EXPLORING ISLAMIC SCHOOL CULTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASS

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Abstract: This research aims to analyze the Islamic school culture in an English language class. The research was conducted in SMP IT Nurul Fikri Selong and focused on the English teaching and learning process in 8th grades. This school is very famous for the Islamic culture applied in the teaching and learning process at school. This research used the qualitative descriptive method, which used observation and documenting to collect the data. The researcher observed the 8th-grade class and then used the lesson plan and syllabus as the data document. The result of this research in SMP IT Nurul Fikri Selong is the Islamic school culture applied in the student activities at the school, such as duha prayer, Islamic dress, respect for one another, and an English language class. The researcher found that Islamic school culture in the English language class is before the teacher starts the class, students say greetings and basmallah. Then teachers give examples that this culture is always related to Islamist elements. Islamic schools are also mentioned these Islam cultures in the lesson plan and syllabus. The researcher concluded that the Islamic school culture in English language class fully applied in the classroom activities at SMP IT Nurul Fikri Selong.

Keywords: Islamic school, school culture, English language teaching

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has very diverse educational institutions, particularly *madrasah*, Islamic boarding schools, and conventional schools. These educational institutions have been recognized by the government, with both conventional and Islamic backgrounds. In recent years, schools with Islamic backgrounds have been widely considered in Indonesia; one of the private school network organizations with Islamic backgrounds is JSIT (Integrated Islamic School Network). JSIT is considered an extensive network of Islamic schools in Indonesia. JSIT has the concept of instilling an Islamic culture based on Al-Qur'an in every activity carried out by students at school.

According to Rojii et al. (2019), the term integrated Islam indicates that all knowledge gained by students in schools is predominantly related to religious values and contributes to the integration of the general knowledge, and they acquire with their religious knowledge because the religious values adopted by students can lead to forms of monotheism. Practically, JSIT is recognized as a school that applies an implementation approach by combining general education and religious education into one integrated curriculum. By adopting this approach, all subjects and school activities must always be related to the teachings and messages of Islamic values. In the application of this approach, there will be no dichotomy, separation, "secularization" (where lessons and all discussions are separated from Islamic values and teachings), or "sacralization" (where learning of Islamic values is separated from the context of benefit in the present and future life). Therefore, Islamic culture in schools must be applied to every subject that students will adopt.

School culture is generally assumed to be one aspect that plays a vital role in schools because school culture can be used to assess the quality of the school. According to Carpenter (2015), School quality is assessed through teachers, school culture, and school development. School management can be adequately achieved if the school culture can be successfully implemented. School culture will always be associated with the school community if the values they have initially applied can be maintained to the present time.

Regarding that matter, school culture is defined as the behavior of the school's members, particularly the behavior the principal shows to students and staff in the school, the behavior of the principal towards parents of students, the behavior of the teachers towards students, and towards fellow staff in the school. Thus, school culture can significantly reflect the norms and values embedded in the school (Fred Luthans, 2003). School culture is mostly only regarded from an artistic point of view, which means that culture is generally referred to as art with achievements in the world of literary arts. Nevertheless, it is regarded as a very narrow and unmodern perspective as Schein (1990) regards organizational culture as being divided into basic levels, particularly artifacts, values, and assumptions.

According to Abdullah (2019), school culture can be interpreted as the behavior indicated by teachers towards their students and the principal's behavior towards teachers and staff engaged in school. Moreover, culture is highly required for an organization because culture can indicate the interactions carried out by each community within the organization, specifically in their daily activities. School culture can reflect unity in human behavior in the school, including thoughts, language, actions, and other behaviors so that the culture is capable of influencing the application of the system in the organization (Ibrahim et al., 2018). Every school community member is required to behave following the applied culture to be accepted in the community. Thus, the school community must be willing to take a very high risk to maintain their behavior in the school environment so that the culture that they initially applied can also be adequately maintained (Robbins, 2007)

School culture and quality of education are recognized as two inseparable aspects, which can significantly influence public interest in getting to know the school concept. In general, the school culture applied by the school can be used as a differentiating identity generated by other schools; school culture is considered a characteristic that is utilized as an identifier for the wider community. According to Arslangila (2018), school culture can be considered a collective agreement made by the school community, which distinguishes a school from one another, and shows how they should be treated and what attitudes the school community should show.

