



## **Development Strategy of Islamic Early Childhood Education Institutions in the Context of Multicultural Society**

**Dhia Rizka Rahmalia<sup>1\*</sup>, Sofa Muthohar<sup>2</sup>, Lina Hasnawati<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Walisono State Islamic University Semarang

<sup>2</sup>Walisono State Islamic University Semarang

<sup>3</sup>Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur

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### **Abstract**

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Islamic Early Childhood Education institutions' development strategy means the strategies institutions use for a planned process of change that requires support from all parties, including management and employees. This change is expected to develop and improve the institution of Early Childhood Education, which requires short-, medium-, and long-term efforts to face changes in the future. This study aims to find out what strategy is suitable for an Islamic early childhood education institution in a multicultural society, using the case study of Samirono Village. This type of research is Qualitative Research. The approach used is phenomenology. Data analysis techniques include data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions. The validity of the data was tested using triangulation techniques derived from observations and interviews with teachers and villagers. The results showed that strategies are establishing good communication with local village officials involving local communities in managing institutions to be accepted by local communities. This research is essential for developing Islamic early childhood education institutions in multicultural societies. The appropriate strategy in establishing communication with village officials and involving local communities in the institution's management makes the institution integrate well into the surrounding environment. This strategy helps Islamic early childhood education institutions to thrive and face future challenges. This study implies that establishing educational institutions with a specific religious identity in a multicultural society requires effective strategies, coordination with related parties, and support from the community.

**Keywords:** institutional development strategy, multicultural community, Samirono Village

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**\* Correspondence Address:**

Email Address: [dhia rizka\\_1903106036@student.walisongo.ac.id](mailto:dhia rizka_1903106036@student.walisongo.ac.id)

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## **A. Introduction**

Multiculturalism is a divine phenomenon that people cannot deny. God created Adam's descendants from one origin and self, and all are descendants of Adam and Eve. God multiplied men and women and then divided them into nations and tribes so that they could know each other (Rosyad, 2019). Indonesia's motto, "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika," means "unity in diversity." In Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 13, it is mentioned that Allah created the descendants of Adam and Eve from one origin and self. All human beings are descendants of Adam and Eve. Then God multiplied them as male and female in large numbers. They then dispersed and diversified into nations and tribes with the aim of mutual recognition and understanding. With diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, Indonesia is a pluralistic society. Islam views pluralism as a means of human life because the purpose of these differences is to get to know each other. This pluralistic society is the basis for the creation of a multicultural society.

According to Rosalia Ginting, pluralism is the willingness to accept that there are different ways of life, cultures, and religious beliefs in society (Ginting & Aryaningrum, 2009). Nasikun argues that it consists of two or more social orders, communities, or groups that are culturally, economically, and politically separated (isolated) and have different institutional structures. In addition to "pluralism," there is also a synonym word that describes the diversity of societies, namely "multiculturalism," commonly referred to as a multicultural society, meaning an organization consisting of two or more fragmented cultural and economic communities (groups) with different institutional structures (Nurhayati & Agustina, 2020). Both Pluralism and Multiculturalism are very general in scope, covering aspects of religion, tradition, ethnic culture, and more. Some problems that often arise in multicultural societies include discrimination, social jealousy, ethnicity, primordialism, ethnocentrism, stereotypes, conflicts based on race, religion, ethnicity, and national disintegration.

In establishing an institution, the surrounding environment becomes an essential factor. This was highlighted in research conducted at Pondok Modern Gontor 7 Putera on the institution's development strategy. A study by Syahrul found that Pondok Modern Gontor prioritizes public relations management by creating a branding image (Syahrul, 2020). The involvement of local communities is significant in building a positive image in the broader community. In addition, there was also research conducted by Akbar Pandu Dwinugraha on institutional development strategies, which resulted in the following strategy: optimizing the use of operational funds to support the achievement of STPPA; optimizing kindergarten management through new sources of income other than tuition fees and operational funds; monitor the use of operational funds; utilize all resources, including facilities, personnel, and ideas, to support STPPA and optimize the use of operational funds to improve the competitiveness of kindergartens. Both studies were conducted in a homogeneous environment, unlike the multicultural community in Samirono village (Dwinugraha, 2021). Research conducted by Bustanul Arifin in 2019 concluded several strategies to develop Islamic educational institutions in non-Muslim majority areas. These strategies include involving employees as role models, establishing communication with local communities, engaging in social activities, packaging beneficial institutional activities, promoting high-performance standards, providing reinforcement and support, improving student and institutional achievement, disseminating achievements to the community, communicating and socializing educational programs, building collaborative networks, strengthening financial resources,

