

## **Implementation of the Islamic Education Curriculum and Learning Materials for Early Childhood in the North Labuhanbatu An-Nur Playgroup**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Lack of understanding and optimal application of the curriculum and learning materials for Islamic Education for early childhood is the main challenge in implementing learning at the An-Nur Playgroup, North Labuhanbatu Regency. This research aims to describe the Islamic education curriculum and learning materials for early childhood in the North Labuhanbatu An-Nur Playgroup. The curriculum is an important part of the learning process, student success is determined by the curriculum implemented by educational institutions. Learning materials as an important part of the curriculum have a role in preparing students according to the educational goals expected by society. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative, with an observation approach to learning activities, interviews with school principals and teachers as well as documentation of the learning process in the North Labuhanbatu An-Nur Playgroup. The informants in this research were teachers, school principals and institutional managers. The research results show that the Islamic education curriculum and learning materials for early childhood implemented in the An-Nur Play Group include teaching about morals, worship, as well as introducing the values of the Koran and hadith through methods that are appropriate to the child's development stage. The implementation of this curriculum also involves play activities which function as a means of introducing Islamic teachings in a way that is fun and easy for children to understand. Overall, the implementation of this curriculum is expected to produce a young generation who is not only intellectually intelligent but also has a strong character and is based on Islamic teachings. The implementation of the Islamic education curriculum in early childhood, especially in the North Labuhanbatu An-Nur Playgroup, has had a positive impact on the development of children's character based on Islamic values. By integrating moral education, worship, and introduction to the values of the Koran and hadith from an early age, this curriculum is expected to form individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have good morals and spirituality. The results of this study are expected to be a reference in developing more effective Islamic Education learning strategies that are in accordance with the developmental stages of early childhood at the An-Nur Playgroup, North Labuhanbatu.*

**Keywords:** *Implementation, Curriculum, Learning Materials, Islamic Education and Early Childhood,*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Islamic education curriculum is an important aspect in forming a generation that not only excels in academics, but also has a deep understanding of religion and noble morals. Along with the times and the challenges of globalization, the Islamic education curriculum continues to develop to answer the needs of society and the world of education. One trend that is currently developing is the integration of the Islamic education curriculum with the general education curriculum. This concept aims to create a balance between religious education and general knowledge, where students not only master religious knowledge, but also broad academic abilities.

The Islamic education curriculum is increasingly flexible to answer educational needs that are more responsive to changing times. In the midst of social dynamics and rapid globalization, the Islamic education curriculum must be able to respond to the needs of students, parents and society. In the context of an increasingly global and multicultural world, the Islamic education curriculum increasingly emphasizes the importance of the values of tolerance, diversity and living side by side with others in a pluralistic society. Education is a right for all, with states parties as the primary duty bearers responsible for ensuring this right, but education is framed in a variety of ways.<sup>1</sup>

Early childhood education (ECE) programs generally focus on developing skills in language, literacy, numeracy, cognitive abilities (including executive functions), socio-emotional growth, and physical development.<sup>2</sup> Children's learning environments encompass those found in early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings. In this review, ECEC refers to any group-based education and care service for young children who take a place outside the home prior to their entry into formal schooling.<sup>3</sup> Policies and teaching approaches in early childhood education and care (ECEC) often reflect national discussions about the purpose of ECEC and how it connects with other sectors of public services and the broader education system.<sup>4</sup>

The importance of quality ECEC programmes is well documented, as they lay the foundation for lifelong learning and success. Recognising this, countries around the world continue to seek innovative ways to improve the effectiveness of ECEC strategies and ensure that they are adaptive to the evolving needs of young learners.<sup>5</sup> The origins of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Zambia stem from traditional practices, where young children learn

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<sup>1</sup> Jane Murray, "What Is the Purpose of Education? A Context for Early Childhood Education," *International Journal of Early Years Education* 31, no. 3 (2023): 571–78, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2023.2238399>.

<sup>2</sup> Robert A. Hahn and W. Steven Barnett, "Early Childhood Education: Health, Equity, and Economics," *Annual Review of Public Health* 44 (2023): 75–92, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-071321-032337>.

<sup>3</sup> Patricia Eadie et al., "Domains of Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care: A Scoping Review of the Extent and Consistency of the Literature," *Educational Review* 76, no. 4 (2024): 1057–86, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2022.2077704>.

<sup>4</sup> Nafsika Alexiadou et al., "Early Childhood Education and Care Policy Change: Comparing Goals, Governance and Ideas in Nordic Contexts," *Compare* 54, no. 2 (2024): 185–202, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2022.2092451>.

<sup>5</sup> Ololade Elizabeth Adewusi et al., "Adaptive Teaching Strategies in Early Childhood Education: A Review for Nigeria and the UK," *International Journal of Applied Research in Social Sciences* 5, no. 8 (2023): 255–71, <https://doi.org/10.51594/ijarss.v5i8.575>.

essential life skills, cultural values, and customs through family and community-based instruction.<sup>6</sup> Children are raised in a society marked by fast-paced technological advancement and regularly interact with different forms of technology in their daily lives.<sup>7</sup>

Fine motor skills are essential from a young age for performing numerous daily tasks.<sup>8</sup> Based on our three studies, leadership and the core culture within early childhood settings play a crucial role in fostering teachers' self-efficacy in the visual arts.<sup>9</sup> Although access to quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) represents just one aspect of a holistic, cross-sectoral strategy for supporting early childhood development, focusing on data related to ECCE access can serve as a foundation for a broader monitoring framework that incorporates health, nutrition, and social protection systems.<sup>10</sup>

Early Childhood Education and Care can serve either as a means to perpetuate existing societal structures or as a catalyst for driving social change.<sup>11</sup> Teaching young children for their lives and futures requires a new approach that combines various subject areas to encourage critical thinking from multiple perspectives.<sup>12</sup> Early Childhood Education teachers recognize the need to enhance their abilities in several domains, including fundamental music theory, instrumental and vocal skills, teaching methods that encourage children's musical creativity and self-expression, as well as skills to incorporate music into other areas of learning.<sup>13</sup>

Early childhood education is an important stage in a child's development, where the basics of learning and character are formed. In recent years, the trend of learning materials for early childhood has become increasingly diverse and adapted to children's development needs and the challenges of the times. Implementing the Islamic education curriculum in early childhood is very important because at this age, children are in the period of character formation and the basics of knowledge. This curriculum aims to introduce Islamic values from an early age, form good morals, and provide a strong foundation of religious knowledge.

