

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF 'AQĪQAH IN CULTURAL SOCIETIES FROM A HADITH PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the implementation of 'aqīqah in the multicultural community of Binjai City from the perspective of hadith, as well as to develop contextual hadith-based educational guides. This research uses a qualitative approach with a type of ethnography. The main data in the form of the practice of implementing 'aqīqah is reviewed from the hadith. The data sources include religious leaders, educational leaders, and the community implementing 'aqīqah who were selected purposively in five sub-districts of Binjai City. Data collection techniques are carried out through direct observation of 'aqīqah activities, semi-structured interviews to explore the understanding of hadith, and documentation in the form of event archives, photos, and lecture scripts. Data analysis is carried out through three stages, namely data reduction to sort out relevant information, presentation of data in the form of thematic narratives, and inductive conclusion drawing to see the relationship between the understanding of hadith and the socio-religious practices of the community. The results of the study show that although the community understands 'aqīqah as part of the teachings of the Prophet PBUH, the practice is greatly influenced by local culture and economic factors. Many processions are adapted, even mixed with non-sharia traditions. The conclusion of this study emphasizes the importance of adaptive hadith-based education and the preparation of guidelines for the implementation of 'aqīqah in accordance with the context of modern society.

Keywords

'Aqīqah, Cultural Societies, Hadist Perspective, Local Culture.



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INTRODUCTION

‘Aqīqah is one of the teachings in Islam that is *sunnah muakkad* as a form of gratitude for the birth of a child. This tradition originated from the recommendation of the Prophet PBUH, who taught the sacrificial of two goats for boys and one for girls on the seventh day after birth, accompanied by shaving their hair and giving names (Aminah, 2018). In social reality, the implementation of ‘aqīqah does not solely follow Sharia rules, but often integrates with local culture already rooted in society. Over time, this tradition has undergone various forms of adaptation according to the local community's social, economic, and religious conditions. In Indonesia, ‘aqīqah is often combined with the selapanan, ruwatan, or kenduri tradition to express collective gratitude that contains cultural and spiritual elements (Aminah, 2018; Aminah & Suhastini, 2021). Binjai City, as a multicultural area in North Sumatra, is an interesting representation for studying the dynamics of the implementation of ‘aqīqah because it contains religious practices influenced by diverse ethnic backgrounds and economic conditions.

Although the hadith has provided explicit guidelines for implementing ‘aqīqah, the community often modifies its implementation based on the prevailing economic or customary conditions (NU Online, 2014). In Binjai City, many residents carry out ‘aqīqah not on the seventh day as recommended, but on the 14th, 21st, and even until the child reaches adulthood, citing economic limitations. In addition, there is also the habit of mixing ‘aqīqah processions with traditional rituals such as ruwatan, selapanan, and even offering offerings, which are substantially contrary to Islamic values. Another problem is the emergence of a contextual understanding of hadith, where some people no longer consider the sacrificial of animals as a mandatory element in ‘aqīqah, but simply with prayer or alms. This phenomenon shows a shift in people's orientation from normative hadith to cultural interpretation, which opens up discussion about the validity, meaning, and social impact of implementing ‘aqīqah in society (Azhari, 2025; Huda & Muhsin, 2022).

Several previous studies have highlighted the diversity of ‘aqīqah implementation—research (Nasir, 2019; Suryanto et al., 2023) shows that the people of Madura combine ‘aqīqah with ruwatan to preserve local culture. Meanwhile, (Erviani et al., 2024; Sari, 2021) people still do ‘aqīqah after their children grow up due to economic limitations. Research (Azzahra, 2024; Eljambaky & Ade, 2024) noted that chicken is used as a substitute for goats in ‘aqīqah, an adaptation rejected by scholars. Other research (Azis & Saguni, 2021; Nanda et al., 2024) has revealed the practice of preliminary traditional rituals before ‘aqīqah with magical meaning and documenting that the

community holds a Tedhak Siten tradition involving all religions in a procession similar to 'aqiqah. These findings show how strong cultural influences are in the implementation of this sunnah worship and understanding based on their local values.

From the various studies conducted, it can be seen that most studies highlight local forms of 'aqiqah practice without specifically examining the public's perception of the hadith that underlies it. Few studies have explored how the understanding of hadith is shaped by local culture in real practice in urban communities such as Binjai City. Moreover, most research is still limited to descriptions of customary practices without offering concrete solutions or hadith-based educational designs to guide the community. This research is here to fill this gap by tracing the perception, understanding, and implementation of hadith about 'aqiqah in the multicultural community of Binjai City, and ultimately produces practical guidelines for the implementation of 'aqiqah according to the Sunnah that is relevant to the conditions of today's society.

