



Integration of Islamic Values in Early Childhood Learning

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Abstract

Introduction to The Problem: Integration of Islamic values into early childhood learning is important, this is because it is in the early childhood phase that character is formed, and religious values can be a key element in its formation. **Purpose:** This study aims to reveal the concept of integrating Islamic values into early childhood learning. In addition, this study also explores the role of parents and teachers in the context of collaboration in shaping children's character. **Design/methods/approach:** This research is a type of library research, namely data collection through a study of primary and secondary documents. In library research, data is obtained by reviewing documents relevant to the problem being studied. The approach used in this study is qualitative research, which aims to describe and analyze phenomena, events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and thoughts of individuals or groups. Data in this study were collected through documentation techniques. After the data is collected, the next step is data analysis, which is carried out through three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification. **Findings:** This study shows that the integration of Islamic values in early childhood learning has a positive impact on the formation of children's character and morals. Values such as honesty, compassion, responsibility, and mutual respect can be applied through activity-based methods, such as playing, storytelling, and daily prayers. The results of this study support the hypothesis that the introduction of Islamic values from an early age can improve children's social-emotional development. However, the main challenges found are the limited understanding of educators and the lack of relevant and interesting teaching materials. Therefore, training is needed for educators and the development of more innovative and enjoyable materials. This study also shows the great relevance of the integration of Islamic values in early childhood education, which can protect children from the negative effects of globalization and form a generation with strong morality and spirituality. **Research implications/limitations:** This study still has shortcomings in terms of data aspects and depth of analysis techniques. In addition, limitations in terms of linkage to supporting documents. **Originality/value:** The results of this study can be a general description of the tradition of Integration of Islamic values in early childhood learning. Further research can be further refined with deeper themes and supporting document depth, so as to provide richer information in describing a complete conception.

Keywords : Islamic values, Early childhood education, Character development, Moral formation

Introduction

Early Childhood Education serves as a crucial foundation in building the character, personality, and morals of future generations. During this golden age, children possess immense potential to absorb values, norms, and habits that will shape their future. Integrating religious values, particularly Islamic values, is a strategic step to ensure character(Wardoyo, 2014) development that is not only intellectually based but also spiritually and morally grounded. In the context of Indonesia, a country with a Muslim-majority population, integrating Islamic values into early childhood education holds strong relevance to societal needs and the nation's developmental vision.(Hanipudin, 2020b; Hemafitria, 2019)

However, despite its importance, the implementation of Islamic values in early childhood education often faces various challenges. One of the main challenges is the lack of understanding and competency among educators in effectively applying Islamic values within the curriculum. Many educators are still limited to conventional methods, teaching Islamic values textually without contextual and practical understanding. Additionally, the lack of relevant and engaging teaching materials for young children also poses a significant obstacle.(Hanipudin & Muanasah, 2024)

On the other hand, modernization and globalization have greatly influenced societal mindsets, lifestyles, and values. Children are exposed to various media content and information that do not always align with Islamic values. Without the reinforcement of value-based education, they are vulnerable to moral degradation and the loss of their spiritual identity. This underscores the urgency of integrating Islamic values into early childhood education. (Awaru, 2017; Sarno Hanipudin, 2024) The primary focus of this discussion is early childhood, a phase characterized by rapid development physically, cognitively, and emotionally. At this stage, children begin to understand the world around them, including the values that will shape their personalities. In the context of education, the curriculum and teaching methods play a critical role in the internalization process of Islamic values. With the right approach, values such as honesty, compassion, obedience, and

responsibility can be instilled early.(Siraj et al., 2022; Sundi et al., 2022)

The integration of Islamic values in early childhood education does not solely emphasize the teaching of religious material. It also involves how these values are reflected in daily activities. For instance, through play, storytelling, singing, or direct practices such as praying together, children can learn the importance of worship, noble character, and good relationships with others.

