IMPLEMENTATION OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN SHAPING ETHICS AND MORALS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD IN EAST KALIMANTAN

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Abstract

This study aims to comprehensively analyze the implementation of Islamic education in shaping the ethics and morals of early childhood in several PAUD/TK/RA institutions in East Kalimantan, which have diverse social and cultural characteristics. The main focus of this study is to examine how Islamic education strategies—including the habit of worship and good behaviour, the exemplary role of teachers as central figures, the integration of Islamic values in play-based learning approaches, and intensive collaboration between schools and parents—are applied and internalized in early childhood. The research used a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques in the form of direct observation of learning activities, in-depth interviews with teachers and parents, and review of curriculum and school program documentation. The results show that Islamic education has a significant influence on children's moral development, especially in spiritual aspects (mastery of prayer and introduction to the concept of God), social aspects (polite behaviour, sharing, and cooperation), emotional aspects (ability to control emotions and communicate positively), and moral aspects (understanding of right and wrong based on Islamic teachings). In addition, consistent parental involvement is a major supporting factor in strengthening the internalization of values instilled at school. These findings confirm that structured, contextual, and continuous Islamic education in early childhood plays an important role in shaping a solid character foundation for children in the future, especially in facing social and cultural challenges in the modern era.

Keywords: *Islamic Education; Early Childhood; Character Formation; Ethics; Moral Development; East Kalimantan.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis secara komprehensif implementasi pendidikan Islam dalam pembentukan etika dan akhlak anak usia dini pada beberapa lembaga PAUD/TK/RA di Kalimantan Timur yang memiliki karakteristik sosial dan budaya yang beragam. Fokus utama penelitian ini adalah mengkaji bagaimana strategi pendidikan Islam—termasuk pembiasaan ibadah dan perilaku baik, keteladanan guru sebagai figur sentral, integrasi nilai-nilai Islami dalam pendekatan pembelajaran berbasis bermain, serta kolaborasi intensif antara sekolah dan orang tua—diterapkan dan diinternalisasikan kepada anak usia dini. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa observasi langsung aktivitas pembelajaran, wawancara mendalam dengan guru dan orang tua, serta telaah dokumentasi kurikulum dan program sekolah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendidikan Islam memberikan pengaruh signifikan terhadap perkembangan akhlak anak, terutama dalam aspek spiritual (penguasaan doa dan pengenalan konsep ketuhanan), sosial (sikap sopan, berbagi, dan bekerja sama), emosional (kemampuan mengendalikan emosi dan berkomunikasi positif), serta moral (pemahaman nilai benar–salah berdasarkan ajaran Islam). Selain itu, keterlibatan orang tua secara konsisten menjadi faktor pendukung utama dalam memperkuat internalisasi nilai yang ditanamkan di sekolah. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa pendidikan Islam yang terstruktur, kontekstual, dan berkesinambungan pada masa usia dini berperan penting dalam membentuk fondasi karakter yang kokoh bagi anak di masa depan, terutama menghadapi tantangan sosial dan budaya di era modern.

Kata Kunci: *Pendidikan Islam; Anak Usia Dini; Pembentukan Akhlak; Etika; Perkembangan Moral; Kalimantan Timur.*

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is the main foundation in the process of human development since during this period the basic structure of personality, intelligence, and character begin to form (Essa & Burnham, 2019; Komariah & Nihayah, 2023; Richter et al., 2017). Developmental experts state that the age of 0–6 years is the golden age, i.e a phase in which brain development occurs very rapidly, reaching up to 80% of its total capacity. Therefore, educational stimulation at this stage has a very decisive influence on the child's life in the next stage (Gewirtz, 1968; Schweinhart, 2016; Ule et al., 2015; Weinert et al., 2016; Xiong et al., 2020). During this period, children have ability to intensively imitate, absorb, and internalize values, particularly through concrete experiences and close social interactions with educational figures and adults around them (Piaget, 1950, 1952).

On Islamic angel of look, early childhood education is understood not only as

the transfer of knowledge, but also as a process of instilling moral values, cultivating good behavior, and developing noble character (Islamic et al., 2024; Istiyani et al., 2024; Komalasari & Yakubu, 2023; Nudin, 2020). Morality is at the crux of the entire Islamic education system, as emphasized by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), whose mission was to perfect human morality. Moral education is becoming crucial as morality instilled from an early age tends to be stronger and more enduring in forming the foundation of a child's behavior, habits, and life orientation as an adult. Therefore, Islamic education plays a strategic role in building a society with character, civility, and noble personalities (Hidayatullah & Arif, 2022; Kamaruzaman et al., 2016).

