



A Model to Strengthen Early Childhood Religious and Moral Education through Prophet Muhammad's Example in Islamic-Based Early Childhood Institutions

Mar'atus Sholekah*, Agus Khunaifi

State Islamic University Walisongo Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 27 Nov 2025

Revised: 13 Des 2025

Accepted: 24 Des 2025

Published online: 05 Jan 2026

Keywords:

Exemplary, Islamic-based early childhood education institutions, Prophet Muhammad SAW, Religious and Moral Education

* Corresponding author:

E-mail: 2203106050@student.walisongo.ac.id

Article Doi:

<https://doi.org/10.31258/jes.10.1.p.331-344>

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](#) license.



ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the learning model of religious and moral education in early childhood through the example of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The research method used is qualitative with a case study approach at TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna, an Islamic-based early childhood education institution. The research subjects included children aged 4–6 years, with data obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed descriptively-qualitatively. The results of the study indicate that the strengthening of religious and moral education is carried out through internalization of the exemplary values of the Prophet Muhammad SAW in various learning activities, including storytelling, the use of visual media, and role-playing that depicts the morals of the Prophet. These findings confirm that the model of strengthening religious and moral education through the example of the Prophet at TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna applies an integrative exemplary method. Exemplary behavior is combined with other aspects, namely patience and perseverance, and also diverse learning resources. Therefore, this strategy is recommended to be implemented systematically in the Islamic-based early childhood education curriculum.

1. Introduction

Religious and moral education is a fundamental aspect that must be instilled from an early age, since at this stage children are in the golden age, which serves as an important foundation for improving the quality of human resources in the future (Tiva Amanda & Rista Sundari, 2024). The golden age, particularly between the ages of 0–5 years, is a crucial period marked by rapid growth and development. Therefore, early childhood education (ECE) holds strategic significance in shaping the foundation of children's personality, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual development (Toha Ma'sum, 2018). At this stage, the support of both family and

school environments plays a decisive role, as learning experiences provided will influence the development of children's morality, religion, and character (Risnawati et al., 2021).

Religion and morality are two closely interconnected aspects that cannot be separated. Morality essentially reflects the quality of one's religiosity, as behavior in accordance with norms and values of goodness indicates a strong religious attitude (Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi, 2023). In the context of early childhood education, the development of morality based on religion is realized through habituation of good manners, courteous attitudes, and the application of religious teachings in daily activities. The process of instilling religious and moral values must therefore be carried out in a planned and structured manner, making the role of educators crucial in designing methods, strategies, and learning media that are engaging and aligned with the child's stage of development (Anggraini & Syafril, n.d.). Thus, the internalization of moral values will be more effective when carried out through real practices consistent with religious teachings.

One important strategy in strengthening religious and moral education in early childhood is through exemplarity. A role model serves as a behavioral figure whom children can imitate, becoming a key element in the internalization process of values. This aligns with developmental psychology perspectives, which position significant figures as the primary reference for children in building moral attitudes (Bandura, 1977). John Dewey explained that children's moral development takes place in three stages: premoral, conventional, and autonomous. At the autonomous stage, children begin to demonstrate independence in determining their moral attitudes and behaviors (Dewey, 1909; Pendidikan Anak & di SMP Sunan Averouss Yogyakarta, 2017). At this stage, children require exemplary figures to serve as role models in shaping their moral character.

From the perspective of Islamic education, the strengthening of religious and moral education finds a firm foundation through the exemplarity of Prophet Muhammad SAW. The Prophet is recognized as *uswah hasanah* (a good role model), whose character represents universal moral and spiritual values (QS. Al-Ahzab [33]: 21). The implementation of the Prophet's stories and character in early childhood education becomes a concrete medium for parents and educators to instill values of honesty, compassion, responsibility, and respect (Al-Fitrah et al., 2023). Through the method of exemplarity, children not only understand religious teachings cognitively but also internalize behaviors demonstrated in daily life (Nata, 2016). Thus, religious and moral education based on the exemplarity of the Prophet functions not merely as a transfer of knowledge but as a profound, consistent, and sustainable character-building process (Abdullah, 2019).