improving facilities and infrastructure, increasing knowledge and empowering human resources, providing excellent service, and making a positive institutional image (Arifin, 2019).

School and society are inseparable entities, giving and taking each other. Schools, as educational institutions and social entities in society, are responsible for determining the future of the nation's young generation. On the other hand, society, in addition to being customers, also plays a role and bears responsibility for the success or failure of the education system (Azhar et al., 2022). The multicultural background of the village presents challenges in setting up an Islamic kindergarten. Therefore, factors should support the sustainability and development of Islamic early childhood education institutions in Samirano village. In this sense, the appropriate strategy is needed. A strategy is a grand plan meant to be progressive, efficient, and productive in achieving goals (Wiyani, 2016). Therefore, managing institutional strategy is a vital aspect to consider because there needs to be ways or efforts to ensure the survival of Islamic schools amid religious diversity in a multicultural environment.

## **B. Literature Review**

This study aims to answer gaps in previous research about the development of Islamic Early Childhood Education institutions in a multicultural society. This article emphasizes the importance of establishing communication with village officials and involving local communities in institutional management as effective strategies. This article differs from previous research in highlighting the need for active involvement from relevant parties in developing Islamic early childhood education institutions in a multicultural environment. This research also emphasizes the importance of the development strategy of institutions as a crucial first step. Thus, this article offers new perspectives and practical approaches to addressing the challenges of developing Islamic early childhood education institutions in a multicultural environment.

The development of educational institutions can be pursued in various ways, one of which is through research conducted by Syahrul entitled "Educational Institution Development Strategy: Exploring the Spirit of PM Gontor 7 Putera, Southeast Sulawesi" (Syahrul, 2020). The research concluded that strategy could be one way to develop the Riyadul Mujahid PM Gontor 7 Putera Islamic Boarding School in Southeast Sulawesi. Some steps that can be done include searching for consistent ideas, designing relevant organizational structures according to developments, strengthening the distinctive culture of PM Gontor Islamic Boarding School, integrating PM Gontor's core values at all levels of education, and expanding the reach of PM Gontor's ideas to the broader community by establishing branches in various parts of Indonesia. Although PM Gontor Islamic Boarding School has successfully developed, challenges cannot be avoided in the institutional development process. An example is highlighted in the research paper "Development Strategy of Kindergarten Education Institutions" written by Akbar Pandu Dwinugraha (2021), which identified issues such as intensifying competition among kindergartens in terms of new admissions and difficulties in managing the disbursement of Education Operational Assistance (BOP) funds. After identifying this problem, the study successfully proposed a new strategy using a research method that combines survey and analysis from three aspects. Once suitable issues and strategies have been identified, implementation becomes crucial. The journal article entitled "Development Strategy of Superior Islamic Educational Institutions"

emphasizes that all institutional development models are influenced by leadership management, quality improvement, capacity building, commitment and integrity of human resources, and community participation (Kholiq, 2020).

