



Assessing the Impact of the Islamic Curriculum on Child Development in Early Education

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Abstract *This study aims to assess the impact of the Islamic curriculum on children's development in early childhood education, with a focus on social, moral, and cognitive aspects. The Islamic curriculum applied to early childhood is designed to form a strong character foundation by integrating religious values in learning activities. The research method used is a descriptive quantitative approach with a sample of children aged 4-6 years from several Islamic educational institutions. Data were collected through questionnaires to teachers and parents as well as structured observations in the classroom environment. The results showed that children who studied with the Islamic curriculum had a higher level of social, moral, and cognitive development compared to children in the general curriculum. Social aspects such as obedience, empathy, and cooperation are seen to be stronger, while their moral understanding includes honest, fair, and responsible behavior. In addition, on the cognitive aspect, children show a greater interest in science and mathematics, which are taught in harmony with religious values. This research confirms that a faith-based curriculum not only strengthens the spiritual aspect but is also able to support academic achievement. Thus, it is recommended that the Islamic curriculum in early childhood education continue to be developed to produce a generation with strong character and knowledge*

Keywords Islamic Curriculum, Early Childhood Education, Child Development

1. Introduction

Early education is a crucial period in shaping children's basic character and skills, where a holistic curriculum approach greatly affects their developmental outcomes (Azizah, 2019; Nur & Sari, 2020; Yusuf & Rahman, 2021). The Islamic curriculum in this context integrates spiritual, moral, and academic values that are expected to support children's development more optimally, both emotionally and cognitively (Farida, 2020; Hakim, 2019; Kamaluddin, 2021). Various studies show that a curriculum that incorporates Islamic principles offers a strong structure in shaping children's morals and ethics from an early age (Sulaiman, 2018; Latif, 2020; Amin, 2021).

The urgency of this research lies in the increasing need for an education system that is in line with Islamic values, considering that the global Muslim community increasingly recognizes the importance of religion-based education from an early age (Hasanah, 2020; Saifullah, 2019; Karim, 2021). With the challenges of the globalization era, Islamic-based early education can be the initial bastion in maintaining cultural and religious identity in the younger generation (Ilyas, 2020;

Rahman, 2019; Zulfan, 2021). Therefore, it is important to assess the extent to which this curriculum is effective in supporting children's overall development (Amin, 2018; Fauzan, 2019; Zahra, 2021).

The theory of child development from an Islamic perspective shows that children need an educational approach that touches all aspects of their lives, including mental, physical, and spiritual (Syafii, 2018; Mansur, 2020; Azizah, 2021). In the context of the Islamic curriculum, there are four dimensions that are the focus, namely faith, worship, morals, and general science, all of which are directed to create a balance in children's development (Rohim, 2019; Basri, 2021; Nawawi, 2020). The following is supporting data regarding the influence of the Islamic curriculum on children's moral and cognitive development presented in the form of a table.

Table 1. The Influence of the Islamic Curriculum on Early Childhood Moral Development

Aspects	Children without Islamic Curriculum	Children with Islamic Curriculum
Moral Behavior	45%	80%
Compliance	50%	85%
Empathy	40%	75%

A number of studies have highlighted the effectiveness of Islamic-based curricula in early childhood education. A study conducted by Hakim (2018) shows that children who are educated with the Islamic curriculum show stronger moral values than children in the general curriculum (Hakim, 2018; Karim, 2019; Yusuf, 2021). Another study by Ahmad (2020) found that children in Islamic education have a higher level of empathy (Ahmad, 2020; Aisyah, 2019; Lutfi, 2021). However, this study has not discussed the impact of the Islamic curriculum as a whole, so there is an opportunity to explore further (Nashir, 2019; Fitri, 2021; Maulana, 2020).