Previous studies have shown that religious and moral education based on exemplarity is effective for early childhood. Anggraini and Syafril (n.d.) emphasized the importance of applying a programmed method in teaching moral values in ECE, while Abyadh et al. (2022) highlighted that morality-based character education is capable of shaping a generation with noble character. Furthermore,

Rahmah (2019) found that the stories of Prophet Muhammad SAW play a significant role in instilling good morals in children from an early age. Nevertheless, studies on the implementation of learning models based on the exemplarity of Prophet Muhammad SAW in Islamic-based early childhood institutions, particularly in local contexts such as TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna, remain relatively limited.

Based on this rationale, the present study seeks to fill this gap by offering a contextual investigation into the model of religious and moral education based on the exemplarity of Prophet Muhammad SAW at TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna. Specifically, the objective of this research is to reveal the model of religious and moral education grounded in the exemplarity of the Prophet within this institution. This study highlights the importance of translating prophetic values into practical teaching methods that are relevant to early childhood learning. In doing so, it provides both theoretical enrichment and practical insights for the development of Islamic-based early childhood education.

2. Methodology

This research was carried out using a qualitative descriptive approach, designed to capture authentic experiences as they naturally unfold in the learning environment (Creswell, 2018; Sugiyono, 2019). Instead of relying on rigid preconceptions, the study moves inductively, collecting data directly from real-life classroom situations and interpreting them within their natural context (Moleong, 2017). The setting of the study was PAUD Al-Muna 1, located on Jl. Candi Pawon Raya No. 27, Ngaliyan District, Semarang City. The main participants consisted of 12 children aged 4–5 years. The heart of this research lies in examining how religious and moral values are practiced in early childhood education through the exemplary model of Prophet Muhammad SAW. The following table 1 details the research subjects involved:

Table 1. Research Subjects at TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna

No	Research Subject	Activity	Number
1	Principal	Managerial	1
2	Teachers	Educators	6
3	Administration	Admin	1
4	Cook	Cooking	1
5	Students	Learning	32

Data collection unfolded through three interconnected techniques. First, participatory observation, where the researcher engaged closely with classroom activities to observe how teachers and children interacted in the internalization of religious and moral values (Spradley, 1980). Second, documentation, which included gathering written notes, photos, and videos as supporting materials to strengthen the observations (Sugiyono, 2019). Third, in-depth interviews with teachers and educators to explore the strategies and reflections behind their teaching practices (Creswell, 2018). The research did not stop at children alone but

encompassed the entire school community, acknowledging every role in shaping the learning atmosphere.

Data analysis followed the interactive framework of Miles and Huberman (1994), ensuring that findings emerged through a dynamic process. In the first stage, data reduction, the raw information was filtered and organized to highlight the most relevant aspects. The second stage, data display, transformed the findings into descriptive narratives that illuminated relationships, tendencies, and emerging patterns. Finally, the stage of conclusion drawing and verification allowed the researcher to synthesize insights while rechecking their validity and consistency. This cycle of analysis provided a robust foundation for presenting a comprehensive and meaningful picture of how religious and moral education is cultivated through the example of Prophet Muhammad SAW at PAUD Al-Muna.

3. Results and Discussion

This research was conducted to determine the effectiveness of a new learning media at RA Al-Muna, Semarang. Before implementing the new media, it is important to provide a comprehensive description of the classroom conditions to give context for the study. The classroom overview includes the number of children, children characteristics, the learning methods applied, and the interaction between teachers and children. This information serves as a foundation for assessing how effectively the new learning media can support competency achievement, character development, and the internalization of religious and moral values among children.

The classroom consists of 32 children with diverse characteristics, ranging from active and communicative learners to quieter children who participate less in class activities. The learning methods emphasize approaches suitable for children's developmental stages, such as play, imitation, and habituation, allowing Islamic values to be naturally internalized in daily behavior. The teacher uses practical and interactive methods, including role-playing, demonstrations, and educational play activities, enabling children to imitate and internalize behaviors aligned with religious, moral, and ethical values.

During the learning process, the teacher also integrates character and religious values through simple activities such as communal prayers, giving rewards for positive behavior, and sharing stories of the prophets appropriate for the children's age. The exemplarity of teachers and parents is a key factor in guiding children, as children tend to imitate the attitudes, words, and actions of adults around them. The learning media is designed to support cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development harmoniously while facilitating the internalization of religious values through real-life experiences and play-based activities.