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<sup>6</sup> Beatrice Matafwali and Mubanga Mofu, "Exploring the Feasibility of Outdoor Indigenous Games and Songs to Enhance Play-Based Pedagogy in Early Childhood Education," *Journal of Childhood, Education and Society* 4, no. 3 (2023): 391–405, <https://doi.org/10.37291/2717638X.202343270>.

<sup>7</sup> Sara Eliasson, Louise Peterson, and Annika Lantz-Andersson, "A Systematic Literature Review of Empirical Research on Technology Education in Early Childhood Education," *International Journal of Technology and Design Education* 33, no. 3 (2023): 793–818, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10798-022-09764-z>.

<sup>8</sup> Karel F.B. Strooband et al., "Validity and Reliability of a Fine Motor Assessment for Preschool Children," *Early Childhood Education Journal* 51, no. 5 (2023): 801–10, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-022-01336-z>.

<sup>9</sup> Rachel Dennee, Gai Lindsay, and Sarah Probine, "Visual Arts Self-Efficacy: Impacts and Supports for Early Childhood Teachers," *Early Childhood Education Journal* 52, no. 6 (2024): 1035–45, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-023-01489-5>.

<sup>10</sup> Abbie Raikes et al., "Global Tracking of Access and Quality in Early Childhood Care and Education," *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy* 17, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40723-023-00116-5>.

<sup>11</sup> Paulette Luff et al., "Educating the Youngest Citizens – Possibilities for Early Childhood Education and Care, in England Paulette Luff, Mallika Kanyal, Mansur Shehu and Nicola Brewis Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford, England," *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies* 14, no. 3 (2016): 197–219.

<sup>12</sup> Ahlam A. Alghamdi, "Exploring Early Childhood Teachers' Beliefs About STEAM Education in Saudi Arabia," *Early Childhood Education Journal* 51, no. 2 (2023): 247–56, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-021-01303-0>.

<sup>13</sup> Alfredo Bautista et al., "Music in Early Childhood Teacher Education: Raising Awareness of a Worrisome Reality and Proposing Strategies to Move Forward," *Arts Education Policy Review* 125, no. 3 (2024): 139–49, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2022.2043969>.

Trends in learning materials for early childhood are increasingly developing and adapting to the needs and challenges of the times. With a holistic, game-based approach, and involving various important aspects such as literacy, numeracy, character development, as well as teaching social and emotional values, Learning materials in early childhood education can contribute to shaping a generation that is not only academically capable but also possesses strong character, empathy, and preparedness to navigate an ever-evolving world.

Islamic education has a very important role in character formation and development of children during their early developmental stages. In the context of early childhood education, implementing a curriculum aligned with the principles of Islamic teachings is essential. In Indonesia, many educational institutions are starting to integrate Islamic values in the learning process to educate a generation that possesses not only intellectual intelligence but also strong moral character. These values can be achieved well if the curriculum is implemented well.

Both intracurricular and extracurricular components of the curriculum play an effective role in shaping students' character.<sup>14</sup> The implementation of the curriculum is closely connected to the concept of curriculum administration.<sup>15</sup> The independent curriculum is a recent educational approach in Indonesia designed to give teachers and students greater flexibility in the learning process.<sup>16</sup> An innovative and relevant learning method aimed at developing a young generation with strong character and virtuous values.<sup>17</sup> Implementing this curriculum posed difficulties for both students and teachers. Students were required to understand complex social issues, form their own opinions about them, and clearly express and defend their perspectives.<sup>18</sup>

The curriculum serves as a vital educational tool in the learning process.<sup>19</sup> The curriculum management process must adhere to the principles of curriculum management because an early childhood curriculum that is managed effectively and efficiently will be able to direct the goals of early childhood institutions.<sup>20</sup> The advancement of the Islamic education curriculum during the new normal era should be supported by careful preparation, including ICT training and adapting to virtual learning methods.<sup>21</sup> The concept of the Independent Curriculum which

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<sup>14</sup> Mursal Aziz et al., "Administrasi Manajemen Kurikulum Intrakurikuler Dan Ekstrakurikuler Dalam Menanamkan Karakter Siswa Di SD Al-Ittihadiyah Laut Dendang," *Administraus* 8, no. 2 (2024): 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.56662/administraus.v8i2.216>.

<sup>15</sup> Mursal Aziz et.al., "Administrasi Kurikulum Dalam Meningkatkan Kualitas Pendidikan Islam Di SD IT Hidayatul Jannah Sumatera Utara," *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 09, no. 2 (2024): 1–5.

<sup>16</sup> Mursal Aziz et.al., "Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Pada Mata Pelajaran Al-Qur'an Hadis Dengan Metode Bernyanyi Di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah," *Edutainment : Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Kependidikan* 12, no. 1 (2024): 36–44.

<sup>17</sup> Mursal Aziz et.al., "Implementation Of Hand Puppet Learning Media In Growing Islamic Character Of Elementary School Students Of Alam Friends Of The Quran," *Tadrib: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 10, no. 1 (2024): 638–44.

<sup>18</sup> Maria Evagorou, Maria Vrikki, and Elena Papanastasiou, "Students' and Teachers' Voice on the Outcomes of a Citizenship Education Curriculum," *Citizenship, Social and Economics Education* 22, no. 2 (2023): 100–117, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14788047231193917>.

