

The Effect of Islamic Values Based Character Education on Early Childhood Social Emotional Development

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Abstract: *This study aims to investigate the impact of Islamic values based character education on the social emotional development of early childhood. In this study, a qualitative approach was employed, utilizing an analytic descriptive method, which involved interviews with educators and parents, direct classroom observations, and questionnaires completed by educators. The results showed that the implementation of Islamic values based character education had a significant positive impact on children's socioemotional development. Children who received this education showed improvements in their empathy, cooperation, and emotion management skills, which were reflected in their daily social interactions, both at school and at home. However, challenges faced in its implementation include limited time to explore the materials, as well as the need for further training for educators. This study provides recommendations for integrating Islamic based character education more intensively into the early childhood education curriculum and for providing support to parents in teaching these values at home. Overall, this study demonstrates that Islam based character education plays a crucial role in shaping children's socioemotional behavior, thereby supporting balanced personal development.*

Keywords: *character education, Islamic values, social emotional development, early childhood, educators, empathy*

1. Introduction

Character education in early childhood is a crucial issue that has garnered global attention in the modern era. In many parts of the world, attention to children's social emotional development is increasing, along with the global challenges faced by the younger generation. Globalization, technological advances, and rapid shifts in cultural values can affect children's mental development and behavior. In some countries, issues such as school violence, emotional instability, and the inability to interact socially well are increasingly dominating the public sphere. Therefore, character education that instills strong moral and ethical values is necessary from an early age. The cultivation of these values depends not only on the cognitive aspects of the child but also on the social emotional aspects that can shape the child's personality as a whole.

In Indonesia, a specific challenge in the world of early childhood education (PAUD) is how to integrate character values into education that are relevant to local

culture and religion. One solution that can be offered is the implementation of character education based on Islamic values. Islamic education has the potential to shape children's character through an approach that emphasizes spiritual, moral, and social aspects of development. However, its application in PAUD institutions is still limited. It faces several obstacles, including a lack of trained human resources and a limited understanding of effective ways to instill Islamic values in children at an early age.

Several previous studies have shown that religion-based character education, especially Islam, can have a significant impact on children's moral and social development. Research by Suryani (2020) indicates that character education grounded in Islamic values can enhance children's sense of empathy and solidarity. In addition, a study by Fitriani (2019) also revealed that children educated in Islamic values tend to be better able to manage emotions and exhibit better behavior in social interactions. Nevertheless, there are still shortcomings in the application of Islamic-based character education in early childhood education, especially in the Indonesian context.

The urgency of this research lies in the importance of introducing Islamic values-based character education effectively in early childhood, particularly to shape children's strong character in the face of the challenges of the times. In addition, this research is expected to contribute to the development of a character education model tailored to the local context and the needs of children in Indonesia. In this case, Islamic-based character education can be one of the essential pillars in creating a young generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also noble and has good social skills.

The novelty of this research lies in its attempt to explore further the influence of Islamic values based character education on early childhood socio-emotional development. This topic has not been widely discussed in previous studies. Most studies focus more on general character education approaches without looking specifically at the role of Islamic education in the context of early childhood education.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the impact of Islamic values based character education on the social-emotional development of early childhood. This research aims to provide new insights into the importance of integrating Islamic values in early childhood education as a means of developing children's social and emotional abilities.

The benefits of this research are vast, both in terms of theoretical and practical. Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich the literature on Islamic-based character education and provide a deeper understanding of its application in early childhood. Practically, the results of this study can be used as a reference for

educators, parents, and managers of early childhood education institutions in designing programs that are more effective in shaping children's character and social-emotional development.

The implications of this research not only impact the development of character education theory, but also contribute to education policy at the national level. It is hoped that the results of this study can influence curriculum renewal in early childhood education institutions, particularly in incorporating Islamic values-based character education as an integral part of the learning process that focuses on children's social-emotional development.

