



STRATEGIES FOR INTERNALIZING ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS VALUES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD THROUGH THE STORYTELLING METHOD

Jimi Harianto*, Siti Sholeha², Khaqiqotul Istiqomah³

Sekolah Tinggi Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Al Islam Tunas Bangsa, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: jimiharianto@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61987/ijpp.v2i1.1803>.

Abstract:

Early childhood Islamic religious value education necessitates Early childhood character formation, which requires developmentally appropriate approaches to internalise moral and religious values effectively. This study aims to identify and analyse strategies for internalising Islamic religious values through storytelling in early childhood education. A descriptive qualitative case study design was employed involving three teachers, five parents, and twenty children as observation subjects, with data collected through passive participatory observation of 12 learning sessions, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Thematic analysis using an interactive model was conducted to identify recurring pedagogical patterns. The findings reveal four integrated strategies used by teachers: contextual preparation of story materials, interactive and dramatic storytelling delivery, participatory activation through question-and-answer and role-playing activities, and transformative reinforcement by connecting stories with children's daily experiences. Observational data from 240 behavioural responses show the predominance of active verbal and nonverbal participation among children during storytelling sessions. The study contributes a cyclical-integrative storytelling strategy model and recommends its application in teacher training and curriculum development to strengthen Islamic character education in early childhood learning contexts.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 14 January 2026

Revised: 01 March 2026

Accepted: 05 March 2026

KEY WORDS

Value Internalisation, Early Childhood Education, Islamic Storytelling, Learning Strategies

INTRODUCTION

In the context of rapid technological advancement and increasing exposure to foreign cultural values, the early formation of children's character has emerged as a strategic priority. UNESCO reports that the development of values, ethics, and spirituality during early childhood (ages 0-8) is closely linked to socio-emotional growth and resilience in later life (Sujana et al., 2023). Therefore, fostering strong moral values and character from the preschool stage is vital for preparing a generation with integrity and responsibility in the digital era (Anjarwati, Kumalasari, Asy'ari, & Lukitoaji, 2025). In Indonesia, the commitment to developing human resources with noble character is outlined in Nawacita and further supported by the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 137 of 2014 on National Standards for Early Childhood Education, which prioritises competencies in spiritual and social attitudes (Nurhasanah, Jailani, & Zukhairina, 2023). At the institutional level, religious-based early childhood education centres (PAUD), such as Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal Kindergarten (ABA), play a central role

in the internalisation of Islamic values. West Waringinsari ABA Kindergarten, affiliated with the Muhammadiyah education network, operates in urban communities and is changing parenting practices. Initial observations at the kindergarten indicate persistent challenges in communicating abstract religious values to young children in ways that are engaging, contextually relevant, and easily internalised, underscoring the need for innovative and effective pedagogical strategies (Andriani, Sulistianah, & Harianto, 2025).

Previous research has examined the use of storytelling. Although prior research has explored storytelling methods in early childhood education, there remains a significant gap in the comprehensive use of storytelling as a primary approach for instilling tolerance and Islamic moral character, particularly in integrating general and religious learning (Hasibuan et al., 2025, Rohmah et al., 2024). The present study addresses this gap by examining the effectiveness of both traditional and modern storytelling formats in internalising key character values, such as courage and cooperation, alongside religious and moral values in early childhood education (Kusnilawati et al., 2022; Jimi & Sulistianah, 2024). In the context of Islamic religious value education, Saphira's research highlights the effectiveness of illustrated story media in improving kindergarten children's understanding of faith in West Java (Siregar & Ansar, 2025).