Management has the function of providing good direction, coordination, and control based on a predetermined plan. According to George R. Terry in his book "Principles of Management," there are four primary functions of management: Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling. These four primary functions of management are interconnected and complementary. They assist managers in managing the organization effectively and efficiently and achieving the set goals. A research paper written by Suharni entitled "Management of Early Childhood Education at TK Bintang Rabbani in Pekanbaru" shows that the early childhood education program at TK Bintang Rabbani is in line with the vision and mission of the institution through the implementation of management functions (Suharni, 2019). Furthermore, in a research paper written by Asep Muljawan entitled "Islamic Education Management Methods and Strategies," it was concluded that the quality management of Islamic educational institutions requires management models such as the Entrepreneurship-based Islamic Education Institution (LPI) model, the community-based LPI management model, and the mosque-based LPI management model. In addition, a quality LPI requires a general and specific management strategy, with a specific strategy known as strategic management. This research focuses on the management of Islamic educational institutions in responding to the challenges of globalization (Muljawan, 2020). This is also in line with research conducted by Muh Syarif, entitled "Education Development Strategy to Improve the Quality of Human Resources in Madura After the Construction of the Suramadu Bridge," which concluded that human resources (HR) are one of the main factors supporting the success of development in Madura. Educational institutions include not only formal institutions but also non-formal and informal institutions. Improving the quality of education and aligning the curriculum delivered in the field of education with the needs of industrialization in Madura must be immediately carried out by educational institutions in Madura. This is done to ensure that Madurese human resources can meet the needs of human resources in industrialization in Madura (Syarif & Jakfar, 2019).

Implementing integrated educational institution development strategies is expected to improve the quality and competitiveness of educational institutions at the local, regional, and national levels. This aligns with a study entitled "Curriculum Development Management," which concluded that curriculum development concerns national education standards to achieve national education goals. Therefore, the curriculum development applied by each educational unit is adjusted to the needs of the madrasah (Andini, 2018). In a study entitled "Development of Madrasah Education Management (Management Studies and Teaching Development in Ma Nu Demak)" by Abdurrohman Kasdi, there are at least four factors that need to be met: first, the implementation of curriculum implementation strategies; second, madrasah-based management development; third, the creation of a synergistic relationship between teachers and students; and fourth, reorientation of the teaching system (Kasdi, 2017). In Jenny Koce Matitaputty's research paper entitled "Art and Culture Exhibition: Characteristics of Maluku as a Multicultural Society in Multicultural Education Courses," it is shown that through art and cultural activities integrated into multicultural education, the characteristics of Maluku as a multicultural society can be understood. This increases students' knowledge in

appreciating the diversity of Maluku as a multicultural society, increases students' awareness to be part of the Moluccas, Indonesian, and global communities in maintaining world peace, and instills hope in students to promote the spirit of togetherness in the life of the Basudara community in Maluku (Matitaputty, 2019). Finally, in a research conducted by Hendra at SMA Muhammadiyah 8 Ciputat, entitled "Development Strategy of Islamic Education Institutions (Case Study at SMA Muhammadiyah 8 Ciputat)," it can be seen that the school has successfully implemented a development strategy. The development strategy is focused on financing, facilities, infrastructure, quality of graduates, and student achievement. The SPACE analysis results show the position of Opportunity Advantage (aggressive strategy), which means taking advantage of opportunities by utilizing the school's strengths (Hendra, 2020).

### **C. Method**

The research data collection methods used in this article, namely interviews, observations, and documentation, are the qualitative approaches applied in phenomenological studies. This study used the data collection method to understand the development of Islamic Early Childhood Education institutions in a multicultural society (Harahap, 2020).

Interviews are used to gain insights and perspectives on institutional development strategies from relevant parties, such as teachers and villagers. Observation is used to observe phenomena directly in educational institutions and the surrounding environment, such as interactions between institutions with village officials and local communities. Documentation is used to collect relevant data, such as documents related to the activities and management of the institution.

The phenomenological approach used in this study focuses on understanding human experience and its meaning. In this context, the study seeks to understand the experiences and perspectives of actors related to the development of Islamic early childhood education institutions in a multicultural society. Qualitative research methods and phenomenological approaches are used to explore detailed and contextual understanding of institutional development strategies.

In addition, this study also links sociological theories, especially structural-functional theories, with the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained. The structural-functional theory provides a framework for understanding the importance of social order and societal stability. In this regard, research focuses on the role of community leaders in Islamic early childhood education institutions and how those roles contribute to the functioning and stability of such institutions in the context of multicultural societies (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2020).

Overall, the research methods used in this article, namely interviews, observation, and documentation, as well as qualitative and phenomenological approaches, are used to gain a deep understanding of the development strategies of Islamic early childhood education institutions in multicultural societies by linking sociological theories, particularly structural-functional theories, in data analysis. The research will focus on the role of one community leader in an educational institution.