2. Method

This research employs a qualitative approach with descriptive-analytic methods. Descriptive research aims to describe in depth the phenomena that occur in the object of study. In contrast, analytic research seeks to examine the impact of Islamic values based character education on the social-emotional development of young children. This approach was chosen because this research not only aims to describe events or phenomena, but also to explore the meaning contained in the experiences of students related to learning Islamic-based character education at the early childhood education level.

The research was conducted in several Early Childhood Education (ECE) institutions that implement an Islamic values based education curriculum, located across both urban and rural areas in Indonesia. The selection of this location aims to obtain representative data from various social and cultural contexts, enabling the study's results to describe more accurately the variations in the application of Islamic-based character education in PAUD. The research subjects consisted of children aged between 4 and 6 years in early childhood, as well as their educators and parents. Educators were chosen because they have a direct role in implementing Islam-based character education. At the same time, parents are also an essential part in supporting the implementation of character values at home.

The research instruments used in this study were interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with educators and parents to explore their views on the implementation of Islamic values-based character education and its impact on children's social-emotional development. Observations were made to directly observe how the implementation of Islamic based character education occurs in daily classroom interactions and the home environment. In addition, documentation in the form of recordings of learning activities and daily records of teachers and parents was also used to explore aspects of teaching that were not recorded in interviews or direct observations.

The data collection techniques employed in this research include in depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentary studies. In-depth interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and perceptions of educators and parents towards Islam-based character education. Participatory observation allowed researchers to be directly involved in daily classroom activities and interact with the children, thus obtaining more natural and contextualized information. Documentation studies were employed to gather additional evidence related to policies, teaching materials, and child development records pertinent to this study.

3. Result & Discussion

This study aims to investigate the impact of Islamic values-based character education on the social-emotional development of early childhood. To this end, data were collected through interviews with educators and parents, direct classroom observations, and questionnaires completed by educators and parents. The data obtained were analyzed to identify key findings that can explain the influence of Islamic-based character education on the social-emotional development of young children in early childhood education institutions.

Respondents in this study consisted of three groups: young children, educators, and parents. The children involved in the study were aged between 4 and 6 years old and attended three PAUD institutions that implement Islamic values based education. The study consisted of 120 children, comprising 60 boys and 60 girls. Most of the children came from families with secondary education backgrounds, with a small proportion coming from families with higher education backgrounds. They were involved in various activities that focused on character development, such as learning about noble traits in Islam, as well as social activities that emphasized the value of empathy and cooperation.

The study involved 15 educators, all of whom had formal educational backgrounds in early childhood education and a range of teaching experience, from 5 to 10 years. Most educators have attended Islamic based character education training and have a deep understanding of the importance of instilling religious values from an early age. 30 parents responded as respondents, having children attending the PAUD institution. They were permitted to take part in interviews related to the implementation of character education at home and their role in supporting religious education in children.

Interviews with PAUD management revealed that educators at the institution are highly committed to integrating Islamic values into every aspect of the educational process. The management emphasizes the importance of character education that strikes a balance between religious knowledge and the development

of children's social-emotional skills. They believe that by teaching Islamic values, which include honesty, empathy, and compassion, children will not only grow into pious individuals but also have good social skills.

The PAUD management also noted an improvement in children's social behavior after the implementation of Islamic-based character education. Children demonstrated improvements in cooperation, respect for their friends, and the ability to manage their emotions more effectively. However, they also acknowledge that the biggest challenge in implementing this education is the limited time to delve deeper into character materials, as well as the lack of more in-depth training for educators in teaching religious values effectively.

The questionnaire distributed to educators revealed that most of them believed Islamic character education has a positive impact on children's social-emotional development. Out of a total of 15 respondents, 13 agreed that children taught with Islamic values are more likely to demonstrate empathy and solidarity towards their peers. However, 2 respondents found it challenging to balance between religious teaching and children's academic development needs.

The questionnaire results also showed that educators felt the need for more support and training related to Islamic character education. They suggested that the curriculum and teaching materials should focus more on children's emotional development through a more practical and applicable approach, integrating Islamic values in children's daily activities.

