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Islamic Character-Based Arabic Learning in Early Childhood in the Digital Era: A Literature Review

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Abstract

Arabic language learning in early childhood can support both language development and the introduction of Islamic character values. Digital technologies create opportunities and challenges that call for learning approaches integrating linguistic and moral development. This study analyses the concept of Islamic character-based Arabic learning for young children and identifies implementation strategies relevant to the digital era. It adopts a qualitative literature review drawing on books, journal articles, and relevant scholarly documents. The synthesis suggests that honesty, trustworthiness, discipline, responsibility, courtesy, cooperation, and cleanliness can be introduced through learning materials, storytelling, singing, vocabulary use in daily routines, and educational digital media. These strategies offer a conceptual basis for bringing together linguistic, spiritual, social, and moral dimensions of learning. The review also highlights the importance of developmentally appropriate teaching and collaboration between teachers and parents. It contributes to a conceptual framework for Arabic learning that responds to technological developments while supporting Islamic character formation. As a literature-based study, it does not establish the empirical effectiveness of the proposed approach in early childhood settings.

Keywords: *Arabic learning; Islamic character; early childhood; digital era.*

A. Introduction

Early childhood education is a fundamental phase in children's cognitive, social, emotional, and language development. Early childhood is often described as a golden age because the brain develops rapidly during this period, and educational stimulation can have lasting implications for children's personalities and abilities (Shodiq, 2014). Language learning, including Arabic, is an important aspect of early education that can develop communication skills and introduce positive values (Yakin et al., 2020).

Arabic occupies a strategic position in Islamic education, particularly in Indonesia, because it is the principal language of religious teaching drawn from the Qur'an, hadith, and Islamic scholarship across generations (Zainuddin et al., 2023). Learning Arabic therefore serves not only to develop children's linguistic abilities but also to introduce Islamic values and nurture character from an early age (Umam & Budiyati, 2020).

The development of digital technology in an increasingly globalised world has significantly changed children's lives. Digital devices, social media, and various online platforms present both opportunities and challenges for education (Aisyah, 2026). Technology can provide engaging, interactive learning resources. Without appropriate guidance, however, it may also encourage dependency, reduce social interaction, and affect children's character development (Adhimah et al., 2024).

Previous studies have explored Arabic learning in early childhood through strategies such as singing, storytelling, and digital media (Larasati et al., 2025). Other research has described national character values in relation to Arabic teaching methods (Umam & Budiyati, 2020) and conceptualised children's character development through Arabic learning (Zaidar et al., 2023). Nevertheless, research specifically integrating Arabic learning with Islamic character development in the digital era remains relatively limited, indicating a need for more comprehensive and sustained investigation.

This study aims to analyse the concept of Arabic language learning grounded in Islamic character values for young children and to identify implementation strategies for addressing the challenges of the digital era through a review of relevant literature.

B. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative approach focused on library research. Library research draws on written sources such as books, scholarly journals, academic articles, official documents, theses, dissertations, and other relevant scholarly materials. This approach was selected because the study examines literature on Islamic character-based Arabic learning for young children without conducting direct field observations. Library research also seeks to develop an in-depth theoretical understanding through the systematic examination of scholarly literature (Abdurrahman, 2024).

Data were collected through documentation and a literature review (H. J. Putri & Murhayati, 2025). Data analysis involved three main procedures: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing (Haryoko et al., 2020).

C. Discussion

The Nature of Arabic Language Learning in Early Childhood

Arabic learning in early childhood involves gradually introducing the language through enjoyable communicative activities suited to children's developmental characteristics (Muzayin & Sugiharyati, 2025). Teaching should emphasise direct experience, play, songs, stories, and social interaction to provide meaningful learning experiences (Yakin et al., 2020).

For young children, Arabic learning focuses primarily on simple vocabulary (mufradāt), listening (istimāʿ), and speaking (kalām), rather than mastery of complex grammatical rules (Kasmiati, 2023). This orientation corresponds to children's language development, which is still characterised by natural language acquisition.

Islamic Character in Early Childhood Education

Islamic character refers to a set of values derived from Islamic teachings and reflected in everyday conduct. Islamic character education seeks to nurture moral integrity, responsibility, honesty, discipline, trustworthiness (amānah), and social awareness (Shodiq, 2014). These values should be introduced in early childhood, a crucial period for establishing positive habits and shaping personality (Umam & Budiyati, 2020).

