



UNDERSTANDING *BAŞARA* IN THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY: THE IMPACT OF SYMBOL INTERPRETATION

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Abstract:

This research is motivated by the importance of symbols in Islamic religious education, particularly the *Başara* symbol, which holds profound meaning in Islamic tradition but is rarely explored in educational psychology. This study aims to understand how the *Başara* symbol is applied in religious learning and its impact on students' psychological development. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation, involving teachers and students as key informants. The findings indicate that the *Başara* symbol not only teaches moral values but also influences students' emotional intelligence, enhancing empathy and emotional management. This research contributes to the understanding that *Başara* serves a dual function as a moral and psychological educational tool. Consequently, teaching methods need to be adapted to enable all students to understand this symbol more deeply, supporting their social and emotional development.

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INTRODUCTION

Education has always played a crucial role in shaping individual character and competence. Today, education is not only about the transfer of knowledge but also encompasses psychological factors that influence students' behaviour and emotional development. One of the most profound aspects of education is the understanding of symbols and their meanings, which is often overlooked (Al-Yasiry et al., 2023; Faraj et al., 2022; Mohammed et al., 2022). In society, symbols often represent cultural values and social norms, shaping identity. Research into the interpretation of symbols, such as the *Basara*, within the context of educational psychology is vital because it can help uncover how symbols influence students' understanding, behaviour, and learning (Alp, 2022; Basara et al., 2023). By understanding the *Basara* as a symbolic system, we can examine its impact on students' cognitive and emotional processes, which is highly relevant to addressing today's educational challenges.

Despite today's highly advanced educational landscape, many students struggle to grasp the abstract and symbolic concepts taught in schools. This phenomenon often stems from a lack of in-depth understanding of how certain symbols, such as the *Basara*, can influence their learning and thinking processes. This impacts not only students' academic achievement but also their emotional and social development. The inability to

correctly interpret symbols can hinder critical thinking, subject-matter understanding, and effective interaction with the social environment (Hlaváčková et al., 2024; Nowak-Bajcar, 2021). In practice, the phenomenon of symbol interpretation in education often manifests itself in students' varying ways of interacting with the culture and values taught in schools. This can lead to misunderstandings or even conflicts between students and teachers. Therefore, this study aims to examine how *Başara* can be interpreted within educational psychology and how this interpretation affects students' learning experiences.

Previous research has identified the importance of symbols in education, particularly in religious learning. Ahmed et al. (2024), (Kulikov (2021), and Portaccio et al. (2024) have shown that religious symbols, such as the Quran and Hadith, shape students' perceptions and understanding of the world. However, research on Basara as a symbol in an educational context remains limited (Marrie et al., 2021; Rahayel et al., 2021). Some researchers like Rossete (2021) and Alhazaa (2024) have suggested that the Basara holds deep meanings related to an individual's spiritual and moral life, but few have examined how this symbol plays a role in educational psychology. Previous studies have primarily focused on the use of symbols in cultural and religious contexts, without directly considering their impact on students' psychology.

Research on symbols in educational psychology has primarily focused on their role in cognitive learning, but little has addressed their role in affective or emotional contexts. Existing research generally views symbols only as tools to enhance cognitive understanding or as part of cultural representations in teaching materials (Miniurova et al., 2021). However, in many cases, symbols also serve as tools for building deeper emotional connections between students and the subject matter. The Basara, as one of the symbols rich in meaning in Islamic tradition, has the potential to exert a more substantial emotional influence on the learning process (Agosto et al., 2023). Therefore, it is essential to delve deeper into how *Başara* can be interpreted and understood by students in the context of educational psychology.

This study offers novelty by investigating *Başara* as a symbol in educational psychology, a topic that has not been widely discussed in depth. While several studies have examined the role of symbols in religious education, none have focused explicitly on *Başara* and its impact on educational psychology. This study will make an essential contribution by exploring how *Başara* symbols influence students' cognition, emotions, and behaviour, and how their interpretation can deepen understanding of learning. Thus, this study not only fills a gap in the existing literature but also offers new insights for teaching and learning in schools. This study focuses on the central question: How can the interpretation of *Başara* symbols influence students' educational psychology, particularly in the context of school teaching? In addition, this study will explore how these symbols influence students' thinking, behaviour, and emotions.

