



**Trends Of Integrated Islamic Schools In Rural Areas:
Parents' Background and Orientation in Choosing SDIT as an Alternative to Elementary
Schools in *Boyolali***

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Abstract

This study aimed to explain the trend shifting of elementary schools in Boyolali Regency. Some questions that would be answered through this research re: 1) Why did SDIT thrive and become a trend in rural Boyolali? 2) What were the motives and orientations of parents in choosing SDIT as an alternative primary school for their children? The study of this theme was conducted using a qualitative research approach. Data were collected through observation techniques, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The data obtained were then processed and analyzed in six stages: transcribing the interview data, labeling all the data obtained, categorizing the data into cognate themes, narrating the data by comparing and contrasting, interpreting the data, and finally drawing conclusions. The results of this study found two main conclusions: 1) The development of SDIT trends in Boyolali was directly proportional to the increasing of the religious awareness of the community, which was driven by the massive development of socio-religious foundations representing various theological concepts, where the foundations felt the need to establish Islamic schools as a medium of regeneration and maintain the sustainability of their respective theological concepts. 2) Beside that, not only the theological and academic factors (quality of education), but also the economic and the children's independence

factors were the motives and orientations of parents in determining the choice of primary school for their children.

Keywords: *Rural Muslims, Education Choice, and Integrated Islamic Schools*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan menjelaskan persegeraan tren sekolah dasar di kabupaten Boyolali. Beberapa pertanyaan yang akan dijawab melalui penelitian ini adalah: 1) Mengapa SDIT tumbuh subur dan menjadi tren di pedesaan Boyolali? 2) Apa motif dan orientasi orang tua murid dalam memilih SDIT sebagai alternatif sekolah dasar bagi anak-anaknya? Kajian terhadap tema ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan pendekatan penelitian kualitatif. Data dikumpulkan melalui teknik observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan analisis dokumen. Data yang diperoleh kemudian diolah dan dianalisis dalam enam tahap: mentranskrip data hasil wawancara, melabeli semua data yang diperoleh, mengategorikan data dalam tema-tema yang serumpun, menarasikan data dengan cara membandingkan dan dikontraskan, menginterpretasikan data, dan terakhir membuat kesimpulan. Hasil kajian ini menemukan dua simpulan pokok: 1) Perkembangan tren SDIT di Boyolali berbanding lurus dengan meningkatnya kesadaran beragama masyarakat, yang didorong oleh masifnya perkembangan yayasan sosial-keagamaan yang merepresentasikan konsep teologis yang beragam, di mana antar yayasan merasa perlu mendirikan sekolah Islam sebagai media kaderisasi dan menjaga keberlangsungan konsep teologisnya masing-masing. 2) Faktor teologis, akademis (kualitas pendidikan), faktor ekonomis dan faktor kemandirian anak menjadi motif dan orientasi orang tua murid dalam menentukan pilihan sekolah dasar bagi anak-anaknya.

Kata Kunci: Muslim Pedesaan, Pilihan Pendidikan, dan Sekolah Islam Terpadu

A. Introduction

Integrated Islamic schools are newcomers to the history of Islamic education in Indonesia. Although it is relatively new, the Islamic school with the integrated slogan can show a good existence, so that now its presence has become a trend for some Muslim communities. Integrated Islamic schools initially only reached out and became a trend among the upper-middle class in urban areas (Lubis, 2018, p. 1085; Suyatno, 2013b, p. 361). But in its development, with the characteristics and various advantages it offers, now integrated Islamic

schools have also reached and even grown rapidly and become a new trend among rural Muslim communities. One of the examples is in Boyolali Regency.

Quantitatively, there are 790 elementary schools in Boyolali Regency, which are divided into several types: 547 State Elementary Schools (SDN); *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* (MI) as many as 208 (public and private); and 35 private elementary schools consisting of 24 Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools (SDIT) and 11 *Muhammadiyah* Elementary Schools (accessed from the Ministry of Education and Culture data http://reference.data.kemdikbud.go.id/index11_sd.php?level=3&kode=030913&id=5, on May 2, 2021). The phenomenon of SDIT in rural Boyolali was interesting to be observed because although institutionally the quantity is still relatively small compared to SDN, but the academic quality and also the number of students showed a significant increase from year to year. While many SDNs had difficulty getting new students, SDIT tended to always meet targets. Even they refuse some students candidates due to limited facilities, infrastructure, and human resources educators. Sutarmin, an elementary school supervisor, explained that many elementary schools in rural Boyolali had closed and were grouped due to lack of students. Although there are still SDNs with a total of 22 students (grades 1 to 6), their existence is still maintained because the SD is the only SDN in a certain village area. Meanwhile, at the same time, SDIT which was born only in 2005, the number of students is very abundant, in which every new academic year can accept 3-4 classes with an average per class of 25 students (interviews with several SDIT parents on 5 and 6 May 2021).

