NAK-KANAK: Journal of Child Research
E-ISSN: 3047-1168 P-ISSN: 3047-504X
JCR, Vol. 3 (3), August 2026 (125-136)
DOI: https://doi.org/10.21107/njcr.v3i3.245

Implementing Islamic Montessori Learning to Foster Islamic Religious Values in Early Childhood Education: A Case Study

Tiara Margareta Sukma Azis[1], Fikri Nazarullail[1]✉, Dewi Mayangsari[1], Dinda Rizki Tiara[1], Angga Fitriyono[1]

[1]University of Trunodjoyo Madura, Bangkalan, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:
Received: April 20, 2026
Revised: May 25, 2026
Accepted: May 27, 2026

Keywords:
Islamic Montessori;
Islamic religious values;
Early childhood education;
Child-centered learning;
Montessori pedagogy.

This is an open-access article under the CC BY-NC license.

Copyright © 2026 by Author, Published Universitas Trunodjoyo Madura

ABSTRACT

Background of the study: The cultivation of Islamic religious values in early childhood is essential for developing children's moral character, spiritual awareness, and social behavior. However, learning practices in many early childhood education settings still rely heavily on rote memorization and teacher-centered instruction, resulting in limited opportunities for children to internalize Islamic values through meaningful daily experiences. The Islamic Montessori approach has emerged as an alternative pedagogical model that integrates Montessori child-centered principles with Islamic teachings in structured and practical learning activities. This approach is considered capable of fostering children's independence, responsibility, and religious character in a more natural and enjoyable manner.

Aims and scope of paper: This study aimed to explore the implementation of Islamic Montessori learning in cultivating Islamic religious values among children aged 4–5 years at TKIT Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyyah Pamekasan, Indonesia.

Methods: This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation involving the principal, teachers, educational staff, and parents. The primary informants were the classroom teacher and the principal, while assistant teachers and parents served as supporting informants. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing to identify patterns in the implementation of Islamic Montessori learning practices.

Results: The findings revealed that the implementation of Islamic Montessori learning at TKIT Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyyah was conducted systematically through opening activities, core learning activities, and comprehensive evaluations. The core learning process was implemented across several Montessori learning areas, including Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, and Islamic Studies, all of which were integrated with Islamic values related to faith, worship, and moral behavior. The study demonstrated that Islamic Montessori learning effectively facilitated the internalization of Islamic religious values through meaningful and child-centered activities. In addition, the approach contributed to the development of children's independence, discipline, responsibility, and positive Islamic character from an early age.

Contribution: This study contributes to the growing literature on Islamic early childhood education by providing empirical evidence regarding the integration of Montessori pedagogy and Islamic values in preschool learning environments.

✉ **Corresponding Author**
Address : Bangkalan, Indonesia
Email : nazarullail8@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a strategic role in advancing a nation, not only as a means of transferring knowledge but also as a foundation for developing adaptive, innovative, and morally responsible human resources. In Indonesia, the education sector continues to experience significant transformation in response to global developments, technological advancement, and the demands of 21st-century competencies. Current educational issues such as digital literacy, character education, learning inequality, the integration of technology in classrooms, and the strengthening of students' moral and religious values have become central concerns in educational development. In addition, the rapid growth of information technology and the implementation of curriculum reforms encourage educational institutions to create learning environments that are more student-centered, contextual, and capable of fostering critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills. Recent studies emphasize that 21st-century education should integrate digital competence, collaborative learning, creativity, and ethical character formation to prepare learners for complex global challenges (Redecker, 2017; Ananiadou & Claro, 2009). Amid these developments, education remains an effective instrument for improving intellectual capacity while shaping students' character and personality. Therefore, continuous efforts are needed to strengthen the quality of education in order to prepare a generation that is knowledgeable, skilled, independent, morally grounded, and capable of facing future social and global challenges (Akhmad, 2016).