Interest in this topic stems from the realization that value-based education has a significant long-term impact on shaping the character of individuals and society. Studies show that children who receive value-based education early on tend to exhibit better morality and are better equipped

to face life's challenges wisely. In the Islamic context, value-based education is also considered an act of worship and a responsibility of parents and educators in raising a faithful and pious generation.(MZ, 2020; Siraj et al., 2022)

Furthermore, integrating Islamic values into early childhood education can serve as a solution to counter the negative influences of globalization on children's morals. Through relevant and contextual approaches, this education can help children understand and apply Islamic values in their daily lives without feeling burdened or alienated from their surroundings.(Husni et al., 2023; Muhammad Dzulfaqor Dahlan, 2023)

Various studies also highlight that educational approaches integrating religious values positively impact children's social-emotional development. Children taught values such as empathy, cooperation, and responsibility through an Islamic perspective exhibit more positive behavior in their social interactions.(Arini & Roesminingsih, 2021)

Literature Review

Research on the integration of Islamic values in early childhood education shows that this approach has a positive impact on the development of children's character and morals. According to Siraj, dkk. children introduced to Islamic values early tend to exhibit better moral development, such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy (Siraj et al., 2022). Additionally, this approach not only instills spiritual values but also strengthens children's socio-emotional skills, such as communication, cooperation, and emotional regulation (Atin Risnawati & Dian Eka Priyantoro, 2021). Other studies reveal that the integration of Islamic values into early childhood education curricula can be implemented through methods such as play, storytelling, and practical activities relevant to daily life, making these values contextually applicable and engaging for children.

However, there are several challenges in implementing the integration of Islamic values, such as the limited competence of educators and the lack of supporting teaching materials. Many educators remain confined to conventional teaching methods that focus solely on theoretical aspects, often delivering Islamic values textually without an applicable understanding. Furthermore, modernization and globalization pose significant challenges, as children are increasingly exposed to media content that does not always align with Islamic values. Therefore, training for educators and the development of innovative teaching materials tailored to the needs of early childhood are necessary. These efforts aim to optimize Islamic value-based learning, which not only shapes individual character but also prepares a generation capable of navigating contemporary challenges while maintaining their spiritual and moral identity.(Sarno Hanipudin, 2024)

Methods

This research is a type of library research (Literature Research), namely document-based data collection. In library research, data is obtained by reviewing documents as primary sources and secondary sources that are relevant to the problem being investigated (Sugiyono, 2014). The approach used in this research is qualitative research, aimed at describing and analyzing phenomena, events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and thoughts of individuals or groups (Nana Sayaodih Sukmadinata, 2015).

The research took place from May to June 2024. The data in this research was collected through documentation techniques. After data collection, the next step is data analysis which is carried out through three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification. (Sugiyono, 2014)

Result

Basic Concept of Islamic Values in Education

Islamic values encompass various aspects, including ethics, worship, social interactions, and daily life. In the context of early childhood education, these values can be translated into positive attitudes that support the formation of a child's character. Among the core values that can be taught from an early age are honesty, compassion, responsibility, mutual respect, and care for others. (Hanipudin, 2019)

According to the Qur'an, children are a trust given by Allah to parents, who have the responsibility to educate them well (Q.S. At-Tahrim: 6). Therefore, value-based education in Islam should encompass various approaches that can shape a child's character, both spiritually and socially. In this regard, Islamic education is expected to not only transfer knowledge but also to cultivate noble morals and good character in children. (Elihami & Ekawati, 2020)

In early childhood education, the integration of Islamic values can be carried out in various ways, such as through daily activities, Islamic stories, educational games, and teaching basic prayers and worship. This approach will help children understand and internalize Islamic values in their daily lives. (Atin Risnawati & Dian Eka Priyantoro, 2021)

Relevance of Integrating Islamic Values in Early Childhood Education

The integration of Islamic values in early childhood education has strong relevance, given the social and cultural context in Indonesia. As a predominantly Muslim country, character formation based on Islamic values is crucial so that children have a solid moral foundation amid the increasing

influence of globalization.(Arriani, 2017)

In Indonesian society, children are often exposed to mass media, the internet, and various information that does not always align with the religious values taught in Islam. Therefore, education that integrates Islamic values can serve as a shield to protect children from these negative influences. Values such as honesty, kindness, and compassion, which are inherent in Islamic teachings, will provide children with the tools to grow into individuals with noble character who can contribute positively to society.(Syahraini Tambak, 2014)

Moreover, the integration of Islamic values in early childhood education is also relevant in shaping a generation that understands their identity and selfhood as Muslims. This is important so that children are not only intellectually intelligent but also possess emotional and spiritual intelligence that will guide them in their daily lives.