Based on information from research informants, the phenomenon of dimming and closing of many state primary schools (SDN) in rural Boyolali is depended on several factors: First, the success of the Family Planning (KB) program, which has made relatively few elementary school-aged children. Due to the trend of Family Planning, many young families are no longer obsessed with having many children. Second, the inability of SDN to adapt and innovate under new development trends. Strict regulation is one of the inhibiting factors. Like food, the menu served in public schools is only the main menu that served according to standard rules. The addition of the menu has the consequence of increasing the budget. But with the existence of School Operational Assistance (BOS) funds from the government, public schools do not allow to collect any fees from students. Third, the appearance of SDIT. The inability of SDN to adapt and innovate under new development trends makes people who are knowledgeable and have a good economic level choose alternative educational models for their children. It is because SDIT is more considered as qualify as an alternative education model than SDN with various limitations. Consequently, the presence of SDIT was greeted with great

enthusiasm by the Muslim community in rural areas. As an Islamic-based school, MI also has a positive impact. Because, even though they are institutionally different and under the auspices of two different institutions, MI and SDIT have many similarities in terms of content and the education system they run. Several MIs have also made many innovations by changing the nomenclature of the name of the institution to MI Special Program (PK). As a result, the interest of the Muslim community in rural Boyolali in MI also seems to be increasing rapidly.

This article did not examine and describe in-depth the two initial phenomena that the authors have mentioned as factors that cause the dimming and death of many public primary schools, although they were interesting enough to be investigated further. This article only focused on the third phenomenon, in which SDIT and other types of Islamic-based elementary schools have become a new trend in rural Boyolali. In general, the emergence of SDIT as a new trend in the education ecosystem in Indonesia has attracted the attention of many education experts and researchers. Therefore, there have been many publications of research results on (integrated) Islamic schools by researchers, both from insiders and outsiders, which in general, publications about SDIT can be mapped into three main narratives.

The first is a narration that generally viewed SDIT and Integrated Islamic Schools (SIT) within the framework of the relationship between knowledge and power. In this case, SDIT is functioned as a medium for the ideological nation based on the political agendas of certain groups, as well as to express Muslim identity today. In this concern, several publications have informed that SDIT was pioneered by a group of Muslim youth who were inspired by the ideas of Hasan al-Banna, the founder of *the Ikhwanul Muslimin* in Egypt. Noorhaidi Hasan said that the SDIT model was first introduced and developed by campus *da'wah* activists of the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB), through the SDIT Lukmanul Hakim which they instituted. Later, it inspired the birth of other Integrated Islamic Schools (Hasan, 2012, p. 86; Suyatno, 2013b, 2013a, pp. 355–377). The trend towards modernization of education is getting stronger with the presence of SIT. However, the education program implemented remains within the framework of the national education system (Suyatno, 2016, pp. 1–10). This is what is called Hasan (Hasan, 2009, 2012, p. 83) as a long-term strategy to Islamize society peacefully and gradually through the state system, which some experts also call as an effort of *santrinization* (Azra, 2002, p. 80). In this narrative, although not all SDITs are under the auspices of the Integrated Islamic School Network (JSIT) which is affiliated with the *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* (PKS), politically by PKS cadres, the development of SIT is used as a tool for ideological regeneration, as well as to attract constituents to strengthen the base of support, from teachers, parents and their families (Hasan, 2012, pp. 77–78; Suyatno, 2014, p. 77).