Education is increasingly understood as a holistic process that extends beyond the transmission of knowledge and the development of technical skills. It also involves facilitating the fulfillment of learners' individual needs, interests, and potential in accordance with their stages of development. In the context of contemporary education, learning is not solely oriented toward preparing children for future responsibilities, but also toward supporting their present well-being, social interaction, and personal growth as active individuals within their environments (Citriadin, 2019). According to the opinion of (Arifudin, 2019) Human development occurs continuously throughout life, encompassing both physical and psychological dimensions, which requires educational practices to be responsive to students' developmental characteristics and learning needs. Therefore, meaningful education should be designed through developmentally appropriate learning experiences that encourage children's cognitive, emotional, social, and moral growth in an integrated manner.

Early Childhood Education represents a critical phase in human development, as experiences during early childhood significantly influence children's cognitive, social, emotional, and moral formation in later stages of life. Within this context, Early Childhood Education institutions serve not only as spaces for academic stimulation, but also as strategic environments for nurturing character, spirituality, and children's holistic development (Saputra, 2016) In Islamic educational settings, the cultivation of religious values is considered an essential component of early childhood learning and should be implemented through pedagogical approaches that are developmentally appropriate and responsive to children's characteristics and needs. The process of instilling religious values requires structured educational efforts that integrate guidance, habituation, and meaningful learning experiences into children's daily activities (Rusdi, 2023). In achieving the development of Islamic religious values, there are 3 levels, namely; 1) the level of achieving the development of faith, namely by introducing religious songs, 2) the level of achieving the development of morals, namely in the form of getting used to daily prayer, loving humans, protecting the environment and others, 3) the level of achieving the development of worship, namely by getting used to and teaching children the movements of prayer (Hostini, 2022) Through developmentally appropriate educational practices, children are expected to achieve optimal growth across cognitive, social, emotional, and spiritual domains in accordance with their developmental stages.

Islamic religious education in early childhood has an important role in shaping children's character, behavior, and spiritual awareness from an early age. In the contemporary educational context, the cultivation of religious values is increasingly viewed as essential, particularly amid

rapid social change, digital exposure, and shifting family interactions that influence children's moral development (Martiana et al., 2024). Early introduction to Islamic values can provide children with foundational attitudes and behaviors that support their future educational and social lives (Safitri et al., 2019) However, in practice, early childhood education often faces various challenges. There is a gap between the importance of instilling Islamic religious values from an early age and the learning practices in early childhood education, which tend to be monotonous and lack variety. Religious learning often consists of rote learning and is not integrated into children's daily activities, so these values are not deeply ingrained. Furthermore, a common societal phenomenon is the demand from parents for their children to master reading, writing, and arithmetic (*calistung*) skills from an early age. This is due to several elementary schools making the reading, writing, and arithmetic test a requirement for new student admission. As a result, many parents worry that their children will not be able to read by the time they enter elementary school. This pressure has led many early childhood education schools to independently teach reading, writing, and arithmetic to their students, and various calistung (reading, writing, and arithmetic) classes are becoming increasingly popular. In fact, at this stage of development, children should learn more through fun play activities that are in accordance with their developmental characteristics. Therefore, the learning process for early childhood should use fun, creative methods, and be able to stimulate all aspects of child development in a balanced manner.

The cultivation of religious values in children's learning processes can be facilitated through educational approaches specifically designed to integrate moral and spiritual development into everyday learning experiences. One approach that has gained attention in early childhood education is the Montessori method integrated with Islamic principles, commonly referred to as the Islamic Montessori method. This approach combines child-centered learning, independence, and hands-on activities with the introduction and habituation of Islamic values within children's daily educational experiences. The montessori method is a child-centered educational approach that emphasizes active learning through observation, exploration, and direct engagement with the learning environment. This approach positions children as active participants in the educational process, allowing them to learn independently according to their developmental needs and interests. In Montessori learning, educators function primarily as facilitators or guides who provide direction and prepare supportive learning environments while minimizing excessive intervention, thereby encouraging children's autonomy, initiative, and self-directed learning. (Andriani & Wijaya, 2023). In this method, there are five aspects developed in its activities: practical life, sensorial, language, mathematics, and culture (Montessori et al., 2014). (Kusnawati Nency et al., 2021).