Additional studies underscore the importance of introducing moral values early through diverse methods, including field trips, conversations, and singing, which are also relevant for religious value education (Cholimah, Tjiptasari, & Purwandari, 2023). Storytelling, in particular, has been identified as a highly effective method for instilling moral values, expanding vocabulary, and fostering strong emotional bonds between children and educators (Harianto & Kurniasih, 2024). Storytelling methods have been identified as promising tools. However, detailed analysis indicates that these studies primarily assess short-term outcomes, such as increases in cognitive knowledge or attitudes, rather than examining the ongoing internalisation process and the operational strategies teachers employ to create meaningful learning experiences (AL-FARISI, Sirojudin, ARIFIN, Lazzavietamsi, & Wasehudin, 2025). Consequently, the present research focuses on exploring storytelling implementation strategies that not only capture children's attention but also foster holistic spiritual and moral awareness, aligned with monotheistic values that are both cognitively engaging and applicable in daily life.

The literature review identifies several research gaps. First, existing studies seldom examine the specific microstrategies teachers employ, such as story selection, delivery techniques, dialogical interactions, and the creation of environments conducive to value internalisation, beyond the general use of storytelling as a method. Second, research on storytelling within ABA Kindergarten is limited, with few studies addressing local characteristics and distinctive Aisyiyah values, such as simplicity, independence, and social concern. Third, no research has comprehensively documented the process from planning and implementation to the evaluation of value internalisation through storytelling in a single, in-depth case study at ABA Kindergarten. Addressing these gaps is urgent to provide empirical evidence and a concrete strategic framework for Islamic PAUD educators, particularly in the ABA context, to optimise storytelling methods.

The urgency is further underscored by the need for value education strategies that are relevant, appealing to the digital native generation, and firmly rooted in Islamic values. The scientific contributions of this study are threefold: (1) to provide a systematic and contextual strategic mapping of Islamic religious value internalization through

storytelling in ABA Kindergarten; (2) to develop an in-depth descriptive design of the pedagogical process as a reference for similar institutions; and (3) to enrich early childhood Islamic education with an operational conceptual model grounded in field findings, thereby bridging the gap between theory and practice. Based on these considerations, the objectives of this study are to describe and analyse the strategy for internalising Islamic religious values in early childhood through storytelling, as applied in Kindergarten Aisiyah Bustanul Athfal Waringinsari Barat. Operationally, the research focuses on (a) planning of materials and values in stories, (b) techniques and stages of storytelling implementation by teachers, and (c) responses and behavioural changes in children as early indicators of value internalisation.

This study argues that the internalisation of Islamic religious values in early childhood can be more effectively achieved when storytelling is implemented as a structured pedagogical strategy rather than merely as a supplementary classroom activity. By integrating carefully selected story content, interactive narrative delivery, and reflective dialogue between teachers and children, storytelling can facilitate deeper emotional engagement and meaningful moral understanding. The originality of this research lies in its comprehensive exploration of storytelling not only as a teaching method but as an operational strategy that connects planning, implementation, and evaluation within the context of Islamic early childhood education. Consequently, the findings are expected to contribute a contextual and practical framework that strengthens value-based pedagogy in Islamic early childhood education and offers a reference model for educators seeking to integrate moral and religious education through narrative-based learning approaches.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive, qualitative approach with a single-case design to explore in depth the internalisation of Islamic religious values through storytelling at Aisiyah Bustanul Athfal Kindergarten (Creswell & Poth, 2023; Yin, 2024). The case study was chosen because it allows a holistic understanding of social phenomena in real-life contexts, enabling researchers to investigate the system’s limitations in depth using various data sources. The study participants included classroom teachers, principals, parents or guardians, and students as observation subjects, who were selected purposively based on the criteria of depth of information and direct experience. Sampling continues until theoretical saturation is reached, a state in which collecting new data no longer yields significant themes or insights (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Saunders et al., 2022).

