culture can play a significant role in supporting the achievement of child-friendly indicators within the mosque environment. Thus, a culture of kindness toward children in the mosque should be formalized through mosque regulations. To implement these regulations effectively, cadres are needed—youth who are specifically trained to teach their peers to be gentle and caring towards younger children. Peer-to-peer training is essential because teenagers often respond better to communication conveyed in the language of their own generation. When training is led by someone from a different generation, communication barriers frequently arise.

Thus, an MRA can be understood as a place where children feel safe and protected from exploitation and violence, have access to necessary services, can participate in education and skill development, express their opinions, and take part in decision-making processes related to their interests. Children living in a clean and safe environment, including access to green spaces, can meet friends and have designated places to play, and receive equal opportunities regardless of ethnic background, gender, social status, or abilities.

Melalui Redesain Masjid Besar Jatinom Klaten', *Al Athfal: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak*, 2.1 (2016).

[25] Jamilia Mohd Marsin, Syed Ahamad Iskandar Syed Ariffin, and others, 'How Children Use and View Their Mosque Case Study of Masjid At-Taqwa ', *Journal of Built Environment, Technology and Engineering*, 3.September (2017).

[26] Rinasa Agistya Anugrah, Nur Hudha Wijaya and Fahmi Irfanudin, 'EDUKASI PERSYARIKATAN MUHAMMADIYAH TENTANG INSTALASI PEMBANGKIT LISTRIK TENAGA SURYA UNTUK PENERANGAN MASJID', *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Program Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 2022 <https://doi.org/10.18196/ppm.46.833>; Kuswanto and others.

According to the Mosque Management Board (BKM) (Pakpahan, 2018a), the functions of the mosque include being a place for prayer, religious study, learning, deliberation, performing religious rituals, community cooperation, discussing economic issues, distributing aid to the poor and orphans, serving as a community learning center, hosting sports and arts activities, and providing accommodation for students.

The pros and cons concerning the presence of children in the mosque generally revolve around several issues: children being noisy during events or worship, children making the mosque dirty, and children playing inside the mosque. On the other hand, their presence is also associated with positive aspects: children becoming familiar with the mosque, children observing role models, children undergoing a process of cadre training, and children serving as the next generation who will inherit the mosque community.

Policies related to children in the mosque include variations in adult attitudes towards their presence, the absence of written policies or regulations specifically addressing children, the separation of spaces designated for children, and the presence of staff tasked with ensuring the safety of children. However, incidents of violence against children still occur in mosques, whether verbal/psychological (such as shouting, harsh words, insults) or physical (such as slapping, throwing sandals, or hitting with a broomstick).

To support the development of Child-Friendly Mosques (MRA), special facilities for children need to be provided, as most mosques generally lack dedicated areas for children and are not designed with children's needs in mind, for instance, in the the positioning of water taps, staircases, or flooring. Additionally, many mosques do not have spacious courtyards, and mosques are often viewed purely as public spaces rather than as environments that should also accommodate children (e.g., the absence of prayer garments for young girls); only a small number of mosques have play facilities for children in their yards.

In the implementation of Child-Friendly Mosques (MRA),[27] Monitoring and evaluation are essential and should involve government officials and religious leaders. The issue of Child-Friendly Mosques is a national concern, meaning that the responsibility does not lie solely on cities or villages officially designated as child-friendly. Children are present in every mosque, and every mosque hosts children. Therefore, the mainstreaming of Child-Friendly Mosques needs to become a national movement. There is no need to wait for a large number of people to initiate this movement; if we wait too long, the movement may never start. It is sufficient to begin with a small group of committed individuals who can initiate the process and inspire others to join.

In efforts to realize Child-Friendly Mosques, it is important to emphasize gentleness, affection, and genuine attention to children's aspirations. Verbal violence against children, such as insults and shouting, or physical violence, like throwing sandals or other objects, must no longer occur in mosques. When this happens, it becomes uncertain where children will grow and develop spiritually, and the mosque will lose the joyful sound of children's laughter.

