

INTEGRATION OF FINE ARTS STUDIES AND ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS, MORAL, AND AESTHETIC VALUES

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Abstract:

This study explores the integration of Islamic visual arts in early childhood education, emphasizing their role in fostering children's religious, moral, and aesthetic development. The research adopts a qualitative literature study by analyzing relevant journal articles, books, and educational reports. Findings indicate that Islamic visual arts, such as mosque drawing, simple calligraphy tracing, and geometric painting, function as effective media for strengthening children's fine motor, cognitive, and aesthetic skills, while simultaneously instilling Islamic values and moral principles. Teachers act as facilitators and role models, bridging the connection between artistic experiences and religious values. The study concludes that Islamic art-based learning provides transformative opportunities in early childhood education by uniting creativity and spirituality. This research contributes theoretically to the development of art-based Islamic pedagogy and offers practical implications for teachers in designing creative, value-laden curricula. Future studies are recommended to apply empirical and experimental approaches to examine the long-term impacts of Islamic art education in various cultural contexts.

Keywords: *Islamic visual art, early childhood education, moral development*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi integrasi seni rupa Islami dalam pendidikan anak usia dini, dengan penekanan pada peranannya dalam menumbuhkan perkembangan religius, moral, dan estetika anak. Metode yang digunakan adalah studi literatur kualitatif melalui analisis artikel jurnal, buku, dan laporan pendidikan yang relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa seni rupa Islami, seperti menggambar masjid, menelusuri kaligrafi sederhana, dan melukis pola geometris, berfungsi sebagai media efektif dalam memperkuat keterampilan motorik halus, kognitif, dan estetika anak, sekaligus menanamkan nilai-nilai Islam dan prinsip moral. Guru berperan sebagai fasilitator dan teladan, yang menjembatani pengalaman artistik dengan nilai-nilai religius. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa pembelajaran berbasis seni Islami memberikan peluang transformatif dalam pendidikan anak usia dini dengan menyatukan kreativitas dan spiritualitas. Kontribusi penelitian ini bersifat teoretis dalam pengembangan pedagogi seni Islami serta praktis bagi guru dalam merancang kurikulum kreatif yang sarat nilai. Penelitian lanjutan direkomendasikan menggunakan pendekatan empiris dan eksperimental untuk mengkaji dampak jangka panjang pendidikan seni Islami dalam berbagai konteks budaya.

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education (PAUD) is an important foundation for the overall development of children, both cognitive, social, emotional, moral, and spiritual aspects. Early childhood is often referred to as the golden age because at this stage children have great potential to absorb learning experiences that will affect their lives in the future (Susanto, 2016). In the context of education in Indonesia, PAUD plays a role not only as a means of academic stimulation, but also as a vehicle for the formation of religious character and values. Emphasizes that aspects of early childhood development include religious, moral, social-emotional, language, cognitive, motor, and artistic values (*PERMENDIKBUD NO 137 TAHUN 2014*). This emphasizes that education in PAUD has a dual mandate, namely equipping children with basic knowledge while instilling noble values that are the foundation of life (Nata, 2016)

The progress of human civilization has given birth to a variety of new technologies that function to facilitate its development in all aspects. Among them is information technology and media, which is empowered by preachers to broadcast Islamic teachings through audio-visual means, which can also act as a medium for acquiring knowledge (Anugrah et al., 2024) In practice, Islamic education in PAUD does not only teach memorization of prayers or simple worship practices, but also emphasizes the formation of religious attitudes, respect, care, and noble morals from an early age (Khairusani, 2020) Islamic education carried out at this stage must be contextual, fun, and in accordance with the child's world. For example, the concept of cleanliness can be taught through ablution activities, while the value of gratitude can be instilled through stories about God's creation. Thus, Islamic education in early childhood education has a dual purpose, namely to guide children to know religion as well as to foster moral values that will be a guideline in their social interactions.

Meanwhile, fine arts have a significant role in supporting early childhood development. Through drawing, coloring, folding, beading/stringing, and making simple three-dimensional works, children can express their imagination, practice motor coordination, and channel feelings that are difficult for them to express verbally (Sari & Pamungkas, 2022) Fine art activities not only train aesthetic skills, but also encourage the social-emotional development of children. Research (Panjaitan et al., 2020) shows that through art activities, children can learn to work together, share, and develop other social skills that support character formation.