Schools can indeed be a tool to shape the political and socio-religious climate of a community and a country (Bryner, 2013; Hefner, 2009, pp. 55–105). Formal education has a role in wider social transformation related to the Islamization, the spread of Islamic militancy, and the political culture of contemporary Indonesian Muslim society (Hasan, 2009). In this case, it generally appears that SIT has a close relationship with the spread of Islamic militants, in which basic religious subjects, such as theology (*'aqīdah*), morality (*akhlāq*), and worship practices (*ibādah*) are specifically controlled. In addition, SIT also contributes to the formation of certain cultures and politics that are in line with the Islamic ideology of *the Ikhwanul Muslimin* model. Still according to Hasan (Hasan, 2012, pp. 77–78), that the expansion of SIT also marks the growth of a new Muslim middle class who wants to express their religious identity while showing their status, class, and social tastes as modern Muslims and in close contact with globalization.

Secondly, SDIT is studied in the narrative as alternative education, in which the concept of integration between faith, knowledge, and charity that is practiced by SDIT, in general, can be a solution to various limitations of the national education system, especially the problem of dualism in education (Muttaqin et al., 2020, p. 219; Suyatno, 2014; Yaacob, 2018, p. 3). Not only in the realm of general science and religion which is the focus of the integration project, but also what is more fundamental and highly expected by the community in the education system is the integration between science and morality. The moral panic felt by the (urban) community in seeing moral decay as a direct result of the modernization and globalization project is quite being a reason why moral education should be integrated into the education system, even it should receive top priority (Fatchurochman, 2012, pp. 4–6; Hasan, 2012, p. 86)).

Third, SDIT is discussed from the technical aspects related to the education and learning process, complete with the related components such as *Full-Day* School system (Hawi, 2015; Susiati & Asyhar, 2015), educational evaluation (Hidayati et al., 2017), curriculum (Bermi, 2016; Hakim, 2012), character building Wibowo, 2014; Yusra, 2016; Zaman, 2017), as well as approaches and learning methods (Ritonga, 2017; Supiani & Murniati, 2016). Publications related to the third narrative are the most dominant and most commonly found.

From the three main narrations that have become the tendency of scholars and academics in their publications, the discussion in this article is more directed to explain the shifting trend of SDIT in rural areas from the point of view of education service users (parents) who have not been widely explained in previous scientific publications. The article (Suyatno,

2015) has indeed mentioned that three factors are considered by parents in choosing SDIT for their children, namely: theological, sociological, and academic factors. However, Suyatno's article is the result of research in the social setting of the urban Muslim middle-class community in Yogyakarta in 2015. In the other hand, this article is based on the results of research on Muslim communities in rural Boyolali in 2021. By the distinction in social settings and research time, it is very possible to obtain new findings, apart from the 3 factors that have been described by Suyatno, or at least to explain the most dominant factor of the three factors, which are considered by parents in choosing elementary schools for their children. Therefore, this article will answer and explain the following two problem formulations: 1) Why does SDIT thrives and becomes a trend in rural Boyolali? 2) What are the motives and orientations of parents in choosing SDIT as an alternative primary school for their children?

B. Discussion

1. Development of SDIT in Boyolali

Administratively, Boyolali Regency has 22 sub-district, namely: Selo, Ampel, Cepogo, Musuk, Boyolali, Mojosongo, Teras, Sawit, Banyudono, Sambu, Ngemplak, Simo, Nogosari, Karanggede, Klego, Andong, Kemusu, Wonosegoro, Juwangi, Gladagsari, Tamansari, and Wono Samudro. The first Islamic elementary school to be present in Boyolali was SDIP Ummahad Simo, based on a decree from the Ministry of Education and Culture, which was established in 2001. Then gradually there were SDIT Arofah and SDIT Avesena in Boyolali, and SDIT al-Falah Simo in 2005. SDIT al-Mannan Mojosongo and SDIT al-Firdaus in 2006. SDIT al-Falah Sambu, SDIT al-Hikam Banyudono, SDIT Arofah Klego, and SDIT al-Madinah Cepogo in 2008. SDIT an-Nur Ampel, SDIT Insan Cendekia Teras, SDIT Iqro' Nogosari, and SDIT el-Zahwa Andong in 2010. SDIT Bina Insani Banyudono and SDIT Nur Hasan Sambu in 2011. SDIT al-Madinah Nogosari in 2012. SDIT Ibnu Umar Mojosongo and SDIT Mutiara Karanggede in 2014. SDIT Nurul Qur'an Simo and SDIT NU Cepogo in 2017. SDIT adz-Zikro Boyolali and SDIT al-Abidin Mojosongo in 2019. SDIT NU Boyolali in 2020 was the last present. And now there are still many SDITs that are still in the process of applying for legal permits, but they are already operating, accepting students and carrying out the learning process (accessed from the data of Boyolali Regency education office on 2 May 2021).