Besides, understudies and educators have a solid relationship since instructors are considered their second guardians at school. The typically created connection among instructors and understudies can influence attention to aggregate life and inspire understudies towards a positive and anticipated formative. Subsequently, it influences understudies' inspiration when adding to the networks where they reside. School culture can incredibly add to the advancement of nearby and public networks extensively and profoundly and can incorporate the development of public mindfulness

The intricacy of showing practice in many subtleties is remembered for planning and sorting out classes, using various showing techniques, assessing understudy information, improving academic abilities in intuitive showing perspectives, instructive correspondence, and numerous others. An inquiry might emerge: what is the real and meaning of the connection between school culture and the instructing and learning measure? The inquiry shows unmistakably whether the components of school culture influence the components of the showing cycle, are needed to comprehend the significance of school culture, and make impetuses for chiefs to foster a culture in their schools.

Therefore, school culture can certainly affect elements in the teaching and learning process at school. When the school implements Islamic culture in schools, then every school lesson must be based on Islamic cultures, as said by Kim & Chang (2019) School culture is also able to change the attitudes and behavior of the entire school community, which then influences in an organization to provide coercion or encouragement to its members to act or behave as expected by the organization.

Learning a language is not just learning the letter set, the importance, the syntax rules, and the plan of words. However, it is likewise learning the conduct of the public and its social traditions. Referring to that matter, learning English as a target language would also involve outside culture into the subject matter in the classroom. Rambe & Salminawati (2019) stated that teaching English in Islamic schools is often contradictory because English as the target language will undoubtedly involve an outside culture that is entirely different from the norms of Islamic culture. Views state that English tends to be oriented towards life in the world, then does not benefit their later life in the hereafter. This statement means that English culture as a target language certainly does not contribute to any relationship with Islamic culture, so that these situations can significantly affect the teaching of EFL in Islamic integrity schools.

The teachers at SMP IT stated that every teacher must provide the same integrity in classroom teaching; they must adhere to the vision and mission of the school and the JSIT organization, which demands that every activity be carried out based on AL-Qur'an. So that Islamic culture has never entirely moved away from the school environment, particularly in teaching EFL as the target language. This integrity is regarded as an essential element and will always be associated with teaching English. Rohmah (2012) conveyed that Islamic values should be in principle integrated into teaching English. EFL teachers must collectively maintain these Islamic values not ignore them when they learn the target language.

Although Islamic culture is not significantly implemented in EFL teaching. Teachers should be able to balance external culture against existing Islamic culture because teachers must follow the instructions contained in the K-13 curriculum in which K1 and K2 must be simultaneously incorporated in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Even though a particular curriculum has been established within the JSIT organization, the learning materials provided by the teachers should not deviate from the curriculum that the government has made. In light of that matter, EFL teachers are highly expected to develop effective strategies in implementing Islamic cultures beyond the existing curriculum instructions (Lie, 2007)

Previous researchers have widely studied Islamic school culture; they deeply discussed the school's culture, and Islamic values applied in the school. (Emawati, 2019)), (Zaitun 2018) and (Abdullah 2019) had studied Islamic school culture, and the entire journal results concluded that Islamic school culture could significantly develop students' character. Islamic school culture in schools may affect students' interest in learning at school. Moreover, Islamic school culture may also help students to acquire Islamic teachings according to Al-Qur'an and As-Sunnah. However, the above studies only focused on Islamic school culture in general, not on one class of subjects.

Referring to that issue, the researcher found the studies gaps that led to exploring Islamic school culture in English class at SMP IT Nurul Fikri. English is considered a foreign language in Indonesia and frequently involves foreign cultures in learning materials. Despite that, the vision and mission of the JSIT community (Integrated Islamic School Network) are to organize teaching and learning processes or activities in schools based on Al-Qur'an and Sunnah. Consequently, the researcher would like to explore how teachers can balance foreign culture with Islamic culture applied in schools in English lessons and identify the environment,

mission, and vision, the interaction relationship between the principal, teachers, administrative staff, and students involved in school.