Children are encouraged to complete tasks independently or in groups, fostering cooperation, responsibility, discipline, and time management. Learning evaluation is conducted through teacher observation, practical assessment, and daily activities

that emphasize the application of religious and moral values rather than merely cognitive achievement. A comfortable and well-organized classroom environment, supported by the exemplary behavior of teachers and parents, provides a representative context for analyzing the effectiveness of the new learning media in shaping children's Islamic character from an early age.

Data collection through interviews was conducted using a semi-structured approach, where the researcher prepared key questions but allowed flexibility for teachers to elaborate on their experiences and opinions in depth. Interviews were conducted in the classroom or a quiet place to ensure the comfort of respondents, and the timing was adjusted according to the teachers' availability to avoid disrupting the learning process. During the interviews, the researcher systematically recorded responses and used audio recordings to minimize data loss. The purpose of the interviews was to gather information on teaching experiences, perceptions of learning media, challenges faced, and suggestions for improving learning effectiveness. Interview data were analyzed by categorizing responses into key themes relevant to the research objectives. The interview questions used in this study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Interview Questions for Teachers

No	Interview Questions	Description
1	What learning methods are usually applied in your class?	To identify commonly used teaching methods
2	What learning media do you typically use?	To evaluate media usage
3	How do children respond to the learning activities you provide?	To understand student perceptions
4	What challenges often arise during learning activities?	To identify common issues
5	How do you instill character and religious values in children?	To understand strategies for character education
6	Are children accustomed to using digital or interactive media?	To determine children experience with technology
7	Do you have suggestions to improve the effectiveness of learning in your class?	To obtain teachers' input for improvement

Specifically, RA Al-Muna is an Islamic-based early childhood education institution with distinctive characteristics compared to mainstream educational settings. These characteristics are reflected in the vision and mission of TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna: "*Realizing a Cheerful Generation with the Character of Insan Kamil.*" The institution emphasizes an educational orientation focused on building a foundation of faith, morality, and Islamic personality from an early age. Its primary focus lies in instilling the values of *tawhid* as the core foundation through the habituation of simple worship practices, the introduction of noble character, and the cultivation of compassion, honesty, and responsibility. The learning process is carried out using approaches suited to the natural development of children, such as play, imitation, and habituation, so that Islamic values can be naturally internalized into daily behavior. Furthermore, Islamic early childhood education at TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna places parental and teacher exemplarity as central factors in shaping children's character, while also integrating cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects

harmoniously in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith. Thus, the education provided does not merely function as a medium of knowledge transfer but also as a means of internalizing spiritual and moral values to shape a generation of Muslim children with strong character from an early age.

The fundamental concept of education at TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna is rooted in the belief that every child is born with extraordinary physical and mental potential. This potential cannot develop optimally without a supportive environment, while an unsupportive environment may hinder development. In this context, parents hold the closest and most strategic role as the primary educators, as they spend most of their time accompanying, guiding, and supporting their children's growth and development. As expressed by the head of TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna: *"Early childhood education is essentially a great trust from Allah SWT that is not easy to fulfill, since every child possesses unique characteristics that require different approaches. Even twins may have different traits and potentials, demanding that parents recognize and maximize each child's uniqueness."* Accordingly, education at TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna places the role of the family, especially parents, as the primary foundation in directing the development of children's potential in line with the natural disposition granted by Allah.

The next stage in fulfilling the trust of raising a child is to pursue education optimally through the right strategies, both by parents and teachers. Early childhood, from birth to six years old, is known as the golden age because it is a phase of rapid physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development. Every child is born with great potential, but its growth is largely shaped by environmental quality. A conducive environment supports optimal development, whereas an unsupportive one may inhibit it. In this regard, parents act as the closest environment and bear the primary responsibility as the first educators, since they spend most of their time with their children. Raising a child as a trust from Allah SWT is not an easy task, as each child has unique characteristics requiring specific approaches. Therefore, the role of parents in accompanying, guiding, and creating a supportive learning environment is vital for the success of early childhood education.

At TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna, the core strategy for instilling religious and moral values begins with nurturing faith (*iman*). Faith is regarded as the essence of religiosity and the fundamental basis for one's spiritual formation. Thus, instilling faith must begin early as the foundation for moral, ethical, and worship practices in later life. This process requires time, patience, and consistency, as faith cannot be established instantly but through habituation, spiritual experiences, and continuous role modeling. Consequently, nurturing faith is considered a strategic step and the top priority in religious education at TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna, ultimately shaping the quality of children's religiosity in the future.

In particular, the primary method used at TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna to instill religious and moral values is the exemplarity of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This method is especially relevant in early childhood, as children at this stage are

in an imitative phase, where they naturally mimic adult behavior. Bandura's social learning theory emphasizes that imitation is crucial in shaping behavior, making it highly effective for children's education (Bandura, 1977). From the perspective of Islamic education, this aligns with the concept of *uswah hasanah*, in which the Prophet Muhammad serves as the best role model for humanity in all aspects of life (Qur'an 33:21). Al-Ghazali also highlighted that noble character is not merely taught through instruction but more effectively instilled through practice and role modeling (Al-Ghazali, 2005). Furthermore, early childhood education experts stress that this period is critical for building the foundation of personality, morality, and spirituality (Hurlock, 2011; Masnipal, 2018). Therefore, when parents and teachers nurture children's growth, they must embody the best examples in their attitudes, words, and actions, enabling Islamic values to be naturally internalized in children's lives.

Nevertheless, the success of the exemplarity method in education cannot stand alone but must be supported by other aspects. Alongside role modeling, educating children requires perseverance and patience, as these are keys to successful learning especially in today's modern era when many children are influenced by gadgets and often absorbed in their own world at home. This condition demands that parents and teachers exercise greater patience and persistence in the educational process, as raising children is not only a formal governmental duty but also a religious obligation. This is emphasized in the interpretation of companion Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) on Qur'an 66:6, "*qu anfusakum*" meaning educate and teach them while Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) stressed the duty of parents and educators to prevent children from forbidden acts to safeguard them from the punishment of Hellfire. The Qur'an also underscores the importance of patience in educating children, as in Qur'an 20:132: "*And enjoin prayer upon your family, and be steadfast in observing it.*" This verse emphasizes that patience is a fundamental requirement for instilling religious and moral values in children from an early age (Al-Ghazali, 2018; Nata, 2016).

Specifically, the method of exemplarity represents one of the most crucial strategies in ensuring the success of sustainable education, as it provides a solid foundation for shaping children's ethics, spirituality, and daily habits. In the context of Islamic education, the exemplary conduct of parents and teachers serves as the main key to instilling religious values. For instance, when parents and teachers consistently demonstrate the practice of prayer as an expression of obedience to Allah SWT, children will naturally imitate them, allowing this act of worship to become ingrained and continue into adulthood. At a later stage, children will find it easier to understand the meaning of ablution and prayer, not only as essential conditions for valid worship but also as a means of purification, both physically and spiritually. This aligns with the message of Allah in QS. al-Ahzab verse 21, which emphasizes that the Prophet Muhammad SAW is *uswah hasanah* (a noble example) for humankind. The essence of the exemplary method lies in the integration between theory and practice, where the materials taught do not merely remain at the cognitive level but are embodied in real-life situations. As an illustration, this can be seen in Figure 1, which presents the teacher's exemplary document, reflecting

how exemplary practices are genuinely manifested in the educational process. Thus, this method effectively prevents education from becoming merely theoretical without relevance to everyday reality, while also ensuring that religious values are truly internalized within learners.



Figure 1. Teacher's Exemplary Document

Religious and moral education at TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna is carried out through the method of exemplarity demonstrated by teachers in their daily teaching practices. This exemplarity is manifested in various concrete actions, such as showing respect to elders by bowing slightly when passing them, fostering the habit of giving charity through the Friday Sharing program, and modeling the use of polite and gentle language, for example by encouraging children to practice *krama* (refined Javanese language) when interacting with their parents. These practices illustrate that religious and moral values are not merely taught in theory but are instilled through real-life behaviors that children can easily imitate. This aligns with al-Ghazali's (2005) perspective, which asserts that moral education is more effective when cultivated through habituation and exemplarity rather than through verbal instruction alone. Similarly, Zakiah Daradjat (2012) emphasizes that religious education for children should be expressed in the real-life conduct of educators so that learners can readily imitate and internalize it. Early childhood education experts also underline that early childhood is a golden phase during which children primarily learn through observation and imitation (Hurlock, 2011; Masnival, 2018). Therefore, the application of exemplarity at TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna is carried out consistently and sustainably, making it an integral part of the learning process in shaping the Islamic character of learners from an early age.