Islamic Montessori is the application of the Montessori learning method designed to bring children closer to Allah SWT while supporting their holistic learning process (Andriani & Wijaya, 2023). This method integrates Islamic religious values into every learning activity, including the introduction of noble morals, worship practices, and Qur'anic teachings through daily experiences aligned with Montessori principles. Montessori learning is fundamentally based on several core principles, including learning through direct experience, the teacher's role as a facilitator who prepares learning materials and environments, the establishment of a structured and supportive prepared environment, individualized learning through one-on-one guidance, and the promotion of peace education (Puspita et al., 2022). Previous international studies have shown that Montessori education supports children's independence, self-regulation, concentration, social-emotional development, and active engagement through experiential and child-centered learning approaches (Lillard, 2017; Cossentino, 2006; Murray et al., 2019; Grazzani et al., 2021; Whitescarver & Cossentino, 2008). According to previous research, the implementation of Islamic Montessori learning activities remains consistent with the original philosophy and principles of Montessori education while incorporating Islamic spiritual values into classroom practices. In the lesson plans examined, learning was implemented thematically throughout the academic year and included seven Montessori areas: Islamic studies, practical life, sensorial, language, mathematics, culture, and arts and crafts.

One of the early childhood education institutions that has adopted the Islamic Montessori approach is TKIT Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyyah Pamekasan. In its educational practices, the institution integrates Islamic religious values into children's daily learning experiences through various habituation activities, including daily prayers, Qur'anic learning, ablution practices, and congregational prayer activities. Alongside religious development, the school also emphasizes play-based and child-centered learning designed to support children's cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual growth in a balanced manner. The implementation of the Islamic Montessori approach in this institution reflects an effort to create a learning environment that combines developmental appropriateness with Islamic character education. This approach has shown positive indications in supporting children's religious development, particularly in fostering familiarity with Qur'anic memorization and encouraging children's participation in religious learning activities from an early age (Hastuti & Ali, 2025).

Based on this phenomenon, the application of the Islamic Montessori method in instilling Islamic religious values in early childhood is an interesting thing to be studied further, because this method does not only emphasize the cognitive aspect, but also integrates Islamic religious values in every child-centered learning activity through direct experience, so that learning will be more meaningful and influential on the formation of character, attitudes, worship habits in children's daily lives. This study aims to determine how the implementation of the Islamic Montessori method in the learning process and how the method plays a role in instilling Islamic religious values in children at TKIT Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyyah Pamekasan.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to examine in depth the implementation of the Islamic Montessori method in cultivating Islamic religious values among children at TKIT Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyyah Pamekasan, Indonesia. A case study approach was selected because the research focused on a specific and bounded educational context, enabling the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon within its real-life setting. According to Yin (2018), case study research is appropriate for investigating contemporary phenomena in their natural contexts, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at TKIT Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyyah Pamekasan, an Islamic early childhood education institution implementing the Islamic Montessori approach in daily learning activities. The participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that the informants possessed relevant knowledge and direct experience related to the implementation of the Islamic Montessori method. The primary informants consisted of the principal and classroom teachers, while supporting informants included assistant teachers and parents of children aged 4–5 years. These participants were considered capable of providing comprehensive information regarding the learning process and the cultivation of Islamic religious values in children.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation to obtain comprehensive and in-depth information regarding the implementation of Islamic Montessori learning practices. Observations were conducted directly during classroom learning activities to examine how Islamic Montessori principles were integrated into children's daily experiences, particularly in developing values related to faith, worship, discipline, independence, and moral behavior. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with the principal, classroom teachers, assistant teachers, and parents to explore their perspectives and experiences regarding the implementation of the Islamic Montessori method. The interviews focused on learning strategies, classroom practices, challenges, and the perceived impact of the method on children's religious

character development. In addition, documentation techniques were used to strengthen the findings obtained through observations and interviews. The collected documents included lesson plans, learning activity records, photographs, school programs, and other institutional documents related to Islamic Montessori learning implementation.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process employed the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles et al. (2014), which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved selecting, focusing, simplifying, and organizing the data obtained from the field to identify information relevant to the research objectives. The reduced data were then presented in the form of descriptive narratives to facilitate interpretation and understanding of the findings. Finally, conclusions were drawn by interpreting patterns, themes, and relationships identified from the data. The findings were continuously verified throughout the research process to ensure their credibility and consistency.

