

## **CHAPTER III**

### **OVERIEW OF THE GREAT MOSQUE SABILAL MUHTADIN BANJARMASIN**

#### **A. History of the Great Mosque Sabilal Muhtadin**

South Kalimantan is an area with the majority of the people follow Islam. In the data found, about 97.5% peoples of South Kalimantan adhere to Islam. As a majority in the area , Muslim communities has a desire to have a great mosque to fulfill their spiritual needs. The community's desire to have a grand mosque that is used and can be proud of received positive support from the scholars, community leaders, and leaders who agreed to realize these ideals. The figures who held the deliberation on the agenda were Mr. H. Hasan Basry (Former Military Commander), Mr. M. Yusi (Former Military Commander), Mr. H. Maksid (former Governor of KDH), and several scholars who reached an agreement to build this great mosque. The magnificent building of this mosque stands it the mindset and fundamental ideals of the figures who realize the standards of its construction. This mosque is not only a place of worship for Muslims but also an inseparable part of the body of Islam.<sup>1</sup>

Before this area became the site establishment of the Great Mosque Sabilal Muhtadin, the land occupied was a former Tatas army dormitory building known as Benteng Tatas or Fort Tatas during the Dutch colonial period. Before the former determine by the Tatas army dormitory as the site for the great mosque's construction, the great mosque will initially build on the land of the former hotel

---

<sup>1</sup>Documents of the Great Mosque of Sabilal Muhtadin Banjarmasin, 1-2.

site. However, some figures were transferred from the construction site to the former Tatas army dormitory area due to the following considerations. Some of the concerns are as follows:

1. The location first as in hotel location is too narrow.
2. Tatas Army dormitory is located in the middle of the city, its primary purpose being to fit into the city center.
3. Establishing a mosque building in the city center can make it easier for people to access it, combined with the beauty and harmony of the city.<sup>2</sup>

Planning for the construction of great mosque was initiated in 1964, assisted by a planning team from the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB), by laying the first stone for the Governor at that time by Mr. H. Aberani Sulaiman and also Mr. Amir Machmud as Commander X who witnessed by civil officials, scholars and community leaders in the city of Banjarmasin as the starting point for the construction the great mosque. Construction did not through smoothly as the start planned. Plan for the construction of the great mosque was delayed due to several obstacles during the construction of the mosque. Mutation of several essential officials and some figures, as well as the eruption of the G30/S PKI movement, resulted in the building being unable to continue, resulting development activities break up for several years.<sup>3</sup>

After the incident subsided a few years later, the plan for the construction of the great mosque which had been delayed, was restarted in 1974 with a different planning and implementing team from the development before. The

---

<sup>2</sup>Personal interview with Mr. Drs. H. Darul Quthni, MH, on October 28, 2022.

<sup>3</sup>Darul Quthni, *et al.*, *Masjid Raya Sabilal Muhtadin: Percikan Pemikiran Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al-Banjari* (Malang: Edulitera, 2022), 4-5.

construction began again with the erection of the first pillar of the mosque, which Governor Soebardjo carried out on November 10, 1974, and celebrating the anniversary of Heroes Day and elements of calligraphy and mosque ornaments are worked. On October 31, 1979, at the urging of the community, the Great Mosque Sabilal Muhtadin was first used for Eid al-Adha activities in 1344 H even though the mosque had not been inaugurated for use because there were still many parts that needed to be addressed and perfected, such as the courtyard around the mosque, towers and facilities, and other infrastructure. To continue this building, which is still not completely perfect and the next stage requires substantial funds, a committee was formed for fundraising, chaired by K.H. Hasan Moegni Marwan with secretary Rafi'i Hamdi who several Banjarmasin community leaders also assisted.<sup>4</sup>

President Soeharto was inaugurated this great mosque on February 9, 1981, under the name Sabilal Muhtadin Great Mosque was used as a center for Islamic activities which included worship, education, and other activities in the South Kalimantan area.<sup>5</sup>

The Great Mosque of Sabilal Muhtadin continues to utilize the existing facilities properly. This improvement also adds to the location of the building more comprehensive to Merdeka Square. Therefore, a park with a suitable arrangement was made for the Great Mosque and the city of Banjarmasin. Construction of this park is expected to function as the lungs of Banjarmasin city. This improvement includes completing facilities and infrastructure such as sound

---

<sup>4</sup>Darul Quthni, *et al.*, *Masjid Raya Sabilal Muhtadin*, 5-6.