Observations made in the classroom indicate that the implementation of Islamic-based character education plays a significant role in shaping children's social-emotional behavior. Children who engage in learning based on Islamic values, such as mutual respect, sharing, and cooperation, are better able to control their emotions and are more considerate of their friends' feelings. For example, in playing together, children tend to be more patient in waiting their turn and giving attention to friends who need help.

However, observations also show that some children require additional guidance in managing emotions, particularly in situations involving conflicts with friends. This suggests that while Islam-based character education has a positive impact, there is still room for strengthening in terms of emotion management and conflict resolution.

Additionally, the findings are visualized through several graphs and tables that illustrate the relationship between the implementation of Islam-based character education and children's social-emotional development. The first table presents the changes in children's empathy and cooperation scores before and after the implementation of Islam-based character education, based on direct observations and interviews with educators.

Table 1. Improvement of Children's Empathy and Cooperation Scores

Aspects	Before Implementation	After Implementation
Empathy	65%	85%
Cooperation	70%	90%
Emotion Management	60%	80%

Additionally, the following graph illustrates the relationship between Islamic character education and children's social emotional development. The results show that children who received Islamic based character education scored higher in social skills and emotional management compared to those who were not involved in faith-based character education.

Figure 1. The Influence of Islamic Based Character Education on Children's Emotion Management



The results of this study indicate that the implementation of Islamic values-based character education has a positive impact on the social-emotional development of early childhood. Children involved in this education showed improvements in empathy, cooperation, and emotion management skills. However, challenges faced in implementing this education include time constraints and the need for further training for educators to deliver the materials effectively. The findings provide new insights into the importance of integrating Islamic values in ECD learning to shape children's character and emotions more fully.

Discussion Results

This study aims to investigate the impact of Islamic values-based character education on the social emotional development of early childhood. Based on data obtained from interviews, questionnaires, and observations, the findings indicate

that Islamic values-based character education has a positive impact on children's emotional management and social behavior. The following discussion outlines the results of interviews with educators and parents, questionnaire responses, observational findings, and comparisons with previous research, followed by practical implications and limitations of the study.

Interviews conducted with educators and parents provided in-depth insights into the implementation of Islamic values-based character education and its impact on children's social-emotional development. In general, most educators revealed that Islamic values-based character education is very important in shaping children's social behavior. Values such as compassion, empathy, honesty, and helpfulness, taught through Islamic-based learning, are considered to have a significant impact on children's social behavior at school and home.

One educator, for example, revealed that children taught with an Islamic values-based approach were better able to empathize with their classmates. In interviews with parents, it was found that they also felt supported in teaching Islamic values at home. Parents feel that faith-based character education provides a strong foundation in shaping children's more positive behavior, both in interpersonal relationships and in emotional management.

However, despite the positive impact of Islam-based character education, some educators revealed that the biggest challenge in its implementation is the limited time to teach religious values in depth. On the other hand, parents felt that although they support these values, some of them find it challenging to balance their children's academic demands with their religious education.

The results of the questionnaire given to 15 educators showed a fairly positive perception of the implementation of Islamic values based character education on children's social-emotional development. Most educators reported seeing an improvement in children's social behavior, including increased empathy, the ability to share, and better emotional management. Thirteen out of 15 educators believed that children who received Islamic character education were better equipped to manage their emotions, particularly in social situations involving conflicts between friends.

However, the questionnaire results also showed that two educators found it challenging to integrate Islamic values into the daily curriculum. One of the educators revealed that there is a need for further training related to teaching methods that are more effective in conveying these values. In addition, some educators suggested enriching the teaching materials with more applicable approaches so that the values taught can be more relevant and impactful in children's daily lives.

Observations made during the research period revealed that the application of Islam based character education is evident in children's social behavior. During classroom activities, children taught with this approach more often demonstrated mutual respect, helping friends in difficulty, and sharing with their classmates. For example, in group activities involving shared tasks, children tended to be more cooperative and supportive of each other, which is a manifestation of the Islamic values taught, such as cooperation and compassion.