Trustworthiness of the Data

To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the findings, this study applied triangulation techniques consisting of source triangulation, technique triangulation, and time triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from different informants, including principals, teachers, assistant teachers, and parents. Technique triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. Meanwhile, time triangulation was implemented through data collection conducted at different times to ensure the consistency and stability of the information obtained throughout the research process.

RESULTS

Teachers' Understanding of the Islamic Montessori Method at TKIT Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyyah Pamekasan based on research results found many findings, namely that the Islamic Montessori method has been implemented since 2023 as a learning innovation that integrates Montessori principles with Islamic values. The implementation of this method is motivated by the need for a learning approach that is able to develop children's independence, provide a fun learning experience, and instill Islamic values from an early age. The principal of IR stated that the Islamic Montessori method was chosen because it is able to provide space for children to learn actively and independently according to their developmental stage, while at the same time instilling Islamic values in every learning activity.

The research also shows that Islamic Montessori is a development of the Montessori method, combined with Islamic spiritual values, such as introducing manners, prayer, and love for Allah and His Messenger in children's daily activities. Classroom teachers and assistant teachers understand this method as a learning method that emphasizes freedom of learning, independence, and the development of morals from an early age. Furthermore, the implementation of the Islamic Montessori method involves all elements of the school, from teachers and educational staff to parents as supporters of children's learning at home.

The implementation of the Islamic Montessori Method at TKIT Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyyah Pamekasan, the implementation of the Islamic Montessori method is carried out in child-centered learning activities by giving children the freedom to choose learning activities according to their interests. However, this freedom remains under the guidance of teachers and is adapted to Islamic values. The principal explained that in the learning process, teachers not only facilitate children's activities but also insert religious values such as daily prayer, gratitude, and recognition of Allah as the creator of the universe.

The Islamic Montessori method is implemented at TKIT Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyyah, led by the class teacher and a teacher-assistant. The learning is child-centered, allowing students the freedom to choose activities while still being guided by Islamic teachings. Islamic values such as

prayer, gratitude, responsibility, and recognition of God's creation are embedded in daily activities, including practical life and sensory activities. The method still adheres to classic Montessori principles but is enriched with Islamic values.

The teacher's role in implementing the Islamic Montessori method is as a facilitator and active companion, creating a pleasant learning environment. The teacher does not dominate, but guides the children and pays attention to each child's needs. Furthermore, the teacher plays a role in instilling Islamic values in all of the children's activities. Instilling Islamic religious values, there are several Islamic religious values materials taught at TKI Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyyah, namely:

Values of Faith

The instillation of faith values at TKIT Al-Irsyad is carried out through an Islamic Montessori approach integrated into every stage of learning. Children are introduced to God's creation through sensory activities and observation of their surroundings. The learning process consists of several stages. The first stage begins with preparing the learning environment, where the teacher arranges the sensory area with various concrete media such as fruits, natural objects, and interesting props. The environment is designed so that children can learn independently but in a directed manner. The second stage is the provision of examples (demonstrations) by the teacher. The teacher clearly demonstrates how to use a tool or observe an object, while inserting faith values into the activity, such as stating that fruit is God's creation. At this stage, the teacher's role as a facilitator is very visible, namely providing direction without dominating the children's activities.

The third stage is independent exploration by children, during which they are given the freedom to observe, touch, and feel objects directly (Figure 1). During this process, the teacher assists by providing stimuli in the form of simple questions or reinforcement, such as inviting children to say "*MasyaAllah*," "*Alhamdulillah*," and "*Subhanallah*" when they encounter something interesting. This helps children connect concrete experiences with religious values. The final stage, reflection or reinforcement, involves the teacher engaging in a brief discussion about what they have observed. The teacher also fosters an attitude of gratitude in the children's daily lives. Throughout these stages, the teacher's role is not only as a deliverer of material but also as a facilitator, naturally instilling religious values in every child's activity.