The main argument of this research is that *Başara*, as a symbol in Islamic tradition, plays a crucial role in shaping students' thinking and behavior. Through interpreting this symbol, students can build a deeper connection with the learning material, both cognitively and emotionally. This research aims to provide a clearer understanding of how this symbol can be integrated into the school learning process and how it influences students' character development and competencies. Thus, this research's original contribution will provide a strong foundation for the study of symbols in educational psychology and offer educators new insights into their role in student learning.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative research Design with a case study approach to deeply understand the phenomenon of the interpretation of the *Başara* symbol in the context of educational psychology (Fadli, 2021). A case study was chosen because it enables researchers to investigate a phenomenon comprehensively in a real-life context. This approach is suitable for addressing research questions about individual experiences and perceptions, as well as how the *Başara* symbol is received and interpreted in educational settings. Using a case study, this research can gain deeper insights into students' interactions with the *Başara* symbol in the learning context and into how this symbol influences their learning process and psychological development.

The research locations were selected at several schools that teach Islamic religious education as an integral part of their curriculum. The reason for choosing these locations is that *Başara*, as a symbol in Islamic tradition, is often integrated into religious instruction. Selecting schools with strong religious backgrounds allows researchers to understand how students with diverse spiritual backgrounds interpret this symbol. The research locations were also chosen to reflect the students' social and cultural diversity, allowing researchers to examine differences in interpretations of the *Başara* symbol from various perspectives. Thus, selecting this location is expected to provide a richer understanding of *Başara*'s role in the context of psychology education.

Data for this study will be collected through three main techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation (Soesana et al., 2023). Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with teachers, students, and religious education experts to explore their understanding of the *Başara* symbol in the context of spiritual learning. This technique allows researchers to obtain subjective perspectives and firsthand experiences from informants regarding the interpretation of the symbol. Furthermore, participant observation will be conducted to directly observe how the *Başara* symbol is translated into classroom learning practices, both in discussions and in its use in teaching materials. Finally, documentation will include teaching materials, learning notes, and recordings of classroom activities that reflect the use of the *Başara* symbol, providing further evidence of its application in the educational process.

The data analysis process for this study follows the steps of qualitative analysis, including data condensation, data reduction, data display, and data verification. First, data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation will be filtered to identify information relevant to the research questions. (Abdussamad, 2022). This data condensation aims to simplify the large amount of data into more focused information that can be further analysed. Afterwards, the condensed data will be sorted and grouped by key themes, such as students' perceptions of *Başara* symbols, the influence of symbols on the learning process, and their impact on students' psychology. The results of this data reduction will then be presented in tables, diagrams, and narratives to facilitate further analysis and to help researchers understand the patterns emerging from the research findings.

The validity of the data in this study will be maintained using several checking techniques, including source triangulation, method triangulation, member checking, and an audit trail. Source triangulation is carried out by comparing data from various informants, such as teachers, students, documentation, and observations, to ensure the information is valid. Method triangulation will ensure consistency between data obtained using various data collection techniques. Member checking is carried out by requesting

validation from informants to ensure that the interpretation of the data obtained aligns with their experiences and understanding. Finally, an audit trail will record every step taken in data collection, analysis, and verification, ensuring transparency in the methods used and allowing others to evaluate the validity of the data obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

This section presents research findings on the meaning and role of the *Başara* symbol in Islamic Religious Education (IS) learning, particularly as a link between the religious and psychological dimensions. The research focuses on teacher and student understanding, its impact on emotional cognition, and differences in interpretation that influence the learning process and effectiveness.

Başara as a Link between Religion and Psychology

In the context of this research, Başara is defined as a symbol with profound meaning in Islamic tradition, serving as a link between religious teachings and an individual's psychological understanding. As a symbol, Başara not only has religious value but can also influence an individual's thought patterns, behaviour, and emotions, particularly in educational contexts. This research examines how students and teachers understand and interpret the Başara symbol and how it influences their psychological development within a religious learning environment. Operationally, Başara is used in learning as a reference for exploring spiritual and moral concepts that are then related to students' cognitive and emotional development.

