

NURTURING FAITH AND MORALITY: A BROAD APPROACH TO ISLAMIC EDUCATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

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Abstract: Islamic teaching for children helps them develop proper values and achieve their full growth through family support. During early childhood many basic moral beliefs and religious practices establish what a child becomes and what they believe in. According to Islamic principles early education builds all aspects of a child's development including their spiritual education. This research studies Islamic early childhood education to show how it follows modern teaching approaches while helping solve modern learning problems. The study combines Islamic teaching insights with modern educational theory plus real-world examples to show how everyone plays part in teaching children proper faith and ethics. This work combines classic Islamic teachings with hands-on learning designs to create a flexible system for religious growth combined with intellectual and social learning. Our results show that teaching Islamic values needs joint efforts between educators and parents who use technology while showing positive examples and telling stories. Our study demonstrates the need to blend traditional faith teaching with modern lesson styles so students become morally excellent and socially engaged learners.

Key words: Islamic Education, Early Childhood, Character Building, Faith Development, Moral Growth.

Introduction

During early human development kids experience important changes in their growth. At this stage Islamic teaching gives children vital moral standards and spiritual practices that form their sense of self and how they view the world. Under Islamic principles education stays with us throughout life but takes greatest effect during the formative years of childhood. The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) revealed through his teachings that "Every newborn infant arrives in Islam before parents direct them to Judaism Christian or Magian beliefs" (Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2658). Researchers show that how parents teach their children during early years directly influences their beliefs and moral compass. Early Islamic education builds moral values and religious knowledge as foundational learning for children who are at the starting point of their development. Studies on faith and moral development in early years show that teaching this material shapes complete child development. A full Islamic education system that teaches both mind and soul builds up excellent moral people. According to Risnawaty (2023) the goal of shaping "shaleh" children emerges strongly in Islamic educational thought. Research has shown teaching needs to give knowledge while developing moral values from Islamic teaching.

According to her research all three social groups play essential roles in making spaces that benefit the complete growth of children.

The learning of children in Islamic education system connects better with us when combined with basic educational ideas of the past. Binti Norman and colleagues studied Ibn Sina's theory of the soul which shows how children need balanced training of their soul's faculties during the early years. This academic perspective matches perfectly with the spiritual and mental stability. Integrating religious values becomes a significant educational element at the early stage. Masdul et al. (2024) studied how schools in Central Sulawesi teach their students Islamic values as part of their everyday schoolwork. Research published in the South African Journal of Childhood Education shows moral and ethical principles become part of young children through local educational methods. Early childhood Islamic education strongly depends on family participation in its foundations. Nurfazri Marinda and Irwansyah in 2024 studied methods for helping families develop crucial character education for their children. Their research in the Gunung Djati Conference Series shows that parents play the biggest part in teaching Islamic values to their children. Modern educational strategies recognize that Islamic teaching needs to support growth from multiple aspects at once. Surbakti Harahap and Hasanah introduced an Islamic personality model with six development stages including spiritual moral intellectual social personal and behavioral facets in 2024. According to the Journal on Islamic Studies researchers underscore the significance of combining all developmental areas in modern education solutions.

Their 2024 research into multicultural Islamic education shows how to raise students with great moral character for the 5.0 era. Through their research published in the Solo Universal Journal they show how Islamic education must accept all students as unique individuals to build unity without losing Islam's core beliefs. Many research studies about Islamic early childhood education show different views about teaching methods. Multiple research projects help us learn better ways to support children's faith development and moral growth. Bringing together Islamic thought with current educational methods and local traditions creates an effective method to develop children's faith values and knowledge areas. The educational design helps children develop coping strategies and still stay true to Islamic principles. Islamic educated early childhood development relies on effective teamwork between parents' educators and community members. These authors show how we can improve techniques for teaching Islam when their work is incorporated into our methods. The principles of Islamic education help to produce positive results when today's generations apply these consistently. This research explores how early childhood Islamic education should develop students, explains effective teaching practices, clarifies education partnerships between parents and experts and explains how modern life affects school policies. This research presents specific steps to blend traditional Islamic values with modern instructional approaches in education.

Literature Review

Many studies explain why Islamic early childhood education needs to combine spiritual growth with teaching valuable life skills. This study organizes what experts have discovered about effective Islamic teaching methods combined with relevant research about modern learning barriers.