<sup>19</sup> Mursal Aziz Zailani, "Transformation of Islamic Education Curriculum Development Policy in the National Education System," *Revista Argentina de Clínica Psicológica* 29, no. 3 (2020): 2538–52, <https://doi.org/10.18844/cjes.v17i7.7685>.

<sup>20</sup> Darmawati, Al Hadi Yan Putra, and Nuril Furqon, "Implementasi Manajemen Kurikulum Pada Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini Yayasan Pendidikan Islam TK Makmur Al Ihsan Desa Penungan Kecamatan Selat Penungan Kabupaten Banyuasin," *Jurnal Education* 05, no. 03 (2023): 8669–79.

<sup>21</sup> Ossi Marga Ramadhan, Acep Heris Hermawan, and Mohamad Erihadiana, "Pengembangan Kurikulum

emphasizes flexibility and responsiveness to student needs, has also emerged as awareness of the importance of a more holistic and coaching-oriented approach in behavior management.<sup>22</sup>

The early childhood curriculum includes a series of play-based learning activities designed to give children hands-on experiences that help nurture their full developmental potential.<sup>23</sup> The curriculum has a major role in the implementation of multicultural education in kindergarten.<sup>24</sup> The conditions for the learning process by applying the singing method are certainly very enjoyable.<sup>25</sup>

The Islamic education curriculum for early childhood is a very determining aspect in educational institutions, because the curriculum is a guide for teachers in teaching children. Therefore, learning becomes optimal and achieves good goals if the implementation of the Islamic education curriculum is carried out well in an institution.<sup>26</sup>

Curriculum for early childhood the overall aim is to provide a comprehensive introduction to the curriculum issues that teachers and educational practitioners will face in the decisions they must make to promote children's learning, and to explore curriculum approaches for early childhood. The identified factors influencing the effectiveness of the curriculum serve as a guide for other institutions implementing similar programs.<sup>27</sup> The ideological curriculum serves as the foundational concept behind the formal curriculum, providing more detailed content and methods of implementation.<sup>28</sup>

The educational curriculum at Playgroup level is basically designed to introduce children to basic learning and tends not to be serious and focused. At the An-Nur Play Group, it is not just normal play in general, but the Islamic education curriculum has been instilled in a way that is fun and appropriate to the child's developmental stage. Learning materials include moral values, basic worship such as prayer, short prayers, as well as an introduction to the stories of prophets and Islamic figures who can provide moral examples for children.

The educators at An-Nur Playgroup also try to integrate Islamic character values, such as honesty, patience and respect, into the children's daily activities. This is expected to shape good character and build a strong moral foundation for their future lives. An effective Islamic

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Pendidikan Islam Di Era New Normal,” *Jurnal Intelektual: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Studi Keislaman* 11, no. 1 (2021): 32–45, <https://doi.org/10.33367/ji.v11i1.1588>.

<sup>22</sup> Agus Purnomo Ahmad Putikadyanto, Moh. Badruddin Amin, and Liana Rochmatul Wachidah, “Mewujudkan Sekolah Ramah Anak: Implementasi Disiplin Positif Dalam Kurikulum Merdeka,” *Kiddo: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini*, 2024, 106–16, <https://doi.org/10.19105/kiddo.v1i1.12766>.

<sup>23</sup> Hasyim Rosidi and Sinuhaji, “Implementasi Kurikulum Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini Perspektif Filsafat Pendidikan Islam Di Tk Muawanah Lamongan,” *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Dan Sosial Humaniora* 3, no. 2 (2019): 58–66, <http://www.tjyybjb.ac.cn/CN/article/downloadArticleFile.do?attachType=PDF&id=9987>.

<sup>24</sup> Muhammad Fadlillah, “Model Kurikulum Pendidikan Multikultural Di Taman Kanak-Kanak,” *Jurnal Pembangunan Pendidikan: Fondasi Dan Aplikasi* 5, no. 1 (2017): 42, <https://doi.org/10.21831/jppfa.v5i1.13286>.

<sup>25</sup> Mursal Aziz et.al., “Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Pada Mata Pelajaran Al-Qur’an Hadis Dengan Metode Bernyanyi Di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.”

<sup>26</sup> Lydia Sartika & Yusrani Batu Bara, “Kurikulum Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini,” *Jurnal Al Athfaal* 1, no. 1 (2023): 29–32, <https://doi.org/10.62214/jalfal.v1i1.52>.

<sup>27</sup> M. Mukhibat et al., “Development and Evaluation of Religious Moderation Education Curriculum at Higher Education in Indonesia,” *Cogent Education* 11, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2302308>.

<sup>28</sup> Marianne Undheim and Maria Ploog, “Digital Competence and Digital Technology: A Curriculum Analysis of Norwegian Early Childhood Teacher Education,” *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2023.2204109>.

education curriculum approach requires teaching staff who not only have sufficient religious knowledge, but also adequate pedagogical skills to teach early childhood.

In its implementation, the curriculum has various models that adapt to the needs of children in each generation.<sup>29</sup> Islamic-based education exists as an effort that can produce a generation with virtuous character aligned with the principles of Islamic teachings. So in developing an Islamic-based curriculum it is mandatory to follow the flow of developments in science and technology.<sup>30</sup>

Globally, there is a trend of increasing integration between religious education, including Islamic education, with general education. In many countries, the Islamic education curriculum at the PAUD level is now trying to accommodate modern science while still maintaining essential religious values. This approach not only teaches Islamic teachings, but also integrates general knowledge, such as science, mathematics and technology, which is conveyed in a way that is easy for children to understand. In today's digital age, the application of technology in education is increasingly widespread, including in Islamic education for early childhood. Technology allows learning material to be delivered in a more interesting and interactive way, such as through educational applications, digital games, videos and social media.