The integration of fine arts in Islamic education provides strategic opportunities to enrich children's learning experiences. For example, children can be invited to color hijayah letters, draw mosques, or make collages about Allah's creation. This kind of activity not only introduces the concept of religion, but also strengthens children's imagination and creativity (Sari & Pamungkas, 2022) Thus, art can be an effective medium to internalize religious and moral values in a fun form and in accordance with the child's developmental stage.

A number of previous studies have discussed the role of art in early childhood education, as well as the role of Islamic education in shaping children's morals (Ismail et al., 2019; Suyadi, 2018) However, studies that specifically examine the integration of fine arts and Islamic education in early childhood education are still

limited. Most studies have highlighted the role of art for the development of creativity or the role of Islamic education in moral formation, but not many have established a conceptual framework that systematically integrates the two (Khasanah et al., 2024). In other words, there is a space for study that is still open to explain how art can function as a medium for internalizing religious values, morals, as well as the development of early childhood aesthetics.

Based on this background, this study aims to examine the integration of fine arts and Islamic education in the context of early childhood education through literature studies. The focus of the research is directed at how art can function as a means of educating religious and moral values, while supporting the aesthetic development of early childhood. This study is expected to make a theoretical and practical contribution to the development of learning strategies in early childhood education, especially in an effort to instill Islamic values through creative approaches that are relevant to the world of children.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature study design (library research). The literature study was chosen because the purpose of the research is to analyze and integrate the results of previous studies on fine arts, Islamic education, and the development of religious, moral, and aesthetic values in early childhood. With this approach, research focuses on a systematic review of relevant theories, concepts, and empirical findings from a variety of academic sources.

In literature studies, the presence of researchers plays a role as the main instrument that carries out the process of selection, critical review, and synthesis of information from various literature. The researcher does not make direct observations in the field, but is present conceptually through the process of scientific interpretation of secondary data (Moleong, 2012).

The source of data for this research is scientific documents in the form of books, national and international journal articles, proceedings, and research reports relevant to the theme of integration of fine arts and Islamic education in early childhood education. This secondary data was selected from the literature published in the last 10 years, especially those that are indexed and have high academic credibility.

Data is collected through the following steps:

1. Literature Identification: The researcher conducted searches on academic databases such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, Scopus, and national journal portals (Sinta).
2. Literature Selection: Articles and books are selected based on the relevance of the theme, the quality of the publication, and the relationship with aspects of fine arts, Islamic education, early childhood education, religious and moral values, and aesthetics.
3. Data Coding: The information collected is classified into categories, e.g. "the role of the arts in early childhood education", "Islamic education in early childhood", "integration of art and religion", and "moral and aesthetic development of children".

The data analysis technique was carried out using content analysis. The analysis steps include:

Read and examine the content of each source in depth, identify relevant key

themes, compare and relate findings from various studies, and develop a conceptual synthesis of how fine arts can be integrated with Islamic education to support the development of early childhood religious, moral, and aesthetic values.

Although this research was not conducted directly in the field, the literature sources used included research from various contexts, both national (Indonesian) and international. Thus, the location of the research is conceptually global, but still emphasizes its relevance in the context of early childhood education in Indonesia.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

This literature study research focuses on the integration of fine arts and Islamic education in supporting the development of religious, moral, and aesthetic values in early childhood. The results of the study show that art activities are not only a means of creative expression, but also a vehicle for internalizing spiritual values in accordance with Islamic teachings.

Based on the secondary data studied (previous research documents, observations of PAUD teachers, and empirical reports), it was found that:

1. Islamic art plays a role as a religious learning medium that helps children visually understand religious values (Khairusani, 2020)
2. Early childhood teachers use drawing, painting, and collage activities with Islamic symbols (e.g., simple calligraphy or mosque shapes) as a means of developing children's aesthetic and moral values (Sari & Pamungkas, 2022)
3. The integration of fine arts with Islamic approaches has been proven to increase children's motivation in learning, build religious character, and foster a tolerant attitude from an early age (Prayitno et al., 2021).