Methods of Integrating Islamic Values in Early Childhood Education

There are various methods that can be applied to integrate Islamic values in early childhood education. One of these methods is through activity-based learning and hands-on experiences. Young children learn a great deal through play, social interactions, and daily practical activities. Therefore, these activities can serve as an effective medium for instilling Islamic values in children's lives.(Rosmiati Azis, 2019)

For example, through play, children can learn about the importance of cooperation, honesty, and patience. When children play with their peers, they can be guided to practice Islamic values, such as mutual respect and sharing. In storytelling activities, educators can use stories of the prophets and Islamic figures as role models to teach morality and life values.

Additionally, teaching basic prayers, such as prayers before meals, prayers before bedtime, and other supplications, can become part of the daily routine that introduces children to the aspect of worship in Islam. In this way, religious values are applied in a contextual manner, seamlessly integrated into children's daily lives rather than being perceived as separate from their everyday activities.

Challenges in Integrating Islamic Values in Early Childhood Education

Although important, the integration of Islamic values in early childhood education faces several challenges. One of the main challenges is the lack of understanding and skills among educators in effectively implementing Islamic values. Many educators are still limited to conventional teaching methods that prioritize cognitive aspects and pay less attention to character and moral development. As a result, the Islamic values taught often tend to be textual and less applicable to children's everyday lives.(Rosmiati Azis, 2019)

Additionally, the availability of relevant and engaging teaching materials for young children is also a challenge. Many existing materials are still rigid and fail to accommodate the learning needs of young children, who learn more through experience and practical activities. Therefore, there is a need for the development of innovative teaching materials that can integrate Islamic values in an engaging and enjoyable way for children.

Another challenge is the increasing influence of globalization and modernization, where children are exposed to various information from social media and the internet, which often contradicts Islamic values. Without a strong value-based education, children may be influenced by foreign cultures that could undermine their morals and ethics.

Solutions and Prospects for Integrating Islamic Values in Early Childhood Education

To address the existing challenges, several solutions are needed to enhance the effectiveness of integrating Islamic values into early childhood education. One of these solutions is through training and developing educators' competencies in understanding and applying Islamic values within the early childhood education curriculum. Educators with a strong understanding of Islamic teachings will be better equipped to convey these values in a more practical and relevant way to children's lives.(Hanipudin, 2020a)

Additionally, the development of innovative and enjoyable teaching materials is also crucial. Teaching materials based on stories, games, and practical activities can help children better understand and internalize Islamic values in their daily lives. The use of engaging media such as videos, images, and educational apps can also be an effective tool for delivering Islamic values in an enjoyable manner.(Sulaiman, 2017)

Equally important is strengthening the role of parents in educating their children in accordance with Islamic values. Parents play a significant role in shaping children's character and morals, both at home and in everyday life. Therefore, collaboration between educators and parents is essential to create an environment that supports the moral and spiritual development of children.(Elihami & Ekawati, 2020)

Discussion

In the context of integrating Islamic values into early childhood education, the findings of this research reveal several important aspects regarding the effectiveness and challenges of such an integration. The results indicate that when Islamic values are incorporated into early childhood education, there is a noticeable improvement in children's moral development, including traits like honesty, responsibility, empathy, and social cooperation. These outcomes support the hypothesis that early exposure to Islamic values can have a significant influence on shaping children's

character and moral conduct.