Islamic education at the PAUD level in Indonesia is increasingly receiving attention as part of efforts to shape national character. Likewise in North Labuhanbatu, parents hope that educational institutions can help their children develop well. The Islamic education curriculum does not only focus on understanding religious teachings, but also on developing character values based on Islamic teachings, such as honesty, discipline and mutual respect. The Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture, has published a curriculum that integrates religious education with general education.

From various studies that have been carried out by researchers, curriculum implementation at the early childhood level varies. The independent curriculum in implementing RA Al-Jihad's early childhood character uses habituation and coaching methods as a way of instilling character values. One influence is found in the learning process, children tend to show increased character values towards each other and towards teachers.<sup>31</sup>

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Kartini Kindergarten is a public kindergarten that has Islamic-based learning, the learning

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<sup>29</sup> Rista Erika, "Penerapan Kurikulum Islam Terpadu Di Taman Kanak-Kanak," *AlMaheer: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 01 (2023): 29–35, <https://doi.org/10.63018/jpi.v1i01.9>.

<sup>30</sup> Cut Citra Novita et al., "Pengembangan Kurikulum Berbasis Nilai-Nilai Islam di TK Islam Darul Arifin Jambi," *SALIHA: Jurnal Pendidikan & Agama Islam* 5, no. 1 (2022): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.54396/saliha.v5i1.178>.

<sup>31</sup> Ainur Rochmah et al., "Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Tema 'Aku Sayang Bumi' Pada Anak Usia Dini Di Ra Al Jihad Malang," *Kiddo: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini* 5, no. 1 (2024): 183–98, <https://doi.org/10.19105/kiddo.v5i1.10809>.

<sup>32</sup> Rochmah et al.

activities carried out are interspersed with Islamic educational activities such as the Iqra' reciting activity which is carried out before entering class, the Dhuha prayer activity in congregation and the reading of Asmaul Husna every day before learning begins.<sup>33</sup>

Pembina Jeneponto State Kindergarten applies the 2013 curriculum to its students. K13 is considered easier than the previous curriculum with thematic learning which is considered to be in accordance with the brain's working patterns because it discusses one theme from various concepts and aspects of development, to produce a generation that is creative, innovative and more productive through a scientific approach.<sup>34</sup>

Nurul Hasanah Kindergarten has implemented the 2013 (K13) curriculum since it was first implemented, then is currently preparing and planning a new curriculum, namely the independent curriculum. In designing the curriculum at Nurul Hasanah Kindergarten, the principal and all teachers were involved.<sup>35</sup> TK IT Rabbani Quran School includes Islam in its curriculum which is oriented towards relevance, adaptation, continuity, flexibility, practicality and acceptability, feasibility and accountability as well as a number of other principles aimed at realizing the quality of early childhood education.<sup>36</sup>

Learning materials for Play Group children are focused on developing physical, cognitive, social, emotional and religious aspects. It was found that many learning materials for Play Group children were not properly arranged in the learning curriculum. The implementation carried out in the field is just for children playing and social training. The North Labuhanbatu An-Nur Playgroup has implemented learning materials that introduce children to religion from an early age. The application of learning materials that introduce children to religion from an early age is part of efforts to build children's character and spiritual foundations. Introduction to religion, especially Islam, is taught in a simple and fun way, according to the child's age development.

Islamic religious education implemented at the Al-Farabi Integrated Islamic Kindergarten consists of knowing God and His creation, practicing obligatory prayers and the Sunnah, getting used to using daily prayers, behaving politely, getting used to being grateful, being happy to help friends and teachers, getting used to saying hello and returning greetings, getting used to reading iqro' every morning, commemorating religious holidays, memorizing simple hadiths, tahfidz short surahs every morning for 30 minutes.<sup>37</sup>

The curriculum that applies at Al-Fath Kindergarten is the 2013 Curriculum, the religious

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<sup>33</sup> Nurhusni, Intan Permata Putri, and Sukiman, "Inovasi Pengembangan Kurikulum Hilda Taba Berbasis Pendidikan Islam (Studi Kasus Di TK Kartini)," *Indonesian Journal of Early Childhood: Jurnal Dunia Anak Usia Dini* 5, no. 2 (2023): 296–305, <https://doi.org/10.35473/ijec.v5i1.2377>.

<sup>34</sup> Ahmad Afiif et al., "Manajemen Kurikulum Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini Di Tk Negeri Pembina Jeneponto," *NANAEKE: Indonesian Journal of Early Childhood Education* 2, no. 2 (2019): 92, <https://doi.org/10.24252/nananeke.v2i2.11576>.

<sup>35</sup> L Hasanah et al., "Manajemen Kurikulum Anak Usia Dini Di Taman Kanak Kanak Nurul Hasanah," *Jurnal Ilmiah Pesona ...* 10, no. 1 (2023), <https://ejournal.unp.ac.id/index.php/paud/article/view/119955>.

<sup>36</sup> Widia Astuti et al., "Analisis Pembentukan Kemandirian Pada Anak Usia Dini Melalui Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam Terpadu Di TK IT Rabbani Quran School Babahrot," *Indonesian Journal of Early Childhood: Jurnal Dunia Anak Usia Dini* 4, no. 2 (2022): 549–59, <https://jurnal.unw.ac.id/index.php/IJEC/article/view/1660>.

<sup>37</sup> et all Indra Prasetya, "Pengembangan Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam Bagi Anak Usia Dini Di TK Islam Terpadu Al-Farabi," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Konseling* 4, no. 1 (2022): 1349–58.

curriculum uses the rote method, namely memorizing daily prayers, tahfiz juz 30. Every Wednesday the religious program carries out dukha prayers, starting from reading, prayer, ablution, etc. There are even children who have memorized 1 juz.<sup>38</sup> The educational curriculum material at Orchid Kindergarten establishes six aspects of development in children, namely, moral and religious values, physical motor, cognitive, language, social emotional, arts.<sup>39</sup>

The Islamic education curriculum at Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal Kindergarten aims to develop faith and devotion to Allah SWT from an early age, create people who are religiously devout and have good morals and instill, grow and increase children's awareness of practicing Islamic teachings.<sup>40</sup>

An-Nur Playgroup in North Labuhanbatu Regency is an early childhood education institution committed to implementing an Islamic education-based curriculum in teaching early childhood. The curriculum implemented at this institution aims to foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cognitive intelligence, while adhering to the basic values of Islamic teachings. The implementation of the Islamic Education curriculum in this play group certainly does not just provide knowledge, but also shapes children's character so that they have a strong foundation of faith and piety.