The development of the SDIT trend cannot be separated from the influence of religious study groups that first grew massively and organized in rural Boyolali. Many socio-religious foundations have grown up among people with various backgrounds, such as; al-Furqon, al-Hikmah, Arsada, Al-Madinah, as well as pesantren-based foundations such as;

Miftahul Huda, Al-Fattah, Al-Hikam, Nurul Qur'an, and many others. Each of the foundations has an intensive study group to nurture and guide its congregations. The intensity of the study group has proven to have a major influence on increasing public religious awareness, especially for non-*santri*. The pattern of religious learning with the "recitation" system that has become a tradition in rural areas is considered no longer effective and tends to stagnate. The recitation method is considered too monotonous (one-way lecture), where the theme presented is also not systematic, depending on the *kyai* or *Ustadz* who delivers, and there are too many jokes (joking). This pattern is considered by progressive youth not to have a significant impact on increasing people's religious understanding, even in changing their social behavior. So, the presence of the thematic, systematic, and organized learning concept of "intensive religious studies" is much more attractive to young people.

Some informants informed that the regular religious studies they participated in had a big impact on their lives. They feel that they have gained a lot of new knowledge after participating in intensive religious studies (the results of interviews with some intensive study congregations fostered by the al-Hikmah and al-Furqon foundations on 5-8 May 2021). Moreover, not only the themes studied in stages are from the most basic (such as; faith, Islam, science, *al-wala' wal bara'*), in the study process, there is also an open room for discussion, question and answer between the *ustadz* and the congregation, both in line with the theme and in terms of others issues asked the congregation are welcome. The religious learning system with a tiered and structured pattern also makes the religious competence of the members of the study measurable under predetermined indicators. As a result, the members who are considered to have standard qualifications have great potential to high level becoming *ustadz* for new members.

The thematic study system is an accelerative step in the regeneration process. The members of the study (congregation) are not invited to study and blacken certain books, as in the tradition of traditional boarding school (*pesantren*). They are asked to study the suitable material of their theological concept that are both related to *amaliyah*, *fikrah*, and *harakah*. The study was conducted with the direct reference to the verses of the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet, which is different from the model of running in the culture of traditional society that is still focused on the issue of *mazhab* fiqh. Studying religion by directly referring to the main sources of the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet is as an attraction and has its prestige for members of the intensive study group. It is different with the tradition in the traditional Muslim community which still having lacks in the study of the Qur'an interpreting and Hadith

due to the strict requirements to become an *ustadz* in the study of Qur'an interpreting and hadith.

Intensity was the key to the success of his *da'wah*. A member of the congregation informed that there was a participant who initially could not read the Qur'an at all at the first time, by the perseverance and patience of *ustadz*, within a few months he was able to read the Qur'an properly and correctly. In fact, outside of the routine scheduled study, the *ustadz* was willing to give special attention- even patiently the *ustadz* wanted to come to the congregation's house to guide reading the Qur'an independently (Results of an interview with Mr. GS, one of the managements of the Arsada foundation on May 10, 2021). Those, the attention and concern of the *ustadz* were able to shape the militancy and loyalty of the congregation to the community (group). In such a relationship, the congregation proved not reluctant to make sacrifices, either in the form of energy, thoughts, and even property for the struggle and development of Islamic symbols according to their religious groups. One of the congregations whom the writer interviewed told that the fundraising from members in *Ramadan* activities could be collected 500 million which then the funds were managed to finance activities for one month (*Ramadan*) only. (As a result of interviewing with Mr. P and M – members of al Furqon Study taken on May 19, 2021). For other development programs (such as building mosques, health clinics, Islamic boarding schools, schools, and others) the rich members—they would sacrifice with their wealth, while those who have the energy would work for hand in hand to help the construction process.

In fact, each study group (foundation) had its theological concept and orientation of the movement, which did not rule out the possibility of differences between groups, especially with traditionalist groups. Therefore, to maintain the continuity of theological concepts, either in form of; *amaliyah*, *fikrah*, and *harokah*, the study group was quite selective in choosing educational institutions for their children. For the regeneration process with the theological concepts, they believe in, some foundations that already had sufficient capital (economic, social, cultural, and symbolic) have established their educational institutions, such as SDIT. So, admit it or not, the rapid growth of SDIT with various names has also expressed different theological concepts, but in the education system, SDIT was relatively the same with one another.