Table 1: Integration of Islamic Fine Arts in Early Childhood Education

Aspects	The Role of Fine Arts	Impact on Early Childhood
Religious Values	Presenting Islamic symbols (calligraphy, mosques, God's created realm)	Strengthening religious understanding and spirituality
Moral	Collaborative activities (painting together, sharing tools)	Cultivate an attitude of empathy, cooperation, discipline
Aesthetic	An exploration of Islamic colors, shapes, textures	Develop creativity and taste sensitivity

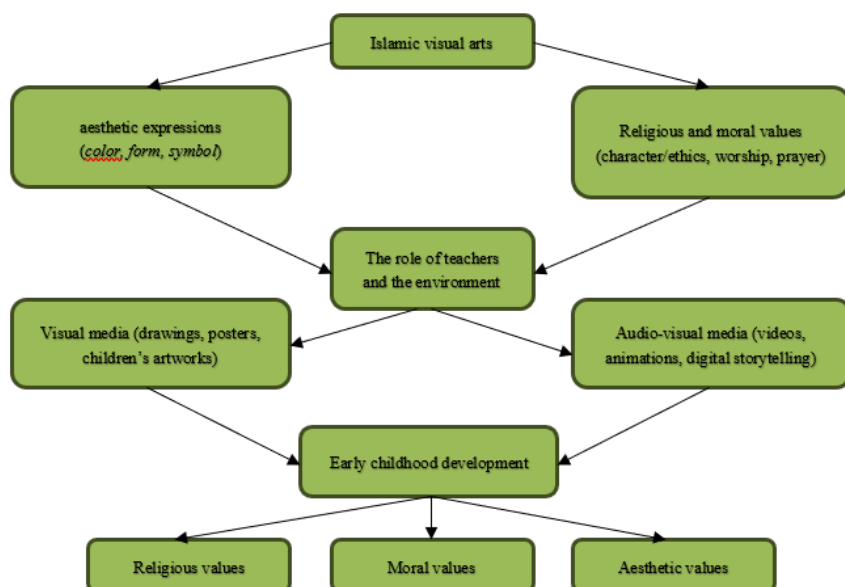


Figure 1: Conceptual Diagram

Table 2: Model of integration of fine arts and Islamic education in early childhood education

Components	Practical Implementation	Impact on Children
Islamic Visual Arts	drawing simple calligraphy, painting mosques, collages of God's creation	fine motor skills, imagination, aesthetic appreciation
Visual Media	posters of ablution procedures, daily prayer illustrations, collective Islamic-themed artworks	facilitating understanding of worship and moral values
Audio-Visual Media	Islamic storytelling videos, moral animations, Islamic songs with visual illustrations	increasing interest, focus, and engagement
Role of Teachers	role modeling, discussing children's artworks, linking art with religion	internalization of religious and moral values
Environment	Islamic-themed classrooms, exhibition spaces for children's artworks	pride, identity, religiosity
Family & Community	involving parents in Islamic-themed exhibitions	consistency of values between school and home

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study confirm the strong relationship between Islamic art education and Islamic education in supporting early childhood development, especially in religious, moral, social-emotional, and aesthetic aspects. Art education is not only understood as a realm of creativity development, but also as a strategic instrument in the internalization of religious values. This is in line with the theory of child development which emphasizes the importance of multisensory experiences in the learning process, where rich and meaningful stimulation is able

to accelerate the internalization of concepts and values (Novita & Juhairiah, 2021)

First, Islamic art presents a concrete learning experience that combines creative expression with the appreciation of religious values. The activity of drawing mosques, coloring Islamic patterns, or copying simple calligraphy not only hone children's fine motor skills, but also become a reflective means of understanding religious symbols. As stated by (Khairusani, 2020) learning experiences based on religious symbols can increase children's spiritual awareness from an early age through simple but meaningful activities.

Second, the role of fine arts in the context of early childhood education also functions as a medium for strengthening moral values. Collaborative activities such as making group artwork or sharing drawing tools encourage children to learn to respect each other, work together, and foster a sense of responsibility. Research (Sari & Pamungkas, 2022) shows that art can strengthen children's social-emotional development, including aspects of empathy, tolerance, and concern for others. Thus, Islamic art serves a dual purpose: in addition to training artistic skills, it also builds the foundation of a child's moral character.

Third, the integration of Islamic art is very influential in shaping the aesthetic development of children. Aesthetics in Islam are understood not just as visual beauty, but as a spiritual reflection of the greatness of Allah SWT. Children learn to understand that beauty is part of faith, as in the hadith of the Prophet who states "Allah is beautiful and loves beauty" (HR. Muslim). This view is strengthened by (Martono, 2015) who states that Islamic aesthetic experiences are able to internalize children's gratitude, admiration, and respect for the Creator. Thus, Islamic art not only forms aesthetic sensibility, but also instills deep spiritual values.

In addition, teachers play a central role in the implementation of Islamic art learning. Teachers not only play the role of technical facilitators, but also role models and mediators between the experience of art and religious teachings. (Ilam et al., 2025) found that the quality of teacher guidance greatly determines the effectiveness of religious value-based art learning. Teachers who are able to present Islamic art activities with a creative pedagogical approach can facilitate children's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development in a balanced manner. Thus, the competence of PAUD teachers in understanding the value of Islamic aesthetics is the key to the success of this integration.