### **D. Findings**

#### **1. Development Strategy of Early Childhood Islamic Education Institutions**

Based on the research findings, it appears that in Samirono hamlet, there are two kindergartens with different religious education, namely TK Persis 447

Samirono and TK Kristen Effata. Effata Christian Kindergarten is the only Christian kindergarten in Samirono village and has been established since 1991. This kindergarten does not charge any fees to students, including operational costs, books, and uniforms. As a result, many people in Samirono village, including some Muslim families, send their children to Effata Christian Kindergarten because of the facilities and proximity to people's homes.

Meanwhile, TK Persis 447 Samirono was only established in 2019, with only three batches of graduates. The kindergarten was established in response to the concerns of the Muslim community, who send their children to Christian kindergartens. TK Persis 447 also offers facilities similar to TK Effata, including a no-cost policy for students regarding uniforms and building fees. Thus, people began to be interested in sending their children to TK Persis 447 because of its similar facilities and location close to residential areas.

TK Persis 447 Samirono chose the initial strategy through two approaches, namely the familial and material approaches. The family approach refers to the efforts of TK Persis 447 Samirono to seek permission from local village and hamlet authorities. This approach is carried out to build harmonious relationships with the surrounding community and get their support for establishing and operating TK Persis. Meanwhile, the material approach was carried out through free school fee, and on the inauguration day, free necessities were distributed to residents around TK Persis 447 Samirono. In addition, TK Persis 447 Samirono also carries out social activities as part of their development strategy. They distributed free vegetables to residents and sold cheap clothes, attracting attention and gaining community support, especially among Muslims. These activities were well accepted and helped to build a positive image of the institution among the local community.

During an interview with Puput, a teacher at TK Persis since 2019, she shared that in TK Persis, there are not only Muslim students but also Buddhist students. This is because there is no particular educational institution for Buddhist students in the village of Samirono. In one of the classes, there was a Buddhist student named Yhaza Susilo. Puput observed that the teacher's attitude towards Yhaza was not discriminatory. All students are treated the same way, so Yhaza feels comfortable studying in kindergarten. Although TK Persis is an Islamic kindergarten, this year marks Yhaza's second year studying there. Therefore, although Buddhist education is not formally taught, Yhaza often observes his friends as they pray before starting lessons.

The students who attend TK Persis come from various hamlets, even from different villages, with diverse cultures and traditions. The reasons parents enroll their children in Persis Kindergarten are also myriad. They expect their children to receive an education appropriate to their religion. Parents also hope that through TK Persis, their children will become better individuals than themselves. With TK Persis, students from different backgrounds can learn together and respect each other's religious and cultural differences. The teachers at TK Persis strive to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for all students so that every child feels welcome and comfortable in the learning process (Sutikno, personal communication, 2022).

Diversity of religion, culture, and social status does not affect teaching and learning activities in TK Persis. Instead, this diversity has become a unique characteristic of the school. Based on the author's observations, the concept of this

school is still traditional because TK Persis is still in the early stages of development. The school must apply more technology regarding facilities, infrastructure, and classroom learning. This is evident in learning activities mainly focused on reading, writing, and arithmetic. Although the facilities are limited, graduates of Persis Kindergarten are ready to continue their education to the elementary school level. On average, they continue their education at Samirano State Elementary School.

The early childhood education institution of TK Persis 447 Samirano has not fully implemented government policy because the educators who teach at TK Persis are high school graduates such as Miss Puput and Miss Rina. At the same time, Miss Dijah is a community service student from the Hadith Department. In addition, Miss Ai is a community service student from the Department of Quranic Studies and Interpretation, which requires more harmony among educators. To overcome this problem, teachers can attend workshops to improve their skills and quality as educators in Persis Samirano Kindergarten. The strategy used by TK Persis is to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for all students, including Buddhist students like Yhaza. They welcome students from various religious and cultural backgrounds and strive to treat all students the same way. Teachers at Persis Kindergarten strive to eliminate discrimination and promote interfaith understanding and interreligious harmony. Thus, they strive to create an atmosphere where all students feel comfortable and can study together without feeling discriminated against (Gina, personal communication, 2022).