<sup>5</sup>Personal interview with Mr. H. Amin, on 4 August 2022.

systems and electrical installations. With these improvements, the view of the Sabilal Muhtadin Great Mosque appears now.<sup>6</sup>

### **B. Giving Name to the Great Mosque Sabilal Muhtadin**

Sabilal Muhtadin was chosen as the name used for this great mosque. This name was selected as a form of respect and appreciation for the great scholar from South Kalimantan, Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjary (1710-1812 AD), was taken from the name one of his famous book, namely the book "Sabilal Muhtadin". He played an essential role in developing and spreading Islam the *Kesultanan* Banjar. He is a pioneer in teaching Islamic law in South Kalimantan and has studied in Mecca for 35 years. Upon his return to hometown, the first thing he did was to establish a place of study (a kind of pesantren), was named Dalam Pagar. In addition to his busy life in educating his students, he wrote several books and treatises, one of his book is "*Sabîlal Muhtadîn Li-at Tafaqquh fî Amriddin*". This book contains laws and rules of fiqh that became the guide and reference for the people of the *Kesultanan* Banjar in studying of fiqh. Now, the book is still a reference for scholars and the public in studying of fiqh. Based on these considerations, Banjarmasin Great Mosque was named Sabilal Muhtadin.<sup>7</sup>

### **C. Vision and Mission of the Great Mosque Sabilal Muhtadin**

As the great mosque is expected to become a religious symbol in the city of Banjarmasin, for the great mosque management agency, there are many things

---

<sup>6</sup>Documents of the Great Mosque Sabilal Muhtadin Banjarmasin, 6.

<sup>7</sup>Darul Quthni, *et al.*, *Masjid Raya Sabilal Muhtadin*, 7-10.

to be achieved, so the need for a vision and mission to be complete have explicit goals.

### 1. Vision

To become a mosque and center for ummah activities, to prioritize worship services, da'wah, and education, and to participate in developing the Islamic economic revival for the welfare of the people who have a national perspective based on Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah.

### 2. Missions

- a. Implement transparent and accountable administrative and financial governance
- b. Prepare facilities and infrastructure and qualified human resources in service
- c. Organizing taklim assemblies for Islamic symbols and coaching muallaf
- d. Organizing and developing educational institutions in the mosque environment
- e. Organizing education and regeneration of ulama and a forum for marriage and inheritance law consultations
- f. Manage the Qur'an center and the Qur'an museum building
- g. Managing the existence of a sharia economic center in the mosque environment<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup>Document of the Great Mosque Sabial Muhtadin, accessed on August, 9th 2022.

#### **D. Architectur of the Great Mosque Sabilal Muhtadin**

The Great Mosque of Sabilal Muhtadin is a landmark the city of Banjarmasin. The area of the mosque is around 100.000 m<sup>2</sup> with a capacity of around 15,000 worshipers. Apart from being used as a place of worship, this mosque carries out many other Islamic activities. A spacious and comfortable place to carry out an activity at this mosque is the choice of the community to carry out activities there. Beautiful architectural style of this mosque is also a special attraction for local and foreign communities, with the development of the times, the architecture of the mosque has changed, both in terms of shape, style and a more modern variety. This cannot be separated from human knowledge that is increasingly advanced so as to produce new forms. Quoting the opinion of Koentjataningrat, architecture is a concrete manifestation of a culture,<sup>9</sup> so that an image of a society is found in that architecture.