Table 1. Profile of Participant Teacher at Aisiyah BA Kindergarten

Code Teacher	Gender	Age	Educational Background	Experience	Role
G1	Women	42 years old	S1 PGPAUD	15 years	Class A Teacher (Age 4-5 years)
G2	Women	38 years old	S1 Islamic Religious Education	12 years	Class B Teacher (Age 5-6 years)
G3	Women	45 years	DIII PGTK	20 years	Principal & Accompanying Teacher

Table 1 presents the profile of the participating teachers involved in this study at Aisiyah Bustanul Athfal Kindergarten. The participants consisted of three female

teachers with varying ages, educational backgrounds, and teaching experiences. Teacher G1 is 42 years old with a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education (S1 PGPAUD) and has 15 years of teaching experience, serving as the Class A teacher for children aged 4–5 years. Teacher G2, aged 38 years, holds a Bachelor's degree in Islamic Religious Education and has 12 years of experience, teaching Class B for children aged 5–6 years. Meanwhile, Teacher G3 is 45 years old, holds a Diploma (DIII PGTK) in early childhood teacher education, and has the longest experience, with 20 years, serving as both the principal and an accompanying teacher. All teachers have obtained educator certification and specialised training in early childhood learning methods grounded in Islamic values. The child participants comprised 20 children, including 10 in Group A (4–5 years) and 10 in Group B (5–6 years), with a gender distribution of 11 girls and 9 boys.

Data collection is carried out through triangulation techniques, including passive participatory observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and document analysis, to ensure data credibility and depth. The main instrument of the research is the researcher himself, supported by observation guidelines and interviews validated through expert review. The entire research process adheres to the ethical principles of qualitative research, which includes written consent.

Data analysis was carried out simultaneously with data collection using the interactive analysis model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (Braun et al., 2023), which allowed researchers to identify, analyse, and report meaningful patterns in the data. The coding process was carried out iteratively in NVivo 12 to facilitate data organisation and increase transparency in the analysis, yielding comprehensive findings on strategies for internalising religious values through a narrative approach in the context of early childhood education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The findings of this study reveal how storytelling is strategically implemented to internalise Islamic religious values in early childhood learning. Data obtained from observations, interviews, and document analysis demonstrate structured pedagogical practices used by teachers during storytelling activities. The results are presented in several thematic findings that describe planning processes, implementation strategies, and children's responses as indicators of value internalisation.

Structured storytelling planning integrates Islamic moral values

The operational definition of structured storytelling planning in this study refers to the deliberate preparation teachers undertake before implementing storytelling activities to internalise Islamic moral values in early childhood learning. In practice, this planning includes selecting stories that convey Islamic teachings, determining which moral values to emphasise, organising the sequence of storytelling activities, and preparing supporting media appropriate for children's developmental stages. Teachers also align the stories with daily learning themes so that the values conveyed become relevant to children's experiences. The planning process is not conducted spontaneously but is integrated into lesson preparation, where teachers identify key Islamic values such as honesty, cooperation, gratitude, and respect. Through this structured planning, storytelling becomes a purposeful pedagogical strategy that translates abstract religious

teachings into simple narratives children can easily understand and relate to in their everyday activities.

The results of interviews with teachers indicate that the integration of Islamic moral values in storytelling begins with careful story selection and value identification. One teacher explained that the preparation process focuses on ensuring that the stories contain clear moral messages aligned with Islamic teachings. As expressed by Informant G1, "Before telling a story, I usually select stories that contain simple Islamic messages, such as helping others or saying thank you, so children can easily understand the values behind the story." Another informant emphasised that the planning stage includes determining the specific value to highlight during the storytelling session. Informant G2 stated, "We do not just tell stories randomly. We decide first what value we want the children to learn, for example, honesty or cooperation, then we choose stories that reflect that value." These statements indicate that teachers consciously design storytelling activities to ensure that Islamic values are clearly embedded within the narrative content delivered to children.

Further interviews also reveal that storytelling planning involves collaborative reflection among teachers and the principal to ensure that selected stories align with the institution's broader educational goals. One informant explained that the planning stage is often discussed informally among teachers to ensure that the stories remain relevant and meaningful for children. Informant G3 stated, "Usually we discuss together which stories are suitable for the weekly theme and what Islamic values can be highlighted, so the storytelling activity becomes part of the learning plan." Another teacher emphasised the importance of adjusting the story's complexity to the children's level of understanding. Informant G1 explained, "Children understand better when the story is simple and connected to their daily life, so during planning we adapt the story to situations they often experience." These interview findings suggest that structured storytelling planning is not an individual activity but a collaborative pedagogical process that ensures the stories effectively convey Islamic moral values to young learners.

