



Teacher Strategies in Supporting Islamic Education Quality in Early Childhood

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the use of school bulletin boards as an effort to improve the numerical literacy of elementary school students. The background of this study stems from the low ability of students to understand numerical concepts contextually in the school environment. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, with the research subjects being teachers and students at an elementary school in Surakarta. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model. The results show that the use of school bulletin boards can increase students' interest in learning and numerical abilities through the presentation of information based on numbers, graphics, and everyday problems. Furthermore, bulletin boards serve as a collaborative medium that fosters students' creativity and critical thinking skills. This study implies the need for teachers to integrate school media into numerical learning as a contextual literacy strategy based on the learning environment.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education plays a strategic role in shaping children's religious attitudes, morals, and character from an early age (Khodadadi et al., 2023). At the early childhood education level, the learning process is not only focused on the transmission of religious knowledge but also on the formation of values and behavior through meaningful learning experiences (Novia & Rachmawati, 2025; Purnama et al., 2020; Sefiloğlu, 2022). Islamic education at this stage serves as an important foundation for instilling Islamic values that influence children's personality development in later stages. In practice, Islamic education learning in early childhood still faces various challenges. Several studies indicate that learning tends to be dominated by conventional teacher-centered methods with limited variation in instructional strategies (Engkizar et al., 2025; Hsiao & Chen, 2016; McDevitt, 2021; Zeng et al., 2017). In addition, the integration of religious values into daily activities has not been implemented optimally, resulting in the limited internalization of values. This condition leads to learning practices that are not fully aligned with the developmental characteristics of early childhood, which require contextual, interactive, and experience-based approaches (Huth et al., 2021; Landau & Greenfield, 2021; Rao et al., 2019; Zeng et al., 2017).

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Previous studies have examined Islamic education in early childhood, particularly in terms of teaching methods and curriculum development (Abawi, 2021; Gilchrist & Yates, 2021; Landau & Greenfield, 2021). However, these studies generally have not comprehensively integrated the three main strategies in Islamic education, namely role modeling, instruction, and habituation, within a unified framework. In fact, these three strategies complement each other in shaping children's religious attitudes, knowledge, and behavior. Therefore, there remains a gap in understanding how these strategies are implemented in an integrated manner in educational practice (Baroud et al., 2025; Engkizar, Jaafar, et al., 2025; Htay et al., 2025).

In this context, Islamic-based early childhood education institutions have the potential to develop learning strategies that are not only oriented toward cognitive aspects but also toward the formation of religious character through a supportive learning environment (Az-Zahra et al., 2025; Mutiaramses et al., 2025). The implementation of role modeling, instruction, and habituation in learning activities, social interactions, and institutional culture represents an important aspect that needs to be examined in depth. This is essential to obtain a comprehensive understanding of effective practices in improving the quality of Islamic education (Fristyarini et al., 2025; Rasdiany et al., 2022).

Therefore, this study aims to examine teachers' strategies in Islamic education in early childhood by emphasizing the integration of role modeling, instruction, and habituation, as well as identifying supporting and inhibiting factors in their implementation. This study is expected to contribute to the development of more contextual, systematic, and developmentally appropriate strategies for Islamic education in early childhood.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative method with a case study approach (Alam, 2021; Bishop & Kuula-Lummi, 2017; Collins & Stockton, 2018; Engkizar et al., 2023). The research was conducted at an Islamic early childhood education institution in Indonesia. Data were obtained from informants consisting of teachers and the school principal through in-depth interviews selected using purposive sampling (Albshkar et al., 2025; Markhmadova et al., 2025). The selected informants met the criteria of having a thorough understanding of the research problem, being actively involved in the learning process, and being able to provide factual information. (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2016; Chotim & Tedja, 2022; Engkizar et al., 2024; Gerring, 2017; Nurwahidin et al., 2019).

Data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The data analysis technique employed the interactive model developed by Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. To ensure data validity, source and technique triangulation were applied (Asipi et al., 2022; Hamzah et al., 2025; Nikken & Schols, 2015; Putri et al., 2021; Rahmi et al., 2021).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that teachers' strategies in improving the quality of Islamic education in early childhood are implemented through three main approaches; role modeling (*uswah*), instruction (*ta'lim*), and habituation (*ta'wid*). These strategies are not applied separately but are integrated into the learning process, social interactions, and school culture. This integration suggests that Islamic education is not only oriented toward cognitive aspects but also toward the continuous development of religious attitudes and behavior. These findings can be visualized in an NVivo analysis that illustrates the relationship between the three main strategies

teachers use to improve the quality of Islamic education for young children.