Sabilal Muhtadin Great Mosque as a whole absorbs Middle Eastern architectural styles as the origin of traditional Islamic ornaments have many decorations from various sides, as evidenced by the presence of Arabic calligraphy ornaments and geometric patterns.<sup>10</sup> Even though it has absorbed Middle Eastern architectural styles, the local elements found in this mosque are still shown in the form of other ornaments with certain motifs in several parts of the mosque.<sup>11</sup> This grand mosque stands firmly in the center of Banjarmasin, has a unique dome shape with 5 minarets, one minaret 45 meters high and four minarets

---

<sup>9</sup>Achmad Fanani, *Arsitektur Masjid* (Yogyakarta: PT. Bentang Pustaka, 2009), 19.

<sup>10</sup>Supatmo dan Syafii, "Nilai Multikultural Ornamen Tradisional Masjid-Masjid Warisan Para Wali di Pesisir Utara Jawa", *Journal of Imajinasi*, Volume XIII, Number 2, July 2019, 5.

<sup>11</sup>Research Observation Result

21 meters high. Formation of various mosque architectures is the result of the interaction between Islamic values and the Muslim cultural system. Because of these factors, very broad and diverse ideas.<sup>12</sup>

The following is a description of the ornamental art of the Great Mosque of Sabilal Muhtadin Banjarmasin:

The ornaments that decorate this mosque are quite diverse, ranging from calligraphy, geometric and arabesque patterns typical of Islamic architecture, as well as forms with local banjar nuances. This cannot be separated from the influence of where the mosque is located.

1. Ornamental structure of Islamic art which tends to be applied to Middle Eastern-style mosques

In general, the structure of the ornament in the Islamic art tradition has three categories, namely geometric patterns, arabesque and calligraphy art.<sup>13</sup> The geometric pattern itself is widely used as a complement to the decoration of a building with Islamic nuances, including a mosque. If the geometric pattern itself is applied to a flat plane, the formation is made by repeating the polygon image to produce a new shape. At the Great Mosque of Sabilal Muhtadin, geometric patterns are used around the mosque's iron fence, the outside of the mosque's walls, mosque's windows, ventilation and several other parts which are mixed and matched with other typical Islamic art decorations.

---

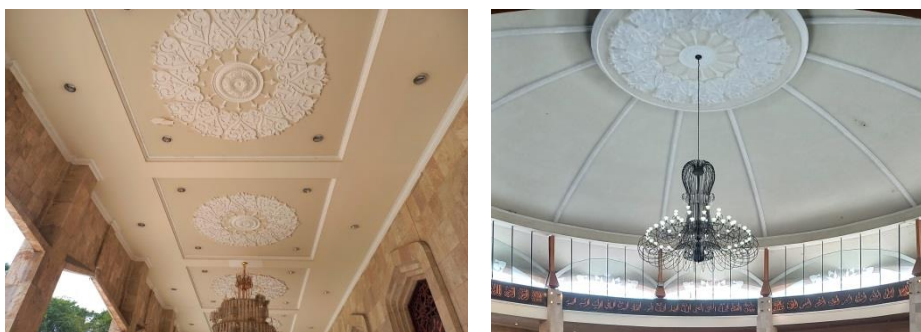
<sup>12</sup>Andika Saputra, *Arsitektur Masjid: Dimensi Idealitas dan Realitas* (Surakarta: Muhammadiyah University Press, 2020), 36.

<sup>13</sup>Andi Pramono, "Pola Geometri Pada Seni dan Arsitektur Islam di Andalusia", *Journal of Islamic Architecture*, Volume 1, Issue 3, June 2011, 133.



Picture 3.1 Geometric Patterns on the Windows and Fences of the Sabilal Muhtadin Great Mosque  
(Researcher Observation Result)

In addition to geometric patterns, *arabesque* patterns are also used as decoration in this mosque. The *arabesque* pattern is a pattern formed from interrelated spiral shapes which then merge rhythmically to form leaves or flowers.<sup>14</sup> This pattern is found on the ceiling of the mosque such as the inside of the dome, the ceiling inside and outside the mosque and a small part that adorns the calligraphy on the mosque's mihrab.



