

Development of Fine Motor Skills in Early Childhood Through Islamic Art Activities: A Case Study at RA. Labschool IIQ Jakarta Kindergarten Group B

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the role of teachers, strategies, and challenges in developing fine motor skills in early childhood through Islamic art activities. A qualitative approach with a case study method was employed. The research subjects included children aged 5–6 years in the TK B group at RA. Labschool IIQ Jakarta, class teachers, and parents. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings reveal that Islamic art activities such as basic calligraphy, coloring Islamic motifs, and hijaiyah letter collages effectively stimulate hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills. The strategies applied by teachers involved the use of engaging materials, thematic approaches based on Islamic values, and repetitive practice. The main challenges encountered included variations in children's skill levels and limited instructional time. This study recommends integrating Islamic art activities into early childhood education as a holistic medium that fosters both fine motor development and the internalization of spiritual values from an early age.

Keywords: fine motor skills; Islamic art; early childhood; Islamic education; creative activities

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan peran guru, strategi, serta tantangan dalam pengembangan motorik halus anak usia dini melalui aktivitas seni Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus. Subjek penelitian terdiri dari anak-anak usia 5–6 tahun di kelompok TK B RA. Labschool IIQ Jakarta, guru kelas, dan orang tua. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa aktivitas seni Islam, seperti kaligrafi sederhana, mewarnai motif islami, dan kolase huruf hijaiyah, efektif dalam menstimulasi koordinasi mata dan tangan serta keterampilan motorik jemari anak. Strategi yang diterapkan oleh guru meliputi penggunaan media yang menarik, pendekatan tematik berbasis nilai-nilai Islami, serta pembiasaan melalui pengulangan aktivitas. Tantangan utama yang dihadapi adalah perbedaan tingkat kemampuan anak dan keterbatasan waktu dalam pelaksanaan kegiatan. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan integrasi aktivitas seni Islam ke dalam pembelajaran anak usia dini sebagai pendekatan holistik yang tidak hanya mengembangkan keterampilan motorik halus, tetapi juga menanamkan nilai-nilai spiritual sejak dini.

Kata kunci: motorik halus; seni Islam; anak usia dini; pendidikan Islam; aktivitas kreatif

INTRODUCTION

Fine motor skills in early childhood play a crucial role in supporting daily activities and preparing children for formal education. These skills include small muscle movements such as those of the fingers, hands, and wrists, which require coordination and precision (Ulfa, 2021). The development of fine motor skills in early childhood is an important aspect of growth and development that affects children's ability to perform various activities, such as writing, drawing, or cutting (Maretiani et al., 2021). This ability involves coordination between small muscles, eyes, and hands, which prepares children for daily activities and formal education in the future. However, many early childhood children still experience difficulties in fine motor skills such as holding a pencil, writing, or performing activities that require high precision (Sutri & Zulminiati, 2020). This is often caused by a lack of appropriate stimulation in the learning process at school and at home.

Fine motor development in early childhood is an important foundation for supporting children's overall growth and development. Good fine motor skills will facilitate children in performing daily activities such as drawing, writing, eating, and dressing (Mansur & Andalas, 2019; Tripuspa et al., 2024). s times change, education experts are increasingly aware of the importance of integrating art into the learning process of early childhood. Art, especially Islamic art, has great potential in stimulating children's fine motor development (Anhusadar & Wulandari, 2019; Dacholfany & Hasanah, 2021; Khadijah & Amelia, 2020).

Islamic art is a creative expression that reflects Islamic values and principles, aiming not only for aesthetic beauty, but also to convey spiritual and moral messages (Iskandar, 2022). The main characteristic of Islamic art is the unity between form and meaning, where each work of art reflects the concept of tauhid (the oneness of Allah) and ethical values in Islam (Mulyani et al., 2024). Islamic art must reflect the principle

of tauhid, namely the oneness of God, and convey a profound spiritual message. This art includes various forms, such as calligraphy, mosque architecture, and music based on Islamic sharia (Hujaeri, 2019; Kusuma, 2020).

Islamic art can be an effective medium for training fine motor skills in early childhood. These activities involve the use of small muscles in the hands and fingers, as well as hand-eye coordination, which are very important for the development of skills such as writing, drawing, and holding objects (Tripuspa et al., 2024). Islamic-based art activities offer various methods that are suitable for children's fine motor development, including simple calligraphy, coloring Islamic motifs, making collages based on Hijaiyah letters, and origami in the shape of stars or moons (Anhusadar & Wulandari, 2019; Hasan et al., 2024). These activities not only introduce Islamic values but also actively involve children in a creative process that trains their motor skills (Kristi & Putri, 2024; Nurvitri & Multahada, 2020). Activities such as calligraphy involve controlling hand movements, while making Islamic mosaics requires precision in arranging small elements (Kurnia & Rosdianti, 2023).