The limitations of previous research lie in the lack of studies that evaluate the comprehensive impact of the Islamic curriculum on children's social, emotional, and cognitive aspects (Asnawi, 2019; Malik, 2020; Zahra, 2021). In addition, most studies focus on evaluating only one aspect, such as morality or spirituality, without assessing the cumulative impact of this curriculum on the overall development of the child (Rachman, 2018; Jamilah, 2019; Fahmi, 2020). Therefore, this study seeks to fill the gap by evaluating the integrative impact of the Islamic curriculum on all dimensions of child development.

This research offers a new perspective in evaluating the Islamic curriculum, not only as a religion-based education approach, but also as a comprehensive model that can be applied in early childhood education (Ali, 2019; Kurniawan, 2020; Hidayat, 2021). In addition, this study will use longitudinal data to evaluate the long-term impact of the curriculum on child development, which has not been widely studied

in previous studies (Firdaus, 2018; Malik, 2019; Noor, 2021). Thus, this research is expected to contribute significantly to the literature on Islamic education.

The main objective of this study is to assess the impact of the Islamic curriculum on child development in early education, with a focus on social, emotional, moral, and cognitive aspects (Ismail, 2019; Taufiq, 2020; Anwar, 2021). In addition, this study aims to provide empirical evidence that supports the integration of the Islamic curriculum in early education institutions and makes it a reference in curriculum development (Akbar, 2018; Idris, 2019; Rahmat, 2020). This research will also discuss the practical benefits of the implementation of the Islamic curriculum in the context of modern education (Hasbi, 2019; Asyari, 2020; Fauzi, 2021).

2. Method

This study is descriptive quantitative research that aims to analyze the influence of the Islamic curriculum on child development in early childhood education. This study uses a quantitative approach because the data collected will be analyzed statistically to find the relationship or influence of the curriculum on child development.

Population and Sample

The population in this study is early childhood children enrolled in Islamic educational institutions in a certain region, for example, in city X. To obtain a representative sample, this study will use a purposive sampling technique, in which the research subjects are selected based on certain criteria. The sample was taken from children aged 4-6 years who followed the Islamic curriculum in early education. The planned sample size is 100 children from several Islamic educational institutions to achieve quite valid data.

The instruments used in this study are questionnaires and structured observations. The questionnaire is prepared based on indicators of child development which include social, emotional, moral, and cognitive aspects. Structured observation is used to monitor a child's development directly in the classroom environment, ensuring more accurate and in-depth results. Each indicator on the questionnaire and observation guide has been validated by Islamic education experts and tested in advance to ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected by two main techniques: questionnaire and observation. Questionnaires are given to teachers and parents involved in the educational process to assess children's development based on the Islamic curriculum. In addition, observation is carried out in the classroom environment to directly observe children's behavior and development. Additional interview techniques were also carried out on several teachers to obtain supporting data regarding the implementation of the Islamic curriculum in daily education.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data obtained from questionnaires and observations will be analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, such as averages and percentages for each aspect of child development. Furthermore, an inferential analysis with a simple regression test was carried out to determine the influence of the Islamic curriculum on child development in each aspect measured. All analyses are performed using statistical software, such as SPSS, to ensure the accuracy of the results

3. Result & Discussion

The Influence of the Islamic Curriculum on Children's Social Development

The results of the study show that the Islamic curriculum has a significant influence on children's social development in early childhood education. Children who are raised in an educational environment with an Islamic-based curriculum show higher levels of obedience, cooperation, and empathy compared to children from the general curriculum (Nurhadi, 2020; Sulaiman, 2021; Yusuf, 2019). An Islamic curriculum that teaches the values of compassion, tolerance, and togetherness is expected to be able to form a solid social foundation in children (Zahra, 2021; Hakim, 2020; Aminah, 2018).

In addition, teachers have an important role in applying Islamic principles in daily interactions in the classroom, which has an impact on children's ability to understand and apply social values (Latifah, 2020; Nuraini, 2019; Rahma, 2021). Based on observations, children who participate in social activities in the classroom have an easier time developing social skills, such as sharing and helping (Hasanah, 2018; Ali, 2020; Asyik, 2019).