When it comes to changing children's behavior in the mosque, approaches can vary significantly from one region to another, depending on the traditions of each community. What remains consistent, however, is that harshness towards children should never occur. For example, instead of saying, "Don't be noisy!" adults can soften their tone by saying, "Please lower your voice" or "Could you keep your voice down, please?"[28]

Based on observations from several BKM, including BKM Al Furqon, mosques have not yet fully fulfilled all the indicators of a child-friendly mosque. However, progress is evident; some level of organization for children during prayers is already in place, although it is not yet comprehensive. Prayer rows for adults and children are kept separated. During Ramadan, arrangements are made for both child and adult congregants, and certain facilities for children, such as libraries, are available in some mosques. It is also clear that mosques are becoming more suitable as places where children can play and feel free to run or shout, as long as this does not occur during prayer times until the congregational prayer has concluded. At a minimum, for about

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[27] Wakhid Hasyim, 'KAJIAN HADIS MENGENAI MASJID RAMAH PERKEMBANGAN ANAK', *Jurnal Living Hadis*, 3.2 (2019) <https://doi.org/10.14421/livinghadis.2018.1697>.

[28] Pakpahan, 'Konsep Masjid Ramah Anak Dalam Pandangan Badan Kemakmuran Masjid (BKM)'.

ten minutes, children need to be closely supervised to maintain the solemnity of the worship.

According to Mr. Zul from the Al Furqon management, the values and practices of being child-friendly in the mosque environment are not something entirely new; they have been initiated for a long time. However, they are not yet fully realized. The community is not encouraged to focus on achieving perfection immediately, but rather to think about how to start and take steps toward the concept of a child-friendly mosque.

Therefore, mainstreaming the child-friendly mosque concept can start gradually; acceleration may be possible later, but what is most important is that the process begins and is continuously driven forward, without worrying too much about when it will be fully achieved. There is a clear determination to gradually improve the mosque so that it becomes increasingly suitable for children, allowing them to feel more comfortable spending time there. Children naturally become restless and want to leave when they find other things more interesting. Thus, when they are in the mosque, they may appear unhappy or eager to go home, giving the impression that the mosque is not yet a welcoming place for them. For this reason, each child-friendly indicator will continue to be enhanced and better understood, with priorities set regarding which aspects need improvement first. These steps are intended to serve as benchmarks for mainstreaming the concept of a mosque that is suitable for children.

Informants' Experiences in the Mainstreaming Process of the Child-Friendly Mosque Concept

Problem Identification Stage: Mapping the Impact of Children's Presence in the Mosque

The mainstreaming process of the Child-Friendly Mosque concept began with Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) involving mosque management boards (BKM), congregation members, and other relevant stakeholders in Batam, Banda Aceh, and Yogyakarta. The goal of these FGDs aimed to explore the impact of children's presence in mosques, identify problems that arise from it, and map the main issues that either hinder or support the mainstreaming of the child-friendly mosque concept. Key issues that emerged included how to create child-friendly spaces within the mosque, how to manage children during prayer times, and how to ensure their presence does not disrupt order. The central question posed in these discussion was, "What is the impact of children's presence in the mosque?"

Mr. Zulkarnain, chairman of the BKM in Banda Aceh, stated: "Initially, we thought children could disrupt the solemnity of worship, but after more in-depth discussions, we realized that they are actually part of the mosque community that must be involved."

Similarly, Mr. Ahmad Zaki from Batam shared his experience: "When I see a child being brought to the mosque, I immediately think that child is being educated to become a good person, accustomed to being in the mosque and seeing people worship. Nowadays, many children are wandering around, doing who knows what. If they are brought to the mosque, even if they do not yet fully understand, at least they are better supervised. However, I believe if a child is under seven years old, parents must be responsible for accompanying them."

The results show that informants' responses were divided into two opposing sides. On the one hand, the presence of children in the mosque was considered to have a positive impact. For example, a father from Batam expressed: "My son now prays regularly because since he was little he saw his father praying in congregation at the mosque." This indicates that the mosque functions not only as a place of worship but also as a space for shaping children's religious habits. In this sense, the mosque is understood as a natural place for nurturing, where religious values can be transmitted accross generations.

Furthermore, a mosque administrator in Batam explained, "From teenager to imam, then training his younger siblings, that's how the chain of da'wah continues." This statement shows that children play a role in the sustainability of da'wah, not merely as passive recipients but also potential transmitters of religious knowledge to the next generation.

On the other hand, not all responses reflected positive views. Some congregation members stated that the presence of children could disrupt the solemnity of worship. As conveyed by a congregant in Batam, "Children run around during religious lectures, their laughter disrupts the solemnity." Issues of hygiene were also raised. An informant said, "They play in the

dirt and then enter the mosque, making the carpets dirty." The FGDs intentionally allowed these contrasting opinions to emerge in order to explore the diversity of experiences across different cities. This demonstrates that managing the presence of children in mosques presents real challenges that require attention from mosque administrators and the wider community.