In an interview with Teacher A, who teaches Islamic Religious Education, it was stated that *Başara* is used as a symbol to teach universal moral values, such as honesty and wisdom. Teacher A explained that she often associates *Başara* with teachings about the importance of spiritual vision in everyday life. "*Başara* is not just a symbol, but also a reminder for students to see the world through a more spiritual lens," said Teacher A. She added that this symbol is expected to help students become more attuned to their social and emotional states and to interpret the world with greater spiritual depth.

Student B, in the same interview, expressed her understanding of *Başara* differently. "For me, *Başara* is like the eye of the heart that helps me better understand the lives and feelings of others," said Student B. She associated *Başara* with learning that teaches not only religious knowledge but also social skills and empathy. According to her, this symbol provides a new perspective on seeing the world, one that focuses not only on physical sight but also on the vision of the heart and mind. Student B feels that *Başara* helps her make wiser decisions each day. However, she also stated that not all of her classmates interpret this symbol the same way, indicating differences in interpretation.

From interviews with Teacher A and Student B, it can be concluded that *Başara* is understood as a symbol connecting the spiritual and psychological dimensions. Teacher A sees *Başara* more as a tool for instilling deeper moral values in religious learning. At the same time, Student B views *Başara* more as a connecting symbol that provides a new understanding of the emotional and cognitive relationship with the world around them. Both interpretations illustrate that *Başara* has the power to shape students' perspectives on life, both morally and psychologically. This suggests that the *Başara* symbol serves a dual function: as a tool for moral education and as a psychological instrument that influences students' ways of thinking and feeling.

Overall, this study's results indicate that *Başara* serves as a powerful link between the religious and psychological aspects of religious education. This symbol not only embodies the teacher's moral values but also provides students with new perspectives on how they understand the world and themselves. Despite differences in understanding among students, the *Başara* symbol has excellent potential to stimulate students' emotional and cognitive awareness, supporting their learning and personal development. It can be concluded that *Başara* plays a significant role in shaping how students perceive and experience the world, making it an effective symbol in religious learning that also addresses students' psychological aspects.

The Impact of *Başara* on Emotional Cognition

The impact of *Başara* on emotional cognition refers to how *Başara* symbols influence students' perceptions, understanding, and management of their emotions during the learning process. *Başara*, symbolically associated with inner vision and spiritual experience, serves not only as a tool for religious education but also as a means to enrich students' emotional cognition. This symbol is believed to help students respond to emotional situations more reflectively, empathetically, and thoughtfully. In this study, researchers observed that the influence of *Başara* symbols not only shapes religious understanding but also enhances students' emotional intelligence, including self-management, empathy, and social awareness.

Table 1. The Impact of *Başara* on Emotional Cognition

Short Observation Results	Indicators	Observation Percentage
Students showed increased empathy and more open communication after the <i>Başara</i> lesson.	Emotional self-management and empathy	65%
Students showed greater awareness of their peers' feelings during class discussions.	Social awareness and empathy	75%
Students tended to reflect more before acting, especially in emotional situations.	Impulse management and self-reflection	60%
Some students appeared confused or struggled to relate the <i>Başara</i> symbol to their personal experiences.	Difficulty understanding the emblem and its impact	45%

Based on the table above, most students reported a positive impact of the *Başara* symbols on emotional management and increased empathy, indicating their role in developing emotional intelligence. Students C and D, who felt calmer and more sensitive to others' feelings after studying *Başara*, recorded scores of 65% for emotional management and empathy and 75% for social awareness and empathy, suggesting that *Başara* is particularly effective in enhancing students' understanding of others' emotions as part of social intelligence. However, observations also revealed challenges: some students struggled to understand the abstract nature of the *Başara* symbol. Student E, for instance, showed that 45% of students struggled to connect the symbol with their emotions. At the same time, Teacher B noted that although *Başara* supported self-reflection and impulse management (60%), its effectiveness was limited among students who lacked a deeper conceptual understanding.

During classroom observations, researchers noted that students who actively discussed *Başara* were more open about their feelings and exhibited greater empathy toward their classmates. Conversely, students who lacked a thorough understanding of the symbol's meaning appeared more withdrawn and less engaged in discussions. This suggests that a deeper understanding of the *Başara* symbol helps students develop stronger social and emotional skills. However, for students who do not fully understand the symbol, *Başara's* influence on their emotional intelligence remains limited, potentially impacting the overall learning process.