There is a tendency that SDIT, which was initiated by progressive youth from various study groups, rejected tradition. As concluded from previous research, ideologically the ideas of developing SDIT was inspired by the *Ikhwanul Muslimin* group in Egypt (Hasan, 2012, p. 86; Suyatno, 2013b, 2013a, pp. 355–377), who had little respect to local culture. In other

word, many SDITs that grew up in Boyolali villages also had this tendency, namely anti-tradition (the author's observations on the social life of *ustadz*, students, and alumni of SDIT al-Falah Sambu). However, in its development, there were also many traditional Muslims (NU; both cultural and structural) who sent their children to SDIT which theologically had many differences, especially in terms of appreciating tradition. Therefore, recently by taking advantage of the SDIT model of Islamic schools, traditional Muslims have also established many SDITs, both in the name of SDIT NU or using the name of a foundation or the name of a boarding school managed by NU people, such as; SDIT Nurul Qur'an, SDIT al-Hikam, SDIT al-Firdaus, and others. The steps, in the author's analysis, were attempted as a defensive method to fortify and preserve the existence of a tradition that had been running and preserved by the community through the concept of a school that was trending so that it was in great demand by the public. At the same time, it also aimed to facilitate NU congregations who yearn for an integrated Islamic school model with various advantages, such as SDIT. So, the growth of SDIT in rural Boyolali was also influenced by the competition factor between various groups of Muslims who represented various theological concepts as well as the longing for quality, holistic and integrative schools.

2. Holistic and Integrative Educational Needs

Holistic and integrative education is an excellent concept that has become an icon of SDIT. SDIT is a model for educational institutions that seek to integrate general science and religion into one curriculum. Curriculum integration is not simply understood as gathering religious sciences with general sciences in educational institutions, as in the early madrasa pattern. According to Riyanto (Riyanto, 2013, pp. 708–709), what was more important in integration was to bring together the two clumps of knowledge, then interlaced them (Amen Abdullah's term) into one integrative education system. So practically, SIT was trying to take on the role that has not been successfully played by the three previous models of educational institutions: *pesantren*, public schools, and madrasas. In the aspect of the curriculum, SIT did have many similarities with madrasas which its presence was initially projected to complement the weaknesses of (traditional) *pesantren* which only focused on teaching religious sciences, such as; memorizing the Qur'an, Hadith, *Nahwu*, *Shorof*, Fiqh, and other religious sciences and the public schools that prioritized mastery on modern sciences, such as; Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and Humanities, because they were seen as more supportive of the needs of life in society.

According to Azra and Jamhari (Azra & Jamhari, 2006) the modernization of Islamic education began in the 1970s when the minister of religion Abdul Mukti Ali introduced a standardized madrasa education system through a joint decision of: the Minister of Religion, the Minister of Education and Culture, and the Minister of Home Affairs (No. 6/ 1975). Then it was strengthened by the Law of the National Education System (UUSPN) No. 2/1989 which recognized madrasas as an inseparable part of the national education system. In the next stage, the government further strengthened madrasas by ratifying the Law of the National Education System (UU Sisdiknas) No. 20/2003 which guaranteed the status of madrasas that were equivalent to public schools, which was distinguished by the breadth of religious material in the madrasa curriculum. At the beginning of its existence, madrasas were in great demand by people who wanted their children not only to master religious knowledge but also to master modern sciences. However, this hope rarely came true because until now it could be said that madrasa alumni have become alumni who only partially mastered religious and general sciences (Hasan, 2009, pp. 4–5).

The holistic and integrative educational narration as the characterized SDIT became the basic capital which has confirmed effective in attracting the interest of the urban Muslim middle class, in determining the choice of schools for their children (Suyatno, 2015). Because in SDIT, children would not only gain general knowledge that was in tune with advances in science and technology but would also gain adequate religious knowledge (Results of an interview with one of the founders of SDIT Nurul Qur'an Simo on June 5, 2021). The two types of knowledge were no longer presented separately, but they were presented in an integrative way, in which religious knowledge and values continued to be integrated with every activity so that religious values became the breath of every activity, both academic and non-academic that supported by a full -Day School system. Those efforts, in the author perspective, were a form of habituation of religious values which had great potential in shaping the character of students, especially Islamic-religious characters.

