

Parents' Tendency To Send Their Children To Islamic-Based Elementary Schools: A Case Study In Nanggulan, Kulon Progo

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Abstract

The growing interest of parents in sending their children to Islamic elementary schools has become a significant issue in the context of basic education in Indonesia. This is influenced not only by academic aspects but also by parents' need for character education and religious values, which are perceived as more secure in Islamic educational institutions. The background to this research is based on the growing tendency of society to be more selective in choosing educational institutions for their children, particularly considering the role of schools in shaping religious and social character. The purpose of this study is to describe the factors behind parents' choice to send their children to Islamic-based elementary schools, to understand parents' perceptions and expectations regarding the quality of education provided, and to analyze the implications of these tendencies for the development patterns of elementary schools in the future. The research method used was a case study with a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with parents and observations at the Islamic Elementary School selected as the research location, as well as a review of documents related to school policies and the educational institution's profile. Data analysis was conducted using the interactive technique of Milles & Huberman, consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and inductive conclusion drawing. The results of this study indicate that the reasons parents send their children to favorite private Islamic-based elementary schools in Nanggulan District, especially Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School, are due to factors such as good Islamic religious education, quality of learning, teacher competence, distance from the school, school facilities, a conducive learning environment, achievement, school fees, and the school's image. Therefore, the dominant main motive is value-oriented rationality (wertrational), where the decision reflects the desire to shape children into an intelligent and Islamic-moral generation.

Keywords: *Tendency, Parents, Elementary School, Islamic Religion Based*

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the main indicators of a nation's progress. Through education, the country will be managed by quality human resources (Pidarta, 2017). According to Ahmad Zain, a nation's character is shaped through education. Therefore, education has strategic value and is crucial in life (Siskandar, 2022).

Education not only functions as a way to know and a way to do, but also a way to be. For this function to be realized, cultural and cultural transfer is necessary (Hadiyanto, 2016). Thus, education becomes a strategic tool for increasing the nation's potential to play a role on a global level (Sarnoto et al., 2022). Quality basic education is crucial as it determines the long-term success

of children. In this regard, the family plays a significant role, as children learn first from their environment from birth (Ansari, 2018).

Currently, more and more parents are choosing to send their children to formal educational institutions, particularly Islamic-based, tiered schools. Formal schools play a crucial role in achieving national education goals (Herliandri, 2020). Parents consider not only academic aspects but also the environment, moral values, and spiritual foundation. Islamic education is seen as capable of helping individuals achieve a balanced and holistic personality (Mei & Fasha, 2025). Parents' concerns about the negative influences of modernity also drive them to be more selective in choosing schools (Huda et al., 2022). Thus, choosing an Islamic school is not merely a trend, but rather a conscious effort to maintain a child's moral and spiritual integrity. Islamic education is believed to protect and equip children with values relevant to the challenges of the times (Prihatin, 2024).

At the elementary school level, the decision to choose a school rests entirely with parents because children are not yet able to make their own choices (Pracipta, 2021). Parents play a significant role in finding the best school for their children. Many factors are considered in this process (Widyastuti, 2024). As Ki Hajar Dewantara stated, education is the key to creating a civilized human being. The more advanced education is, the more civilized society will be (Vena Ayunda, 2023).

Parents' right to choose their child's school is also guaranteed by Article 7 of Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which states:

1. Parents have the right to choose an educational institution and obtain information about their child's development.
2. Parents are obliged to provide basic education to school-age children.

Indonesian children generally start elementary school at age 6 and complete it by age 12. According to Piaget, at this age, children are in the concrete operational stage, characterized by a love of play, movement, group work, and learning through direct experience. Therefore, teachers need to create learning environments that provide opportunities for children to interact with peers to develop their social skills (Diba & Muttaqien, 2019; Viktor Novianto & Dewi Sufiyati, 2021).