This research aims to reveal in depth the perception and implementation of hadith regarding 'aqiqah in the people of Binjai City. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the question of how people understand the hadith about 'aqiqah, how it is implemented in real life, and the social, economic, and cultural factors that influence it. In addition, this research is also directed to develop a guide to the implementation of hadith-based 'aqiqah that the community can implement by considering the existing local reality. Thus, the results of this research are expected to make a real contribution to the development of hadith understanding in a cultural context and become an educational reference for religious leaders, educators, and the general public in carrying out 'aqiqah according to the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH but still relevant to the dynamics of modern society.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with ethnography to examine the implementation of 'aqiqah in the Binjai City community based on the hadith perspective. An ethnographic approach was chosen to understand socio-religious practices holistically through researchers' direct involvement in the community's cultural context (Hammersley, 2016). The research population covers the community of Binjai City spread across five sub-districts: East Binjai, West Binjai, North Binjai, South Binjai, and Binjai Kota. The research sample amounted to around 20-25 people from each sub-district, consisting of religious leaders (5 people), educational leaders (5 people), and

community leaders and members (10 people) who were selected purposively because of their involvement in the practice and understanding of 'aqīqah. The primary data in this study is the implementation of 'aqīqah by the people of Binjai City, reviewed from the perspective of hadith. Data collection techniques are carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were carried out from the pre-research stage (October 2023) to understand the social situation and patterns of 'aqīqah implementation, with a focus on observations on the theme of implementation time, type of animal, and integration between customs and sharia.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with informants selected from five sub-districts, including religious leaders (ustadz and mosque imams), educational leaders (religious teachers and lecturers), and residents implementing 'aqīqah to explore their understanding of the hadith that is the basis of the practice. Meanwhile, the documents studied include archives of records of the implementation of 'aqīqah, photos of activities, invitations to events, and sermon or lecture scripts used in community religious activities. Data analysis is carried out through three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and the conclusion drawn. Data reduction was done by selecting relevant information from field observations and interview transcripts, which were coded based on themes such as implementation time, hadith understanding, and local cultural influence. The presentation of data is carried out in the form of narrative and thematic, to show patterns of meaning and practices that develop in society.

Conclusions are drawn inductively to understand the correlation between the understanding of hadith and the form of implementation of 'aqīqah in the cultural reality of Binjai City. This research was carried out through three stages: (1) the pre-research stage in the form of initial observation and permit correspondence; (2) the stage of research implementation, including interviews, field observations, FGDs, and documentation studies; and (3) the post-research stage, namely the analysis of the results, the preparation of reports, and the validation of the draft guidelines for the implementation of hadith-based 'aqīqah by experts. In the process of validation and triangulation, the researcher also involved discussions with hadith and Islamic education experts to test the accuracy of the findings and adjust the design of the hadith learning model regarding 'aqīqah to the context of the people of Binjai City. Field validation is carried out to determine how the research results can be accepted, understood, and applied practically by the broader community as an educational guide for implementing 'aqīqah according to the Sunnah.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Finding

This study aims to determine the implementation of 'aqiqah by the people of Binjai City based on the perspective of hadith. These findings were obtained through direct observation in five sub-districts, in-depth interviews with religious leaders, community leaders, and residents implementing 'aqiqah, and documentation in activity archives, event invitations, and implementation photos. Based on the results of data collection and analysis, it is obtained that the people of Binjai City understand that 'aqiqah is part of the sunnah of the Prophet PBUH. Still, its implementation is greatly influenced by local economic and cultural conditions that have taken root. As a result, there are variations in the time of implementation, the type of animal, the procession carried out, and the understanding of the meaning of hadith related to 'aqiqah. These findings are presented in the following table and narrative description.