Observational data further confirm that the storytelling activities implemented in the classroom reflect prior planning that integrates Islamic moral values. During classroom observations, teachers were observed preparing storytelling media, such as illustrated books and visual props, before the learning session began. Teachers also introduced the story by explaining the value to be discussed, followed by a narrative delivery that emphasised key moral messages. Children were encouraged to respond to questions about the characters' actions and the story's moral lessons. These observations indicate that the storytelling sessions were organised systematically rather than delivered spontaneously. The data show that storytelling activities function as a structured learning process in which narrative content, teacher interaction, and classroom discussion collectively reinforce Islamic moral values, making the abstract concepts more understandable and meaningful for young children.

The overall data demonstrate a consistent pattern in which storytelling planning plays a central role in integrating Islamic moral values into early childhood learning. Teachers intentionally select stories, identify specific moral values, and design storytelling stages to help children understand these values. The interviews highlight that teachers perceive planning as essential for ensuring that storytelling remains meaningful and purposeful. Observations further reveal that these planned elements are visibly reflected in classroom practices, including the use of storytelling media, guided discussions, and

value-focused questions. Together, these findings indicate that structured storytelling planning creates a coherent learning process in which narrative activities become a strategic medium for introducing and reinforcing Islamic moral values. This pattern shows that the effectiveness of storytelling in value internalisation is closely linked to the care with which the activity is prepared before implementation in the classroom.

Strategies for Internalising Islamic Religious Values through Storytelling Methods

To understand how Islamic religious values are internalised through storytelling activities, classroom learning processes were systematically observed and supported by an analysis of daily lesson plan documents (RPPH). These data sources provide insight into the practical strategies teachers implement during storytelling sessions. Through repeated observations and examination of documents, several consistent pedagogical patterns emerged regarding how teachers integrate moral and religious values into narrative-based learning activities. The analysis focused on identifying the specific strategies teachers use to make abstract Islamic values understandable and meaningful to young children. Based on observations of 12 learning sessions and analyses of RPPH documents, four main strategies were identified as used by teachers to internalise Islamic religious values. The frequency of application of each approach in the 12 observation sessions is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Strategies and Techniques for Internalising Values in Storytelling Methods

Strategies	Operational Engineering	Internalised Religious Values	Frequency of Occurrence (in 12 Sessions)	Example of Concrete
Contextual Preparation	Selection of stories from the scriptures & stories of the Prophet; use of visual aids (puppets, pictures).	The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).	12 sesi (100%)	The story of "Prophet Jonah in the Fish" with a large fish doll.
Interactive Delivery	Modulation of sound and dramatic expression; sparker questions during storytelling; repetition of key sentence values.	Worship (gratitude, prayer), morality (confidence, listening).	12 sesi (100%)	"What should we say when we are grateful? Come on, repeat together: Alhamdulillah."
Participatory Activation	Post-story structured Q&A, role-playing, and singing thematic songs.	Morals (cooperation, empathy), practice of worship (daily prayer).	10 sesi (83%)	The children take turns playing characters in the story "The Honesty of the Prophet Muhammad."
Transformative Reinforcement	Connecting the story to everyday situations, giving specific compliments, and working on simple projects (colouring characters).	The application of morals in social interaction (sharing, greeting).	8 sesi (67%)	"Like in the story earlier, how do we borrow toys from friends?"

The data presented in Table 2 indicate that teachers applied several structured strategies to internalise Islamic religious values through storytelling activities. The table shows that contextual preparation and interactive delivery were consistently implemented across all 12 observed sessions, indicating that teachers always began storytelling with careful preparation of narrative content and continued with expressive, engaging delivery techniques. Participatory activation occurred in 10 sessions, suggesting that interactive follow-up activities, such as role-playing, discussions, and singing, were frequently used to deepen children's understanding of the values conveyed in the story. Meanwhile, transformative reinforcement occurred in eight sessions, reflecting teachers' efforts to connect narrative messages to children's real-life behaviour. Classroom observations support these findings. During storytelling sessions, teachers prepared visual media, emphasised key moral messages through expressive narration, and encouraged children to respond to questions or reenact the story's characters. These activities demonstrate that storytelling was implemented as an intentional pedagogical process designed to translate religious values into practical learning experiences.