However, in public schools, many older teachers struggle to adapt to current developments and therefore rarely participate in competency development. Meanwhile, parents desire schools with added value, particularly religious education that is integrated into daily activities, not merely as an additional activity. In contrast to private schools, teachers generally have more freedom to provide the best quality education for children (Juni Ahyar, 2022).

Private schools, especially those with an Islamic nuance and networked networks, are increasingly attracting parents. In the Nanggulan District, Kulon Progo Regency, one of the top schools of choice is Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School, which implements an integrated education system from kindergarten. This school is considered capable of developing a generation that is intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually intelligent. Compared to other schools, this preferred Islamic elementary school has a better reputation for educating children and producing graduates with character (Danang, 2021). The existence of private schools essentially complements the role of public schools in providing education (Crawfurd & Hares, 2021).

To create a generation with Islamic character, Islamic schools integrate the national curriculum with a religiously nuanced curriculum. At Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School, for example, there is a Quran memorization program to develop students with Quranic character while preserving the Quran (Siskandar, 2022). According to Rizqi & Adistiarachma (2023), implementing Islamic values in school routines can improve students' emotional resilience and ethical decision-making skills, thereby promoting holistic development. By aligning the curriculum with Islamic principles, Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School is expected to produce graduates who are both intellectually competent and spiritually grounded.

Various previous studies support the growing trend of parents choosing Islamic schools. Santosa & Aida (2022) found six dominant factors: teaching staff, learning quality, school values and culture, image, and facilities. Cost, location, and parents' educational background were not top priorities. Similar results were reported by Andayani & Suherman (2023), who indicated that educational facilities and quality were the primary considerations, followed by accreditation, cost, and location. Fitriani et al. (2022) even emphasized that cost was less influential than service quality, accreditation, and school performance. Jonathan et al. (2023) added that private school choice is also based on academic achievement, teacher quality, religious values, and ideological and pragmatic motives. Meanwhile, Widyawati & Sukadari (2023) emphasized the importance of quality teaching to produce responsible and committed educators. Mousumi (2022) also added that parents choose private schools because of proximity, discipline, emphasis on Islamic teachings and values, security, and caring teachers.

Based on this description, researchers are interested in analyzing the factors influencing parents' decision to send their children to their favorite Islamic elementary schools. This study aims to determine the primary considerations parents consider when choosing a favorite Islamic elementary school. Practically, the research results are expected to provide schools with an overview of the factors that influence parents' decisions, so that they can be used as a reference for improving the quality of education.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employed a case study method with a descriptive qualitative approach. This approach was chosen because the research aimed to describe in depth the factors underlying parents' choice to send their children to Islamic-based elementary schools, understand parents' perceptions and expectations regarding the quality of education provided, and analyze the implications of these trends for future elementary school development patterns.

The research was conducted at Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School, Nanggulan District, Kulon Progo Regency. The research period lasted for 4 months, namely from Juni to September 2025. The research subjects were parents of students at Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School, who were selected purposively because they were considered to be able to provide relevant, in-depth information, and in accordance with the research focus (Sugiyono, 2019). The research objects were the factors behind parents' choices in sending their children to Islamic-based elementary schools, as well as their perceptions and expectations regarding the quality of education at the school. Data Collection Techniques using several techniques, namely: 1) In-depth interviews, conducted with parents to explore their motivations,

perceptions, and expectations, 2) Observations, conducted in the Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School environment to understand the learning atmosphere, teacher-student interactions, and school culture, 3) Documentation studies, in the form of document reviews related to school policies, vision-mission, educational programs, and educational institution profiles.

The tools used were mobile phones to record interviews and document related data. Data validity was tested through source triangulation techniques and informant review. Triangulation was carried out by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documentation, while informant review was used to validate research findings with respondents or related parties. Data analysis was carried out using the interactive analysis model of Miles & Huberman (2015) which includes three stages: 1) Data reduction: the process of selecting, focusing attention, simplifying, and transforming raw data into a more organized form, 2) Data presentation: the reduced data is presented in narrative form, tables, or charts to facilitate understanding, 3) Conclusion drawing/verification: the process of searching for meaning, finding patterns, and drawing conclusions inductively based on the data obtained. The analysis model can be illustrated in chart 1 below.