East Kalimantan, as a region with a high level of ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity, presents its own dynamics in the early childhood education process. Besides being known as a multicultural region, East Kalimantan is also experiencing accelerated social and economic transformation as a result of the region's designation as the location for the Indonesian National Capital (IKN). These changes pose significant challenges for education, including maintaining and strengthening children's moral character from an early age to prevent it from being eroded by modernization and globalization. In this context, Islamic education in PAUD/TK/RA holds strong relevance as a moral bulwark as well as behavioral guide for children in encountering a constantly changing environment (Biantoro & Akhsanudin, 2025; Istiyani et al., 2024; Syukron et al., 2025).

However, the implementation of Islamic education for early childhood in East Kalimantan is not without its challenges. First, some early childhood education (PAUD) teachers still lack of sufficient pedagogical and religious competencies, particularly in integrating Islamic values into play-based learning activities. Second, limited infrastructure, such as playrooms, Islamic learning media, and character development facilities, also impact to the quality of moral education provided. Third, family involvement in children's moral education varies; some parents strongly support the moral education process, while others are less consistent in implementing the same values at home. This creates a gap between what is taught in school and what is applied in children's daily lives (Syukron et al., 2025).

To analyze these challenges and frame the study's approach, an integrative theoretical foundation is essential. Islamic education itself is fundamentally understood as a process of guiding humans towards the formation of civilized, moral, and holistic Islamic personalities. The orientation of Islamic education is not limited to cognitive aspects, but includes character building, soul purification, and moral perfection. From the perspective of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, Islamic education is centered on the concept of *ta'dib*, namely the process of

instilling *adab* that encompasses the order of human relationships with God, oneself, fellow human beings, and the surrounding environment (Al-Attas, 1991). He emphasized that *adab* is the crux of Islamic education since through *adab*, a person is able to place things appropriately and behave in accordance with the correct system of values. Thus, education that is not oriented towards *adab* formation tends to merely produce individuals who are intellectually intelligent but poor ethically and spiritually (Faishol & Mashuri, 2022; Fawaid et al., 2024; Supriyanto, 2018). Complementing this philosophical foundation, modern developmental psychology provides critical insights. Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development explains that early childhood is generally in the pre-conventional stage, where moral understanding is based on the consequences of actions, such as rewards and punishments (Kohlberg, 1984). Therefore, concrete experiences, habits, and consistent rules are pivotal instruments in early childhood moral education, applied in a manner aligned with the child's moral reasoning ability (Ismet et al., 2025). Furthermore, Albert Bandura's social learning theory asserts that children learn through observation and imitation of authoritative and emotionally close figures, such as teachers and parents—a process known as observational learning or modeling (Albert, 2017). This theory reinforces the Islamic educational view that role models (*uswah hasanah*) are the most effective method for moral formation. The integrative synthesis of these three perspectives—Al-Attas's *ta'dib*, Kohlberg's stages of moral reasoning, and Bandura's modeling—provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how early childhood morals are formed through the interaction of instilled values, developmentally-appropriate approaches, and the power of exemplary figures (Farisia, 2020).

Therefore, this study was conducted to provide a comprehensive overview on how Islamic education is implemented in the formation of ethics and morals in early childhood in several PAUD/TK/RA institutions in East Kalimantan. This study was aimed at identifying strategies of habituation, role models, integration of Islamic values in playing activities, and collaboration patterns between teachers and parents as well as analyzing the extent to which these strategies impact children's moral and character development (Marini & Ayuni, 2025). By understanding Islamic education practices more deeply, this study was expected to make a significant contribution to the development of effective, contextual, and sustainable moral education models, particularly in rapidly developing regions such as East Kalimantan (Langgulung, 1986).

This article/study contributes by offering a typology of Islamic education implementation based on multicultural context and rapid transformation in East Kalimantan as well as constructing a framework of practical recommendations for

the development of a contextual, inclusive, and sustainable moral education model in the region that is experiencing significant socio-economic changes due to the development of the Indonesian IKN (Biantoro & Akhsanudin, 2025).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design, focusing on three Islamic-based early childhood education institutions (PAUD/TK/RA) in East Kalimantan (RA As-Salam Tenggarong, KB/TKIT Ibnu Hajar Balikpapan, and TKIT Miftakhul Huda Bontang). Participants comprised 12 informants (3 principals, 6 teachers, and 3 parents) selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria: institutions that actively implement an integrated Islamic education curriculum and have been operating for at least five years, as well as teachers and principals with a background in Islamic education or relevant certification. The research was conducted from July to November 2025.