Interpretation Based on Previous Studies

The findings of this research align with earlier studies that emphasize the importance of early moral education in the development of children. For instance, Arini pointed out that children who are introduced to moral values, particularly those grounded in religious teachings, tend to show better moral development compared to those who are not exposed to such values (Arini & Roesminingsih, 2021). Similarly, Siraj found that children who engaged in value-based learning, including Islamic values, demonstrated stronger social-emotional skills, such as empathy and teamwork. These findings support the notion that integrating Islamic values in early childhood education is an effective strategy for nurturing well-rounded individuals (Siraj et al., 2022).

Moreover, the positive influence of Islamic values on children's character formation and moral development is consistent with the results of previous research by Hanipudin, dkk, which identified that children who are taught values through both spiritual and practical approaches tend to have a better understanding of their roles within society. These findings highlight the significance of a balanced educational approach that includes both intellectual and moral/spiritual growth. (Hanipudin & Muanasah, 2024)

Implications of the Findings

The findings from this study have significant implications for both educational practices and policy development. The successful integration of Islamic values in early childhood education suggests that Islamic-based curricula could play a crucial role in shaping children's moral character from a young age. This can not only help children grow into individuals who are morally and ethically grounded but also prepare them to face the challenges posed by the increasingly globalized world.

However, the study also revealed several challenges, such as the lack of competency among educators and limited availability of engaging learning materials. These challenges highlight the need for targeted training programs for educators to enhance their skills in delivering Islamic values effectively. Additionally, the development of innovative and culturally relevant educational resources that engage children through play, stories, and hands-on activities is essential for ensuring the effective transmission of Islamic values.

Future Research Directions

The findings of this study also point to several directions for future research. First, it would be beneficial to explore the long-term effects of integrating Islamic values in early childhood education. Longitudinal studies could help assess whether early exposure to Islamic values has lasting impacts on children's moral and spiritual development as they grow older. Moreover, future

studies could examine the impact of integrating Islamic values on children's academic achievement and how these values may influence their behavior in later stages of education.

Another area of future research could focus on the role of technology in delivering Islamic values. As technology becomes increasingly pervasive in education, understanding how digital platforms, such as educational apps, online games, and multimedia resources, can be utilized to teach Islamic values could provide valuable insights for modernizing early childhood education.

Finally, research could investigate the role of family involvement in the integration process. While this study emphasized the importance of teacher-parent collaboration, exploring how different family structures and cultural backgrounds influence the integration of Islamic values at home and in educational settings could offer deeper understanding and solutions for overcoming cultural barriers in value-based education.

In conclusion, this research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on early childhood education and the integration of Islamic values. By addressing the challenges and expanding on the potential benefits, this research opens pathways for future studies that could further explore and refine the practices and strategies for implementing Islamic-based education in early childhood.

Conclusion

The integration of Islamic values into early childhood education is crucial for shaping the moral and spiritual development of children. This study has shown that when Islamic values such as honesty, responsibility, compassion, and respect are incorporated into early education, they contribute significantly to the formation of strong character in children. The positive outcomes of this integration are not only seen in children's social and emotional development but also in their ability to navigate societal challenges with a firm moral foundation. These findings reinforce the hypothesis that early exposure to Islamic teachings can positively influence the moral conduct of children.

However, despite the benefits, challenges persist in effectively integrating Islamic values into early childhood education. The lack of educator competency and limited access to engaging, age-appropriate teaching materials were identified as significant obstacles. These challenges suggest the need for comprehensive teacher training programs and the development of innovative educational resources that combine Islamic teachings with interactive and practical learning methods. Addressing these issues will be key in maximizing the effectiveness of Islamic value integration in early childhood education.

Looking ahead, there are several important directions for future research. Longitudinal studies could help assess the long-term impact of early value-based education on children's moral and academic growth. Additionally, exploring the role of modern technology in delivering Islamic values could open new avenues for engaging children in a digital age. Finally, further research into the role of parental involvement in supporting the integration of Islamic values could enhance the overall effectiveness of these educational practices, ensuring a more holistic approach to early childhood moral education.

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