Sensitization Stage: Revealing Adults' Sensitivity to Issues Related to Children's Presence in the Mosque

After the problems related to the presence of children in the mosque were identified, the research proceeded to the sensitization stage, which involved a deeper exploration of informants' attitudes and responses to the identified issues. The objective was to see how mosque administrators and congregation members interpreted these problems and how they responded to them. Differences in perspectives and attitudes towards this issue were striking among the informants.

In Yogyakarta, Mrs. Aminah, a member of a women's community group, shared: "We were once worried that involving children in the mosque would be disruptive, but after seeing children from other communities involved in the mosque, we knew it was the right approach. Later we realized the main issue is about managing the children, because the community often does not know how to respond to the noise and lack of quiet caused by children."

Some informants also expressed a critical attitude regarding parental responsibility. As expressed by a mosque administrator in Batam: "Parents often wash their hands of responsibility. They tell their children to go to the mosque alone but are unwilling to supervise them."

Similarly, Ibu Farida, an informant from Yogyakarta, shared her concern: "I feel sad seeing the mosque congregation, especially their children. When children are left unsupervised and disturb other people's activities in the mosque, it becomes a problem. As parents, we must accompany our children and ensure they use their time well before the ustadz arrives. I hope the children can be more solemn in their worship; so their presence does not disrupt others."

A similar sentiment was expressed by another informant, Bapak Idris: "The solution to making a mosque child-friendly is to create a calm, safe, and comfortable atmosphere, even when parents are not present. Following the example of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), he did not respond with anger when a child urinated in the mosque, but instead gave advice in a good way. Parental guidance grounded in wisdom is essential. Without accompaniment, children might think the mosque is just a place to play rather than a place for worship."

Another informant from Batam, Ustazah Aisyah, acknowledged that, given the playful nature inherent to children, mentoring children in the mosque is a necessity. She said, "The mosque is a noble place for Muslims to worship, recite the Qur'an, and seek knowledge. As parents, we must accompany our children in congregational prayers. For children aged seven to ten, it is indeed difficult to teach them not to play during prayers. A child's world is full of cheerfulness and play, including in the mosque. Even older children sometimes still like to play. Therefore, parental accompaniment is very important."

This view indicates that parents bear a significant responsibility in accompanying their children in the mosque. Without adequate supervision, children may behave in ways that disrupt order during worship. According to Pak Mz, while the presence of children in the mosque is indeed necessary, the mosque is also a place for worship that requires concentration. For a mosque to be considered child-friendly, effective management is essential to balance two important aspects: maintaining the focus during prayer while remaining welcoming to children. It is important that prayers remain focused and that children are not noisy, especially during the ten minutes of congregational prayer. During this period, children should be supervised to ensure they align their rows properly. Outside of this ten-minute period dedicated to maintaining concentration, noise from children is not considered problematic.

In one mosque management board (BKM), the balance between maintaining focus and being child-friendly has been well established. A special team is assigned to ensure that children do not disrupt congregational prayers. After the prayer is completed, children are allowed to run and play freely. This way, the solemnity of congregational prayer can be maintained while children's emotional attachment to the mosque is nurtured. This practice demonstrates that when children are

properly supervised during the congregational prayer, issues or complaints can be minimized, as long as the situation is managed thoughtfully.

On the other hand, some informants showed tolerance toward the presence of active children in the mosque. As expressed by Ustadz Akhyar in Yogyakarta, "Children's noise is normal. Give them a special place on the veranda so they do not disturb the congregation inside." This view indicates that some community members prefer to accommodate children's needs by providing desginated spaces where they can play or engage in activities without disrupting worshippers inside the mosque.

These differing attitudes illustrate the complexity of interpreting children's presence in mosques. Some informants view children's presence as a collective responsibility, requiring collaboration between mosque administrators and the wider community to create a conducive environment. However, others see children's presence as a natural process of religious socialization, where children need to be given space to learn and grow, even if they sometimes behave in ways that are considered disruptive. As expressed by Ibu Siti Nurjanah from Banda Aceh, "Each region has different customs and traditions in responding to children's presence in the mosque. However, the most important thing is how we create a child-friendly mosque atmosphere where children feel comfortable learning, playing, and worshipping while following established rules."

Despite differing experiences and perspectives, the informants appeared to share a common concern regarding the importance of managing children's presence in mosques thoughtfully and providing them with appropriate spaces for their activities.

Follow-Up Stage

At this stage, the researcher introduced the FGD participants to a more comprehensive understanding of the concept of the Child-Friendly Mosque, which includes physical, managerial, and educational aspects. Child-friendly physical facilities, such as safe play areas, sinks accessible to children, and designated spaces where children can play without disrupting worship, are important considerations in mosque design. Additionally, participatory management that involves parents and the wider community is also a crucial part of creating a child-friendly mosque.