## **2. Multicultural Society in Samirano Village**

Pluralism is the willingness to accept that there are different ways of life, cultures, and religious beliefs in society, thus fostering an attitude of tolerance (Ginting & Aryaningrum, 2009). This pluralistic society is the foundation for the creation of a multicultural society. A multicultural society is one in which there are many differences and in which there are agreed agreements aimed at minimizing potential conflicts (Husaini et al., 2022). God designated humankind as a social creature who needs relationships and social interaction with other human beings. As social creatures, humans need to cooperate with others in meeting their needs.

Based on the findings, this study focuses on the plural religions in one of the villages called Samirano Village. Samirano Village, Getasan District, Semarang Regency, consists of 5 hamlets: Pongangan, Kendal, Tawang, Watulawang, and Samirano. Each hamlet has its own culture and characteristics. Pongangan hamlet is the only Hindu place of worship or temple, although it is not the majority religion in the hamlet. Each village in Samirano has its own culture and characteristics, such as Tawang Village, known for its recycled handicrafts. On the contrary, Pongangan Village is known for the majority of its people who raise dairy cows, including some cows managed by the government and Pongangan residents. In addition to the diversity of social conditions, the people of Samirano Village adopted three official religions: Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics Semarang City (BPS Semarang, 2023), in 2020, there were 1,835 Muslims, followed by 494 Christians and 73 Buddhists. However, the distribution of places of worship is uneven. For example, there are no Christian places of worship in Tawang and Watulawang villages, even though some people there are Christians, so they must go to neighboring villages to worship. Similarly, the Buddhist place of worship can only be found in Pongangan Village.

The village's people practice three official religions: Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism. In addition to religious diversity, there are various organizations such as Nahdatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, Persis, and Ahmadiyah. Despite the diversity of religions and organizations, each hamlet has different cultural traits. For example, there are the traditional art of reog and the craft of waste management. This activity is usually organized by youth groups in each hamlet. In addition to youth groups, organizations such as PKK (Family Welfare Movement) for women and women's farmer groups hold regular monthly meetings according to their members' agreement (Gina, personal communication, 2022).

Diversity usually causes issues. To overcome these problems, leaders in Samirono village have the following steps or stages: the first step is to solve the problem through family discussion, and if the issue is not resolved through family discussion, it will be resolved at the ward level, then forwarded to the Hamlet Head, and if it still cannot be resolved, it will be resolved at the Village Head level, said Mr. Sutikno, Chairman of Rukun Neighbor in Samirono Hamlet (Sutikno, personal communication, 2022).

In holding meetings in the Mother Group (PKK) and the Youth Group (Karang Taruna), there were no significant obstacles to discussing something. Although there are majority and minority groups, this does not affect the political aspects of choosing leaders at the RT (neighborhood community), RW, Hamlet Head, and Village Head levels in Samirono Village. All are selected based on the results of deliberations conducted through voting. In addressing these majority and minority groups, society does not distinguish or use this to trigger internal conflicts. On the contrary, tolerant attitudes have been instilled from a small scope, for example, towards neighbors in different RTs. In addition, the community regularly holds joint work activities or mutual assistance.

Educational institutions that the people of Samirono village can choose from include Samirono Elementary School located in Pongangan Hamlet, Izzatul Islam Elementary School located in Pongangan Hamlet, Izzatul Islam Kindergarten located in Pongangan Hamlet, Village PAUD located in Samirono Hamlet, Effata Christian Kindergarten located in Samirono Hamlet, and Persis 447 Kindergarten Samirono located in Samirono Hamlet. Unfortunately, the schools in Samirono village only reach kindergarten and elementary levels, so to continue their education to a higher level, people have to travel far enough to the city to access the schools. In addition, there are no particular educational institutions for Buddhist children in this village, so some parents send their children, especially those of kindergarten age, to interfaith educational institutions.