Studies show that artistic activities, such as coloring or origami, improve children's hand-eye coordination and ability to focus. In addition, these activities stimulate creativity, teach patience, and help children understand Islamic concepts in a fun and interactive way (Khadijah & Amelia, 2020; Nurlaela, 2021; Yesi, 2023). This approach also encourages children to be more independent and boosts their confidence through their achievements in art (Anhusadar & Wulandari, 2019). By utilizing Islamic art in fine motor skill development, teachers and parents not only support children's physical growth but also build a strong moral foundation and religious values.

Activities such as writing Hijaiyah letters or creating artwork inspired by Islamic values can be relevant media for introducing children to religion while improving their motor skills (Rumyati, 2022). Several studies show that media such as collages, beading, and games based on natural materials can significantly improve

children's skills. The media used must be interesting, safe, and easily accessible so that children can actively and repeatedly engage in these activities (Sutri & Zulminiati, 2020; Husna & Mayar, 2022).

Research on the development of fine motor skills in early childhood has been conducted extensively, focusing on various stimulatory approaches, such as educational games, drawing, pasting, and nature-based activities. Previous studies have shown that fine motor stimulation is very important for children's academic readiness and basic skills in daily activities (Maretiani et al., 2021; Sutri & Zulminiati, 2020; Ulfa, 2021). Several studies have also identified that arts-based approaches are effective in stimulating eye-hand coordination and finger skills in children (Mansur & Andalas, 2019; Tripuspa et al., 2024).

The integration of Islamic values in arts education for early childhood has also attracted the attention of researchers. Research by Anhusadar & Wulandari (2019) and Khadijah & Amelia (2020) shows that Islamic arts, such as calligraphy and Hijaiyah collage, have the potential to shape children's character and spirituality. However, most studies still separate the artistic approach from the religious approach in the context of fine motor skill development.

This study offers something new in terms of integrating Islamic art activities as a simultaneous medium for developing fine motor skills while instilling Islamic values in early childhood. By emphasizing Islamic art forms such as simple calligraphy, Hijaiyah letter collages, and Islamic motifs, this study not only focuses on physical skills but also touches on the spiritual and cultural aspects of children.

This study also provides a contextual contribution by taking place at RA. Labschool IIQ Jakarta, which represents an integrative Islamic educational institution. This approach has not been explored in depth in previous studies, especially in the context of case studies that directly observe the involvement of teachers, children, and parents in Islamic art activities oriented towards the development of fine motor skills.

Islamic art activities not only help develop fine motor skills, but also introduce moral and spiritual values. Children learn about important concepts in Islam through a fun and creative approach. In this way, Islamic art becomes a medium that not only develops physical skills but also instills a love for culture and religious values from an early age. Seeing the above phenomenon, the author wanted to know more about how fine motor skills are developed in early childhood through Islamic art activities at RA. Labschool IIQ Jakarta Kindergarten Group B, ages 5-6 years old.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the process of fine motor development in early childhood through Islamic art activities in a natural and holistic context. The location of the study was RA. Labschool IIQ Jakarta, an Islamic-based early childhood education institution that integrates religious values into its learning activities.

The subjects in this study consisted of 15 children aged 5–6 years who were members of the TK B group, two classroom teachers, and several parents who were actively involved in the learning process. The subjects were selected purposively based on their direct involvement in the Islamic art activities that were the focus of the study.

Data collection was carried out using three main techniques, namely observation, interviews, and documentation. The collected data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which consists of three stages: (1) data reduction, which is the process of filtering and selecting data relevant to the research focus; (2) data presentation, which is the compilation of data in the form of narratives, matrices, or tables for easy analysis; and (3) drawing conclusions, which is the process of formulating key findings based on patterns that emerge from the analyzed data (Sugiyono, 2013).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Role of Teachers in the Development of Fine Motor Skills in Early Childhood through Islamic Art Activities

The results of observations and interviews show that teachers play a very important role in designing and implementing activities that support children's fine motor development. At RA. Labschool IIQ Jakarta, teachers not only act as educators, but also as facilitators, motivators, and companions in every learning process, especially in Islamic-themed art activities. This role is reflected in how teachers design activities that directly train children's hand and finger coordination through activities such as coloring calligraphy, making Hijaiyah letter collages, pasting Islamic ornaments, and folding paper with Islamic values themes.