METHOD

The descriptive qualitative method was successfully utilized in this study, where the results obtained in the study would be explained in detail by using sentences. Qualitative research is an interactive process to identify social or human conditions that are being experienced directly or images that have been experienced previously (Creswell, 2000). By applying qualitative methods, the researcher would explain the phenomena of the data studied. The data from the study was generated from one of the schools that implement Islamic culture in their school, specifically, SMP IT Nurul Fikri Selong in NTB. The object of the study consisted of all activities carried out by the school community, and the 8TH-grade students who engaged themselves in English lessons amounted to 15 people. The data collection techniques used by the researcher were observation and documentation using an additional document checklist instrument to support the research results, specifically, lesson plans and syllabus used by English teachers in the classroom. Wiersma, cited by (Dwi Rahayu et al., 2020), stated that qualitative research categorizes, describes, and synthesizes data. It is highly required to conduct the data reduction. Therefore, descriptive analysis was used in this study to analyze the data, and the findings would be described descriptively.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In collecting data, the researcher utilized observation sheets, syllabus, lesson plans, and English textbooks to gather the study data in English classes. The documentation sheet consisted of 15 statements with two answer options, mainly Yes and No, and the researcher obtained 4 "NO" answers and 11 "Yes" Answers. The results of the observation sheet indicated that Islamic cultures were still successfully applied in English learning materials at school.

Table 1. Table of documentation in teaching and learning process

No	Statements	Yes	No	Remarks
A.	*Pre activity in teaching and learning process*			
1.	The teacher makes lesson plans and syllabus by providing elements of Islamic culture.	✓		SMP IT has its curriculum and is combined with the government curriculum so that the teachers themselves prepare the lesson plans used.
2.	The teacher opens the class by greeting *"assalamualaikum."*	✓		When the teacher entered the class, one of the students said *"say salam" "Assalamualaikum"* then the teacher replied to the greeting
3.	The teacher invites students to pray before starting the class	✓		
4.	The teacher asks students to say, *"Bismillahirrohmanirrohim."*	✓		The teacher invites students to say basmallah first, as a sign that the lesson will begin
5.	The teacher gives motivation to the students	✓		

No	Statements	Yes	No	Remarks
B.	*The main activity in the teaching and learning process*			
6.	The teacher tells the students the purpose of material		✓	The teacher did not tell the learning objectives today and immediately gave the lesson material
7.	The teacher tells students how today's learning material is related to Islamic activities	✓		
8.	The teacher explains the subject matter by adding elements of Islamic culture.	✓		The teacher gives an example of a recount text about the experience of Eid prayer that occurred a few weeks.
9.	The teacher replaces some words with elements of foreign culture with Islamic culture when explaining the material.	✓		The teacher gives examples of other recount texts but replaces some elements in the text with Islamic culture
10.	The teacher uses instructional media that can attract students' interest in learning in the classroom		✓	The teacher does not use learning media in the classroom, only explains directly
11.	Teachers use electronics as a supporter of learning media in the classroom		✓	Teachers do not use electronic media such as laptops and LCDs in the classroom.
12.	The teacher uses a Textbook that has elements of Islamic culture.		✓	The teacher uses the PR Textbook publisher *Intan Pariwara* to not contain elements of Islamic culture.
13.	The teacher gives assignments to students about the material in the classroom by adding Islamic culture.	✓		The teacher asks students to recount text about their experience during Tahfiz al Qur'an, which was carried out before the pandemic.
C.	*Last activity in the teaching and learning process*			
14.	The teacher conveys the subject matter in the class	✓		The teacher asks the students to conclude the lesson material that was obtained today
15.	The teacher invites students to be grateful to Allah SWT for allowing them to take part in today's lesson	✓		

From the documentation sheet, the teacher tries to balance Islamic school culture and western culture, which was involved with Islamic culture. In 1st statement in the documentation sheet, the answer consisted of two options, specifically Yes/No, because the lesson plan used was a lesson plan designed by an English teacher, even though it was combined with the government lesson plan. Meanwhile, the syllabus used by the teacher was a syllabus generated from the government, and the syllabus did not include elements of

Islamic culture so that the answer to statement number one showed between Yes and No. In the 2nd statement, students greeted the teacher so that the answer that was checked on the observation sheet was Yes, praying (statements 3), and saying basmallah (statements 4) before starting the lesson in the classroom. The teacher also motivated students to respect, tolerate, and be diligent when studying in class. So that, in all the pre activities before starting the lesson, the answers on the observation sheet contained 5 Yes answers, and NO answers were not significantly found.