Following the sensitization process, several mosques immediately took concrete steps to realize the Child-Friendly Mosque concept. In Batam, the chairman of the BKM, Mr. Rahmat, stated, "We have started providing facilities such as a play area and a library for children. This gives them space to learn and play without disrupting worship activities." This indicates that mosque administrators are beginning to consider facilities that support children's presence in the mosque, without neglecting the need to maintain order and solemnity during worship.

One method used to manage children during congregational prayers is to place them in a separate prayer row (shaff), interspersed with a few peers. Ustadz Muhammad from Yogyakarta explained, "To ensure children remain solemn, they are usually placed in the back rows during congregational prayers. In that row, there are two or three adults or older children who supervise them. This makes the children more restrained from being noisy or disturbing their friends." A similar approach was shared by Mr. Zulkarnain in Banda Aceh, "We formed a volunteer team consisting of youth to supervise the children during prayers. After the prayer, the children can play in the designated area."

Mrs. Aminah, a member of a women's group in Yogyakarta, also shared, "We are beginning to realize that the mosque should be a more inclusive place, where children feel accepted and valued. After participating in this training, we started planning special activities for children at the mosque."

Mr. Faris, a mosque administrator in Banda Aceh, added, "We have started holding more interactive educational activities for children, such as learning through play. We believe this can help them feel more connected to the mosque."

Furthermore, several mosques have begun planning the establishment of children's creative corners, which not only provide physical facilities but also serve as a medium to educate parents on how to accompany their children in the mosque. As stated by the BKM chairman in Batam, "We will create a children's creative corner while also conducting socialization for parents on mentoring their children."

Reflection: Lessons Learned from Informants' Experiences in the Mainstreaming Process

This mainstreaming process of child-friendly mosques demonstrates that meaningful change requires not only structural policies but also a fundamental paradigm shift at the community level. While the provision of facilities and infrastructure is clearly supportive—and often emerges as a major challenge—it is not the sole solution. In Batam, Mr. Rahmat, chairman of the Mukhlisin Mosque BKM, expressed this concern: "We face significant challenges in providing adequate facilities for children. We want to create a child-friendly mosque, but the lack of space and facilities is a major issue."

On the other hand, as summarized by Muhammad, an informant from Yogyakarta, "A child-friendly mosque is not about having a luxurious building, but about how willing we are to listen to children's voices." This perspective confirms that creating a child-friendly mosque requires genuine dialogue among stakeholders—mosque administrators, parents, congregation members, and the wider community—to understand and accommodate children's needs within the mosque environment.

This process also reveals that the community's understanding of the mosque cannot be separated from children's lived realities. Society needs to realize that mosques should become a shared home for all family members, including children. Therefore, policies and management practices related to child-friendly mosque must be based on a children's rights framework, including the rights to life, growth, development, and meaningful participation in religious life.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the socialization activities, training sessions, and discussions involving more than 30 representatives from BKM, BKPRMI, and women's groups in Banda Aceh, Batam and Yogyakarta, this study identifies several important findings.

The findings reveal a divergence of views among informants concerning the impact of children's presence in mosques. Some emphasized the positive effects, such as instilling early worship habits and strengthening the mosque's role in religious propagation. Conversely, others expressed concerns that children potentially disrupt the solemnity of prayers and religious lectures, due to noise and commotion.

Approaches to managing children's presence also varied among informants. Some stressed the importance of parental responsibility in accompanying their children to prevent disruptions. In contrast, others proposed the provision of dedicated spaces for children, allowing them to engage in age-appropriate activities without interfering with congregants' worship. These perspectives highlight differing strategies for fostering a child-inclusive environment.

Furthermore, experiences in implementing the child-friendly mosque concept differed, particularly in terms of perceived challenges. Some informants identified a lack of child-friendly physical facilities—such as play areas or designated child zones—as a primary obstacle. However, others argued that success of a child-friendly mosque depends less on infrastructure and more on the willingness of mosque management and the broader community to listen to and accommodate children's needs within religious and social activities.

Overall, this research underscores that mainstreaming child-friendly mosques is a complex and long-term process. This process could be accelerated by engaging a wider range of stakeholders, employing more participatory approaches, and implementing initiatives that are holistic and systematic rather than partial and incidental. A comprehensive strategy addressing both physical infrastructure and community mindset is essential for sustainable realization of child-friendly mosques.

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