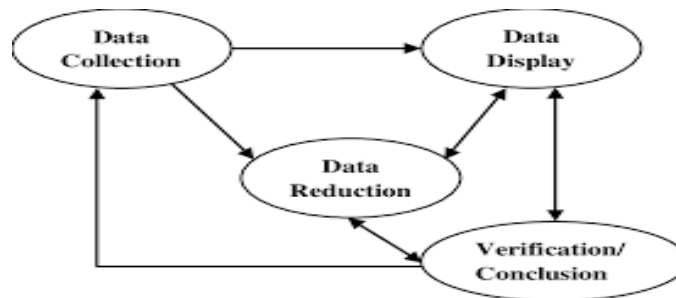


Chart 1.
Miles and Huberman's Interactive Data Analysis Model
(Patilima 2016:102)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School is one of the most popular private elementary schools based on Islamic education. The school is located in Ngrojo Hamlet, Kembang Village, Nanggulan District, Kulon Progo Regency. Geographically, the school's location is quite strategic, being located not far from the provincial road connecting Nanggulan and Godean, approximately 500 meters north of the Kenteng Terminal in Nanggulan, Kulon Progo. The principal of Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School is Mr. Nur Hidayat, S.Pd.I. Based on document review and interviews with him, various information was obtained regarding the school's profile, vision, mission, and implementation of educational activities.

Based on the review of school documents and interviews with him, it was discovered that Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School has 161 students. The teaching staff consists of 12 teachers, while the administrative staff consists of two administrative staff. All teachers at this school have academic qualifications that align with their fields of work and diplomas.

Institutionally, Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School has a vision of “Forming a generation with Islamic character, intelligence, and independence.” To realize this vision, the school has established several missions, namely:

- a. Teaching faith and worship through habituation and meaningful activities in daily life;
- b. Instilling Islamic moral values in students;
- c. Implementing a learning process oriented toward 21st-century skills;
- d. Developing a culture of literacy; and
- e. Creating a safe, comfortable, and enjoyable learning environment.

To realize this vision and mission, the school first established a common understanding among all members of the school community, including the principal, teachers, and educational staff. Following this, the school's vision, mission, and programs were disseminated to parents or guardians of students and the surrounding community to foster a shared understanding and support for the school's development direction.

In its daily activities, Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School instills Islamic values through various habit-forming activities, including morning dhikr (recitation of the Qur'an), reading the Quran, and memorizing short surahs (chapters). These habits aim to foster religious character and discipline in students from an early age.

Based on accreditation results from the National Accreditation Board for Schools/Madrasahs (BAN-S/M), Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School received the "Very Good" rating, indicating the quality of its educational delivery meets national education standards. Its flagship programs serve as a major attraction. These programs include:

- a. Islamic Personal Development

This is a separate subject, tending towards practice and application. Examples include ablution, prayer, and reciting the good deeds. Participants range from first to sixth grade. This activity is supervised by the homeroom teacher.



Figure 1.
Students practicing prayer
(Source: personal documentation)

- b. Student Leadership Activities

These are activities held outside of school. All students participate in these activities. Prior to implementation, teachers and the committee meet to determine the location and costs. These activities are typically outbound activities. Outbound activities are expected to foster teamwork and leadership, fostering unity within the group.



Figure 2.
Outbound activities for students at SD IT Generasi Mulia
 (Source: personal documentation)

c. Outing Class

This activity provides an opportunity to explore educational opportunities outside of school. Sixth-grade students, accompanied by teachers, participate in this activity. This activity aims to broaden their knowledge and insight. It is held annually.