Figure 1. Recognize fruits as God's creation

Value of Worship

The instillation of religious values at TKIT Al-Irsyad is carried out through habituation and direct practice appropriate to the child's developmental stage. Implementation is gradual and child-centered. The initial stage begins with preparing the learning environment by providing a prayer area and appropriate media, such as ablution equipment, prayer mats, and hijaiyah letter cards

(Figure 2). Next, the teacher provides a slow demonstration of the procedures for ablution, prayer, and reciting the Iqra' as a concrete example for the children.

The next stage is independent practice and habituation, where children directly practice activities such as *murojaah* (recitation), daily prayers, ablution, prayer, and Quran recitation in turn. In this process, the teacher acts as a facilitator and role model, providing guidance, and reinforcement, so that worship habits can be instilled from an early age in a gradual and meaningful manner. All of these activities demonstrate that the worship material taught reflects aspects of the pillars of Islam, and these activities are carried out to foster worship habits from an early age and continue into adulthood.



Figure 2. Introduction to Hijaiyah Letters and Their Values

Moral Values

Moral values at TKIT Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyyah are instilled through the Islamic Montessori method, beginning with preparing an environment that supports the habituation of commendable attitudes in daily life, such as honesty, politeness, helping each other, loving and respecting friends, sharing with others (Figure 3), and fostering empathy for others. Children are also accustomed to saying hello, thanking others, and apologizing when they make mistakes.

Next, children are given the opportunity to practice these skills directly in daily activities, such as sharing with friends, helping others, and participating in community outreach programs. In this process, teachers act as facilitators and role models, providing guidance, and consistent reinforcement. Through repeated practice, moral values can be ingrained naturally and become part of children's behavior. Furthermore, schools have community outreach programs as a concrete way to implement the moral values taught in school.



Figure 3. Sharing timesnack time

The implementation of moral values instillation at TKIT Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyyah is carried out in an integrated manner within Montessori activities, adapting daily learning themes while still adhering to Montessori principles. Moral values are applied through various activities, including practical life activities, and there is a program of sharing activities with the surrounding community as a concrete form of noble moral behavior towards children.

The implementation of the Islamic Montessori method in instilling Islamic religious values is carried out through several stages of learning activities, including opening activities, core activities, evaluation, and closing. The opening activities are carried out with the habit of greeting, prayer before learning, and group murojaah. In the core activities, children engage in various Montessori activities in several learning areas prepared by the teacher while still integrating Islamic values. Evaluation is carried out through observations of children's behavior and habits in daily life, such as children's ability to say prayers, demonstrate polite behavior, and apply religious values in learning activities. Thus, the application of the Islamic Montessori method is able to instill Islamic religious values naturally through a fun learning experience that is in accordance with the developmental characteristics of early childhood.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of the Islamic Montessori approach at TKIT Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyyah Pamekasan contributes positively to the cultivation of Islamic religious values in early childhood through meaningful, child-centered, and experience-based learning activities. The integration of Islamic values into daily classroom routines reflects an educational environment that combines spiritual habituation with Montessori principles emphasizing independence, exploration, and active learning. Islamic learning activities such as reciting prayers, memorizing short surahs, performing congregational prayers, and practicing good manners are consistently integrated into children’s daily experiences, allowing religious values to be internalized naturally rather than merely taught through memorization.

The implementation of Islamic Montessori learning in this study aligns with previous studies emphasizing that early childhood religious education becomes more meaningful when delivered through contextual and enjoyable learning experiences. The integration of Islamic values into Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, and Islamic Studies activities enables children to connect abstract religious concepts with concrete experiences in their surrounding environment. This finding supports the view that Montessori-based Islamic learning can foster children’s spiritual awareness, independence, concentration, and positive behavior through hands-on and sensory-based activities (Hastuti & Ali, 2025). Previous international studies also indicate that Montessori and experiential learning approaches contribute positively to children’s autonomy, self-regulation, social competence, and reflective thinking through active interaction with the learning environment (Lillard, 2017; Murray et al., 2019). Furthermore, religious and values-based learning in early childhood is considered more effective when children are emotionally engaged and actively involved in meaningful activities connected to their everyday experiences (Hyde, 2022; White & Warfa, 2011). The use of child-centered approaches also reflects international perspectives suggesting that meaningful religious learning in early childhood should involve emotional engagement, exploration, sensory experiences, and active participation rather than teacher-centered instruction alone (Cossentino, 2006; Grazzani et al., 2021).

