Strategies for developing the religious and moral aspects of early childhood

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Abstract

Religious and moral development is essential to early childhood education; therefore, it is necessary to implement development strategies. This study aimed to explain the strategy for fostering young children's religious and moral development. This is qualitative research employing a literature review methodology. Collecting articles, reducing articles, presenting articles, explaining articles, and drawing conclusions comprised the data analysis technique. The findings revealed that media for fostering religious and moral development include Alqur'an learning media, digital animation media, Educational Game Tools, BEAT application media, ICT (Information and Communication Technology), VCDs, and student worksheets. While the strategies for developing religious and moral aspects in young children are exemplary, they include playing while learning, the Montessori method, the PAIKEM model, behavior development, habituation, storytelling, demonstration methods, and programs for character education. In conclusion, the strategy for fostering religious and moral development in young children can be implemented through various media and instructional techniques.

INTRODUCTION

Aspects of early childhood development generally consist of six aspects of development, namely the development of religion and morals, physical-motor, language, cognitive, social-emotional, and art and creativity (Sugiono & Kuntjojo, 2016; Hasanah, 2016; Holis, 2016; Kurniati et al., 2020; Aghnaita, 2017). Aspects of this development are usually carried out in parallel, meaning that no one is superior (Riza Oktariana, 2019; Pratiwi, 2021; Darmawani, 2018). Thus, all aspects of this development are considered important to be developed by PAUD educators and parents (Khadijah & Zainriani, 2021; Noor Baiti, 2021; Windayani et al., 2021).

One aspect of development that must be considered by early childhood education institutions (PAUD) and early childhood educators is religious and moral development. (Rahman & Kencana, 2020; Saputra, 2016; Qadafi, 2019; Khaironi, 2017; Sabi’ati, 2016). According to Marshall dkk. (2021) reveals that it is necessary to apply and develop religious aspects in every child's life because religion is a person's entity, formal through law and necessary in social life (Talango, 2020; Safitri & ‘Aziz, 2019; Sope, 2022). The aspect of religious and moral development is aimed at developing the abilities of early childhood, which include the desire to carry out religious teachings and stay away from His prohibitions, manners, politeness, and daily behaviour (Permataputri & Syamsudin, 2022; Hasanah, 2018; Zain, 2021). Added that the scope of developing religious and moral aspects for early childhood is Islamic laws, monotheistic law, physical and spiritual guidance,
Islamic religious principles and attitudes, behavior and character in Islam (Khairiyah, 2020; Muzaki, 2019; Juhriati & Rahmi, 2022). Religious and moral values can be interpreted as psychological changes in children related to their ability to behave well based on Islamic teachings (Tanfidiyah, 2017; Supriyanto, 2015; Kuntilangensari & Asmar, 2021; Tanfidiyah, 2017).

Fauziddin (2016) argued that religious and moral development must be trained from an early age to create habits for the next generation of the nation so that they have a strong religious foundation and positive character so that they can carry themselves in society by distinguishing what is good and what is not good (Marshall et al., 2021; Musyadad et al., 2022; Prasetyawati, 2016; Wiyani, 2017). According to Juhriati & Rahmi (2022) added that the development of religious and moral values is the initial foundation and basis for children in self-regulation, improving life goals, overcoming bad possibilities that will occur, and fortifying themselves against daily interactions (Marshall et al., 2021; Wati & Arif, 2017; Nurjanah, 2018; Ardiansari & Dimyati, 2021).