The implementation of the Islamic Education curriculum at the play group level faces various challenges and dynamics that require special attention. Various factors, such as human resources, limited facilities, and parents' understanding of Islamic-based education, are several aspects that influence the successful implementation of this curriculum. Therefore, it is important to research and assess the extent of the effectiveness and success of implementing the curriculum, as well as to identify the factors that support and hinder it.

This article aims to examine the implementation of the Islamic Education curriculum at An-Nur Playgroup North Labuhanbatu, with a focus on implementation, challenges faced, and efforts made to improve the quality of Islamic education for early childhood. This research is expected to offer valuable insights and suggestions for educators, managers of educational institutions, and related parties in efforts to improve the quality of Islamic education at the early childhood level.

This study has similarities with several previous studies that both highlight the importance of Islamic education at the PAUD level, such as in Kartini Kindergarten which integrates Islamic activities into children's daily routines,<sup>41</sup> and TK IT Rabbani Quran School which develops cycles based on Islamic principles.<sup>42</sup> In addition, similarities were also found in the use

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<sup>38</sup> P. Ali, A., & Pirman, "Manajemen Kurikulum Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Lulusan Di TK Islam Al-Fath Leuwiliang Bogor" 6, no. 1 (2023): 119–32, <https://doi.org/10.30868/im.v4i02.3661>.

<sup>39</sup> Agnes Puspita Sari et al., "Analisis Kurikulum Pendidikan Di Taman Kanak Kanak Anggrek Kecamatan Sukarami Palembang," *HYPOTHESIS: Multidisciplinary Journal Of Social Sciences* 3, no. 01 (2024): 222–31, <https://doi.org/10.62668/hypothesis.v3i01.884>.

<sup>40</sup> Serli Marlina, Rismareni Pransiska, and Zahratul Qalbi, "Analisis Kurikulum Pendidikan Islam Di Taman Kanak-Kanak Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal Padang," *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* 6, no. 2 (2021): 844–55, <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v6i2.1143>.

<sup>41</sup> Nurhusni, Intan Permata Putri, and Sukiman, "Inovasi Pengembangan Kurikulum Hilda Taba Berbasis Pendidikan Islam (Studi Kasus Di TK Kartini)."

<sup>42</sup> Astuti et al., "Analisis Pembentukan Kemandirian Pada Anak Usia Dini Melalui Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam Terpadu Di TK IT Rabbani Quran School Babahrot."



of the 2013 Curriculum as implemented in Pembina TK Jeneponto and Nurul Hasanah<sup>43</sup>; <sup>44</sup>. However, this study has its own uniqueness because it specifically examines how the implementation of the Islamic education curriculum and its teaching materials are designed, adapted, and implemented contextually in the An-Nur Playgroup in North Labuhanbatu Regency, which is a non-formal Islamic-based PAUD unit. This study not only describes the activities or principles of the curriculum, but also comprehensively examines the integration process between the national curriculum and Islamic teaching materials at the early age level, as well as the role of teachers in developing Islamic learning materials that are in accordance with the characteristics and needs of early childhood in the region. This makes this study different and has a novel value in the context of developing a locally-based Islamic curriculum for PAUD.

Research focused on how the Islamic education curriculum is implemented and learning materials for early childhood in the North Labuhanbatu An-Nur Playgroup presents a number of significant novelties in the context of the Islamic education curriculum which emphasizes introducing the basics of religion and developing children's character from the start. The novelty in this research can be seen from the Islamic education curriculum targeted by the Play Group and the learning materials used to integrate Islamic values in children's daily lives.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study aims to explore the implementation of the Islamic Education curriculum and learning materials for early childhood at the An-Nur Labuhanbatu Utara playgroup. The research employs a qualitative approach, specifically using descriptive analysis to gather and interpret the data.<sup>45</sup> This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design, aiming to provide an in-depth description of the implementation of the Islamic Education curriculum at An-Nur Playgroup, North Labuhanbatu. The qualitative method was chosen because it enables a comprehensive understanding of how the Islamic Education curriculum is carried out in early childhood education, along with the factors that affect its implementation.

This research was conducted at the An-Nur Playgroup located in North Labuhanbatu Regency, North Sumatra in the odd semester of 2024/2025. This educational institution was chosen because it has a commitment to implementing an Islamic education-based curriculum for early childhood. The subjects in this study were educators (teachers involved in teaching at the An-Nur Playgroup), institution managers, and parents of children registered in the playgroup. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, namely selecting subjects based on certain considerations that are relevant to the research objectives.

**Table 1. Correspondence Characteristics in Research**

No	Data source	Correspondence Characteristics
1	Islamic Education Curriculum	This data includes the curriculum implemented at the

<sup>43</sup> Afif et al., "Manajemen Kurikulum Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini Di Tk Negeri Pembina Jeneponto."

<sup>44</sup> Hasanah et al., "Manajemen Kurikulum Anak Usia Dini Di Taman Kanak Kanak Nurul Hasanah."

<sup>45</sup> Sugiono, *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan (Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif Dan R & D)* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2014).