Beside the theological (religious) aspect, academic achievement (especially non-religious subjects) was also the basic orientation of the urban Muslim middle class in choosing SDIT, no other types of schools. The Consideration of academic achievement became very rational, pragmatic, as well as realistic. Meanwhile, academic considerations were not enough to become a priority among the rural Muslim communities in choosing SDIT and other Islamic-based schools. Academic considerations were more accepted as religious competencies than achievements outside of it. Rural communities still thought that religious considerations as main priority in determining school choices. Strictly speaking, the majority of parents

interviewed by the author stated that the theological aspect was the main consideration in choosing a school for their children (Results of interviews with several parents of SDIT Al-Falah Sambu on May 15, 2021). While academic achievement was considered as a bonus, it must be accepted and grateful for because their children, apart from having adequate religious competence, also had good academic achievements, even it was better than those –students in non-SDIT. However, academic achievement was not the main orientation that parallelize to the theological orientation.

There was a paradox, where the spirit and big narration of the presence of SDIT were as autocratic to school models that tended to perpetuate a dichotomy culture, by offering a holistic and integrated concept of education. The educational process carried out by SDIT also remained consistent with its basic spirit and concept, namely rejecting the dichotomy of knowledge by advocating a holistic and integrated education model. But in fact, this spirit was poorly understood or even less accepted by the public who used SDIT education services, especially in Boyolali villages. Theological considerations for children to, such as; having adequate religious understanding, having memorized the Qur'an and Hadith a lot, having good character (character), and being more diligently worship were more pride so that it became the main orientation in choosing SDIT schools and other religion-based schools.

A student's guardian said that his two children attended SDIT. The choice was decided solely based on religious considerations. It was said because he realized that his religious abilities were only average, and he was so busy in work made him unable to intensely accompany children in learning religion. Whereas he thought that religious education he believed as the basis for Muslims in living life. So, because of the importance of religious education, he believed more in sending his children to SDIT which had many excellent programs in the field of religion. Why did not just choose at the boarding school? It stated because children were less interested in *pesantren*. Education in *pesantren* was considered less flexible when compared to Integrated Islamic Schools, where students could still interact with their families normally.

The guardians of the students whom the writer interviewed proudly told that their children had memorized so many *juz* for verses of the Qur'an, many hadiths of the prophet, could finish reading the Qur'an 1 to 2 times in one month (Ramadan), and diligently worship, diligently doing *i'tikaf*, *qiyam al-lail* during Ramadan, and so on. And it was rare for parents to talk about their children's academic achievements, especially in the non-religious field. Even though their children had these achievements (results from interviews with Mr. R, Mr. M1, Mr. S, Mr. G, Mr. A, which the author confirms through direct observation). This fact showed that

there were still many Muslim communities in rural areas who thought that when their children had good religious knowledge, their temperament and personality were good according to religious values, then other good things would follow, such as work and careers in later life. So, in any condition, religious education, especially moral education, remained the main orientation, in which the theological concepts strengthen their beliefs. It stated that was the eternal afterlife, the knowledge (religion) possessed and practiced by the offspring would become savings for their parents in the hereafter, which would flow endlessly.

3. Economic Value Considerations

Many of research results informed that the Integrated Islamic School model was perceived as an expensive school and had segmentation in the upper-middle class (Hasan, 2012, p. 78; Suyatno, 2015, p. 129). The conclusions might be entirely true in the context of urban communities, as the researchers explained. However, there were interesting and different facts in the rural context, where people who used SDIT services in rural Boyolali had quite diverse work and professional backgrounds such as: civil servants, entrepreneurs, factory workers, farmers, to scavengers. So, the claim of SDIT was more segmented for the upper-middle class, it would not be appropriate in a rural context.

Some guardians of students who worked as scavengers, construction workers, and farm laborers said that among the available primary school options, they preferred SDIT with consideration of the quality of education, especially in the religious field, and also on economic considerations (Interviewed to Pak MU, PU, and M2, on May 2, 2021). How could schools that were perceived to be expensive were considered more economical, while there were public elementary schools that were free? It turned out that some SDITs in rural areas also provided an option for nominal tuition fees which parents were allowed to choose the available options according to their abilities. The monthly fee with a nominal value of 200-300 thousand was also considered relatively cheap because, at school, children already got snacks and lunch so that children did not need to eat outside, because it is also not allowed during school hours. So, by no giving pocket money again, the monthly costs at SDIT were still considered more economical according to the parents. Therefore, even though at first glance the registration fee (entry) and monthly fees charged by SDIT appeared to be more expensive than public elementary schools (free), after calculating mathematically they were still economical.