Educators must carry out strategies for developing religious and moral aspects and collaborate with educators and children's parents (Tuna, 2022; Agusniatih & Monepa, 2019; Ananda, 2017; Asti, 2017). According to Panjaitan dkk., (2020) explained that in the religious and moral development of early childhood, teachers play an important role by teaching children through the use of effective media, methods, and strategies, for example, by habituation, setting examples, exemplifying appropriate and positive attitudes in line with Islamic teachings (Gusmayanti & Dimyati, 2021; Zuriqoni & Musarofah, 2018; Putri & Hudah, 2019). According to Repelita (2021) added that educators must display their best abilities and competencies in the learning process (Futaqi, 2018; Erdiyanti & Syukri, 2021; Rahmidani et al., 2018). The teacher must determine the media, have strategies, techniques, and methods appropriate to the lesson's theme, and can make students active during teaching and learning activities (Pratesi, 2018; Kurnia, 2017; Idhayani et al., 2020). Thus, learning and developing religious and moral aspects depend on the teacher as the main actor in educational activities (Julaeha, 2019; Widodo, 2018; Faiz et al., 2020). Then, parents are referred to as the main family supporting and shaping children's development (Fitri & Na’imah, 2020; Nugroho et al., 2022; Latifah, 2020). Parents participate in educating children's behavior and work with teachers to carry out self-development in children (Fauzia, 2015; Junaaidi, 2020; Irma et al., 2019; Winarti, 2020).

Teachers as educators must enrich learning strategies and media in developing religious and moral aspects (Mumin, 2018; Utomo, 2018; Iskarim, 2016). According to Repelita (2021) argues that the learning strategy is one-factor determining success in the learning process (Astiti et al., 2021; Syafi’i et al., 2018; Umi et al., 2019). The learning strategy is the method used by the teacher to achieve the learning objectives (Marlina, 2017; Mochamad Riyanto, 2022; Zahro et al., 2019). According to Abdurrochim dkk., (2022) added that learning media also had a very positive effect on the achievement of learning objectives and became an important component in determining children's success in learning (Hs & Suriningsih, 2021; Kurniasih & Rahmah, 2021; Susanty & Mahyuddin, 2022).

Based on the author's interviews with several early childhood teachers in several Kindergartens in August 2022, it was found that today's children's religious and moral aspects are far behind (Sumara et al., 2017; Nudin, 2019; Arkam & Mustikasari, 2021).
teachers explained some data related to children's low religion and morals. First, the religion and morals of children decreased due to the behavior and religious attitudes of adults, which also decreased due to the times (Hidayati, 2020; Azis, 2018; Andhika, 2021). Second, it is very easy for children to access shows on television, gadgets, and smartphones; many of these are negative and are not well imitated by children, thus affecting children's attitudes, morals, and religious aspects (Munisa, 2020; Siti Inayatul Ulya, 2019; Alia & Irwansyah, 2018). Third, learning strategies, methods, and media for children's religious and moral development must be more effective and varied to absorb learning well (Wahyuni, W. & Aryani, 2021; Partikasari et al., 2014; Zaini & Dewi, 2017).

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that religious and moral development aspects are important to be improved and developed (Setiawati et al., 2019; Nurhayati et al., 2021; Roostin et al., 2022). The aspect of religious and moral development is important to improve because it is increasingly being eroded by technological developments and the times (Gussevi & Muhfi, 2021; Assingkily & Miswar, 2020; Rozaq et al., 2022). One way that can be done is to use various learning media and strategies so that children are interested in learning (Maymunah et al., 2021; Anhusadar & Wulandari, 2019; Ardiana, 2022). With various media and learning strategies, children will be more interested in learning and understanding what is currently aimed at developing religious and moral aspects. (Tahir et al., 2019; Syaparuddin et al., 2020; Makhmudah, 2020). Therefore, this research aims to explain strategies for developing the religious and moral aspects of early childhood.