Document in An-Nur		An-Nur Playgroup, including learning objectives, learning materials and methods used.
2	Interviews with Managers and Teachers	Correspondence was carried out with managers and teachers at the An-Nur Playgroup to obtain information about curriculum implementation and religious teaching.
3	Direct Observation in Class	Data was gathered by directly observing the classroom learning process, focusing on teacher-child interactions and the utilization of teaching materials.
4	Data on Religious Extracurricular Activities	Data related to extra-curricular activities that support the teaching of the Islamic religion, such as recitation of the Koran, group prayer, or arts-based activities.
5	Parental Involvement in Learning	Information about how parents play a role in supporting their children's religious learning, both through direct communication and through joint activities.
6	Children's Responses to Religious Learning	Collect data from children through age-appropriate methods (for example, through light interviews or observations) to see their understanding and involvement in religious learning.
7	Children's Learning Outcome Data	Data regarding children's learning outcomes related to mastery of religious material, such as memorizing prayers, short letters, and understanding Islamic moral values.

The researchers employed interviews, observations, and documentation as data collection methods. The data analysis process involved data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.<sup>46</sup> Interviews were conducted with educators, institutional managers, and parents to explore their perceptions and experiences regarding the implementation of the Islamic Education curriculum in play groups. Participatory observation: Researchers will be directly involved in learning activities in play groups to observe how the Islamic Education curriculum is applied in daily activities. This observation aims to see directly the interaction between educators and children, as well as the use of Islamic-based teaching materials in learning activities.

**Table 2. Instrument Table and Indicator Grid**

<sup>46</sup> Salim, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: Cita Pustaka, 2019).

No	Data Source Application	Characteristics of Correspondence	Data Collection Instruments	Person-to-person Indicator
1	Islamic Education Curriculum Document in An-Nur	This data includes the curriculum implemented at the An-Nur Playgroup, including learning objectives, learning materials, and the methodology used.	Curriculum Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Islamic learning objectives</li> <li>- Structure and subjects in the curriculum</li> <li>- Learning methods applied in Islamic religious education in early childhood.</li> </ul>
2	Interviews with Managers and Teachers	Correspondence was carried out with managers and teachers at the An-Nur Playgroup to obtain information about curriculum implementation and religious teaching.	Structured Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Management of Islamic religious learning materials</li> <li>- Teaching methods used to introduce Islam to children</li> <li>- Challenges in curriculum implementation.</li> </ul>
3	Direct Observation in Class	Data collection was conducted through direct classroom observations, focusing on teacher-child interactions and the implementation of teaching materials during the learning process.	Observation Sheet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher and child interaction during learning</li> <li>- Use of learning media (audio, visual, games)</li> <li>- Active participation of children in religious learning activities.</li> </ul>

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the researcher will explain the findings obtained from observations, interviews and documentation studies related to the implementation of the Islamic Education curriculum at An-Nur Playgroup, North Labuhanbatu. Next, the findings will be analyzed and discussed to identify successes, challenges, and steps taken to improve the quality of curriculum implementation.

### Implementation of the Islamic Education Curriculum at An-Nur Playgroup North Labuhanbatu

In the interview conducted with the head of An-Nur Playgroup North Labuhanbatu, information was obtained, namely: "The curriculum taught at An-Nur Playgroup includes hijaiyah letters, reading Iqro, studying prayer movements, studying the stories of the prophet.

The aim of learning at An-Nur Playgroup is to develop children's potential from an early age to live in society and adapt to the environment to achieve increased children's knowledge. The aim is set like that because it is to develop and maximize the child's potential and knowledge as a provision for the child in living a child's life."

Apart from that, the teacher who teaches at An-Nur Playgroup also provided information in an interview, namely: "The material taught at An-Nur Playgroup includes writing, drawing, recognition of letters and listening. The strategy used by teachers in teaching these materials is in the form of telling our stories which are easy for students to respond to. The learning method used at An-Nur Playgroup is the story method, the question and answer method, work tour assignments. The media used in learning at An-Nur Playgroup is the whiteboard, Iqro' magazine picture media. "Educational curriculum, curriculum evaluation, assignments, provision of data, notes, portfolio of work results and so on."



**Figure 1.**

**An-Nur Playgroup North Labuhanbatu Teacher Implementing the Islamic Education Curriculum**

Regarding the material, the head of An-Nur Playgroup, North Labuhanbatu also stated: "The learning materials taught at An-Nur Playgroup include writing. Students are taught to write as they wish, scribble, make lines and circles, apart from coloring. Students are invited to color books that have pictures. Apart from that, recognize letters and numbers. The lessons about Islamic education taught at An-Nur Playgroup include the morals of worship by carrying out habits that are implemented in the school environment and then inviting and involving the parents of students to continue the habits that have been implemented in the school. "The aim of An-Nur Playgroup learning is to develop children's potential from an early age as a form of preparation for life and adaptation and then to increase knowledge of skills so that each child can understand what their hobbies are."

## Learning Materials in the Islamic Education Curriculum in the North Labuhanbatu An-Nur Playgroup

An-Nur Playgroup North Labuhanbatu teacher conveyed the learning strategy used, namely: "The strategy used at An-Nur Playgroup is telling stories that contain elements of the Islamic religion, such as stories of the prophets and apostles, stories of religious figures who comes from within the country using language that is simple and easy to understand by students.

As for learning methods and media, the An-Nur Playgroup North Labuhanbatu teacher said: "The method applied at An-Nur Playgroup is the storytelling method, namely the teacher tells stories or subsequent events, the dialogue method, namely the teacher asks questions and answers to the students about daily life and activities in Apart from that, it is also a field trip method, namely inviting students to get to know the types of plants around or outside the school area, such as to agricultural land, plantations, gardens and reminding them of the greatness of God who created the universe. "The media used in Annur Kindergarten is almost the same as the media used in other puzzles, namely large blackboards, small blackboards, drawing media that have not been colored, Iqro book media and children's story magazines."

The way teachers evaluate learning related to the curriculum is by giving weekly daily assignments and every 6 months, collecting data on students' progress in social knowledge and manners towards teachers and parents, event records, photos, portfolios, collecting students' work.