However, observations also showed that despite improvements in emotion management, some children still had difficulty in dealing with conflicts between friends. This suggests that emotion management in a social context remains a challenge that requires continuous monitoring. Therefore, there is a need for a more intensive approach in addressing this aspect, such as more in depth teaching on how to manage feelings of anger or disappointment.

This research aligns with the findings of previous studies, which demonstrate that religion-based character education can have a positive impact on children's socio-emotional development. Research by Suryani (2020) suggests that character education grounded in Islamic religious values can foster empathy and cooperation in children. In addition, Fitriani (2019) in her research also revealed that faith-based education can help children manage their emotions more effectively, which aligns with the findings in this study.

However, the study also revealed some new findings, such as the importance of more in-depth training for educators in teaching Islam-based character education. This finding has not been widely discussed in the existing literature, which typically focuses more on the direct impact of character education on children's behavior, rather than addressing the challenges in its implementation.

This research has significant implications for the development of character education at the early childhood education level. Based on the research findings, it is recommended that early childhood education institutions place greater emphasis on educator training in implementing Islam-based character education. This training could include effective ways to teach religious values in children's daily lives, both at school and at home. Thus, educators can better understand the most effective approach to delivering these values and maximize their impact on children's social-emotional development.

In addition, this study also implies the importance of parental involvement in supporting Islamic based character education at home. Therefore, educational institutions can conduct training programs or seminars for parents to introduce effective ways of educating children with a faith-based approach.

Although this study makes a meaningful contribution to the understanding of the influence of Islam-based character education, it also has some limitations. First,

the limited number of respondents in a few PAUD institutions in a particular region may limit the generalizability of the findings. Secondly, the limited time frame of the study meant that the researcher could only observe the children for a short period and was thus unable to measure the long-term impact of implementing Islam-based character education on children's social-emotional development.

Additionally, this study relied solely on interviews, questionnaires, and observations as data collection methods, which may not fully capture all factors influencing children's social emotional development. Therefore, further research with a longitudinal design and involving a larger sample is needed to confirm these findings and explore the long-term impact of Islam-based character education more deeply.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that Islamic values-based character education has a positive impact on the social-emotional development of early childhood. Children who received this education showed improvements in empathy, cooperation, and emotion management skills. However, challenges in implementing Islamic values based character education, such as time constraints and the need for further training for educators, require serious attention to improve their effectiveness. This research is expected to contribute to the development of a more comprehensive early childhood education curriculum, as well as provide insights for educators and parents in educating children with strong religious values.

4. Conclusion

This study aims to investigate the impact of Islamic values-based character education on the social emotional development of early childhood. Based on the research results obtained from interviews, questionnaires, observations, and data analysis, it can be concluded that the implementation of Islamic values-based character education has a significant positive impact on the social-emotional development of early childhood. Children taught with this approach showed improvements in empathy, cooperation, and emotion management skills.

Islamic values based character education helps children to be better able to respect their peers' feelings, share, and cooperate in group activities. In addition, children also showed improvements in managing their emotions, especially in social situations involving conflict between friends. These findings align with previous research indicating that faith-based education can have a positive impact on children's social-emotional development.

However, while Islam-based character education yields positive results, this study also identified some challenges in its implementation. Time constraints in teaching religious values in depth, combined with the lack of adequate training for educators, are the primary obstacles to effective implementation. Therefore, further

efforts are needed to provide more intensive training to educators and enrich teaching materials based on Islamic values.

Practically, the results of this study provide recommendations for early childhood education institutions to integrate Islamic-based character education into their curriculum further, as well as to provide greater support to parents in teaching these values at home. The research also has important implications in the development of early childhood education policies based on character education and religious values.

Thus, it can be concluded that character education based on Islamic values not only contributes to the formation of children's character but also plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality of early childhood social-emotional development.

5. References

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