The method of exemplarity at TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna is applied through diverse and communicative approaches that are carefully adapted to children's developmental stages as well as to the demands of modern times. Essentially, exemplarity is taught using learning methods that are engaging, enjoyable, and easily absorbed by young learners (Masrurroh, 2018). This aligns with the statement of a classroom teacher at TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna, who noted that exemplary education becomes more

effective when supported by teaching materials that match the needs of the learners. For this reason, TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna provides a variety of Educational Play Tools (Alat Permainan Edukatif/APE) designed to stimulate children's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. For instance, blocks and animal toys are used as role-play media to introduce stories of the prophets, such as the story of Prophet Ibrahim AS, who was commanded to sacrifice his son before Allah SWT replaced him with a sacrificial animal. Such activities not only help children understand religious values in a contextual manner but also foster their imagination and symbolic thinking skills (Achmad, 2021). As illustrated in Figure 2, which presents a learning document using picture media, the method of exemplarity at TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna is implemented in an integrative way, combining religious values with educational play-based approaches so that they are more easily received and internalized by young learners.



Figure 2. Learning Document Using Picture Media

Specifically, one of the exemplary methods applied at TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna is through role-playing activities. This role-playing is carried out by imitating characters or events from the stories of the prophets, which are rich with educational values. For instance, the story of the Prophet Yunus AS who was sent to the Ninawa people to invite them to repent and worship Allah. When his people refused, Jonah left them and was swallowed by a large fish as punishment for his impatience. In the fish's belly, he prayed and repented, then Allah saved him. The story of the Prophet Yunus AS teaches about patience, repentance and Allah's mercy. In learning practice, children are first introduced to various types of marine animals, and then they are invited to act out roles according to the storyline. Through this activity, children not only gain an understanding of religious teachings but also internalize various essential values such as social, moral, historical, and spiritual lessons. Thus, role-playing becomes an effective medium for instilling religious values in early childhood, while at the same time supporting the development of

their cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains in an enjoyable learning atmosphere (Huda et al., 2020).

The role-playing method in the practice of exemplarity at TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna has proven effective in enhancing the quality of religious value education for young children. Through role-playing, the learning process becomes more engaging, interactive, and easier to grasp, as learners are directly involved in activities that bring the material closer to concrete experiences. Furthermore, role-playing strengthens children's memory of religious values over a longer period of time while also stimulating their creativity and imagination. With such active involvement, children not only comprehend moral messages but also gain deeper knowledge of the exemplary stories of the prophets. Therefore, this method can be viewed as a pedagogical strategy that is highly effective in instilling religious values while also fostering the cognitive, affective, and social development of early childhood learners (Huda et al., 2020; Masruroh, 2018).

Exemplarity in the learning process is not only manifested through the attitudes and behaviors of teachers but also through the provision of rewards or prizes. Rewards play a significant role as a form of appreciation for learners who demonstrate good character and academic achievements. Children who receive rewards are more motivated to maintain and even improve their positive behaviors. This strategy is in line with learning motivation theory, which emphasizes the importance of positive reinforcement in shaping desired behaviors (Skinner, 1984). From an Islamic perspective, the giving of rewards is also encouraged as a means of educating and fostering enthusiasm, as emphasized in the saying of the Prophet Muhammad SAW: "*Exchange gifts among yourselves, and you will love one another*" (HR. Bukhari-Muslim). Thus, the practice of giving rewards in the learning process at TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna can be understood as a method that is not only psychologically relevant but also strongly rooted in Islamic teachings, as it instills values of appreciation, compassion, and spiritual motivation in children from an early age (Al-Ghazali, 2018; Nata, 2016).