Table 1. The Implementation of 'Aqiqah for the People of Binjai City
from the Perspective of Hadith

No.	Stages of Activity	Activity Description	Source of Hadith
1.	Implementation Time	7th, 14th, 21st, to 40th day or when the economy allows	Sunan Abu Daud No. 2838, Sunan At-Tirmidhi
2.	Sacrificial Animals	2 goats for males, one goat for females	Sunan Abu Daud, Sahih Bukhari
3.	Additional Processions	Combined with selapanan events, child naming, feasting, and ruwatan	Local traditions, no direct references
4.	Understanding Hadith	'aqiqah as the sunnah of muakkad; The Soul of a Child Is Pawned If It Has Not Been 'aqiqah	Sunan Abu Daud No. 2838
5.	Inhibiting Factors	Economy, postpartum maternal time, and limited public understanding	Field findings

Implementing 'aqiqah in the people of Binjai City shows a consistent pattern but varies depending on the local socio-economic and cultural conditions in each sub-district. Most people know that 'aqiqah should be done on the seventh day after birth, as recommended in the hadith of the Prophet PBUH. Still, the reality in the field shows that many 'aqiqah implementations are carried out on the 14th, 21st, and even up to the 40th day, or when parents feel capable. This is due to cost considerations, postpartum recovery, and the availability of goats. Implementing 'aqiqah is often combined with cultural processions such as selapanan, naming children, or family feasts as a form of gratitude and respect for ancestral traditions.

In terms of implementation, almost all informants mentioned that Animals that are sacrificed were according to the provisions of the hadith, namely two goats for boys and one for women. However, there is also a practice of replacing goats with chickens or only reciting symbolic prayers due to cost limitations, as found in some cases in North and West Binjai. The 'aqīqah procession is also often coupled with traditional rituals such as ruwatan, which has no basis in Islamic teachings. Nevertheless, the community still bases the implementation of their 'aqīqah on the teachings of the Prophet, but the implementation is flexible and adaptive to local conditions. This shows an assimilation between Islamic sharia and community traditions that takes place dynamically.

The public's understanding of hadith related to 'aqīqah generally comes from recitations, lectures, and hereditary traditions, not from an in-depth study of the source of the hadith itself. Most respondents know that the hadith mentions that children are pawned by their 'aqīqah, but interpretations of the meaning of "pawned" also vary. Some understand it as a spiritual dependency, while others consider it a social burden that must be resolved. The main obstacles to the implementation of 'aqīqah by the Sunnah are economic limitations and the lack of formal religious education that comprehensively explains the implementation of 'aqīqah from the perspective of hadith. Therefore, a practical and contextual hadith-based educational approach is needed so that the community can carry out 'aqīqah with the correct understanding and by Sharia.

Discussion

The study results show that implementing 'aqīqah in the community of Binjai City is understood as part of the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, which is highly recommended, especially for Muslim families who have economic ability. However, the implementation in the field shows variations in terms of the implementation time, the number of animals that are sacrificed, and the form of the procession accompanying it. Although the hadith recommends the implementation of 'aqīqah on the seventh day after birth, most of the people of Binjai City carry it out on the 14th, 21st, and even until the 40th day or after having financial means. This happens due to economic limitations, postpartum recovery time for mothers, and limited public understanding of the details of the hadith provision (Alam et al., 2024; Nasution, 2020; Syaifudin & Khoiriyah, 2024). Most people sacrificial two goats for boys and one for women, as is the general guidance they understand from recitation and oral tradition. However, in practice, people often mix 'aqīqah processions with cultural traditions such as selapanan, kenduri, or even ruwatan (Aravik et al., 2024; Juliakha et al., 2021; Saddiah et al., 2024). This tradition is understood as a form of gratitude and part of the customs

that cannot be separated from the social life of the local community.

Theoretically, the implementation of hadith in society is not rigid, but undergoes a process of contextual interpretation. In the living hadith approach, hadith is understood and lived by the community according to their social, economic, and cultural conditions (Hassanein, 2018). The hadith about 'aqiqah, which mentions the recommendation for implementation on the seventh day, hair shaving, naming, and the sacrificial of goats, is translated practically in the local context. This theory asserts that although the text of the hadith is universal, its application in society can be flexible (Hassanein, 2018). The community combines the normative teachings of hadith with cultural practices that have been going on for a long time. This process shows the integration between religion's normative dimension and society's social reality. In other words, people accept the hadith, but adapt it to the abilities and cultural values of the environment in which they live. This theory is also in line with the approach of religious anthropology, which sees that spiritual practices are inseparable from the social structures that influence them (Ammerman, 2020; Bowie, 2021). In this context, hadith is a normative inspiration grounded in culture.