Several previous studies are relevant to this research, but this research differs from previous research. First, research from Salasiah (2021) emphasizes instilling religious and moral values in early childhood through routine activities. Still, this research focuses more on strategies for developing the religious and moral aspects of early childhood. Second, research from Tadjuddin (2018) with research focuses on early childhood moral education from a psychological, educational, and religious perspective, while this research focuses more on strategies for developing religious and moral aspects of early childhood. Third, research Solekah dkk (2021) discusses the implementation of learning religious and moral values in children aged 4-5 years while learning from home. This research focuses more on strategies for developing the religious and moral aspects of early childhood. Fourth, research from Husna & Mayar (2021) focuses on strategies to introduce asmaul husna to instill religious and moral values in early childhood, while this research focuses more on strategies for developing religious and moral aspects of early childhood. Fifth, research from Iftitah (2020) focuses on strategies for developing religious values in early childhood at the Surabaya Islamic Center Kindergarten, which includes three activities: routine activities, integration, and special activities. Meanwhile, this study focuses more on strategies for developing early childhood's religious and moral aspects by using various media and learning methods.

**METHODS**

This research employs a qualitative methodology, a form of literature review. From July to September 2022, this research was conducted at Al Huffazh Payakumbuh Kindergarten. The investigated research hypothesis or variable focuses on early childhood religious and moral development strategies. This study of the literature is also known as a
literature review. According to Azizah & Kholifah (2021), this literature review research examines the studies conducted by previous researchers using diverse sources, including books, journals, articles, and other scientific publications.

In this study, the authors conducted a literature review by analyzing 155 articles from 2015 to 2020 that were published in national and international journals. Figure 1 depicts the steps required to achieve the anticipated research outcomes:

![Figure 1. Research Design](image)

Based on the research design above, the research steps can be described as follows:

Collecting the articles, The author takes this first step by searching for articles in national and international journals related to the title that the author will research. After that, the author downloads the article and creates a folder on the laptop according to the keywords in the title.

Reducing the article, The activity of reducing this article is by reading every article collected and reducing articles not needed for this research. Thus, the only remaining articles the author will review follow the title that the author will develop.

Compiling and organizing the articles, In this stage, the writer organizes the article based on the theory that the writer will take according to the title of this research. The author presents previous articles and makes connections with the articles that will be developed.

Discussing the articles, In this step, the author discusses the article based on the literature review in the previous article. Next, the writer connects the theory written by the author of the language in the article with the theory from the previous article by comparing, comparing, making similarities and differences, and connecting relevant ideas and ideas.

Concluding, This is the last step that the author did in this research. This step is to make conclusions from the discussion that has been done before.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The strategy for fostering young children's religious and moral development is based on learning media and learning strategies. As early childhood educators, teachers are required to master both of these skills. According to Tuna (2022) established that, as educators, teachers must be professional, i.e., they must comprehend holistic educational teaching, enlighten students in a humanistic manner, and students can rely on them during the learning process. According to this study's findings, there are various media and instructional strategies for the religious and moral aspects of early childhood. This finding differs from previous research findings, in which only one media or development strategy was presented in relation to early childhood's religious and moral aspects. While the findings of this study
emphasize the various media and strategies that can be used to develop children's religion and morals, they also highlight the importance of parental involvement. Additionally, these media and strategies can be used in tandem or in combination to enhance students' comprehension.

**Media for the Development of Religious and Moral Aspects**

Qur'an learning media, According to (Ihsani 2021), The Qur'an is a guide for life for every human being. Thus the Qur'an should be used as a source of teaching and life guidance for everyone, especially children. The Qur'an states that every human being is a representative of Allah on earth who is free and bound only by the Qur'an. According to (Aprida 2022) argues that the implementation of learning the Koran greatly influences the development of religious and moral values in early childhood. The function of learning the Qur'an is so that children have an Islamic personality, form character, and have noble character and fortify themselves from bad influences because reading the Qur'an is a worship that will bring children closer to Allah SWT.

Animation Digital Media, This learning media is a form of audio-visual media that makes the ability to hear and see children active simultaneously. According to Panjaitan dkk. (2020) explained that learning using digital animation media is more interesting for children. Children will more easily accept and understand learning and be motivated to follow learning well. This is because children will always be excited during the learning process using this media because of the interesting "watching" activity.