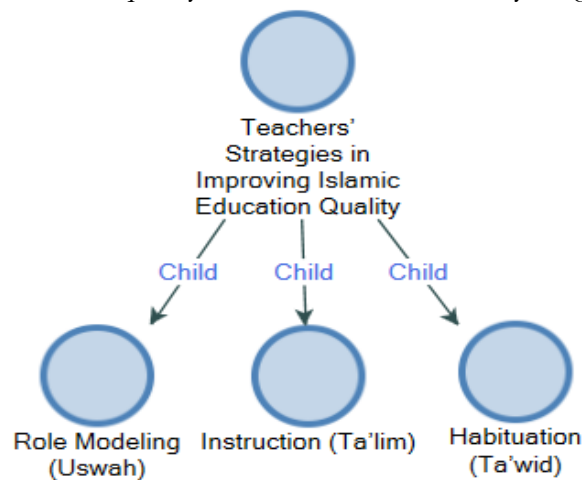


Fig. 1. NVivo Analysis of Teachers' Strategies in Improving Islamic Education Quality

First, the role modeling (*uswah*) strategy is reflected in teachers' behavior in demonstrating religious attitudes, discipline, and good morals in daily activities. Teachers act as role models whose behavior is directly observed and imitated by children. This is supported by a statement from one of the informants:

...We try to provide direct examples to the children, such as getting them used to greeting others, praying before and after activities, and showing polite behavior in interactions (Interview).

This finding indicates that role modeling is an effective strategy for value internalization, as young children tend to learn through imitation. Therefore, teachers play a dual role not only as knowledge transmitters but also as representatives of the values being taught (Aisy & Muzakki, 2024; Busral et al., 2025; Ummah, 2022).

Second, the instructional (*ta'lim*) strategy is implemented through classroom learning activities using various methods, such as lecturing, play-based learning, role playing, and simple discussions. These varied methods are adapted to the developmental characteristics of early childhood learners and aim to enhance students' understanding and engagement in the learning process. As expressed by an informant:

...In teaching, we do not only use lectures, but also games and hands-on practices so that children can understand the material more easily (Interview).

This finding shows that the use of varied teaching methods can improve students' comprehension and participation, making learning more effective and meaningful (Abdiyantoro et al., 2024; Zalnur et al., 2024).

Third, the habituation (*ta'wid*) strategy is implemented through routine religious activities such as daily prayers, worship practices, Islamic greetings, and the reinforcement of good moral behavior. These practices are carried out consistently to build children's religious character. This is supported by the statement of an informant:

...Every day, children are accustomed to praying, performing congregational prayers, and greeting each other with Islamic greetings so that it becomes part of their daily habits (Interview).

This finding highlights that habituation plays a crucial role in shaping religious behavior, as it is practiced repeatedly and consistently in children's daily lives.

The implementation of these strategies is supported by a religious school environment and a curriculum that integrates Islamic values into learning activities. Additional supporting factors include teacher competence, leadership support, and parental involvement. On the other hand, several challenges were identified, including limited learning facilities, diverse student characteristics, and time

constraints in the learning process. Overall, the findings suggest that integrated teacher strategies through role modeling, instruction, and habituation contribute to improving the quality of Islamic education in early childhood, as reflected in the development of religious attitudes, social behavior, and the internalization of Islamic values in students' daily lives (Nudin et al., 2024; Sitanggang & Munthe, 2023).

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that teachers' strategies in early childhood Islamic education are constructed through the integration of role modeling, instruction, and habituation within learning activities and school culture. The integration of these strategies contributes to the development of religious attitudes, social behavior, and the internalization of Islamic values among students. These findings highlight that the quality of Islamic education is not solely determined by cognitive aspects but also by the consistent practice of values within the educational environment. Practically, this study implies the importance of strengthening teacher competence, institutional support, and parental involvement in optimizing the learning process. Therefore, the development of contextual and sustainable teaching strategies is essential for improving the quality of Islamic education in early childhood.

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