Figure 3.
Class outing activity visiting an educational location.
 (Source: personal documentation)

d. Taekwondo

To ensure students develop good self-defense skills, this school holds taekwondo training. Participants range from third to sixth grade. Training takes place once a week at the school, accompanied by professional trainers.



Figure 4.
Taekwondo training attended by students
 (Source: personal documentation)

e. **Marching**

This activity aims to foster a sense of nationalism. They are trained by members of the local military command. Marching practice is held before each sub-district parade. Participants range from fourth to sixth graders. Being selected as a marching participant is a source of pride for students and their parents, as they will be participating in the Indonesian Independence Day parade.



Figure 5.
Marching practice in preparation for the sub-district-level parade

(Source: personal documentation)

f. Manasik Simulation/Practice

This activity aims to strengthen the students' faith. It takes place on school grounds. Participants range from first to sixth grade. All wear white clothing to enhance the solemn atmosphere of the simulation. They are guided by the school's religious teacher.



Figure 6.
Manasik practice activities
(Source: personal documentation)

g. Scouts

Scouts are held to develop students' skills and independence. All students at this school are required to participate in Scouts. The activities are designed to be fun for students, ensuring their enjoyment. Activities take place every Friday afternoon. They are trained by experienced Scoutmasters.



Figure 7.
Scouting activities
 (Source: personal documentation)

Prospective students enrolling at Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School have been registering for several months. This is due to limited space. However, parental interest in enrolling their children at Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School is high. Therefore, the school conducts additional screenings. In addition to residency and age, other screenings include folding clothes and dressing themselves.

The parents of Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School students come from various backgrounds. 40% are self-employed, 25% are civil servants, 25% are private sector employees, and 25% are traders. They also come from several sub-districts in the Nanggulan area.

Each parent or guardian at Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School contributes a monthly tuition fee (SPP) to cover school operations. The amount is determined jointly by the school and the parents. The monthly fee is determined jointly, based on the parents' economic situation or income. The goal is to minimize the burden on the students, ensuring that each parent can afford the monthly fee. This monthly fee covers all activities and facilities.

The facilities at Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School are comprehensive. Some of these include catering for lunch, comfortable and adequate classrooms, clean restrooms, office space, a cafeteria, and a sports field. Students and teachers make good use of these facilities.

To produce quality graduates, the school implements several targets that students must master. These targets relate to the Reading and Writing of the Quran (BTHQ). BTHQ for students in grades 1 to 3 must pass volume 3. For students in grades 4-5, they must be able to read the Quran. Meanwhile, students in grades 6 must have memorized 2 juzz in the Quran (Juzz 29 and 30). To ensure all students can achieve these targets, the Ilman Waruhan (IWR) method is used to study the Quran. This method combines the two volumes of Iqra' into one. Therefore, students only need to study 4 volumes to be able to read the Quran and its tajweed. Therefore, the quality of the graduates produced is better than that of public elementary schools.



Figure 8.
BTHQ Activities
 (Source: personal documentation)

The achievements of Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School in Nanggulan Subdistrict are considered good. Some of its accomplishments include first place in the Quran Recitation Competition (MTQ) and the Nanggulan Subdistrict-level talent and interest competition, and a marching competition. With several academic and non-academic achievements, along with adequate facilities, the school received an accreditation rating of "Very Good."

Interviews with parents who send their children to popular private schools in Nanggulan District revealed a preference for Islamic-based elementary schools as their primary choice. They believe that Islamic religious education is crucial in elementary school, as it provides a foundation for a child's development. The following is an excerpt from an interview with Mrs. Rini, a parent of a student at Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School:

"For me, I chose an Islamic-based elementary school as my primary choice. This is because Islamic religious education in elementary schools is crucial as a strong foundation and foundation. It's crucial to teach and implement it from an early age."