The hope of the community with establishing an Islamic early childhood education institution in Samirono village is that it can advance their hamlet and educate their children with Islamic teaching from an early age. This is also one of the reasons why the Persis institution established a kindergarten in this hamlet as a means of da'wah through education. Along the way, TK Persis 447 Samirono has graduated two batches simultaneously. From the first to the third group, one or two children are Buddhist and have joined as students in kindergarten.

The history of establishing TK Persis 447 Samirono is noteworthy, considering that there are two kindergartens located relatively close to each other in the hamlet. They are TK Kriten Effata, founded in 1991, and TK Persis 447 Samirono, established in 2019. One of the community leaders, Mr. Jarot, who pioneered the establishment of TK Persis 447 Samirono, told the history of its



establishment. Starting from the anxiety of one of the da'wah activists, Mr. Purwanto, who was chairperson of PW Persis Central Java then. He was disturbed that many Muslims in Samirono village sent their children to Christian kindergartens, citing economic factors. Given the good facilities provided to the students of Effata Christian Kindergarten, including free education, building fees, and school supplies, they bear the brunt of those costs. Seeing this, Mr. Purwanto was moved to establish an Islamic early childhood education institution under the auspices of PW Persis Central Java. TK Persis 447 Samirono developed good relations with village officials, village heads, and other elements of society. This can be seen from the history told by several sources in the kindergarten establishment meeting, where local village officials such as the village head, the chairperson of the local community association, and the chairperson of the local environmental association were present. Before the establishment meeting, Persis also established good relations with parties who were considered to have essential positions or roles in the Samirono village community (Jarotlan, personal communication, 2022).

## **E. Discussion**

This study focuses on discussing the development strategies of TK Persis Samirono in the context of multicultural societies. According to Pierre L. Van den Berghe, multicultural societies have several characteristics, including (Hidayat et al., 2020). a) segmentation into different subcultural groups, b) social structures divided into non-complementary institutions, c) lack of consensus among members, d) frequent conflicts between groups, e) social integration enforced by external factors, and f) political dominance of one group over another. Indonesia can be considered a multicultural country with 17,000 scattered islands and geographical locations at the crossroads of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, greatly influencing cultural and religious plurality. This route also serves as a significant route for cross-border travel, allowing Indonesia to be easily influenced by existing cultures due to interactions along this route. Indonesian society is a multicultural society. Challenges faced in this multicultural society include discrimination, social jealousy, ethnicity, primordialism, ethnocentrism, stereotypes, religious conflicts, and national disintegration. To minimize those conflicts, several solutions are 1) Multicultural education, 2) Involving religious elites in formulating positions in social, economic, and political life, 3) Conducting a model of religious studies in the plurality era to minimize conflict by studying Islam from anthropological, theological, and phenomenological aspects to find the essence of what is behind all forms of religious manifestations in human life on earth (Husaini et al., 2022). Multicultural societies also have characteristics such as 1) societies that have a lot of diversity, 2) segmentation, 3) institutional structures that do not complement each other, 4) low consensus, 5) potential for conflict, 6) integration can grow through strength, 7) political dominance of one group over another, 8) the emergence of minority and majority groups (Nurhayati & Agustina, 2020).

The differences that arise from the various characteristics and nature of multicultural societies demand that people have a tolerant attitude so that they are not carried in a negative direction. Tolerance is necessary to create balance and social cohesion in a multicultural society. To develop an attitude of proportional religious tolerance in a multicultural society, it is essential to instill the attitude of the times (neutral principle) in theology (Casram, 2016). This will eventually become people's

identity so they will not be easily swayed. In behavior, people will also have a foundation to deal with differences wisely and kindly.

Early childhood education in the formal education system takes the form of kindergarten, which is very different from elementary school, junior high school, and so on (Dwinugraha, 2021). Children who attend kindergarten still need guidance and direction from those closest to them, considering the age range for this education is 4-6 years. The Indonesian National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003 also mentions this. Article 1, paragraph 14 states that Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is an effort that aims to nurture children from birth to the age of six through educational stimulation to help with their physical and spiritual growth and development so that they are ready to enter further education.