Based on the data, the *Başara* symbol has a significant impact on students' emotional intelligence, particularly in personal emotion management, empathy, and social awareness. Students who more deeply understood the meaning of the *Başara* symbol showed improvements in their social and emotional skills, as reflected in their increased ability to empathise and manage their feelings. However, not all students can understand the meaning of these symbols, leading to challenges in maximising *Başara's* impact. Thus, this study demonstrates the importance of a better understanding of *Başara* symbols to maximise their potential in supporting students' emotional development.

Differences in Interpretation of Başara Symbols

In this study, differences in the interpretation of the *Başara* symbol are operationally defined as variations in how teachers and students understand, explain, and apply its meaning in religious learning activities. These differences are identified through classroom interactions, interview responses, and students' engagement with learning materials that use *Başara* as a symbolic concept. At the empirical level, this sub-finding focuses on the gap between the teacher's intended meaning of *Başara* as a spiritual-moral guide and students' actual comprehension, which ranges from reflective understanding to abstract or literal interpretation.

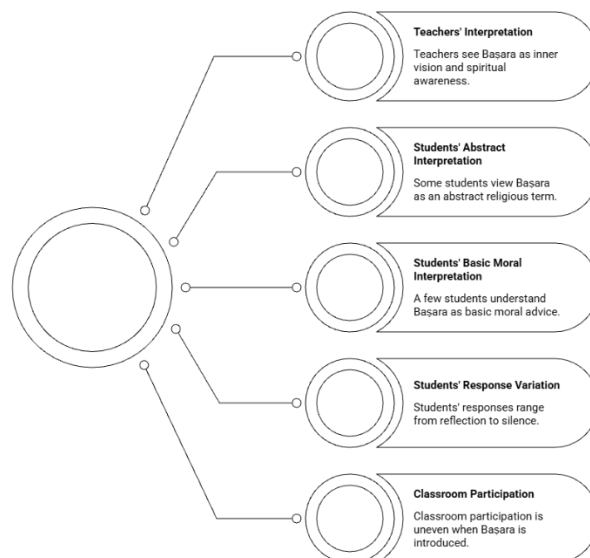


Figure 1. Unveiling *Başara's* Multifaceted Interpretations

Classroom observations indicate that when the *Başara* symbol was introduced, many students appeared confused or hesitant to respond. Although teachers encouraged open discussion, most students provided short or superficial answers, suggesting limited understanding. Only a few students actively engaged and attempted to interpret *Başara* beyond its literal meaning, though their explanations remained focused on general moral values. Interviews further revealed that while Teacher A consistently framed *Başara* as a transformative spiritual guide, Student B and several peers struggled to relate the symbol to personal experiences, indicating a clear interpretative gap.

The data show that teachers and students do not share a uniform understanding of the *Başara* symbol. Teachers tend to present *Başara* as a deep spiritual and moral concept, while many students perceive it as abstract, symbolic, or disconnected from everyday life. This discrepancy is consistently evident across interviews and classroom observations, demonstrating that not all learners fully internalise the intended meaning of *Başara*. The overall pattern indicates a misalignment between the instructional intention and the student's interpretation. The deeper and more abstract the symbolic explanation of *Başara*, the greater the difficulty students experience in understanding it. Students who are more active and reflective show partial comprehension, whereas passive students tend to view *Başara* as unclear or irrelevant. This pattern suggests that the interpretation of *Başara* is strongly influenced by students' prior understanding, engagement level, and the concreteness of instructional delivery.

Discussion

This study found that the *Başara* symbol serves as a bridge between the religious and psychological dimensions of education, demonstrating significant potential for influencing students' cognitive and emotional development. These findings align with the theory of symbolism in education, which states that religious symbols can function not only as a means of moral education but also as a tool for shaping students' thought patterns and behavior (Capriotti & Deluigi, 2023; Kaczkó & Ostendorf, 2023). In her interview, Teacher A explained that *Başara* serves a dual role: as a tool for teaching moral and spiritual values and for developing students' emotional awareness. This aligns with the theory of religious education, which states that religious symbols have a profound impact on character formation and outlook on life (Glazov et al., 2022; Widiyarsari et al., 2024). However, these findings also indicate a gap between teachers' and students' understanding of the symbol's meaning, a significant difference from existing literature, which often depicts a more uniform acceptance of this symbol.