In the sensorial learning area, children were encouraged to observe natural objects such as plants, flowers, and animals while relating these experiences to the greatness of *Allah SWT*. Through this process, children gradually developed an understanding of faith values by recognizing nature as part of Allah’s creation. The findings indicate that sensory-based learning activities help young children understand spiritual concepts more concretely because early childhood learners tend to understand knowledge through direct experiences and observation.

These findings are consistent with previous studies indicating that experiential and nature-based religious learning supports children's spiritual understanding, gratitude, and emotional attachment to religious values (Hyde, 2022). Moreover, the use of positive Islamic expressions such as "*Subhanallah*," "*MasyaAllah*," and "*Alhamdulillah*" demonstrates that religious language habituation can strengthen children's spiritual awareness in everyday contexts.

The study also found that worship values were cultivated through routine and habituation practices such as Dhuha prayer, Quran recitation, memorization of short surahs, and daily supplications. Teachers played an important role in introducing prayer movements, ablution procedures, prayer times, and the meaning of worship activities through repeated daily practices. This finding confirms that habituation remains an important strategy in Islamic early childhood education because young children naturally learn through imitation and repetition. Previous studies have demonstrated that repeated religious practices and structured routines contribute significantly to children's character formation, self-regulation, and moral internalization during early childhood development (Benson et al., 2019; Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). Furthermore, integrating worship activities into playful and engaging learning experiences, such as verse-connection games and group murojaah, demonstrates that religious learning can be enjoyable and developmentally appropriate for young learners. Research in early childhood education also suggests that play-based and emotionally engaging pedagogies support children's spiritual understanding, intrinsic motivation, and long-term behavioral development (Hyde, 2022; White & Warfa, 2011). In addition, social learning perspectives emphasize that children acquire moral and religious behaviors effectively through observation, imitation, and repeated interaction with significant adults and peers within meaningful social environments (Bandura, 1977). Therefore, consistent religious habituation integrated with child-centered learning activities can strengthen children's spiritual awareness, worship discipline, and positive behavioral development from an early age.

Another important finding concerns the cultivation of moral values through Practical Life activities. The implementation of activities such as organizing learning materials, cleaning work areas, sharing food, helping friends, and participating in monthly charity programs reflects the integration of Islamic moral education into children's daily practices. Through these activities, children developed responsibility, discipline, empathy, cooperation, and independence. These findings support Montessori theory, which emphasizes that Practical Life activities are essential for developing self-regulation, social responsibility, and independence in early childhood. The results also indicate that moral education becomes more effective when children are directly involved in meaningful social experiences rather than merely receiving verbal instruction about good behavior.

Despite these positive findings, the study also identified several limitations in the implementation of the Islamic Montessori approach. Although Islamic values were successfully integrated into classroom routines and activities, the application of authentic Montessori principles was not yet fully optimized. Religious learning activities still relied heavily on habituation and teacher guidance rather than utilizing Montessori teaching aids and self-directed exploration comprehensively. In authentic Montessori pedagogy, teaching aids are essential tools that allow children to independently explore concepts through sensory experiences and self-correction. However, in this study, the use of Montessori learning materials specifically designed for Islamic religious learning remained limited. As a result, the implementation of Islamic Montessori learning tended to emphasize routine religious practices more than autonomous exploration and discovery learning.

Implications

The findings of this study have several important implications for early childhood Islamic education. First, the study highlights that integrating Islamic values into child-centered and experiential learning activities can support children's spiritual, social, emotional, and moral development simultaneously. Religious education for young children should therefore move

beyond memorization-based approaches toward more meaningful, contextual, and activity-based learning experiences.

Second, the findings suggest that Islamic Montessori learning environments can provide an alternative pedagogical model for integrating religious education with holistic child development. The combination of Montessori principles and Islamic values enables children to learn religion through direct experience, independence, and exploration while maintaining spiritual and moral foundations.

Third, the study implies the importance of teacher competency in implementing authentic Islamic Montessori pedagogy. Teachers need adequate understanding of Montessori principles, especially regarding the use of teaching aids, prepared environments, and self-directed learning activities, so that religious learning can become more interactive and exploratory rather than relying solely on habituation practices.