Parents prefer a preferred private Islamic elementary school for their children to ensure a sound, solid understanding of religion and the maintenance of moral character. Therefore, they chose Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School in Nanggulan District as their primary choice, as it is considered to have a high-quality Islamic curriculum. The following is an excerpt from an interview with Mrs. Rini:

"The reason I chose an Islamic-based elementary school was to establish a foundation for children's habits, such as congregational prayer. Here, I chose Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School because it's a religious-based school, close to home, and affordable. This faith-based curriculum is exactly what I was looking for."

The quality of the curriculum and teaching at private Islamic elementary schools is considered superior to that of public or state schools. The Islamic-based learning methods have a particular appeal to parents. The teachers at these schools are also more competent than those at public schools. In addition to religious instruction, children are also taught skills to foster independence. The following is an excerpt from an interview with Mrs. Rini:

"I think the academic quality at this school is good. In addition to academics, my child receives religious instruction. The teachers also seem more diligent in teaching religious knowledge, especially regarding Islam. For example, my child is trained to memorize and practice reading the Quran correctly. So, my child receives a balance between academics and religious knowledge. At other schools, the time and material are limited. Here, it's more flexible. That's what attracted me."

Islamic-based elementary schools are also considered to be better at instilling religious values than public schools. The social environment at these schools is also well-developed, giving parents greater peace of mind about sending their children to school. The following is an excerpt from an interview with Mrs. Rini:

"I feel the environment here is quite conducive. My child's friends are Muslim, so the teachers can focus more on teaching Islamic religious knowledge in class. This is what attracted me to sending my child to school here. I also feel more at ease sending my child to an Islamic-based school. In other schools, or public schools, the students aren't exclusively Muslim; some are non-Muslim. So, teachers tend to be more general in their teaching. As a result, the children's religious knowledge is lacking."

For a reasonable fee, their children receive comprehensive facilities. They believe the monthly fees are comparable to the learning facilities offered at private Islamic schools. The school offers a variety of services, including positive activities that foster outstanding character. Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School, a private Islamic elementary school, has achieved numerous achievements within the Nanggulan District. These achievements earned the school a "Very Good" accreditation rating. This further enhances the school's appeal and encourages parents to enroll their children there. The following is an excerpt from an interview with Mrs. Rini:

"I'm looking for a school with facilities that support my child's learning. Because they support their learning. I think the monthly fees are commensurate with the facilities. They're still affordable. It all comes back to the child through various activities. Yesterday, my child represented the school in a competition and won the Nanggulan District level. The school's accreditation is also excellent."

Besides the reputation and quality of Islamic religious education at Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School, parents apparently send their children there based on recommendations from relatives. Some learn about it through social media. The following is an excerpt from an interview with Ms. Tanti, a parent at Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School:

"I learned about this school from relatives and friends who live nearby. They have sent their children here. They spoke highly of the quality and outcomes of their studies. The school is quite popular in the Nanggulan District community. Promotions about Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School often appear on Facebook and Instagram. This made me even more determined to send my child here."

Parents who send their children to private Islamic schools experience a very positive impact. Children become obedient and receptive to advice, diligent in their religious practices, independent, willing to help their parents without being forced, and show concern for others. Here's an excerpt from an interview with Mrs. Tanti:

"What I noticed is that my child prays regularly and on time. When he leaves for school, he always says goodbye. When I advise him, he obeys. He even does the household chores he can do himself, like mopping, sweeping, and washing the dishes. Even though I don't force him."



Figure 9.
Students are accustomed to washing their own dishes at home.
(Source: personal documentation)



Figure 10.
Students performing obligatory prayers in daily life
(Source: personal documentation)



Figure 11.
Students share alms with local residents as a form of social responsibility.
(Source: personal documentation)

The tendency of parents to send their children to preferred private Islamic schools is a social act. According to Weber (Ritzer, 2015), social action is human behavior that has subjective meaning and is directed towards the actions of others. Furthermore, according to Max Webber (Prahesti, 2021), there are four forms of social action that individuals engage in:

1. Instrumental Rational Action

Actions driven by rational calculations to achieve a specific goal. Individuals who perform these actions will weigh various alternative courses of action, choosing the most efficient and

effective one to achieve their goal. These actions are based on the principle of cause and effect, where individuals believe that certain actions will produce certain consequences.