Educational Game Tool (APE), This media helps the development of religious and moral aspects of early childhood. According to Mustika & Suyadi (2022) explained that educational game tools are all objects children use to play while learning. This game tool aims to educate and teach children, especially to improve the morals and religion of early childhood. According to Aly dkk. (2021) added that APE PAUD was deliberately designed specifically for educational purposes and following the intended teaching objectives or development aspects.

BEAT Application Media (Fun Learning About), This application is an Android-based learning application developed by (Abdurrochim dkk., 2022). This application contains interesting learning features, interactive e-books, and learning videos related to religious and moral materials for children. This learning video contains Islamic content such as instilling good behavior in everyday life, giving alms, and others. According to Mastiyah (2017) agree that early childhood should be introduced to basic concepts and daily behavior such as buying and selling, almsgiving, paying zakat, and other worship.

Media ICT (Information and Communication Technology), According to (Z & Saputra 2022), media ICT (Information and Communication Technology) is a tool used in the learning process by utilizing technology, such as computers, laptops, multimedia, android, telecommunications, and internet networks. Media ICT (Information and Communication Technology) is included in electronic media. According to Hafsah (2016), Types of learning media that can be used by PAUD educators in aspects of early childhood development include: 1) electronic media such as television, telephone, and tape recorders, 2) print media, such as books, word cards, and number cards, 3) environmental media, such as soil, water, and plants, 4) artificial media, such as realia, plastic flowers, plastic fruits, 5) design media, such as paper houses, origami paper birds, and so on.
Media VCD, VCD media is familiar to children. Even children like to watch VCD at home. The choice of VCD media for early childhood must follow the child's age and development. Watching activities at home must be accompanied by parents and at school accompanied by teachers so that children get learning which ones must be applied and which ones must be abandoned. According to Anik Lestariningrum (2014) revealed that one of the VCD media that is suitable for the development of the religious and moral aspects of children is the VCD media for children's Fiqh, which displays examples of behavior, faith, and morals as well as good habits. With this media, the teacher is also assisted in conveying learning, so an introduction and material are delivered through image and audio displays.

Student Worksheet Media (LKS), Student worksheets are one of the media and learning resources for children. According to Suryani dkk. (2022) argued that LKS is a learning medium besides printed books that make it easier for children to learn anywhere because they can be brought to school and the house. LKS contains core learning materials that are more concise than a printed book. Moreover, it contains more exercises to develop children's abilities. Worksheets for early childhood can be adjusted according to developmental stages and age. For example, children aged 3-6 can be given worksheets for coloring, but the pictures or patterns are religious-themed or pictures of good behavior.

Strategy for the Development of Religious and Moral Aspects

Exemplary Activities, This activity can give examples of behavior and daily appearance for children, such as setting a good example when praying, dressing, talking, looking good, being happy to help, showing enthusiasm, and so on (Ananda, 2017). (Kurniasari 2021) added that there are many methods teachers can use to instill religion and morals in early childhood, such as exemplary methods, singing, telling stories, poetry, field trips, behavior habituation, playing, outbound, role-playing, discussions, and so on.

Strategy for Playing while Learning, This strategy is very suitable for early childhood education because early childhood should not be required to learn fully but how to teach children through fun activities, one of which is with games. According to (Fauziddin 2016), This strategy is very suitable for early childhood education because early childhood should not be required to learn fully but how to teach children through fun activities, one of which is with games. (Sugiono & Kuntjojo 2016) added that playing for children is a learning process with a positive value that brings joy to children. Thus playing is an effective strategy for educators to channel learning.

The Montessori Method, A Montessori approach is an approach that makes children active and does independent learning. (Permatapatriti & Syamsudin 2022) Assumes that this approach emphasizes children's talents and interests in introducing basic concepts according to age stages. In addition, this approach makes children learn with love and cooperation so that children are more active and confident. (Nudin 2019) mentioned that the Montessori method can instill Islamic religious education values in children. This method is guided by the principle that children must be taught according to their nature as a child. Thus, this method educates and teaches children according to their interests and abilities.