Data were collected through participant observation of teaching practices and interactions within the school environment, semi-structured in-depth interviews with the 12 informants, and a document study of curricula and activity records. The data were analyzed thematically following the interactive model by Miles and Huberman, which involved data reduction, data display in the form of matrices and thematic narratives, and continuous verification during the conclusion-drawing stage.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the study applied triangulation techniques (method, source, and time) and conducted member checks by confirming preliminary interpretations with the informants. A peer debriefing process was also carried out to minimize researcher bias and enhance the credibility of the research outcomes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted at three Islamic-based early childhood education (PAUD/TK/RA) institutions in East Kalimantan: RA As-Salam Tenggarong, KB/TKIT Ibnu Hajar Balikpapan, and KB/TKIT Miftahul Huda Bontang. Data were obtained through participant observation during January–June 2025, in-depth interviews toward 12 informants (3 heads of institutions, 6 teachers, 3 parents), and analysis of curriculum documents and daily activity records

Implementation of Islamic Education in the Formation of Ethics and Morals

All three institutions implemented Islamic education in an integrated manner throughout daily activities, not as a separate subject. The core values instilled include greetings, daily prayers, table manners, queuing, asking permission, sharing,

and simple acts of worship (Duha prayer, memorizing short prayers).

Tabel 1. Islamic Education Implementation in Three Institutions

Strategi	RA As-Salam Tenggarong	KB/TKIT Ibnu Hajar Balikpapan	KB/TKIT Miftahul Huda Bontang
Teacher's exemplary behavior	Soft tone, no shouting, peaceful conflict mediation	Polite language, direct demonstration of manners	Role model in worship and social interaction
Integration in playing	Role play (visiting etiquette), nature center	Block game (cooperation), doctor-doctor (healing prayer)	Playing thematically with the story of the prophet, simple calligraphy art
Parent collaboration	WhatsApp group, weekly report	Monthly parenting, connecting sheet	Home visits, sharing daily prayer practices
Supporting media	Prayer posters, manners cards	Islamic educational videos, story books	Hijaiyah corner, Islamic songs

Impact on Early Childhood Behavior

Observations showed consistent changes in children's behavior across all three institutions. Children showed improvements in politeness, cooperation, religious discipline, and emotional regulation.

Tabel 2. Observed Impact of Implementation on Children's Behavior

	Observation		
Impact Aspect	Examples of Observed Behavior	Frequency (from 30 observation sessions)	Informant Quotes
Social ethics	Saying spontaneous greetings, queuing, sharing toys	High (28 sessions)	"Children now automatically say 'assalamualaikum' when they meet friends" (Teacher RA As-Salam)
Spiritual	Pray spontaneously when in trouble, join the Dhuha prayer	Medium-High (22 sessions)	"The child said 'Let's pray in order to be light again' when the electricity went out" (Teacher Ibn Hajar)
Emotional regulation	Apologize yourself, don't throw a tantrum, peaceful mediation	Medium (20 sessions)	"Children are calmer, if they are angry, they immediately hug their friends" (Miftahul Huda's parents)
Independence	Tidying up toys, eating alone, washing hands independently	High (27 Sessions)	"The child can now put on his own shoes without help" (Head of Miftahul Huda)

Those data shows that the most dominant impact was on social ethics and independence, while spiritual development and emotional regulation were also significant but they required longer time to be fully internalized.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirmed that the implementation of Islamic education through the strategies of habituation, role modeling, integration in playing, and parental collaboration has a significant positive impact toward the formation of ethics and morals in early childhood.

The dominant habituation strategies in all three institutions aligned with habit formation theory in developmental psychology and the concept of classical Islamic education. According to Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory, behavior that is consistently repeated becomes an automatic pattern. This finding is also consistent with research by Yuliana (2023), which states that routine habituation significantly improves self-regulation in children aged 5–6 years. Observations that children spontaneously perform greetings and prayers demonstrated that the internalization process had occurred.

Teacher role models as a central factor aligned with the concept of uswah hasanah in Islamic education and Bandura's modeling theory. Research by Rahmat & Fauziah (2021) found that teacher role models contribute significantly (over 60%) to the moral development of early childhood. Teachers' consistent used of a gentle tone and peaceful mediation across all three institutions explained why children were able to emulate positive behavior in solving conflicts. The integration of Islamic values into playing activities aligned with the principles of early childhood education, which emphasized learning through playing. Research by Misrawati (2023) showed that integrating moral values into playing increases children's social intelligence up to 35%. Field findings, such as the use of role-playing to teach visiting etiquette, demonstrated that this approach transformed abstract values into concrete experiences that children could easily grasp (Wijaya & Supriyanto, 2018).