1. Islamic Pedagogy and Early Childhood

According to Islamic learning methods students grow spiritually and morally while developing their intellectual skills and physical fitness. In line with Halstead's 2004 study Islamic education follows Quranic and Sunnah teachings to educate students who live by God's guidance. During early childhood learning children build their basic Islamic identity by learning Islamic values first. According to Halstead early childhood training builds essential belief systems and moral values at their base. According to Al-Attas (1980) children need guidance that matches their natural tendency toward faith and goodness. The author proposes that early education must follow children's natural tendency by helping them relate to Allah and understand right behavior.

2. Parental Contribution in Islamic Education

Parents impact their kids' first education about Islam more than anyone else. Children learn to practice Islam by watching their parents demonstrate Islamic actions throughout their daily lives according to Hoffman M.L.'s (1962) theory. He shows that helping children study Islamic beliefs by asking questions about their faith can make them know Islamic values better through daily prayer times and Quran story telling. New findings from 2024 research by Altalib, Abu Sulayman, and Altalib demonstrate how parents influence spiritual learning in children. She suggests parents must design a Muslim-friendly domestic atmosphere that brings worship and ethical education together daily. Smetana showed in 1999 how parents help their kids start understanding Islam during their early years. He explains how families need to show good Islamic conduct and talk to kids about their religion.

3. Role of Storytelling in Islamic Education

Students of all ages learn better through stories which makes this technique valuable for Islamic schools. According to Malik in 2021 storytelling was part of Quranic tradition to teach moral values and create spiritual thoughts. Stories about Prophets teach children how to demonstrate patience through high courage while placing complete trust in Allah. Sharing stories with a child in an interactive format builds both emotional and thinking skills to help them reason better about morality and feel for others.

4. Challenges of Modernization and technology

Our current approach to modernization and digital technology creates important difficulties for traditional Islamic education methods. Amin et al. suggest that technology should support teaching methods today while preserving our cultural heritage tomorrow. They suggest combining technology with traditional instruction to make sure new tools support basic Islamic education instead of taking its place. The growing international exchange brings in multiple cultures which compete with Islamic education principles. According to Ghaffari and Naderi in 2013 teachers are responsible for showing students how to handle online content without losing their Islamic beliefs.

5. The Role of Schools and Societies

Muslim schools and community centers take a leading part in developing early education programs for young children. Christian preschools should create lesson plans that include both spiritual learning and essential subject topics reports M. A. Ramli in 2022. Schools need to work together with families and the community to setup a strong platform for children's learning. Churches and Islamic schools run special classes throughout the weekend to help young Muslims practice their faith with other members of their religious community. Zaimeche S. (2002) shows that these religious programs allow kids to feel connected to their community and learn Islamic values.

6. Integrative Approaches to Islamic Education

Research now supports combining Islamic values with modern learning programs. Ainnin and Ismail introduced an educational approach that blends multimedia projects alongside interactive learning activities combined with experiential exploration for effective Islamic teaching to children. Research shows that when children can create and join in activities they learn about Islam much better.

Research methodology:

This research uses a qualitative strategy to review classical Islamic texts alongside scholarly and contemporary research about early childhood learning. This research closely studies Islamic education approaches which work well to discover effective teaching practices along with how families and communities join in. This study examines modern educational obstacles from globalization and technology while looking at ways such as digital devices and engaging lessons to improve learning. The project combines Islamic education traditions with modern learning methods to design a complete approach for early childhood education.

The Goals of Islamic Education for Early Childhood

1. Spiritual Development:

Through Islamic education the child builds their relationship with Allah during their learning experience. Students learn fundamental beliefs about Allah and their prayers as part of their basic Islamic educational teachings.

2. Moral Foundation:

Teaching Islamic values especially honesty compassion and accountability forms the core of this education system. The basic rules to lead an honorable life come directly from Quran and Prophet Muhammad's teachings.

3. Cognitive Growth:

Through early Islamic learning the religious tradition teaches students both to pursue knowledge and to think profoundly. It helps children study and think about how Allah designed our world.

4. Social Interaction:

The lessons focus on developing good social skills and helping children respect others while becoming active members of their community.

Effective Methods for Implementing Islamic Education

1. Role Modeling:

Children absorb important lessons when they watch what adults do. Teachers and parents must act like examples of Islamic values so their children can follow their lead. Praying with children next to you plus saying kind words while expressing thanks helps them learn these values from daily life.

2. Storytelling:

Through Quranic teachings and holy traditions children love to learn important principles. Through the story of Prophet Yusuf (AS) children learn how to stay patient, keep going, and forgive others. Children can join storytelling lessons by asking questions and sharing their thoughts about the meaningful stories.