The overall data reveal a clear pattern in the implementation of storytelling-based value education. Strategies that focus on preparation and delivery appear most consistently, indicating that teachers prioritise selecting appropriate stories and presenting them in engaging ways to capture children's attention. Strategies that involve active participation and behavioural reinforcement occur slightly less frequently but still represent important stages in the learning process. This pattern suggests that the storytelling strategy operates progressively, beginning with contextual preparation of narrative content, followed by interactive storytelling delivery, then participatory activities that involve children directly, and finally reinforcement that links the story's moral lessons with everyday behaviour. The decreasing frequency from preparation to reinforcement reflects the natural variation in classroom dynamics, in which some sessions focus more heavily on narrative delivery. In contrast, others extend the learning process into interactive or reflective activities. Overall, the pattern demonstrates that storytelling is a structured, multi-stage pedagogical approach to the internalisation of Islamic values in early childhood learning.

Children's Response to the Internalisation Process

To understand the effectiveness of storytelling in supporting the internalisation of Islamic religious values, it is important to examine how children respond during and after the learning activities. Children's responses provide meaningful indicators of how well the narrative messages are understood, accepted, and reflected in their behaviour. These responses can appear in various forms, including verbal expressions such as answering questions, repeating moral phrases, or commenting on the story, as well as non-verbal behaviours such as attentive listening, imitating characters, or demonstrating positive social interactions with peers. Observing these responses allows researchers to identify early signs of value internalisation in young learners. Children's responses during and after the storytelling sessions were therefore categorised as verbal or non-verbal. The categorisation was conducted based on observations of 240 data points (20 children × 12 observation sessions). The results of this categorisation are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Categories and Frequency of Children's Responses in the Internalisation Process

Response Categories	Response Indicators	Frekuensi	Percentage	Examples of Observed Behaviours
Respon Aktif Verbal	Answering the teacher's questions, retelling, and saying words/value sentences (patience, honesty, God willing).	158	65.8%	The child raised his hand and replied, "Noah saved animals out of love."
Respon Pasif Verbal	Be silent, nod, or give a short answer ("yes" or "No").	42	17.5%	The child nodded when the teacher asked if he had to be honest.
Respon Verbal Partisipatif Non-Verbal	Enthusiastic facial expressions (smiles, wide eyes); imitating the teacher's movements; Enthusiastic in role-playing.	175	72.9%	The child smiled and made a swimming movement when he heard the story of the Prophet Jonah.
Neutral/Unfocused Non-Verbal Response	Looking at other things, yawning, rolling around, and talking to friends.	40	16.7%	The child looks out the window as the story unfolds.

The data presented in Table 3 show that children's responses during the storytelling sessions appeared in both verbal and non-verbal forms, indicating active engagement in the learning process. Verbal responses were reflected in children repeating key phrases from the story, answering the teacher's guiding questions, and mentioning moral messages related to the narrative. Nonverbal responses were observed through attentive listening, facial expressions of enthusiasm, imitation of story characters, and spontaneous actions, such as helping friends or greeting teachers politely after the storytelling activity. Restating the data, the table demonstrates that most children consistently showed positive reactions to the storytelling sessions across the twelve observations. Classroom observations confirmed that many children actively followed the narrative, raised their hands to answer questions, and enthusiastically repeated religious expressions, such as simple prayers or phrases of gratitude. These behaviours indicate that storytelling activities not only attracted children's attention but also stimulated their emotional and behavioural responses toward the Islamic values conveyed in the stories.