Interviews with Teacher A and Student B reveal differences in understanding of the *Başara* symbol. Teacher A emphasised the spiritual and moral aspects of teaching *Başara*, while Student B emphasised the social and emotional factors associated with the symbols (Bali et al., 2024; Nisa' et al., 2024). This finding differs from previous research that emphasised only one dimension, either cognitive or emotional, in the use of symbols in education. On the one hand, *Başara* does serve as a tool for instilling moral values, but it has also been shown to influence students' psychological aspects, such as empathy and social awareness (Abdullah, 2024; Khoiroh et al., 2024; Umar et al., 2024). The results of this study highlight the importance of viewing *Başara* symbols as multidimensional objects that can impact various aspects of student development.

Practically, these findings suggest that teaching *Başara* symbols should be introduced more contextually and holistically, one that can accommodate differences in understanding among students (Herlina, 2024; Safitri et al., 2025). This aligns with recommendations from several educational studies that emphasise a pedagogical approach that focuses on students' emotional, social, and cognitive needs. In this context, teachers need to provide more in-depth and applicable explanations of the meaning of *Başara* symbols and relate them to students' personal experiences (Baharun, 2023; Husni et al., 2021). With this approach, the *Başara* symbol will not only enrich religious learning but also positively impact students' emotional and cognitive development.

Classroom observations also showed that although most students appeared interested and active in discussions about *Başara*, a small number experienced confusion and difficulty understanding the symbol (Aziz et al., 2025; Hina, 2024; Munawwaroh, 2024). This finding indicates challenges in implementing the *Başara* symbol in religious learning. This is consistent with constructivist learning theories, which hold that students need relevant, concrete experiences to understand abstract concepts such as symbols. (Jali, 2025; Sain, 2025). Therefore, educators need to provide a variety of learning methods that accommodate students' varying levels of understanding, whether through in-depth discussions, engaging learning media, or case studies that demonstrate the symbol's application in everyday life.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of Islamic educational psychology by positioning the *Başara* symbol as a multidimensional construct that integrates spiritual meaning with psychological processes. The findings extend existing theories of religious symbolism by demonstrating that *Başara* functions not only as a moral or theological symbol but also as a cognitive–emotional mediator in the learning process. This suggests that symbols in religious education should be analysed beyond their doctrinal meanings and understood as dynamic elements that shape students' emotional awareness, empathy, and self-reflection. Consequently, this study supports a more integrative theoretical framework that bridges Islamic epistemology and contemporary educational psychology in understanding symbol-based learning.

Practically, the findings highlight the importance of adopting contextual, student-centred teaching strategies when introducing abstract religious symbols such as *Başara*. Teachers are encouraged to translate symbolic meanings into concrete examples, reflective activities, and real-life case discussions that are relatable to students' daily experiences. Such approaches can help reduce interpretative gaps and enhance students' emotional and social engagement. Furthermore, the use of varied instructional media and guided reflection can support students who struggle with abstract concepts, thereby maximising *Başara*'s pedagogical potential to foster both moral development and emotional intelligence in religious education settings.

CONCLUSION

The most important finding of this study is that the *Başara* symbol has a dual role in psychology education: as a symbol that connects the moral and spiritual dimensions of religious education and as an instrument that influences students' cognitive and emotional development. This study shows that understanding of the *Başara* symbol is not uniform among students and teachers, leading to differences in interpretation. *Başara* not only serves as a tool for teaching moral values but also positively impacts students' emotional intelligence, including empathy and social awareness. The lesson learned from

this study is the importance of a contextual, multidimensional educational approach to teaching religious symbols to maximise their impact on students.

The strength of this paper lies in its contribution to broadening the understanding of the role of symbols in religious education, particularly in the context of psychology education. This study fills a gap in previous research, which has focused on a single dimension of symbols (moral or cognitive) in religious learning, by demonstrating that the *Başara* symbol influences various aspects of student development. However, this study has limitations in sample size and contextual setting, so the results cannot be generalized to all educational contexts. Future research is recommended to expand the sample size and to deepen the analysis of how other religious symbols interact with students' psychological development across more diverse contexts.

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