Picture 3.2 *Arabesque* pattern on some ceilings mosque  
(Researcher Observation Result)

---

<sup>14</sup>Andi Pramono, "Pola Geometri Pada Seni dan Arsitektur Islam di Andalusia", *Journal of Islamic Architecture*, Volume 1, Issue 3, June 2011, 133.





Picture 3.3 *Arabesque* pattern on the mosque doors  
(Researcher Observation Result)

## 2. Calligraphy decorations adorn the interior and exterior of the mosque

Calligraphy at the Sabilal Muhtadin Grand Mosque, Banjarmasin, does not only display Al-Qur'an calligraphy, but also consists of other calligraphy. Before entering the room area of the mosque, visitors will immediately be treated to Kufic calligraphy that reads the name of the mosque, namely Sabilal Muhtadin (سبيل المهتدين), continued on the front door of the mosque, which is four in number, treated with calligraphy inscribed with the names of the four caliphs, each with one name on each one of the mosque doors, the sentence *lâ ilâha illallâh* which is in the mihrab of the mosque, *Asmâul Husnâ* around the inner mosque dome roundabout, as well drum that is displayed on the terrace of the mosque, *lafadh Allah* (الله) and *Muhammad* (محمد), and *lafadh Allâhu Akbar* on the outside of the mosque. Furthermore, there is Al-Qur'an calligraphy which is found in several elements of the

mosque building with a total of 12 verses consisting of 8 surahs.<sup>15</sup> The verses contained in the calligraphy of the Qur'an can be seen in the following description:

a. The Mihrab Section of the Great Mosque Sabilal Muhtadin

On the mosque's mihrab, there is calligraphy written in the Pharisaiic style. The verse by chapter al-Nisâ'/4: 103.

فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِكُمْ ۚ فَإِذَا اطْمَأْنَنْتُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا

الصَّلَاةَ ۚ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ كَانَتْ عَلَىٰ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا مَّوْقُوتًا (١٠٣)

When ye pass (Congregational) prayers, celebrate God's praises, standing, sitting down, or lying down on your sides; But when ye are free from danger, set up regular prayers are enjoined on believers at stated times.<sup>16</sup>



Pict. 3.4 Qur'an calligraphy chapter al-Nisâ' verse 103 on the mihrab of the Great Mosque Sabilal Muhtadin  
(Source: Research documentation results)

<sup>15</sup>Andi Pramono, "Pola Geometri Pada Seni dan Arsitektur Islam di Andalusia", *Journal of Islamic Architecture*, Volume 1, Issue 3, June 2011, 133.

<sup>16</sup>A. Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Translation and Commentary* (Maryland: Amana Corp, 1983), 213.

On the right side of the mihrab mosque, it is decorated with the Qur'an calligraphy made of blackened iron ore which colored golden yellow. On the right side, the type of khat used is the Tsuluts khat. Previously, the calligraphy decorations on the left and right sides of the mihrab and the back near the female congregation were framed without glass. After the mosque's restoration in 2010, the calligraphy ornaments were given glass so that the calligraphy of the Qur'an was more durable and better preserved.<sup>17</sup> On the right side of this mihrab, consisting of chapter Al-Hijr/15: 98-99.

فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَكُنْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ ۝ (٩٨) وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ (٩٩)

But celebrate the praises of the Lord, and be of those who prostrate themselves in adoration(98) And serve the Lord until there come unto the hour that is certain.<sup>18</sup>



Pict. 3.5 Qur'an calligraphy chapter al-Hijr verses 98-99 in the main room of the mosque to the right of the mihrab  
(Source: Research documentation results)

<sup>17</sup>Personal Interview with Mr. H. Amin, on 4 August 2022.