3. Engaging Activities:

Educational activities that involve artistic projects and musical performances combined with role play help children learn better about Islam through fun experiences. Children better engage when they make their own prayer mats or memorize simple Quranic verses.

4. Practical Demonstrations:

Children learn to perform daily Islamic habits better when they join in activities like preparing for prayer and giving to charity. Effective understanding happens when students see and experience lessons firsthand.

5. Memorization and Recitation:

When children learn to recite short surahs and duas they enhance both their written communication skills and spiritual development. Children learn better when they memorize while repeating words to songs and using visual materials.

Collaborative Roles in Islamic Education**1. Parents as Primary Educators:**

Parents have an essential part in teaching their children about their faith from the beginning. Home starts as the primary learning environment for children to see Islamic ways of life demonstrated in real practice. Children learn best when parents make their home an open space where they teach by example.

2. Teachers and Schools:

Through formal instruction Islamic schools let students gain both religious knowledge and regular school subjects at the same time. Teachers need both expertise in Islamic teachings combined with child-focused teaching methods.

3. Community Involvement:

Mosque facilities run educational sessions for children that include weekend Islamic school and Quran studying plus youth group events. When children take part in these activities they discover their place within Islam while honing their faith in shared settings.

Challenges in the Modern Era**1. Digital Distractions:**

Modern technology creates difficulties yet opens new doors for teaching Islam to children. Digital education helps students learn better yet parents need to control what their kids see online and limit device usage.

2. Cultural Influences:

Globalization brings many different cultural practices that create problems for those who follow Islamic ways of life. Adults need to help children resist damaging online influences by keeping solid hold on their spiritual beliefs.

3. Balancing Secular and Religious Education:

Many nations find it hard to combine Islamic teachings within their regular school system. Schools need new methods to combine teaching both faith and subjects effectively.

4. Parental Involvement:

Due to busy schedules and fast-paced lifestyles parents often find it hard to fully support Islamic instruction for their children. Working together between parents and teachers plus using local help can solve this problem.

Introducing today's technology into Islamic teaching practices

1. Interactive Apps:

Learning materials in app format help children learn Quranic stories and the Arabic alphabet while playing digital games and answering interactive questions. These apps teach Islamic knowledge to children through "Muslim Kids TV" and "Quran Stories for Kids."

2. Online Classes:

Virtual learning platforms offer students the chance to learn from educated Islamic instructors especially when specific educational resources are hard to find. Students can benefit from an easily adjustable learning system that works well for unique requirements.

3. Multimedia Resources:

Multimedia resources help students learn Islamic lessons by presenting ideas through songs, picture books, and video animations. Adults can pick educational materials for children to learn about Islam correctly. These Examples Prove How People Achieve Better Results Using these Methods.

Case Examples and Achievements from Teaching

1. Integrative Programs:

Darul Arqam Islamic School in Singapore teaches early childhood students while merging Islamic values with their educational programs. The school combines religious exercises with classroom lessons without disrupting academic content.

2. Parental Workshops:

The Al-Huda International organization in Pakistan teaches parents special home education workshops. They teach parents to create supportive Islamic living environment.

3. Community-Based Initiatives:

The East London Mosque in the United Kingdom operates playgroups that teach young children about Islam alongside other regular activities. These programs help children make connections with classmates and begin learning about the Islamic faith.

Recommendations

1. Tailored Curricula:

Create teaching materials for young children that combine Islamic principles into their normal age-based learning system. Build lessons that combine stories about good and bad behavior with daily skill training and arts projects.

2. Parental Education:

Teach parents basic education programs that show them how to help their children learn better. Teach parents about how to tell Islamic stories and create homeschool environments that help young children learn the Quran while showing them how to memorize and use it.

3. Technology Integration:

Use digital platforms to help children learn better and more actively. Create digital apps and web tools that teach Islamic education effectively to children.

4. Community Support:

Bring schools and community leaders together with parents to create organized help for Islamic education. Older students must work with younger students in formal mentorship programs.

Conclusion

During the earliest years' children need Islamic education to build their moral direction and spiritual understanding. When teachers apply good teaching practices and work together with parents while adapting to current issues students will benefit from an integrated Islamic education. By combining traditional Islamic values with current education methods society prepares young children to become practicing Muslims in their everyday lives. Putting funds into early childhood education creates both strong students and builds up the Muslim community of all members.

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