The overall data reveal a clear pattern in which storytelling activities generate both cognitive and behavioural engagement among children. Verbal responses generally occur during the storytelling process, when children answer teacher questions or repeat important moral messages. Non-verbal responses tend to appear during and after the activity through attentive listening, expressive reactions, and imitation of positive behaviours demonstrated by story characters. This pattern suggests that storytelling functions as a multidimensional learning experience that simultaneously engages children's listening, speaking, emotional, and social abilities. The responses also indicate that the internalisation of values does not occur only through verbal understanding but also through behavioural imitation and social interaction. As the storytelling sessions progressed, children increasingly demonstrated confidence in responding to questions and participating in activities, showing that repeated exposure to narrative-based learning contributes to stronger engagement and the gradual internalisation of moral and religious values.

DISCUSSION

The study revealed four strategies for internalising Islamic religious values through systematically applied storytelling methods: contextual preparation, interactive delivery, participatory activation, and transformative reinforcement. This pattern does not unfold linearly but rather in a cyclical, integrative manner, forming an ecosystem of values internalisation in the classroom. The dominance of active (65.8%) and participatory non-verbal (72.9%) responses among children indicates that the strategies used are effective in eliciting cognitive and affective engagement. The high frequency of participatory activation (83% of sessions) reflects a paradigm shift from teacher-centred to child-centred learning, where children are not just objects receiving stories but subjects who actively construct the meaning of values through direct experience (Bier et al., 2023; Lickona, 2019).

Interactive delivery with modulation of sound and dramatic expression, which appears in 100% of observation sessions, serves as an emotional anchor. This technique psychologically helps early childhood, which thinks concretely and imaginatively, bridge abstract values (such as patience and honesty) into memorable emotional experiences (Hoffman, 2022). These findings align with Vygotsky's theory of moral development, which emphasises that values are internalised through the mediation of cultural tools, including narratives, props, and social interactions (Tappan, 2021).

The findings of this study strengthen and, at the same time, develop several key theoretical pillars. First, the strategies found directly reflect the principles of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) in early childhood education (Copple & Bredekamp, 2021). The selection of contextual stories and the use of visual aids are tangible manifestations of the principle of "age-appropriate." At the same time, participatory activation is an implementation of the principle of "active learning." Second, the identified strategies' stages (from contextual to transformative) resonate with the theory of internalisation in Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020), in which values move from external regulation (through the teacher's guidance) to integrated internal regulation (when children associate values with daily life).

However, this study also found nuances that enrich scientific discourse. In contrast to some previous studies that emphasised the effectiveness of storytelling methods as a single technique (Harianto & Kurniasih, 2024). These findings reveal that effectiveness lies precisely in the complexity and interconnectedness between strategies. The storytelling method is not just a "storytelling moment" but a long process that begins with the preparation of value-rich material, is strengthened by lively delivery, is consolidated through active participation, and is integrated into the child's real context through reinforcement. This explains why, in some settings, storytelling fails to produce deep internalisation: perhaps because it is applied only as a partial, isolated strategy rather than as a whole system (Suyadi & Sutrisno, 2022).

This research contributes to the development of a cyclical-integrative value internalisation model for early childhood. This model offers an alternative to the dominant linear model by emphasising the importance of feedback loops from children's responses at each stage as material for reflection and adjustment of teachers' strategies (Ribath et al., 2025; Ya'cub et al., 2026). The findings strengthen the position of the socio-cultural approach in early childhood character education by showing that the internalisation of values is a highly social process, mediated by language (narrative), tools (props), and interaction (question-and-answer, role-play).

For Educators and Early Childhood Institutions: These findings provide a practical roadmap that can be replicated. Teacher training needs to focus not only on storytelling techniques but also on mastering the four strategies as a unit. The preparation of the RPPH must explicitly plan the four stages. For Curriculum Developers: The need to allocate adequate time and resources to each phase of the strategy, particularly the “transformative reinforcement” phase, which remains relatively infrequent (67% of sessions). This phase is crucial to bridge the gap between grades in school and practice at home. For Parents and Families, this study underscores the importance of tripartite synergy between schools, teachers, and parents. Parents can adopt similar techniques at home by reading valuable stories and relating them to everyday events to reinforce internalisation.