The findings of this study are consistent with several previous studies. Research (Nasir, 2019; Suryanto et al., 2023) . It also shows that the implementation of 'aqiqah is often combined with ruwatan processions as a form of cultural adaptation. (Erviani et al., 2024) Due to economic considerations, many people carry out 'aqiqah after their children grow up. (Azis & Saguni, 2021; Nanda et al., 2024) Records the traditions before 'aqiqah with magical content, clearly a form of syncretism between Islam and local culture. Likewise, research about the Tedhak Siten tradition, which is carried out in conjunction with 'aqiqah, shows that the community interprets this worship culturally. These studies show a pattern similar to the findings in Binjai City, namely that the implementation of 'aqiqah is not only normative but also cultural. The trend found in previous studies reinforces the finding that people tend to adapt the implementation of sunnah to local conditions, both in terms of economy and tradition. This variety of practice proves that the implementation of hadith in people's lives does not occur in a vacuum, but interacts with local values (Mutawali, 2016; Sahin, 2018; Sanjani et al., 2024).

The findings of this study also affirm the results of previous research, which stated that there is a distance between the normative text of hadith and the social practice of the community. For example, research (Azzahra, 2024; Eljambaky & Ade, 2024) that people replaced goats with chickens as a form of economic adjustment was also found in the case of the people of Binjai City, who did

‘aqīqah when their children were adults, when they were able. This shows that the spiritual dimension of implementing ‘aqīqah is still maintained, but the form has been adapted. This emphasizes that the implementation of Sunnah in society is more flexible than what is written in a classical fiqh book (Bajuri, 2017). Some Binjai people believe that what is important is not when ‘aqīqah is carried out, but the intention and implementation when they have the ability. This affirmation strengthens the understanding that social structures, such as economics and culture, greatly influence the implementation of hadith in social life (Bayumi & Jaya, 2018; Forster & Fenwick, 2015). This kind of understanding cannot be categorized as an aberration, but as a form of community adaptation to maintain religious values within their limitations.

Nevertheless, these findings also provide antithesis to some views that state that cultural practices such as ruwatan or mappatinro manu can be equated or substituted with ‘aqīqah. Although the community claims that they have carried out a form of gratitude for the birth of a child, implementing a procession that has no basis in the hadith can confuse the meaning (Jahroni, 2018; Ludwig, 2015; Nurmalinda & Zulfa, 2023). In fact, in some cases, the procession tends to lead to practices contrary to monotheism's principles, such as the giving of offerings or the use of magical symbols. There must be a clear separation between adaptation and deviation in this context. Adaptations include combining ‘aqīqah with the sacrament or postponing the implementation because the economy can still be tolerated if it does not eliminate the substance of the hadith (Hassan, 2022; Shaw, 2019). On the contrary, the practice that replaces animals that are sacrificed with traditional rituals without the basis of hadith needs to be criticized academically and theologically. Therefore, religious leaders and religious institutions need to provide appropriate education to the community so that the implementation of ‘aqīqah remains within the Sharia corridor, without having to eliminate cultural elements that do not conflict with Islam (Arifuddin et al., 2024; Muhammad & Hartono, 2024).

Based on this overall discussion, it can be concluded that implementing ‘aqīqah for the people of Binjai City from the perspective of hadith experiences a complex interaction between religious texts and cultural reality. The community does not reject the hadith, but adapts it to local conditions and values. These findings reinforce the importance of a contextual approach in understanding the implementation of hadith in society. However, this also requires a balance between cultural understanding and the purification of religious practices to avoid shifting from the substance of Islamic teachings. The hadiths about ‘aqīqah provide clear directions regarding the

time, type of animal, and implementation procedure. The community needs to be given practical and contextual guidance so that 'aqiqah can be implemented appropriately, according to their abilities, without losing the essence of Sharia. Thus, the implementation of 'aqiqah will remain spiritually meaningful and relevant in contemporary society, which is full of social and economic challenges.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the implementation of 'aqiqah by the people of Binjai City shows a dynamic between normative hadith teachings and adaptive local cultural practices. Although the community understands 'aqiqah as the sunnah of muakkad recommended by the Prophet PBUH, its implementation is often adjusted to economic conditions, local traditions, and understanding obtained from generation to generation, thus giving rise to variations in the time of implementation, type of animals, and processions carried out. This phenomenon emphasizes the importance of an educational approach that can bridge the gap between hadith texts and the cultural reality of society. Therefore, it is recommended that religious leaders, educators, and local governments strengthen hadith literacy in the community through lectures, thematic studies, and contextual educational media, as well as prepare guidelines for the implementation of 'aqiqah based on hadith that are applicable, so that the community can carry out the sunnah with an appropriate understanding but still relevant to local social and cultural conditions.

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