As facilitators, teachers prepare teaching materials and media that are interesting and appropriate for the children's stage of development. For example, when children are asked to decorate the words Allah or Muhammad using paper collage techniques, teachers ensure that the materials used are easily accessible and safe. As motivators, teachers give praise, verbal encouragement, and simple rewards that build children's self-confidence, so that they feel proud of their work. As a companion, teachers accompany children personally, helping them when they encounter difficulties and providing gentle guidance without taking over the children's creative process.

The interview results also showed that teachers consciously incorporated Islamic values into every art activity. This not only enriched the cognitive and affective aspects, but also made the activities more spiritually meaningful. Children learned the Hijaiyah alphabet, Islamic phrases, and religious symbols while strengthening their fine motor skills through fun activities.

According to Bodrova & Leong (2007) within the framework of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, teachers play an important role as scaffolders or providers of

support that enable children to develop new skills within their zone of proximal development (ZPD). In this context, teachers provide assistance tailored to children's abilities when they engage in artistic activities such as coloring calligraphy or arranging Hijaiyah collages, which train their fine motor skills.

This finding is in line with the opinion of Roopnarine et al. (2018) who emphasize that teachers at the early age stage must be able to create a learning environment that stimulates children's fine motor development through a holistic and contextual approach. Thus, it can be concluded that the success of children's fine motor development is largely determined by the active and creative involvement of teachers in designing and implementing learning activities that incorporate Islamic values.

In Islamic-themed art activities designed by teachers, children are not only recipients of learning, but also key players in the process of developing their fine motor skills. The children's active role is evident in their involvement in activities that require hand-eye coordination, such as drawing calligraphy, pasting Islamic ornaments, or stringing Hijaiyah letters. The children show great enthusiasm in participating in these activities, especially because the media and materials used are closely related to their spiritual lives.

The results of the observation show that most children are able to follow the stages of the activity well. For example, when making a collage of the word Allah, the children independently cut out colored paper pieces and pasted them according to the pattern. This activity stimulated their manipulative abilities, such as pinching, squeezing, and controlling fine finger movements. Some children who initially had difficulty cutting or pasting accurately showed improvement after receiving guidance and repeated practice.

Interviews with teachers also revealed that children's fine motor skills had

developed positively over the several weeks of the activity. The children became more confident in using writing instruments, scissors, and glue, and showed improvement in their accuracy and endurance in completing tasks. Teachers noted that children who were initially reluctant to draw or color began to show greater interest when the activities were linked to Islamic values they were familiar with, such as decorating the phrase Bismillah or making mosque ornaments.

This improvement reflects significant achievements in fine motor skills, as described in the early childhood development indicators according to Permendikbud PAUD No. 137 of 2014. Children aged 5–6 years are expected to demonstrate hand-eye coordination in activities that require precision and small muscle control. Based on teachers' development records and documentation of children's work, it appears that the majority of children have reached the appropriate stage of development for their age, with some children even showing progress that exceeds initial expectations.

B. Activity Design and Teacher Strategies in the Development of Fine Motor Skills in Early Childhood through Islamic Art Activities

In the context of developing fine motor skills in early childhood through Islamic art activities, teachers have the primary responsibility of designing activities that are developmentally appropriate and imbued with Islamic values. The activity design developed by teachers at RA. Labschool IIQ Jakarta shows the integration of fine motor skill stimulation and the internalization of Islamic values. The teacher's activity design takes into account the developmental characteristics of 5-6 year old children. At this age, children are in the preoperational stage according to Piaget, which means they learn most effectively through concrete, manipulative, and symbolic activities. Teachers utilize visual and real materials, such as paper cutouts, glue, and coloring tools, so that children can explore directly with their hands.

Selected activities, such as pasting Islamic ornaments, arranging Hijaiyah letter collages, or coloring the word Allah, not only train motor precision but also provide enjoyable cognitive and emotional experiences.

Teachers apply an active learning approach in which children are directly involved in the learning process. This is in line with constructivist theory, particularly the views of Piaget (1978) and Bruner (1987), which emphasize that children construct their knowledge through interaction with their environment. Bruner also introduced the concept of a spiral curriculum, in which children are gradually introduced to abstract concepts such as religious values through media and symbols that they can understand. For example, the Hijaiyah alphabet is introduced not only as a linguistic symbol, but also as part of worship and Islamic identity.