Although it provides an in-depth picture, this study has several limitations. First, as a single case study, this finding has high context-dependent validity for the Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal Kindergarten setting. Still, its transferability to the context of early childhood education across cultures and resource contexts requires further study. Second, this study relies on behavioural observation and self-report to measure internalisation. To measure the depth and stability of value internalisation in children, longitudinal research that tracks children’s development over a longer period is needed. Third, the study focuses on teachers’ strategies so that children’s voices, as valued recipients, are more readily read through observable behaviour. Participatory research that involves children more directly (e.g., through the mosaic approach method) can provide a richer perspective. Therefore, further research is recommended to 1) Test this cyclical-integrative strategy model in various contexts of early childhood education (public, private, other religion-based) with a multi-case study approach; 2) Design quasi-experimental research to test the specific impact of each strategy on more measurable internalization outcomes; and 3) Conduct collaborative action research with teachers to develop these findings-based training modules and see their impact on classroom practice on an ongoing basis.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the internalisation of Islamic religious values in early childhood through the storytelling method at Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal Kindergarten is effective through a cyclical-integrative strategy model consisting of four pillars: (1) contextual preparation of story material, (2) interactive-dramatic delivery, (3) children’s participatory activation, and (4) transformative reinforcement to daily life. The success of internalisation does not lie in storytelling as a single technique but in the integration and sustainability of the four strategies, which together create a learning ecosystem that simultaneously engages the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of children. These findings answer the research’s purpose by showing that the internalisation mechanism is a mediating social one, in which abstract values are processed into concrete experiences through structured narratives, props, and interactions. Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of a value internalisation model grounded in a socio-cultural approach to Islamic Early Childhood Education (PAUD), emphasising the cyclical and contextual dimensions of the process.

The main practical implication is the need for holistic training for educators that focuses not only on storytelling techniques but also on the ability to design and connect the four stages of the strategy synergism. Concrete recommendations for PAUD

institutions include integrating the “preparation-interaction-participation-reinforcement” framework into the curriculum and the Daily Learning Implementation Plan (RPPH), as well as building systematic partnerships with parents to extend the ecological system of value internalisation into the home environment. For further research, three main agendas are suggested: First, test the external validity of this model through multi-case studies in different types of early childhood education (public, private, and religion-based). Second, design quasi-experimental research to measure the specific impact of each strategy pillar on children’s moral development outcomes. Third, conduct a longitudinal study to track the sustainability of internalised values at the next stage of development, and conduct more in-depth participatory research to capture children’s perspectives as the main subjects of the internalisation process.

REFERENCES

- AL-FARISI, M. A., Sirojudin, R., ARIFIN, M. N., Lazzavietamsi, F. A., & Wasehudin, W. (2025). The Values of Tauhid Education in the Novel “Suluk Abdul Jalil” by Agus Sunyoto. *LEARNING Jurnal Inovasi Penelitian Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran*, 5(1), 120–130. <https://doi.org/10.51878/learning.v5i1.4309>
- Andriani, N., Sulistianah, S., & Harianto, J. (2025). Cultivating Disciplined Character Through the Habit of Dhuha Prayer in Early Childhood. *Aulad: Journal on Early Childhood*, 8(3), 1286–1294.
- Anjarwati, R., Kumalasari, N., Asy’ari, A., & Lukitoaji, B. D. (2025). The Importance of Instilling Character Education at an Early Age in the Digital Era. *Adidaya*, 2(2), 93–97. <https://doi.org/10.58466/adidaya.v2i2.1926>
- Bier, M. C., Brown, M., McGrath, R., Berkowitz, M. W., & Johnson, K. A. (2023). Advancing the Science of Character Education. In *Springer International Handbooks of Education* (pp. 483–496). Springer Nature (Netherlands). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-24420-9_26
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). Reflecting on Reflexive Thematic Analysis. In *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health* (Vol. 11). <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1628806>
- Cholimah, N., Tjiptasari, F., & Purwandari, S. (2023). Methods of Introducing Moral Values to Early Childhood Over 20 years in Indonesian Families. *Jurnal Obsesi Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 7(3), 3025–3038. <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v7i3.4505>
- Copple, C., & Bredekamp, S. (2021). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs* (4th ed.). NAEYC.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2023). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*.
- Fusch, P. I., & Ness, L. R. (2023). Are we There Yet? Data Saturation in Qualitative Research. *The Qualitative Report*, 20(9), 1408–1416. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2015.2281>
- Harianto, J., & Kurniasih, S. (2024). The Influence of Illustrated Story Media on Reading Skills in Islamic Religious Education Subjects in Elementary Schools. *Al Mumtaz*:

- Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Sosial Keagamaan*, 3(2), 40–64.
- Hasibuan, A., Manurung, M. A., & Siregar, H. L. (2025). Cultivating Tolerance Character in Diversity Through Storytelling Strategy for Elementary School Students of Sdn 064958 Medan. *SOCIAL Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan IPS*, 5(3), 1308–1317. <https://doi.org/10.51878/social.v5i3.7270>
- Hoffman, M. L. (2022). *Empathy and Moral Development: Implications for Caring and Justice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Jimi, H., & Sulistianah, S. (2024). The Problems of Picture Media in Teaching Arabic Vocabulary in Kindergarten. *Attractive: Innovative Education Journal*, 6(1), 296–302.
- Lickona, T. (2019). *Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility*. Bantam.
- Nurhasanah, J. M., & Zukhairina, Z. (2023). Teacher Pedagogical Competence in Social Emotional Development of Early Childhood 5-6 Years. *Journal DZURRIYAT Journal of Islamic Education for Young Children*, 1(1), 101–108. <https://doi.org/10.61104/jd.v1i1.29>
- Ribath, m. k., & Astutik, anita puji. (2025). The Implementation of the Qur'an Tahfidz Programme at SD Muhammadiyah MBS Prambanan, Sleman: A Case Study on Its Impact on Academic Character and Islamic Identity Development. *Pendes: Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar*, 10(02), 296–305.
- Rohmah, P. A., Rahim, A. M. & Sudrajat, S. (2024). Embroidering Early Childhood Characters Through Islamic Story Literacy. *Jurnal Obsesi Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 8(1), 123–136. <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v8i1.5604>
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2020). Self-determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68–78. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68>
- Saunders, B., Sim, J., & Waterfield, J. (2023). Saturation in Qualitative Research: Exploring Its Conceptualization and Operationalization. *Quality & Quantity*, 52(4), 1893–1907. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-017-0574-8>
- Siregar, M. D., & Ansar, A. (2025). Characteristics of Non-Formal Education Programs at Kb and Tk Iman Al Qurbah. *MANAJERIAL Jurnal Inovasi Manajemen dan Supervisi Pendidikan*, 5(4), 961–971. <https://doi.org/10.51878/manajerial.v5i4.7646>
- Sujana, I. G., Semadi, Widyatiningtyas, R., & Santika, I. G. N. (2023). The Strategic Role of Parents in Optimizing Character Education in Early Childhood in the Family Environment. *Jurnal Obsesi Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 7(3), 3241–3252. <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v7i3.4563>
- Suyadi, S., & Sutrisno, S. (2022). Hybridization of Islamic Education and Neuroscience in Early Childhood Character Building. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 12(1), 267–279. <https://doi.org/10.36941/jesr-2022-0021>
- Tappan, M. B. (2021). Mediated Moralities: Sociocultural Approaches to Moral Development. In 3rd (Ed.), *The handbook of moral development*. Psychology Press.
- Ya'cub, M., Hasan, M. S., Aspiana, R., & Binti Mastor, H. (2026). The Al-Qur'an Memorization Program as an Instrument for Religious Character Education for Islamic Boarding School Students. *Urwatul Wutsqo: Jurnal Studi Kependidikan Dan Keislaman*, 15(01), 76–86.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Sage Publications.