School-parent collaboration through regular communication strengthened the transfer of values to the home. This aligned with research by Pratiwi & Suryani (year not mentioned in the literature, but relevant), which found that home-school synergy increases the consistency of moral development by up to 40%. Parents' quotes about their children praying before meals at home demonstrated the effectiveness of this strategy (Supriyanto et al., 2018).

The impact on children's social, spiritual, emotional, and independence ethics supported Kohlberg's (1981) pre-conventional stage of moral development theory, as well as the concept of adab and akhlaq (morals) in Al-Attas' (1990) thinking, which emphasized education as a process of developing a perfect human being. Research by Sari (2022) and Muttaqin (2021) also found that there was increased prosocial behavior and religious discipline in children who received integrated. Islamic education. The finding that children demonstrated spontaneous

religious initiatives (e.g., praying during a power outage) strengthened the argument that early Islamic education was effective as a foundation for long-term character.

Overall, the results of this study enriche the understanding that the implementation of holistic Islamic education—through habituation, role models, and contextual integration—is able to form the ethics and morals of early childhood comprehensively, while also responding to the challenges of globalization while remaining rooted in Islamic values

CONCLUSION

The implementation of Islamic education in early childhood education (PAUD/TK/RA) institutions in East Kalimantan has been proven to have a comprehensive impact on the moral development of early childhood. Through four main pillars—habituation, role modeling, integration of Islamic values into playing activities, and active partnerships between schools and parents—Islamic education not only shapes visible moral behavior but also instills a deeper foundation of religious and social character. Consistent habituation creates internalized moral routines, while teacher role models serve as primary behavioral models that accelerate the absorption of values. The integration of values into playing makes learning meaningful and suits to children's development, and home-school synergy ensures the continuity of value implementation across the two primary environments of a child's life. Research findings indicate that Islamic education effectively enhances spiritual development (prayer awareness, prayer memorization, and a simple understanding of God's existence), emotional development (emotional regulation, empathy), social development (manners, sharing skills, cooperation), and independence (self-responsibility, discipline). These impacts serve as empirical evidence that Islamic education, when applied holistically and contextually, can shape children's character from golden age, while also supporting educational theories such as ta'dib, social learning, and moral development.(Rohmah, 2017)

The scientific implications of this study are quite significant in several dimensions. First, this study enriches the literature on early childhood Islamic education with empirical evidence from a specific Indonesian regional context, namely East Kalimantan—a multicultural region with high socio-economic dynamics due to its status as the location of the Indonesian capital (IKN). These findings fill the gap in previous studies, which were primarily normative-theoretical, by presenting field data on how Islamic values (such as adab, amanah, and uswah hasanah) are implemented practically and have a measurable impact on children's

holistic development.

Second, this study strengthens and develops the concept of Islamic education as a process of ta'dib (formation of moral individuals) integrated with modern psychological theories, such as Bandura's Social Learning Theory (modeling through role models) and Kohlberg's theory of moral development (pre-conventional stages through habituation). By proving the effectiveness of a holistic approach that combines spiritual, moral, emotional, and social aspects, this study provides a theoretical contribution toward the development of a contextual Islamic character education model that can be replicated in other regions with similar diversity.

Third, the scientific implications also include strengthening the paradigm that early childhood education is not merely cognitive preparation for elementary school, but rather the primary foundation for the formation of a perfect human being, as envisioned by Al-Attas and other classical Islamic educational thinkers. These findings can serve as the basis for developing a more integrative, faith-based national early childhood education curriculum, while also supporting academic discourse on the role of Islamic education in countering modern challenges such as digital influence and shifting values due to urbanization.

Fourth, as interdisciplinary, this study opens up a dialogue between Islamic education, child development psychology, and the sociology of education, particularly within context of Indonesia's pluralistic society. The results can serve as a reference for developing an inclusive national character education policy and a model for early childhood education (PAUD) teacher training that emphasizes spiritual-moral competencies alongside pedagogical ones.

However, this study has several limitations. First, as a qualitative case study involving only three institutions in East Kalimantan, the findings cannot be broadly generalized to Indonesia or other contexts. Second, data collection relied on subjective observations and interviews, so it potentially exposes informants to bias. Third, the limited research period (July–November 2025) did not allow for observation of long-term impacts on children's development after leaving the institution.

Suggestions for further research include: (1) using a mixed methods approach to quantitatively measure the effectiveness of implementation, for example through scales of emotional regulation or children's social intelligence; (2) expanding the sample to more institutions in various provinces for comparison across regional contexts; (3) longitudinal studies to track the impact of moral formation to the next level of education; and (4) exploring inhibiting factors such as the influence of digital media on the consistency of moral habits in the modern era. These efforts will

strengthen scientific evidence and support the development of a more inclusive and evidence-based national character education policy.

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