In the observation table of the main activities, there were eight checked statements, 4 Yes answers and 4 No answers. In statement 6, answers were checked in the NO column, which indicated that the teacher did not explain the purpose of the material. In a statement, no 10 – 12 in the observation sheet, related to learning media and textbooks in the classroom, the teacher did not utilize any learning media, such as electronic media. The teacher directly explained the subject matter in the classroom by using a textbook. In statement no 12, the textbook used by the teacher was a textbook published by Intan Pariwara. The examples and sentences in the textbook did not contain Islamic culture completely.

In the main activity on the observation sheet in the English class, answers to "Yes" were found in numbers 7, 8, 9, and 13. Regarding the statements in numbers 7, 8, 9, the teacher explained the current subject matter related to Islamic culture in the classroom about recount text and provided examples of recount text, specifically the hospitality experience carried out by students through the Idul Fitri moment. The teacher provided an example first and asked students to tell their experiences. In the last statement in number 13, the teacher asked students to write back their experiences when participating in the tahfidz Al-Qur'an activity, which the school carried out before the pandemic.

For the last activity, two statements were contained in the observation sheet; the three statements had the answer Yes. The teacher asked one of the students to conclude the lesson material and ask students to be grateful for the grace of Allah SWT for having successfully conducted face-to-face classes and always given health, accompanied by a closing sentence, namely "Alhamdulillah." School observations were carried out directly to schools because the school has conducted face-to-face activities since the beginning of last year. The study was carried out during English class for grade 8, held on Thursday, May 27, 2021. In the morning, teachers and principals prepared the school by checking that every room was ready to be used in the teaching and learning process. When students had entered the gate, students greeted the teacher by saying *"assalamualaikum"* without shaking their hands to comply with the Health protocol. Subsequently, the student's body temperature was checked by the teacher. After that, students do duha prayer in room prayer and recite Al-Qur'an.

Referring to these activities, it can be seen that Islamic culture was indeed significantly applied in this school, even though in a pandemic situation. The teachers did not eliminate the activities of reciting Al-Qur'an and praying Duha at school. This statement was intended to train students to perform the sunnah worship constantly. In addition, the clothes used by teachers at school, especially Ustazah and female students, should be in the form of clothes covered with long headscarves and loose clothes. Students also used a veil on the face, which clearly showed that Islamic culture had been implemented in the school. Even though this school was not a boarding school, the teachers had succeeded in stipulating the rules where Islamic culture can be reflected in this school environment.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In conclusion, exploring Islamic culture at SMP IT Nurul Fikri, it may be inferred that Islamic culture had generally been applied in this school. It can be seen from the activities

carried out before starting lessons at school, starting from greeting the teacher, being obedient and respectful to the teacher. Even though they did not shake their hands, the students remained obedient when meeting with the teacher at school. Besides that, the clothes worn by teachers and students were fine Islamic clothes, such as wearing skirts, loose clothes, and long headscarves. The use of shirts and trousers by female students also reflected that Islamic culture in this school had indeed been implemented, specifically in the English class. Islamic culture was also applied to every aspect of activities in the learning and teaching process in English class, precisely when the teacher explained by inserting elements of Islamic culture in every sentence spoken by them. Moreover, the teacher also motivated students to study diligently, be courteous, and have a high sense of solidarity in the school environment as applied by the Apostle and his companions.

In suggestion, the research may be a guide for future researchers who will research Islamic school culture, and hopefully, this research can provide an overview for English teachers to be able to balance Islamic culture and western culture in English classes.

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