It stated slightly different from the guardians of students who had employee and business backgrounds in the upper-middle-class cluster. They were more interested in expensive schools as well as to show their social status. So, if faced with the option of nominal

tuition fees at SDIT, they would choose the highest one. The decision was depended on a belief that the more expensive the cost of education must also be proportional to the services and all the facilities provided. So, it was not surprising that they doubted the quality of cheap schools, moreover the free ones. In this cluster, cheap schools, especially free ones, were not attractive anymore. However, the existence of this cluster was not more dominant than the lower-middle-class cluster whose backgrounds were farmers, factory workers, and entrepreneurs. Therefore, the calculation of the economic value remained a consideration in choosing a school.

4. Aspects of Child Independence

Sumawardani and Pasani stated that an independent attitude was a character value that could eliminate the behavior of a child's dependence on others in carrying out their duties (Sumawardani & Pasani, 2013, p. 83). The independent character possessed by students would affect changes in attitudes, behavior, and personality under applicable values and norms (Yusutria, 2013, p. 158; Yusutria & Febriana, 2019, p. 579). On the importance of an independent attitude for the younger generation, independence was also referred to as one of the goals of national education as stated in the National Education System Law no. 20 of 2003, which was one of the potentials that must be developed in every student through education. Because of the significance of independent character for students, it was quite rational if children with independent personalities became the dream of the majority of parents.

Aspects of children's independence became a very rational consideration for parents in choosing educational institutions. Independence, for elementary school-age children, could be include in many ways, such as; independent in learning, independent in meeting their daily needs, independent in carrying out their duties and obligations, especially independent in carrying out worship. In the context of daily life, there were not a few elementary school-age children whose learning awareness was still quite minimal, including awareness in carrying out worship, especially the 5 daily prayers. To carry out these duties and responsibilities, parents still needed a lot of intervention, which must be intensely accompanying, even forcing children to do their duties and obligations. So parents had great hopes that the educational institution they choose could foster independent attitudes and character in their children. So that they could continue to be aware and independent in carrying out their duties and obligations.

The formation of independent character in students could essentially be developed through consistent discipline, continue to be accustomed and imitated based on noble values, and continue to promote an attitude of togetherness that is full of love, simplicity, honesty, and

sincerity (Budyanto & Machali, 2014, p. 108). The process of character building was considered to be able to be played well by SDIT (results of interviews with several sources (parents) SDIT al-Falah Sambu). Some informants said that in their daily life, their children already had independence which they were quite proud of. Their awareness has grown and could distinguish between learning and playing time. They were aware of the times of worship; diligently going to the mosque every time the call to prayer was heard, diligently reading the Qur'an, and diligently fasting, even though it still required parental attention (the results of interviews with some parents of students, which the author affirms by direct observation of the daily lives of SDIT students). Therefore, the aspect of child independence was enough to be considered by parents in choosing an educational institution. Parents would choose schools that had potential to shape the personality and character of students, especially independent characters.

C. Conclusion

Based on the descriptions that have been narrated in the previous discussion, it can be concluded: 1) SDIT has become the prototype of the ideal school according to the Muslim community in rural Boyolali. The development of SDIT trends in Boyolali was directly proportional to the massive development of socio-religious foundations that represented various theological concepts, in which between foundations needed to establish Islamic schools as a medium of regeneration and maintain the continuity of the theological concepts they believed in. The competition factor between foundations was also increasingly encouraging the growth of SDIT, both in quantity and quality. 2) There were some factors encouraged parents to choose SDIT than public schools, namely: First, theological considerations. Parents hoped that their children would become pious individuals, good at reading the Qur'an, have a lot of memorizations of the Qur'an, and could carry out worship properly and correctly; Second, academic considerations. Although for the lower middle class in rural areas stated that the academic orientation (non-religious achievement) was not very visible, but the consideration of academic quality in terms of schools that provided quality educational programs remained an option; Third, economic considerations. By having good quality, SDIT in rural Boyolali still provided space for the lower middle class. So, with the various educational facilities provided, the cost of education at SDIT was still considered quite economical; Fourth; consideration of child independence aspect. Those SDIT children were proved to have proud independent characters.

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