**Table 3. Learning Material Components**

No	Learning	Material	Activities
1	Aqidah	1. Introduction to God (Allah)	1.1 Introduce children about God as the Creator of the universe.
		2. Introduction to Prophets and Apostles	1.2 Explain that Allah is Almighty, All-Knowing, and All-Loving.
		3. Get to know the Pillars of Faith	2.1 Introducing the Prophet Muhammad SAW as the last Messenger.
		4. Get to know Prayer and Zikr	2.2 Teaching about the noble morals of the prophets as role models. 3.1 Teaching the six main pillars of faith in a simple way. 4.1 Teach short prayers that can be practiced every day, such as prayers before eating, prayers before sleeping, and other prayers. 4.2 Introduce dhikr or sentences that praise Allah
2	Worship	1. Introduction to Prayer	1.1 Introduce prayer as an obligatory act of worship for Muslims.
		2. Daily Prayer	1.2 Teach basic prayer movements, such as takbiratul ihram, bowing and prostration, through games or demonstrations.
			1.3 Teaching short prayers that are read in prayer,

			such as the iftitah prayer, bowing prayer, and prostration prayer.
			2.1 Teach prayers that are often read in everyday life, such as prayers before eating, prayers before sleeping, prayers when entering and leaving the house, and other prayers.
			2.2 These prayers are taught by singing or using picture cards to make it easier for children to remember.
3	Morals	1. Instill noble morals through example	1.1 Instilling Good Values
		2. Teaching Responsible Behavior	1.2 Love
		3. Teaching to speak politely	2.1 Taking Care of Yourself
			2.2 Responsible for Duties
			3.1 Good Speech
			3.2 Avoid Harsh Words
4	Al-Qur'an	1. Pengenalan Huruf Hijaiyah	1.1 Mengenal Huruf Hijaiyah
		2. Mengenal Asmaul Husna	1.2 mengingat huruf-huruf
		3. Membaca Surah-Surah Pendek	2.1 Memperkenalkan Nama-Nama Allah
		4. Mengajarkan Doa-Doa Pendek	3.1 Surah Pendek dalam Al-Qur'an
			3.2 Menggunakan Melodi atau Lagu
			4.1 Doa Sehari-Hari
			4.2 Doa dalam Bahasa yang Sederhana
5	Sosial dan Emosional	1. Knowing Yourself and Self-Confidence	1.1 Introduction to Yourself
		2. Empathy and understanding towards others.	1.2 Building Self-Confidence
			2.1 Teaching Empathy
			2.2 Using Stories and Games

Based on the results of observations and interviews with managers and educators, it is known that the curriculum implemented at the An-Nur Playgroup integrates Islamic teaching values with learning that focuses on early childhood development. This curriculum covers the main aspects, namely:

1. Aqidah Learning: Introduction to the basics of faith and monotheism for children, such as knowing the names of Allah, introducing the Prophet Muhammad SAW, and reading daily prayers.
2. Worship Learning: Teaching about basic worship obligations, such as prayer, prayers, and ablution procedures.
3. Moral Learning: Instilling Islamic moral and ethical values, such as being honest, respecting parents, sharing and giving alms.
4. Al-Qur'an learning: Introduction to hijaiyah letters and memorizing short letters of the Al-Qur'an.

5. Social and Emotional Learning: Involves Islamic teachings about the importance of living in harmony and tolerance.

At this play group level, learning is carried out through various methods appropriate to the child's age, such as storytelling, singing, role playing and art activities. This aims to make learning material more fun and easier for children to accept. The teaching methods applied at An-Nur Playgroup are very diverse. Based on interviews with educators, the method most often used is the play method (play-based learning), which is very suitable for young children. In the context of Islamic education, this method is combined with an Islamic story approach, religious songs, and worship simulations. For example, children are taught how to perform ablution by playing roles or performing prayers using dolls and props.

Educators also utilize the thematic learning model, where learning themes such as "sharing with friends", "prayer before eating", and "getting to know Allah's creation" are taught in an integrated manner, so that children can see the connection between Islamic values and everyday life their day.

Filling Islamic education learning at RA. An-Nahl is Islamic education material that contains values of attitude, knowledge, and skills. The contents of the Islamic education program include aqidah, morals, worship (fiqh), Al-Qur'an-Hadith, and Islamic dates <sup>47</sup>.

Islamic education curriculum learning materials in Play Groups aim to provide an understanding of how the principles of Islamic education are applied in the early stages of children's development. Islamic education in playgroups is very important to form children's moral and spiritual foundations. With fun and age-appropriate teaching, children can grow up with a basic understanding of the Islamic religion that can be applied in everyday life.

## **Challenges in Implementing the Islamic Education Curriculum at An-Nur Playgroup North Labuhanbatu**

### **1. Resource Limitations**

One of the main challenges faced by the An-Nur Playgroup in implementing the Islamic Education curriculum is limited resources, both in terms of teaching materials and facilities. Even though educators try their best to utilize simple teaching aids and media, limitations in terms of textbooks, Islamic teaching aids, and adequate classrooms reduce the effectiveness of learning.

The results of interviews with institutional managers show that although the Islamic-based curriculum has been well designed, its implementation is hampered by limited budgets to purchase teaching materials and supporting educational equipment. This condition requires educators to be more creative in utilizing existing resources, such as using paper and used materials as learning media.

### **2. Variations in Parental and Community Understanding**

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<sup>47</sup> Rizka Harfiani, "Preparation of Learning Implementation Plan Islamic Education for Early Childhood Based on Inclusive Education" 349, no. Iccd (2019): 451–54, <https://doi.org/10.2991/iccd-19.2019.118>.

Another challenge faced is the variation in parents' understanding regarding Islamic-based education. Some parents do not fully understand the importance of religious education from an early age, so they focus more on academic aspects such as reading and writing rather than instilling Islamic values. Some parents also think that religious education at home is sufficient, without the need for reinforcement in educational institutions.