The design of teacher activities also reflects an understanding of Howard Gardner (2000) Multiple Intelligences theory. Some of the intelligences developed through Islamic art activities include:

1. Visual-spatial intelligence: through drawing and collage activities.
2. Kinesthetic intelligence: through cutting, pasting, and coloring activities.
3. Musical intelligence (if accompanied by Islamic songs while working).
4. Interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence: when working in groups or reflecting on works that have spiritual meaning.

By combining various types of activities, teachers are able to cater to different learning styles (auditory, visual, kinesthetic). The strategies used by teachers also demonstrate a differentiated learning approach, which involves tailoring activities to the abilities and needs of each child. Children who are not yet able to cut neatly are given larger pieces, while those who are already skilled are challenged to make more complex collage patterns. According to Tomlinson (2001), differentiation is an important approach in early childhood education because each

child develops at a different pace. Teachers who implement differentiation can avoid frustration in children and encourage optimal growth.

Teachers do not simply instruct children to complete tasks, but also provide contextual narratives, such as “this is the letter ‘Alif’, the first letter in the name of Allah,” or “this blue color reminds us of the sky created by Allah.” This is in line with Ausubel's theory of meaningful learning, which emphasizes the importance of linking new information to the knowledge structure that children already possess. By connecting concrete activities with Islamic values, learning becomes more meaningful.

Table 1. Key Designs and Concepts for Developing Fine Motor Skills in Early Childhood through Islamic Art Activities

Figure/Theory	Key Concept	Application in Teacher Design
Piaget (1983)	Preoperational stage: learning through concrete manipulation	Children learn to color and paste using real media
Bruner (1966)	Spiral curriculum and discovery learning	Children learn Islamic concepts gradually through experience
Gardner (1993)	Multiple Intelligences	Art activities stimulate children's various intelligences
Tomlinson (2001)	Differentiated Instruction	Teachers adjust tasks according to each child's motor skills
Ausubel (1963)	Meaningful Learning Theory	Children understand Islamic symbols meaningfully through experience

The activities designed by teachers have been proven to not only stimulate children's fine motor skills, but also serve as an effective medium for instilling Islamic values in a contextual and enjoyable manner. This reflects the principle of meaningful learning (Ausubel, 1963) in which children are able to relate new information or experiences to their existing knowledge structure, such as the concept of Hijaiyah letters or mosque symbols that are familiar to their daily lives..

Furthermore, this approach is also in line with Bruner (1987) view of the spiral curriculum, in which children are introduced to abstract concepts such as religious values gradually and repeatedly through concrete experiences. Using a concrete-manipulative approach, teachers facilitate children's understanding of spiritual concepts through art media, such as coloring the word Allah or arranging Hijaiyah letter collages.

In addition, the use of various creative strategies and activities demonstrates the application of Howard Gardner, (2000) Multiple Intelligences theory, which encourages teachers to stimulate various aspects of children's intelligence, especially kinesthetic, visual-spatial, and intrapersonal intelligence in Islamic art activities. Teachers also apply Tomlinson (2001) principle of differentiated instruction by adjusting the difficulty of tasks and the level of assistance according to each child's individual abilities, so that every child feels challenged but still comfortable in learning.

By integrating child development theory, modern pedagogy, and Islamic values, teachers have succeeded in creating a holistic, meaningful, and relevant learning environment for early childhood, as emphasized in the integrative Islamic education approach according to (Suyadi, 2019), namely building children's full potential through learning experiences that encompass physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual aspects.

C. Challenges in Developing Fine Motor Skills in Early Childhood through Islamic Art Activities

Islamic art activities have been proven effective in stimulating children's fine motor skills. However, their implementation in the field is not without challenges, both in terms of the children themselves, the abilities of teachers, and the learning environment. These challenges include:

1. Differences in Children's Motor Maturity Levels

Every early childhood child has different fine motor skills development. Some children are already able to hold writing instruments steadily, while others still have difficulty controlling their finger movements. This disparity poses a challenge for teachers to develop adaptive and responsive strategies to meet the individual needs of children. According to Individual Development Theory (Gesell, 2011), children develop at their own pace, so the learning approach must be tailored to the child's level of readiness, not just based on chronological age. If teachers are not sensitive to this, art activities can become a burden rather than an enjoyable learning experience.