In addition, these findings also strengthen the view that Islamic art education has a transformative dimension. It not only hone creativity, but also serves as an instrument for shaping children's religious and moral identity from an early age. Research conducted by (Nurlina et al., 2024) shows that the integration of Islamic art in the PAUD curriculum can increase children's religious awareness while fostering appreciation for Islamic cultural heritage. Thus, Islamic art in the context of early childhood education can be seen as a meeting space between aesthetics, religiosity, and character education.

Conceptually, this discussion affirms that the integration of Islamic art in early childhood education has a significant contribution both theoretically and practically. From the theoretical side, this research provides a foundation for the development of a holistic Islamic art-based learning model. From a practical perspective, this research provides guidelines for PAUD teachers in designing creative activities that are not only fun, but also full of value, so as to support the mission of Islamic education to form people who have faith, noble character, and culture.

When compared to international research, the integration of the arts in early childhood education globally also shows an important contribution to the holistic development of children. For example, a study conducted (Wright, 2015) in Australia emphasizes that art education in early childhood education serves as a vehicle for symbolic communication that enriches children's experiences in understanding the world around them. Meanwhile, research (Gadsden, 2008) in the United States revealed that art helps children connect personal experiences with broader social values. Thus, the findings of this study strengthen the international literature, but with a uniqueness: Islamic art does not only function as a medium of expression, but also as a means of internalizing distinctive religious values in accordance with the cultural and religious context in Indonesia.

However, the implementation of Islamic art in early childhood education faces a number of challenges. First, the limitation of teacher competence is still the main obstacle. Not all PAUD teachers have a deep understanding of the concept of Islamic aesthetics and adequate fine arts skills. As revealed (Nurlina et al., 2024) the quality of teacher guidance greatly affects the success of integrating religious values in art activities.

Second, the limitations of the formal curriculum are also a problem. The national early childhood education curriculum tends to emphasize more on general developmental aspects (cognitive, linguistic, motor, social-emotional), while the integration of Islamic arts has not received special attention. This creates a gap between the need for religious value-based learning and the availability of systematic curriculum guidelines (Khasanah et al., 2024)

Third, resource factors and learning environment. Many PAUD institutions in the region do not have adequate facilities or teaching materials for Islamic art, such as Islamic drawing media, simple calligraphy, or visual materials that are appropriate for the child's age. These limitations can reduce the effectiveness of the learning process.

However, this challenge actually opens up opportunities for further research as well as practical innovation. Teachers can develop local-based learning media, for example using batik motifs with Islamic nuances or mosque architectural ornaments as inspiration for drawing activities. This not only fosters creativity, but also strengthens the child's attachment to the local religious culture.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that Islamic art has the potential to be a transformative learning model in early childhood education. This model not only builds artistic skills, but also shapes the religious, moral, and aesthetic character of children from an early age. By paying attention to implementation challenges, teachers and policy makers need to work together to increase pedagogical capacity, enrich the curriculum, and provide relevant supporting facilities.

The findings of this study have important implications for educational practices in early childhood education, especially in designing meaningful Islamic art learning. First, teachers need to develop a teaching strategy that is oriented towards hands-on experience. For example, the activity of drawing a mosque or attaching Islamic ornaments can be combined with simple religious stories so that children acquire a double meaning: aesthetic and religious. This strategy is in line with the experiential learning approach that emphasizes the active involvement of children in the learning process (Kolb, 2015)

Second, teachers can use a collaborative activity model to instill moral values

through art. Activities such as painting together or making collages with Islamic nuances foster cooperation, mutual respect, and care. This is important considering that learning moral values at an early age is more effective if it is realized in real practice, not just verbal instruction (Mulyani et al., 2025)

Third, the development of Islamic art-based learning media is a strategic step. Teachers can use local materials, such as Islamic patterned fabrics, geometric shapes in mosque architecture, or simple calligraphy motifs as inspiration for art activities. The use of calligraphy as an educational medium is one of the evidence of the positive impact of the development of Islamic art-based learning. According to (Syarofah et al., 2022) the activity of writing calligraphy not only hone students' fine motor skills, but also enrich their understanding of the beauty and meaning of the art, which can ultimately foster a love for religion. This approach is in line with efforts to create an innovative Islamic Religious Education learning concept that is able to attract students' interest (Salsabila et al., 2024) This media not only enriches the child's aesthetic experience, but also reinforces a religious identity that is in line with the local culture.