<sup>18</sup>A. Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an*, 654.

Next, on the left side the mihrab, there is the Qur'an calligraphy decoration using the same type of khat as the right side, namely the Tsuluts khat. The verses of the Qur'an used are chapter Ali 'Imrân/3: 102.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ (١٠٢)

“Ye who believe! Fear God as He should be feared, and die not except in a state of Islam.”<sup>19</sup>



Pict. 3.6 Qur'an calligraphy chapter Ali 'Imrân verse 102 in the main room of the mosque to the left of the pulpit  
(Source: Research documentation results)

#### b. Main Room of the Great Mosque Sabilal Muhtadin

In the main room of the mosque, there are two ornaments of the Qur'an calligraphy, which located on the back wall of the mosque (the female congregation). Calligraphy of the Qur'an in this section is written in the Pharaic style on the wall's right and left sides. On the right side are verses of the Qur'an, chapter Al-'Ashr/103: 1-3, along with the sentence Basmalah.

<sup>19</sup>A. Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an*, 149.

وَالْعَصْرِ ۝ (١) إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ۝ (٢) إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ

وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ۝ (٣)

By (the Token of) time (Through the ages).(1) Verily Man is in loss (2) Except such as have Faith, and do righteous deeds, and (join together) in the mutual teaching of Truth, and of Patient and Constancy (3).<sup>20</sup>



Pict. 3.7 Qur'an calligraphy chapter al-'Ashr verses 1-3 in the main room of the mosque in the back right  
(Source: Research documentation results)

On the other hand, there is the Qur'an calligraphy with the same type of khat, Pharisaic khat. The verses of the Qur'an used are chapter al-Nisâ'/4: 9.

وَلْيَخْشَ الَّذِينَ لَوْ تَرْكُوا مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ ذُرِّيَةً ضِعَفًا خَافُوا عَلَيْهِمْ ۖ فَلْيَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْيَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا

(٩)

<sup>20</sup>A. Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an*, 1783.

Let lose (disposing of an estate) have the same fear in their minds as they would have for their own if they had left a helpless family. Let them fear God, and speak words of appropriate (comfort).<sup>21</sup>



Pict. 3.8 Qur'an calligraphy chapter al-Nisâ' verse 9 in the main room of the mosque, back left  
(Source: Research documentation results)

c. Part of the Sabilal Muhtadin Great Mosque's Door

Apart from the mihrab and mosque's main hall, the Qur'an calligraphy is also found at the entrance to this mosque. The entrance from the right and left sides of the mosque has the same Qur'anic calligraphy as the Pharisaic khat. The Qur'an calligraphy on the door made of copper is directly engraved on it so that the door's surface stands out from the current form of the Qur'an calligraphy. At the entrance to the right and left of the front side of the mosque, the left, and right door leaves, there are verses of the Qur'an in the form of calligraphy, chapter Al-Isrâ'/17: 80 and several verses of chapter Al-Ankabût/29: 45.

وَقُلْ رَبِّ اَدْخِلْنِيْ مُدْخَلَ صِدْقٍ وَّاَخْرِجْنِيْ مَخْرَجَ صِدْقٍ وَّاَجْعَلْ لِّيْ مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ سُلْطٰنًا نَّصِيْرًا (٨٠)

Say: O my Lord ! let my entry be by the gate of Truth and Honour, and likewise my exit by the Gate of Truth and Honour; and grant me from they presence an authority to aid (me).<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup>A. Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an*, 180.

...وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ ۖ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ... ﴿٤١﴾

“....And establish regular prayer: for prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds.....”<sup>23</sup>



Pict. 3.9 Qur'an calligraphy surah al-Isrâ' verse 80 and verse fragments from surah al-Ankabût verse 45, which are found at the entrance to the right and left front sides of the mosque  
(Source: Researcher's documentation result)

Furthermore, at the entrance to the back of the right and left doors there is calligraphy of the Qur'an, by chapter Al-Hajj/22: 32 and chapter al-Rûm/30: 43.