Research Contributions

This study contributes theoretically and practically to the field of Islamic early childhood education. Theoretically, the study enriches the literature on the integration of Montessori pedagogy and Islamic education by providing empirical evidence regarding how Islamic values can be internalized through child-centered learning experiences in early childhood settings. The findings also contribute to discussions on developmentally appropriate religious education for young children.

Practically, this study provides insights for teachers, school leaders, and early childhood institutions seeking to implement Islamic Montessori learning in preschool contexts. The findings offer practical examples of how Islamic values related to faith, worship, and morality can be integrated into daily classroom activities through sensory exploration, practical life experiences, and play-based learning.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted in a single Islamic kindergarten setting, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. Second, the study focused primarily on teachers', principals', and parents' perspectives without directly exploring children's voices and experiences in depth. Third, the study employed a qualitative approach without quantitative measurement of children's developmental outcomes, making it difficult to measure the extent of the effectiveness of Islamic Montessori learning statistically.

Suggestions

Future studies are recommended to explore the implementation of Islamic Montessori learning in broader educational contexts involving multiple schools and diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. Further research may also employ mixed-method or experimental designs to examine the effectiveness of Islamic Montessori learning on children's religious, social, emotional, and cognitive development quantitatively. In addition, future researchers are encouraged to develop and investigate Montessori-based Islamic teaching aids and learning materials that can support children's independent exploration of religious concepts in more authentic Montessori learning environments.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of the Islamic Montessori approach at TKIT Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyyah Pamekasan has contributed positively to the cultivation of Islamic religious values in early childhood. The integration of Islamic values into daily learning activities was systematically carried out through opening activities, core learning activities, and evaluation processes designed to foster children's faith, worship practices, and moral development in meaningful and enjoyable ways. Islamic values were integrated into various Montessori learning

areas, including Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, and Islamic Studies, allowing children to experience religious learning through direct, contextual, and child-centered activities.

The findings further indicate that the Islamic Montessori approach supports the development of children's independence, discipline, empathy, responsibility, and spiritual awareness both at school and within their home environments. Through sensory exploration, practical life activities, worship habituation, and social interaction, children were able to internalize Islamic values naturally through everyday experiences. However, the study also found that the implementation of authentic Montessori principles, particularly the optimal use of Montessori teaching aids and self-directed exploration, still requires further improvement. Therefore, this study emphasizes that Islamic Montessori learning has strong potential as a holistic pedagogical approach for integrating religious education with children's cognitive, social, emotional, and moral development in early childhood education settings.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Tiara Margareta Sukma Azis: Conceptualization, Investigation, Data Curation, Writing – Original Draft. **Fikri Nazarullail:** Supervision, Methodology, Validation, Writing – Review & Editing. **Dewi Mayangsari:** Formal Analysis, Methodology, Writing – Review & Editing. **Dinda Rizki Tiara:** Data Curation, Investigation, Documentation. **Angga Fitriyono:** Resources, Visualization, Project Administration.

REFERENCES

Akhmad, M. A. (2016). *Urgensi pendidikan karakter di Indonesia*. Ar-Ruzz Media.

Andriani, R. T., & Wijaya, A. (2023). Analisis penggunaan metode Islamic Montessori dalam menanamkan nilai Islam pada anak di RA Tunas Literasi. *Journal of Islamic Education, 1*(2), 81–92.

Arifudin, O. (2019). *Konsep PAUD* (Cetakan 1). Widina Bhakti Persada.

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Prentice Hall.

Benson, P. L., Roehlkepartain, E. C., & Rude, S. P. (2019). Spiritual development in childhood and adolescence: Toward a field of inquiry. In R. M. Lerner, R. W. Roeser, & E. Phelps (Eds.), *Positive youth development and spirituality: From theory to research* (pp. 205–213). Routledge.

Berkowitz, M. W., & Bier, M. C. (2005). What works in character education: A research-driven guide for educators. *Journal of Research in Character Education, 3*(1), 29–48.

Citriadin, Y. (2019). *Pengantar pendidikan* (1st ed.). CV Sanabil.