Fourth, teachers need to internalize their role as role models. The attitude, behavior, and aesthetic expression of teachers will greatly influence the way children view the values of religion and art. A teacher must be a good example for his students, because his positive attitude and behavior will be a direct example for them. This good example serves as a fundamental tool to realize the goals of Education (Nia, 2013) Thus, the training of PAUD teachers in the field of Islamic arts is an urgent need to improve their professionalism.

Additionally, educational institutions and policymakers can benefit from these findings by developing a more integrative curriculum. The early childhood education curriculum ideally provides an explicit space for Islamic art, not just as an additional activity, but as an important part of the formation of a child's religious and moral character.

Thus, the practical implications of this study confirm that PAUD teachers are not only teachers of art skills, but also facilitators of values. Islamic art is a transformative medium that is able to unite aesthetic, moral, and religious dimensions in the process of early childhood education.

Table 3: Example of Islamic Art-Based Activities in Early Childhood Education

Activity	Learning Objectives	Moral & Religious Values	Developmental Aspects Supported
Drawing a mosque	Introduce basic shapes and spatial awareness	Respect for places of worship, love for Allah	Cognitive, fine motor, religious
Simple Arabic calligraphy tracing	Develop hand-eye coordination and focus	Patience, discipline, respect for the Qur'an	Fine motor, aesthetic, moral
Collaborative Islamic collage	Practice teamwork and social interaction	Cooperation, empathy, tolerance	Socio-emotional, moral, religious
Painting geometric patterns	Recognize symmetry, patterns, and creativity	Appreciation of Islamic aesthetics, order	Cognitive, aesthetic, moral
Storytelling with drawing (e.g., Prophet stories)	Express ideas visually and verbally	Honesty, kindness, role models from prophets	Language, creativity, moral, religious

Table 3 illustrates the design of Islamic art activities that can be implemented in early childhood education (PAUD). Each activity is structured not only to develop children's motor, cognitive, and aesthetic abilities, but also to simultaneously instill moral and religious values. For instance, the mosque drawing activity does not merely introduce basic geometric shapes, but also fosters respect for places of worship and nurtures love for Allah. This aligns with Saefurrohman's view that meaningful visual stimulation can accelerate the internalization of values in children (Saefurrohman, 2024).

Simple calligraphy tracing activities provide a learning experience that supports fine motor coordination while training children's patience and discipline. Research (Khairusani, 2020) confirms that Islamic calligraphy functions as a spiritual medium as well as aesthetic, so the integration of this activity in PAUD provides added value in shaping children's religious character. Similarly, collaborative activities such as making Islamic collages allow children to learn to work together, appreciate differences, and develop empathy. This supports research (Sari & Pamungkas, 2022) which found that collaborative art activities can strengthen children's social-emotional development.

Furthermore, Islamic aesthetic-based art activities such as painting geometric patterns introduce the concept of order and beauty, which in Islam is seen as a reflection of the greatness of the Creator (Sari & Pamungkas, 2022). This activity can also be combined with simple religious stories, such as prophetic stories, so that children can relate visual experiences to moral examples. Thus, this table shows that Islamic art learning in PAUD is able to present a complete learning experience: aesthetic, religious, and moral.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study confirm that Islamic art has a strategic role in early childhood education, especially in instilling religious, moral, and aesthetic values in an integrated manner. Through simple activities such as drawing mosques, tracing calligraphy, and painting geometric patterns, children gain learning experiences that not only strengthen motor and cognitive skills, but also foster a love for religious and moral values that are relevant to their daily lives. Teachers play an important role as facilitators who bridge the integration between art and Islamic education, so that the success of implementation is highly determined by the quality of guidance and creativity of teachers in designing learning experiences.

The practical implication of these findings is the need to develop a more integrative early childhood education curriculum, by providing an explicit space for Islamic art activities as a vehicle for shaping children's character from an early age. In addition, improving teacher competence through Islamic art training is also an urgent need so that the learning process can run effectively.

This research opens up opportunities for more in-depth follow-up studies, especially in examining the effectiveness of Islamic art learning models in various cultural contexts and educational institutions. Quantitative and experimental studies can be conducted to measure the long-term impact on children's moral, religious, and aesthetic development. Thus, the integration of Islamic art is expected to become one of the transformative learning models that is relevant for

strengthening early childhood education in Indonesia and can also make an important contribution to the global education discourse.

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