ذٰلِكَ وَمَنْ يُعْظَمِ لِلّٰهِ فَاِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوٰى الْقُلُوْبِ ﴿٣٢﴾

Such (is his state): and whoever holds in honour the symbols of God (In the sacrifice of animals), such (honour) should truly from piety of heart.<sup>24</sup>

فَاَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ الْقَيِّمِ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ ۗ مِنَ اللّٰهِ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصَّدَّعُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾

<sup>22</sup>A. Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an*, 717.

<sup>23</sup>A. Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an*, 1041.

<sup>24</sup>A. Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an*, 859.

“But set thou thy face to the face to the right Religion, before there from come from God the Day which there is.”<sup>25</sup>



Pict. 3.10 Qur'an calligraphy in chapter al-Hajj verse 32 and chapter al-Rûm verse 43, which are found at the entrance to the right and left rear sides of the mosque

(Source: Research documentation result)

Growth and development of calligraphy cannot be separated from the role of the Qur'an which talks about the command to read and write contained in the verses of the Qur'an were first revealed, namely chapter al-Alaq/96: 1-5. The period of development of the art of calligraphy itself occurred during six periods since the revelation of the Qur'an. The development of the art of calligraphy in Indonesia also went through a very long process from the century period (13-19 AD), to the 19-20 centuries AD. As for the trend of decorating mosques with Arabic calligraphy, it occurred around the 1970 carried out by a generation of Islamic boarding schools with a tendency to type khat. such as the Tsuluts, Naskhi, Pharisees, Diwani and Kufi.<sup>26</sup> The calligraphy found at the Great Mosque of Sablal Muhtadin, which began its

<sup>25</sup>A. Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an*, 1063.

<sup>26</sup>Sirojuddin AR, “Perkembangan Kaligrafi Islam di Indonesia”, *Journal of Al-Turas*, Volume XX, Number 1, January 2014, 223.



production in 1974, uses a lot of Tsuluts, Pharisaic and also Kufic styles. The use of this type of khat was probably chosen because at that time the writing taught was the types of khat mentioned above, even though it was not perfect according to the rules.

### 3. Decorative Ornaments with Local Nuances of Banjar

The Banjar people actually have a very high artistic spirit. This is reflected in the activities carried out by most people who produce many beautiful works of art, this can be seen from the various ornaments and ornaments found in typical traditional Banjar houses and not a few are also found in other elements such as mosques, fabrics and etcetera. This typical Banjar ornament is called “*Tatah*” or carving. There are three types of *tatah*, namely *tatah surut*, *tatah babuku* and *tatah baluang*.<sup>27</sup>

Sabilal Muhtadin Great Mosque, whose architecture is generally Middle Eastern style, does not forget the local characteristics attached to some parts of this building. Distinctive feature of Banjar architecture are found on the drum decoration on the terrace of this mosque. *Tatah* used is a type of *tatah*, namely carving in the form of relief at the top of the bedug and drum supports, this *tatah* pattern is tendrils equipped with leaves. Furthermore, there are carvings in the form of noni fruit and jasmine flowers generally used for decoration at the foot of the walls in traditional houses of Banjar used as decorations on the pillars supporting the drum. This makes the

---

<sup>27</sup>Ira Mentayani, “Analisis Asal Mula Arsitektur Banjar Studi Kasus: Arsitektur Tradisional Rumah Bubungan Tinggi”, *Journal of Teknik Sipil dan Perencanaan*, Volume 10, Nomor 1, Januari 2006, 6.

congregation of the Sabilal Muhtadin Banjarmasin great mosque still feel the elements of Banjar cultural locality, even though only a small part.<sup>28</sup>



Pict. 3.11 ebb and flow patterns (left) and carvings of noni fruit and jasmine on the pillars supporting the drum (right)  
(Source: Researcher's Observation result)

---

<sup>28</sup>Researcher's Observation result