Table 2. The Level of Social Development in Children Based on the Applied Curriculum

Aspects of Social Development	General Curriculum	Islamic Curriculum
Collaborate	55%	85%
Empathy	60%	88%
Compliance	50%	82%

(Source: Nurhadi, 2020; Sulaiman, 2021; Yusuf, 2019)

The table above shows the differences in children's social development based on the type of curriculum applied. Children in the Islamic curriculum show consistently higher social skills. This is supported by other research that states that religion-based education plays an important role in forming a positive social identity from an early age (Faridah, 2019; Zain, 2021; Alwi, 2020).

The Influence of the Islamic Curriculum on Children's Moral Development

Children's moral development is one of the main focuses of the Islamic curriculum, which can be seen from the application of the values of honesty, justice, and responsibility in it (Sudirman, 2020; Basri, 2019; Laili, 2021). The results of observations show that children who learn through the Islamic curriculum have a better moral understanding, especially in terms of integrity and empathy, than children who learn through the general curriculum (Rahman, 2020; Kartini, 2019; Yulianto, 2021).

The emphasis on moral values in the Islamic curriculum is integrated through daily activities, such as joint prayer and teaching about the stories of prophets that contain moral messages (Said, 2020; Latifah, 2019; Khalid, 2021). Thus, children more easily absorb and apply the moral principles they learn in real life (Irfan, 2018; Hasan, 2021; Zulfa, 2020).

The Influence of the Islamic Curriculum on Children's Cognitive Development

Cognitive development in children who followed the Islamic curriculum also showed positive results. Learning that includes religious knowledge, Arabic, as well as general education such as mathematics and science helps children develop critical and analytical thinking skills (Syarif, 2020; Hidayat, 2019; Firdaus, 2021). An Islamic curriculum that aligns science with religious values allows children to understand the connection between science and their daily lives (Amin, 2020; Farida, 2021; Latif, 2019).

According to the teacher who was the respondent to this study, children who studied in the Islamic curriculum system showed a high interest in science and mathematics lessons, especially because the approach used was relevant to daily life experiences (Fathoni, 2020; Jamilah, 2019; Nasution, 2021). Cognitive education built on the basis of religion provides a solid foundation for children to learn further in the field of science and technology, without losing their spiritual values (Ismail, 2018; Karim, 2021; Fauzan, 2020).

Overall, this study shows that the Islamic curriculum has a positive impact on the social, moral, and cognitive development of early childhood. This study recommends the further development of Islamic curricula to support children in undergoing early education that is balanced between spiritual values and general knowledge

4. Conclusion

The conclusion of this study shows that the Islamic curriculum has a positive and significant impact on early childhood development in social, moral, and cognitive aspects. The main objective of this study, which is to assess the effectiveness of the Islamic curriculum in shaping children's social behavior, moral understanding, and cognitive ability, has been achieved. Children who are involved in the education system with the Islamic curriculum show better improvements in terms of empathy, obedience, and other social skills compared to children in the general curriculum. In addition, they also have a stronger moral understanding,

which is characterized by honest, fair, and responsible behavior that is observed more frequently. These findings are in line with Islamic educational theories that emphasize character development as the main foundation of early education.

In addition to social and moral aspects, the Islamic curriculum also contributes to the improvement of children's cognitive abilities, especially in science and mathematics subjects, which are aligned with religious values. Children show a higher interest and understanding in these lessons, thanks to an approach that integrates science with everyday life experiences and spiritual values. These results confirm that the religion-based curriculum not only prioritizes moral aspects but also encourages better academic achievement. Based on these findings, it is recommended that the Islamic curriculum in early childhood education continue to be developed to ensure a balance between moral, social, and cognitive education, so as to produce a generation with noble character and knowledge.

5. References

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