2. Limitations of Teachers' Skills in Integrating

Not all early childhood teachers have a strong background in Islamic education. Some teachers find it difficult to integrate Islamic values into art activities in a natural and contextual manner. As a result, art activities tend to focus only on technical (motor) aspects, without reinforcing spiritual or religious meanings. According to the value-based learning approach, the introduction of religious values should not be verbalistic, but should be integrated into the concrete experiences of children (Tilaar, 2002).

3. Lack of Availability of Islamic Thematic Learning Media and Resources

Many early childhood education institutions have a wide range of general teaching materials, but very limited visual media, worksheets, or teaching aids specifically designed for Islamic arts (such as children's calligraphy, colored Hijaiyah letters, or Islamic-themed images suitable for early childhood). This makes it difficult for teachers to carry out activities that are rich in stimuli and meaningful. According to the Reggio Emilia approach, the environment is the third teacher, so the availability of rich learning media is crucial in supporting children's exploration. When appropriate media are not available, teachers are

forced to make their own teaching aids with limited time and resources (Inan et al., 2010).

4. Limited Learning Time

The development of fine motor skills requires a repetitive process and sufficient time for children to become accustomed to precise movements, such as holding a pencil, cutting with scissors, or pasting. However, limited learning time—especially in early childhood education with short durations—makes it impossible to strengthen motor skills consistently. The Theory of Experience-Based Learning (Dewey, 1986) emphasizes the importance of duration and continuity of experience for meaningful learning. When learning time is limited and discontinuous, learning outcomes may be less than optimal.

5. Lack of Parental Involvement at Home

A child's fine motor development does not only depend on learning at school, but is also greatly influenced by stimulation at home. Unfortunately, some parents do not involve their children in household activities that train motor skills (such as tearing paper, peeling eggs, or buttoning clothes), or do not continue the art activities carried out at school. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological approach to development emphasizes the importance of the relationship between the various environments of the child (microsystems), including home and school. If there is no continuity between the two, the child's development can be stunted.

The implementation of Islamic art activities in developing children's fine motor skills offers significant educational value but also presents multiple interrelated challenges. Variations in children's developmental readiness, teachers' limited ability to integrate Islamic values, the scarcity of relevant learning resources, time constraints in instructional settings, and the lack of parental involvement at home collectively hinder optimal outcomes. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic and collaborative approach involving teachers, parents, and educational

institutions. Teachers need continuous professional development in both pedagogical and Islamic integration skills, while institutions should provide adequate Islamic-themed learning materials and allocate sufficient time for art-based learning. Furthermore, strengthening partnerships between school and home environments is essential to ensure that children's fine motor development and spiritual growth are consistently nurtured in both settings.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted at RA. Labschool IIQ Jakarta, it can be concluded that teachers play a central role in developing young children's fine motor skills through art activities integrated with Islamic values. Teachers do not merely act as instructors, but also as facilitators, learning environment designers, role models, and companions in children's developmental processes. This role aligns with the perspective of (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978) n *scaffolding*, in which teachers provide temporary support until children are able to complete tasks independently—particularly in fine motor skills such as cutting, pasting, and coloring.

The strategies implemented by teachers reflect an active and meaningful learning approach. Teachers design Islamic art activities—such as coloring calligraphy, creating Hijaiyah letter collages, and pasting Islamic ornaments—that are tailored to the developmental characteristics of early childhood. This aligns with Piaget (1978) theory, which emphasizes the importance of concrete manipulation during the preoperational stage, as well as (Ausubel et al., 1978), who argue that learning becomes more meaningful when new material is connected to children's real-life experiences. In addition, the design of these activities embodies the principles of *Multiple Intelligences* (Gardner, 1993) by facilitating the development of children's visual, kinesthetic, and spiritual intelligences.

However, in its implementation, several challenges arise. Differences in children's levels of motor development, teachers' limited competence in integrating Islamic values, the lack of Islamic-themed learning media, limited instructional time, and minimal parental involvement all serve as inhibiting factors to the success of these activities. These challenges highlight the importance of (Bronfenbrenner, 1999), ecological approach to development, which emphasizes the interaction among environmental factors—home, school, and community in supporting the holistic growth of children.

Thus, the success of fine motor development through Islamic art activities largely depends on teachers' creativity in designing adaptive learning strategies, the support of a conducive learning environment, and the synergy between family and school. Art activities serve not only as a medium for physical stimulation but also as a bridge for value internalization, spiritual expression, and the cultivation of Islamic character in children from an early age.

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