Educators revealed that to overcome this problem, they regularly hold meetings with parents, to provide information and understanding regarding the importance of the Islamic Education curriculum in shaping children's character and morals from an early age. However, this challenge requires time and a more intensive approach to change parents' paradigm about the importance of Islamic education.

### **3. Limitations of Teacher Competence in Teaching Religion**

Although most of the educators at the An-Nur Playgroup have a fairly good educational background, there are some who lack special competence in teaching Islam. This is one of the obstacles in delivering Islamic education material optimally.

To overcome this, the institution holds regular training and workshops for teachers to increase their understanding of the Islamic Education curriculum and more effective teaching methods. However, more attention is still needed to improve the quality of professionalism of educators in the field of religious education.

The implementation of the Islamic education curriculum in the North Labuhanbatu An-Nur Playgroup certainly faces various challenges, such as: Limited Resources, Lack of Parental Understanding about Early Childhood Islamic Education, Difficulty in Conveying Islamic Values with Attractive Methods, Limited Time in Teaching All Material and so on. But with the right approach and support from all parties, these challenges can be overcome. By paying attention to parental involvement, training for educators, and the use of methods appropriate to the child's age, Islamic education at the playgroup level can be effective and enjoyable for children.

### **Efforts to Improve the Implementation of the Islamic Education Curriculum**

Parental involvement plays a crucial role in the implementation of the Islamic education curriculum. To enhance the effectiveness of the curriculum at An-Nur Playgroup, efforts have been made to strengthen parents' participation in their children's educational journey. Some of the activities that have been carried out are holding regular meetings with parents, as well as providing outreach regarding the importance of religious education from an early age. The institution also invites parents to participate in class activities, such as accompanying children in worship lessons or teaching short prayers.

Teachers as educators are a fundamental element for implementing the curriculum, therefore they must be professional and qualified education personnel. Teacher professionalism and qualifications are requirements that every educator must have.<sup>48</sup> Curriculum implementation

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<sup>48</sup> Mahdi M. Ali, "Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Bagi Anak Usia Dini," *JURNAL EDUKASI: Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling* 1, no. 2 (2016): 190, <https://doi.org/10.22373/je.v1i2.605>.



cannot be separated from the teacher's role as curriculum implementer which occurs in the teaching and learning process between teachers and students.<sup>49</sup>

Implementation of the Islamic education curriculum at An-Nur Playgroup by strengthening the competence of educators. To overcome deficiencies in educational competence, institutions actively hold training programs and workshops for teachers, especially in terms of teaching Islam. Apart from that, they also invited resource persons from religious teachers and Islamic education experts to provide training regarding teaching strategies that are in accordance with Islamic principles.

Utilization of existing resources is another factor in the successful implementation of the Islamic education curriculum at An-Nur Playgroup north Labuhanbatu. To overcome limited facilities and teaching materials, educators at the An-Nur Play Group try to be more creative by utilizing the materials around them. For example, making props from used goods, using available audio-visual media, and inviting children to participate in arts and crafts activities that have Islamic values.

Research on the implementation of the Islamic education curriculum in the North Labuhanbatu An-Nur Playgroup shows that this research is limited by several factors that influence the validity and generalization of the findings. One of the main limitations is limited resources, both in terms of budget, time and facilities that support more in-depth observation and data collection. Variations in curriculum implementation among different classes or teachers can add complexity to analyzing implementation consistency. Limited documentation of children's development also poses a challenge in obtaining objective data. In addition, diverse social and cultural factors in local communities can influence the perspective of the curriculum, leading to non-uniform acceptance of the Islamic education curriculum. All of these factors have the potential to limit the scope and depth of the research results obtained, as well as make it difficult for researchers to draw conclusions that can be generalized to all Islamic education contexts in the North Labuhanbatu area.

The results of this study provide a significant contribution to the development of early childhood education based on Islamic values. Practically, these findings can be used as a reference by other PAUD institutions in compiling and implementing Islamic curricula that are relevant, contextual, and in accordance with the child's developmental stage. Theoretically, this study enriches the study of the integration of religious values in early education, and opens up a discussion space regarding holistic and spiritual-based pedagogical approaches. Methodologically, this study shows the importance of a descriptive qualitative approach in understanding the curriculum implementation process in depth and contextually, which can be an inspiration for further studies. Another implication is the potential for developing a more systematic and standardized Islamic curriculum model, which can influence the direction of early childhood education policies at the local and national levels.

## CONCLUSION

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<sup>49</sup> Y Andriani, R Maya, and S Sarifudin, "Implementasi Manajemen Kurikulum Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini Di Tk Tahfidzul Qur'an Nurul Iman Jakarta Tahun Ajaran 2018/2019," ... *MPI: Prosiding Al ...*, no. 3 (2019): 19–35, <http://jurnal.staialhidayahbogor.ac.id/index.php/pmpi/article/view/526>.

Based on the findings and discussions above, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Islamic Education curriculum and the use of learning materials have been effectively carried out to support the spiritual and moral development of early childhood at An-Nur Playgroup in the An-Nur Playgroup has gone well even though there are several challenges that need to be overcome. This curriculum successfully integrates Islamic values with a learning approach that is suitable for early childhood. However, limited resources, different understanding of parents and the competence of educators are the main challenges in its implementation. In the future, more intensive efforts are needed to enhance the quality of human resources, strengthen partnerships with parents, and maximize the use of available resources to support the successful implementation of the Islamic Education curriculum at the institution.

The findings of this study can serve as a foundation for constructing a conceptual framework for Islamic-based early childhood education that emphasizes the integration of religious values, pedagogical approaches appropriate to child development, and local contexts. These findings also provide real contributions to improving the quality of professional practice of PAUD educators, especially in designing interactive, fun, and meaningful Islamic learning for children. In addition, this study opens up opportunities for further research that can explore the long-term effectiveness of Islamic curriculum on the formation of children's character, as well as a comparison of its implementation in various social and cultural environments, thus enriching academic discourse and the practice of Islamic early childhood education more broadly.

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