Model PAIKEM, PAIKEM stands for Active, Innovative, Creative, Effective, and Fun Learning. According to Repelita (2021) states that PAIKEM is a learning model that
must be coupled with certain strategies to achieve the expected learning objectives. PAIKEM is a refinement of the PAKEM method (Active, Creative, Effective, and Fun Learning) which has the same learning principles, namely making student-centered learning (Rafikasari dkk., 2021).

Behavior Coaching Method, According to Juhriati & Rahmi (2022), Behavior coaching in children can be started by introducing God, introducing ways of worshiping God, instilling good morals, and providing good habits every day to children. According to Amelia dkk., (2013) explains that behavior coaching includes teaching respect, teaching by example, teaching with words or verbally, teaching to take responsibility, and balancing between bound or controlled freedoms.

Habituation Method, Habituation is the best way for educators to do early childhood. With habituation, children will easily practice theory into practice and do it for the rest of their lives. (Natari & Suryana 2022) states that religion and morals are abstract and can only be seen by their application in everyday life, attitudes, and behavior. With habituation, the child will get used to it without being forced. (Wahyuwi 2018) argues that the application of moral values to children is carried out through habituation methods. This activity includes general daily activities from waking up to sleeping again. Children are introduced to life habits gradually and continuously so that they become good habits for children to live their lives both as individuals and as members of the social community.

Storytelling Method, The teacher uses the storytelling method to teach something by speaking. Anggraini (2015) states that the story's content distinguishes the storytelling method for developing each aspect. Especially for the aspect of religious and moral development, the stories that are presented are stories that have an Islamic theme and contain exemplary examples of good behavior to emulate. The same thing was also stated by Kusnilawati et al., (2018), who stated that Islamic storytelling activities could improve the development of religious and moral values in early childhood.

Demonstration Method, The demonstration method is the teacher's way of demonstrating, displaying, and expressing something by giving hands-on practice in front of children, both inside and outside the classroom. Akmal (2018) states that the demonstration method is carried out by showing the process of something happening, the steps for doing something, and how to make something so that children easily understand it. Teachers can use this method to demonstrate how to do ablution, pray, walk in front of parents, and do other things that require direct practice in front of children.

Character Education Program, Character education is also known as moral education. Soleh & Ramadan (2021) explain that a child's character is not formed directly and instantly but through education and teaching. Children obtain character and moral education in religious and moral development. Sholeh (2018) said that character education is accompanied by education on faith and morals and religious education. These three aspects of character education are the main points of religious education following the early childhood learning curriculum.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that there are several media and strategies commonly used in developing the religious and moral aspects of early childhood, which can be seen in the following table:
Table 1. Media and strategies for developing religious and moral aspects of early childhood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Religious and Moral Development Media</th>
<th>Religion and Moral Development Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Qur'an learning media</td>
<td>Exemplary Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Animation Digital Media</td>
<td>Strategy for Playing while Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Educational Game Tool (APE)</td>
<td>The Montessori Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>BEAT Application Media (Fun Learning About)</td>
<td>PAIKEM model</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Media ICT (Information and Communication Technology)</td>
<td>Behavior Coaching Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Media VCD</td>
<td>Habituation Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Student Worksheet Media (LKS)</td>
<td>Storytelling Method</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstration Method</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Character Education Program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSION

Based on the preceding, it is possible to conclude that strategies for developing early childhood's religious and moral aspects can be implemented through various media and learning strategies. Al-Qur'an is learning media, digital animation media, Educational Game Tools (APE), BEAT application media (Fun Learning about), ICT media (Information and Communication Technology), VCD media, and LKS (student worksheet) are examples of religious and moral development media. While early childhood religion and moral development strategies are excellent, playing while learning, the Montessori Method, the PAIKEM model, behavior coaching, habituation, storytelling, demonstration methods, and character education programs are also excellent.

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