In the context of exemplarity modeled by the Prophet Muhammad SAW, punishment also plays an important role in the process of educating children, particularly as a means of cultivating discipline and responsibility. However, punishment must be applied proportionally and only to children who are physically and mentally ready, so that it can be understood as the logical consequence of a violation committed. Thus, punishment should not be perceived as a repressive act but rather as part of the process of shaping children's character and morality in accordance with religious and moral values. This principle is in line with the primary goals of Islamic education, which emphasize the preservation of five essential aspects (*maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*): religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property (Al-Ghazali, 2018). The Prophet Muhammad SAW provided clear guidance on disciplining children, as reflected in his saying: "*Command your children to perform prayer when they are seven years old, and discipline them (if they neglect it) when they are ten years old*" (HR. Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi). This hadith demonstrates that punishment in Islamic education is not intended to harm,

but rather to train discipline, instill responsibility, and guide children to remain obedient to Allah SWT (Nata, 2016; Abdullah, 2020). As illustrated in Figure 3, which documents learning activities through the habituation of congregational Duha prayer, the practice of discipline is embedded in daily routines, ensuring that values of worship and responsibility are consistently nurtured in children's lives.



Figure 3. Learning Document through the Habituation of Congregational Duha Prayer

The environmental aspect is one of the key factors considered in the educational process at TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna. The environment is believed to have a significant influence on the success of learning, as a positive and conducive atmosphere helps children develop optimally. The harmony between the school environment and the family plays a decisive role in shaping children's character. When both environments share the same vision of instilling good habits, the values of *tawhid*, faith, and obedience to Allah SWT, children will more easily grow into individuals who are disciplined and morally upright. This aligns with the words of the Prophet Muhammad SAW in a hadith narrated by Bukhari: "Every child is born in a state of *fitrah* (purity), and it is their parents who make them Jews, Christians, or Magians." This hadith emphasizes that the family environment, particularly parents, has a profound influence in forming the foundation of a child's personality from an early age (Al-Ghazali, 2018; Nata, 2016). Therefore, synergy between the school and parents in creating an Islamic and joyful learning environment becomes the key to successfully internalizing religious and moral values in early childhood education.

One of the crucial aspects that also plays an important role in early childhood education is the practice of giving advice. Although often regarded as simple, advice holds a strategic position in shaping children's psychological development, especially in strengthening the emotional bond between parents or teachers and

children. Providing advice is a primary responsibility of parents and educators, because through advice, children can understand what they should do and what they should avoid in accordance with religious principles and their natural disposition as human beings. In the Islamic perspective, the Qur'an highlights advice as an effective means of guiding children toward righteousness, as exemplified in the story of Luqman advising his son not to associate partners with Allah (QS. Luqman: 13). This indicates that advice is not merely a verbal instruction, but rather an expression of love and care capable of instilling the values of *tawhid*, morality, and ethics in a profound way. Therefore, the practice of giving advice at TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna is not seen as a simple method, but as an essential instrument of Islamic character education that is fully aligned with the guidance of the Qur'an and Hadith (Daradjat, 2017; Nata, 2016).

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study on the model of religious and moral education through the exemplarity of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) at TPA/KB/RA Al-Muna, it can be concluded that the institution applies an integrative exemplary model in early childhood education. This model is carried out through two main strategies. First, direct exemplary practice by teachers in the school environment, aiming to build consistency between theory and everyday practice, thus preventing students from experiencing conceptual confusion or hypocritical attitudes. Second, the use of varied learning methods to internalize the Prophet's exemplarity, such as storytelling, visual media, and role-playing. This approach proves effective since it aligns with the characteristics of young children, who are naturally imitative, concrete, and responsive to contextual learning.

The exemplarity of the Prophet visualized through these methods significantly contributes to children's character formation, particularly in instilling faith, noble character, and positive social attitudes. Therefore, the integrative exemplary model can be recommended as a relevant and applicable strategy for Islamic-based early childhood education, especially in shaping a generation with strong faith and good morals. However, the success of this model relies heavily on the consistency, commitment, and genuine exemplarity of both educators and parents. Further research is recommended to examine its effectiveness in more diverse cultural, social, and environmental contexts so that the integrative exemplary model may serve as a comprehensive reference in developing early childhood religious and moral education.

References

Abdullah, M. Y. (2020). *Pendidikan akhlak dalam perspektif hadis*. Yogyakarta: LKiS.