2. Value-Oriented Rational Action

Value-oriented rational action is driven by a belief in certain values that are considered true and worth fighting for. Individuals who perform these actions will choose actions that align with these values, even if they may not bring them any personal benefit or advantage. These actions are based on moral, religious, or ideological principles.

3. Affective Actions

Affective actions are driven by emotions, feelings, or moods. Individuals who engage in these actions act on impulse or impulse without rational consideration. These actions are often spontaneous and unplanned.

4. Traditional Actions

Traditional actions are driven by long-standing customs or traditions. Individuals who engage in these actions act in accordance with the ways that have been done by previous generations without questioning the reasons behind their actions. These actions are often automatic and performed unconsciously.

Theoretical findings related to the tendency of parents to send their children to favorite private schools based on Islam, especially in the Nanggulan District area, are as follows.

Table 1.
Theoretical Findings

Types of Social Action According to Max Weber	Field Findings
Instrumental Rational Action	Parents choose to send their children to Islamic schools to ensure their academic performance is strong. For the monthly tuition, children are taught good morals and religious practices, along with facilities that support their learning. This is considered commensurate with the results and services provided. The hope is that they will become quality individuals.
Value-Oriented Rational Action	Parents choose to send their children to Islamic private schools to foster strong morals and religious values. Teachers are considered more competent to teach general knowledge and religion. This decision is driven by moral and religious convictions.
Affective action	Parents choose to send their children to Islamic-based private schools because they perceive the learning environment as more conducive, promote achievement, and have a positive image. Consequently, the public perceives that children who attend these schools will be more intelligent, both academically and non-academically, than those

	attending public schools. They are proud that their children attend their favorite schools, which can lead to psychological satisfaction. In this case, actions are influenced by emotions and social self-image, rather than rational considerations.
Traditional Actions	Parents who want their children to excel academically and religiously will subconsciously send them to Islamic-based private schools. Especially in the Nanggulan District, they are drawn to Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School. Furthermore, some send their children to this school due to the influence of their siblings.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research results, the tendency of parents to send their children to favorite private Islamic-based elementary schools in Nanggulan District, especially at the Generasi Mulia Integrated Islamic Elementary School, is due to factors such as good Islamic religious education, learning quality, teacher competence, school distance, school facilities, a conducive learning environment, achievement, school fees, and school image. Therefore, the dominant main motive is value-oriented rationality (wertrational), where the decision reflects the desire to form a generation that is intelligent and has Islamic morals. This is in accordance with the results of research conducted by Rusadi (2022) which stated that one of the reasons parents consider choosing an Integrated Islamic Elementary School for their children is value-oriented rationality, namely the hope of becoming pious and pious children and having good character and morals in accordance with Islamic teachings. A similar statement from Alshboul (2021), the reasons parents choose schools are driven by the desire for their children to receive an effective religious education according to their expectations, as well as the perception that Islamic schools can protect children from negative external influences.

The following suggestions can be made. First, for private elementary schools that are already performing well, they should maintain and optimize the factors that determine parents' decisions in choosing an elementary school for their children, as indicated by the results of this study. This aims to attract parents' interest in sending their children to the school in question, considering that parents hold a fairly dominant decision in choosing a school at the elementary school level. Meanwhile, for schools that are still performing poorly, they should repackage their schools by considering the factors that influence parents' decisions in choosing a private elementary school for their children. For public schools, they should create added value, improve, and enhance school quality by considering these factors. This will enable them to compete competitively to attract parents' interest in enrolling their children in the school in question.

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