Referring to Indonesia's National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003, Article 28 states that even from the name alone, TK (kindergarten) means "park," not "school." The term "Park" in the phrase "Kindergarten" (kindergarten) means "a safe and comfortable playground." Therefore, in carrying out kindergarten education, it is necessary to create a safe and comfortable play environment for children's growth and development (Iftitah, 2020). The objectives of kindergarten education are encouraging physical and mental growth and development so that children are ready to enter further education; develop the personality and potential of learners according to their stage of development; To help lay the foundation for the development of the attitudes, knowledge, skills, and creativity necessary for students to adapt to their environment and for further growth and development.

Early childhood education is critical because it is the starting point for humans to move on to the next level. In this regard, the state must provide education at every level, including learning to know, do, be, and live together. The higher the quality of an institution, the higher the quality of educational services in early childhood education units, and of course, the output will be a high-quality generation. Achieving this is not easy; many things must be considered to continue developing and improving the school. There are many discussion branches, including curriculum management, educational staff management, student management, financial management, infrastructure management, and public relations management. However, among the many types of management, one that plays a vital role in developing an institution is infrastructure management because infrastructure can impact graduates produced by schools. For example, in the case of Islamic kindergarten institutions, the provision of Educational Play Tools (APE) is needed to help learning activities. Kindertgartens with good infrastructure certainly have complete Educational Playground Equipment. However, if we examine more deeply, the APE used will also affect children's understanding of the material delivered by their teachers.

Developing an institution needs strategies. Educational institution development strategies are divided into two categories, namely internal and external strategies (Astari, 2023). The internal strategy of developing educational institutions includes formulating the vision, mission, goals, objectives, nature, teaching and learning activities, and technology. The external strategy for developing educational institutions includes government policies, social and cultural aspects of society, and the development of science and technology (IPTEK).

The development strategy of the Persis Samirono Kindergarten institution is in line with one of the social theories, namely Structural Functionalism. According to this perspective, society is a social system consisting of parts or elements that are

interconnected and interdependent in a balanced manner. Therefore, when taking steps or actions, good coordination and communication with various parties are necessary, especially those who hold important positions in the community order, such as village officials, including village heads, chairpersons of local community associations, and chairpersons of local environmental associations (Maunah, 2016). This theory emphasizes the importance of good coordination and communication with various parties in society to achieve balance and sustainability. In the case of TK Persis 447 Samirono, they established good relations with village officials, village heads, and other elements of society. This allowed them to obtain permission to develop the institution and full support from the local community. Although TK Persis 447 Samirono faces several challenges, such as a lack of teachers with bachelor's degrees in education, which is why they did not obtain operational permits, their development strategy has proven successful. TK Persis 447 Samirono serves not only as an early childhood Islamic educational institution but also as a center of social activities that benefit the multicultural community in Samirono village.

## **F. Conclusion**

TK Persis 447 Samirono, a religiously affiliated early childhood education institution, successfully overcame the challenge of establishing an institution with a specific religious identity in a multicultural society. Through effective development strategies, they can deal with the complexity of their environment. The primary strategy implemented by TK Persis 447 Samirono includes coordination with relevant stakeholders such as local village officials, Samirono village heads, and mosque administrators to obtain permits to establish institutions. It involves discussions to explain the importance of establishing Islamic kindergartens with free education to gain support and attract interest from the community. In addition, TK Persis 447 Samirono also carries out social activities as part of their development strategy. These activities were well accepted and helped to build a positive image of the institution among the local community. This study implies that establishing educational institutions with a specific religious identity in a multicultural society requires effective strategies, coordination with related parties, and support from the community. TK Persis 447 Samirono demonstrated that religious, educational institutions could develop and benefit the local community with the right approach. However, the study also had some limitations. First, this study only focused on one particular educational institution in Samirono village, so the study results need to be generalized carefully. In addition, this study does not discuss in detail the long-term impact of this educational institution's establishment on society and children's learning process. For future research, involving more religious educational institutions in various multicultural contexts is recommended. It can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges, strategies, and impacts of establishing religious educational institutions in diverse communities. In addition, future studies may also look in more detail at the long-term effects of religious educational institutions on children's development, their influence on local communities, and their relation to religious values and tolerance in multicultural environments.

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