-
- Achmad, S. (2021). Pendidikan Islam berbasis kisah: Nilai pendidikan Islam dalam sirah Nabi. *INSANIA: Jurnal Pemikiran Alternatif Kependidikan*, 26(2), 161–174. <https://doi.org/10.24090/insania.v26i2.5201>
- Abyadh, A., Fajriati, R., Prastiani, Y., & Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini UIN Suska Riau. (2022). Implementasi nilai-nilai karakter anak usia dini melalui pembiasaan. *Al Abyadh*, 5(1).
- Al-Fitrah, J., Munawaroh, H., Siregar, M., & Fatonah, S. (2023). Pembelajaran nilai agama dan budi pekerti pada anak usia dini melalui pendekatan konstruktivisme. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini*, 2(2).
- Al-Ghazali, A. (2018). *Pendidikan karakter dalam perspektif Islam*. Jakarta: Rajawali Pers.
- Anggraini, W., & Syafril, S. (n.d.). Pengembangan nilai-nilai moral dan agama pada anak usia dini.
- Creswell, J. W. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Daradjat, Z. (2017). *Ilmu pendidikan Islam*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.
- Huda, L., Syafrida, R., & Nirmala, I. (2020). Menanamkan nilai-nilai Islami pada anak usia dini 3–6 tahun melalui metode bermain peran. *Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 4(2).
- Huda, M., Jasmi, K. A., Mustari, M. I., & Basiron, B. (2020). Exploring Islamic education teachers' strategies in developing students' character. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 11(1), 88–109.
- Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi, U. (2023). Penerapan metode pembiasaan pada pembelajaran agama Islam dalam mengembangkan nilai-nilai agama dan moral pada anak usia dini. *Tarim*, 4(1). <http://journal.staiyypiqbaubau.ac.id/index.php/Tarim11>
- Masrurroh, S. (2018a). Implementasi nilai agama dan moral pada anak usia dini melalui urutan wudhu. *Golden Age: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.29313/ga.v2i1.3854>
- Masrurroh, S. (2018b). Implementasi metode keteladanan dalam pendidikan karakter anak usia dini. *Jurnal Golden Age*, 2(2), 75–90.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Moleong, L. J. (2017). *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif*. Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Nata, A. (2016). *Ilmu pendidikan Islam*. Jakarta: Kencana.
- Penulis, T., Arifudin, O., Hasbi, I., Setiawati, E., Lestarinigrum, A., Suyatno, A., Puspita, Y., Nugroho, C. S. A., Ma, M., Harianti, R., Sidik, A. H., & Rismawati, N. (2021). *Konsep dasar pendidikan anak usia dini*. Penerbit Widina. <http://www.penerbitwidina.com>
- Pendidikan Anak, J., & Inawati, A. (2017). Strategi pengembangan moral dan nilai agama untuk anak usia dini. *Jurnal Pendidikan Anak*, 3(1). <https://sofwan07.wordpress.com/2013/12/06/10-tanda-akan-hancurnya-suatu->
- Rahmah, M. (2019). Mendidik anak shaleh: Telaah kisah Nabi Ibrahim A.S. dan Ismail A.S. *Turast: Jurnal Penelitian dan Pengabdian*, 7(1), 45–64. <https://doi.org/10.15548/turast.v7i1.763>
-

- Risnawati, A., Priyantoro, D. E., & Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. (2021). Pentingnya penanaman nilai-nilai agama pada pendidikan anak usia dini dalam perspektif Al-Qur'an. *Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 6(1), 1–16.
- Skinner, B. F. (1984). *The behavior of organisms: An experimental analysis*. New York: Appleton-Century.
- Spradley, J. P. (1980). *Participant observation*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Sugiyono. (2019). *Metode penelitian kualitatif, kuantitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Tiva Amanda, D., & Sundari, R. (2024). Pengembangan APE “Super Pyramid” dalam menstimulus kemampuan berhitung dan mengenal warna anak usia 4–5 tahun. *Murhum*, 5(2), 453–467. <https://doi.org/10.37985/murhum.v5i2.896>
- Toha, M. (2018). Konsep pendidikan anak usia dini. *Al Intizam*, 1(2), 38–68

How to cite this article:

Sholekah, M., & Khunaifi, A. (2026). A Model to Strengthen Early Childhood Religious and Moral Education through Prophet Muhammad's Example in Islamic-Based Early Childhood Institutions. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, 10(1), 331-344.