Cossentino, J. (2006). Big work: Goodness, vocation, and engagement in the Montessori method. *Curriculum Inquiry, 36*(1), 63–92. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-873X.2006.00340.x

Grazzani, I., Agliati, A., Cavioni, V., Conte, E., Gandellini, S., Lupica Spagnolo, M., Ornaghi, V., Rossi, F., & Zanetti, M. A. (2021). Adolescents' resilience during COVID-19 pandemic: The role of peer attachment and emotional competence. *Children and Youth Services Review, 120*, Article 105654. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105654

Hastuti, D., & Ali, R. M. (2025). The application of Islamic religious values through the Montessori method in early childhood education: A systematic review. *Proceedings of the Education and Psychology International Conference*, 140–151.

Hostini, L. (2022). Upaya penanaman nilai-nilai pendidikan agama Islam pada anak usia dini di PAUD Pelita Hati. *Early Childhood Research and Practice, 3*(1), 1–4. https://doi.org/10.33258/ecrp.v3i01.2546

Hyde, B. (2022). Action possibilities enhancing the spiritual wellbeing of young children: Applying affordance theory to the Godly Play room. *Religions, 13*(12), Article 1202. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13121202

Kusnawati, N., Sa'dullah, A., & Setiawan, E. (2021). Penerapan Islamic Montessori activity pada kegiatan pembelajaran anak usia dini di RA Tunas Mulia Dua Desa Pandanlandung Kecamatan Wagir Kabupaten Malang. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini, 3*, 1–12.

Lillard, A. S. (2017). *Montessori: The science behind the genius* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Martiana, E. A., Syarif, F., & Yildirim, E. (2024). Building spirituality from an early age in the digital era: Innovative strategies for Islamic religious education. *Indonesian Journal of Early Childhood Educational Research (IJECER), 3*(1), 85–93.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Montessori, M., Gutek, G. L., Lintang, L. A., & Setyaningrum. (2014). *Metode Montessori: Panduan wajib untuk guru dan orang tua didik PAUD* (Cetakan 1). Pustaka Pelajar.

Mulyati, M. (2020). Menciptakan pembelajaran menyenangkan dalam menumbuhkan peminatan anak usia dini terhadap pelajaran. *Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, 1*(2), 277–294.

Murray, A., McFarland-Piazza, L., & Harrison, L. J. (2019). Changing patterns of parent–teacher communication and parent involvement from preschool to school. *Early Child Development and Care, 189*(13), 2170–2186. https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2018.1439946

Puspita, M., Jaya, S., Febrianti, V., & Ahmad, S. (2022). Prinsip-prinsip Montessori dalam pembelajaran anak usia dini di RA Shazia Palembang. *DIAJAR: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran, 1*(3), 356–370. https://doi.org/10.54259/diajar.v1i3.1010

Redecker, C. (2017). *European framework for the digital competence of educators: DigCompEdu*. Publications Office of the European Union. https://doi.org/10.2760/159770

Rusdi, M. (2023). *Penanaman nilai-nilai agama Islam dalam pembelajaran* (Cetakan 1). Universitas Medan Area Press.

Safitri, N., Kuswanto, C. W., & Alamsyah, Y. A. (2019). Metode penanaman nilai-nilai agama dan moral anak usia dini. *Journal of Early Childhood Education (JECE), 1*(2), 29–44. https://doi.org/10.15408/jece.v1i2.13312

Saputra, M. A. (2016). Penanaman nilai-nilai agama pada anak usia dini di R.A. DDI Addariyah Kota Palopo. *Al-Qalam, 20*(2), 197–210.

Voogt, J., & Roblin, N. P. (2012). A comparative analysis of international frameworks for 21st century competences: Implications for national curriculum policies. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 44*(3), 299–321. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2012.668938

White, J., & Warfa, N. (2011). Building schools of character: A case study investigation of character education's impact on school climate, pupil behavior, and curriculum delivery. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 41*(1), 45–60. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2010.00701.x

Whitescarver, K., & Cossentino, J. (2008). Montessori and the mainstream: A century of reform on the margins. *Teachers College Record, 110*(12), 2571–2600. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146810811001202

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Sage Publications.