Table 1. Examples of Islamic character values integrated into Arabic learning in early childhood

No.	Character Value	Arabic Vocabulary
1.	Honesty	الصِّدْقُ
2.	Trustworthiness	الأَمَانَةُ
3.	Discipline	الانْضِبَاطُ
4.	Courtesy	الأَدَبُ
5.	Cooperation	التَّعَاوُنُ
6.	Responsibility	المَسْؤُولِيَّةُ
7.	Cleanliness	النَّظَافَةُ

Strategies for Islamic Character-Based Arabic Learning

1. Integrating Character Values into Learning Materials

Arabic learning materials can be organised around everyday themes that convey moral messages and Islamic values. Themes such as honesty, respect for parents, cleanliness, and helping others are particularly relevant (Umam & Budiyati, 2020). Through this approach, children learn new vocabulary while also exploring the values associated with it.

2. Storytelling

Storytelling is an effective strategy for developing language abilities and nurturing character (Nadhif, 2023). Stories of the prophets, the companions,

and other simple Islamic narratives can be presented using Arabic vocabulary that children can readily understand.

A related reference is Akmalia and Faizin's (2026) review of Deguara and Nutbrown's Children Making Meaning: Exploring Drawings, Narratives, and Identities. Its focus on a book about children's drawings, narratives, and identities provides a relevant point of connection with the present discussion of storytelling and meaning-making. Here, this connection informs a conceptual suggestion: children can be invited to connect simple Arabic expressions with stories and drawings drawn from their own experiences.

3. **Singing**

Arabic songs or nasheeds conveying Islamic moral values can increase children's interest in learning and support vocabulary recall. Singing has been reported to help children remember vocabulary more easily while creating an enjoyable learning environment (N. B. I. A. Putri & Fahyuni, 2025).

4. **Embedding Arabic Vocabulary in Daily Routines**

Habit formation can be supported by repeatedly using Arabic words associated with Islamic character values in children's daily activities. Familiarity with this vocabulary may help establish patterns of conduct that develop over time.

Akmalia and Faizin (2021) investigated the recitation or assignment method in virtual nahwu learning at the higher education level. Their findings provide a related example of structured learning tasks in online Arabic instruction. In the present conceptual framework, brief, adult-supported activities linking vocabulary with everyday conduct could be explored. This is a proposed adaptation rather than an empirically established outcome for young children.

Implementing Islamic Character-Based Arabic Learning in the Digital Era

The digital era offers considerable opportunities to develop resources for Arabic learning. Animated videos, educational applications, interactive games, and digital platforms can provide children with more engaging and contextualised learning experiences (Aisyah, 2026). When used appropriately as supplementary resources, digital devices may support children's attention and interest in learning Arabic vocabulary (Umam & Budiyati, 2020).

Research on virtual Arabic instruction offers additional methodological perspectives. Faizin and Akmalia (2021) examined discovery learning among students in a higher education Arabic programme and reported improved understanding of material presented virtually. For early childhood education, this provides a starting point for considering guided exploration, such as matching pictures with Arabic words. This proposed adaptation requires age-appropriate design and separate evaluation; the original study did not establish its effectiveness for young children or Islamic character development.

In addition, developments in artificial intelligence (AI) and augmented reality open up new possibilities for interactive language learning. Research on augmented reality provides a relevant example of technology-supported vocabulary learning (Ibrahim et al., 2018).

Implications for Early Childhood Education

Islamic character-based Arabic learning positions language as a means of moral development alongside the acquisition of linguistic skills (Zainuddin et al., 2023). This approach enables the integration of linguistic, spiritual, social, and moral dimensions of learning (Umam & Budiyati, 2020).

Arabic teachers need to develop digital learning resources that incorporate Islamic moral messages, while parents play a key role in fostering a positive language environment at home (Adhimah et al., 2024). Collaboration

between schools and families is essential to the successful implementation of Islamic character-based Arabic learning in early childhood.

D. Conclusion and Recommendations

Islamic character-based Arabic learning for young children in the digital era offers a strategic means of integrating language development with character formation grounded in Islamic values. This literature review suggests that Arabic can function not only as a means of communication and access to the language of the Qur'an, but also as a medium for introducing honesty, trustworthiness, discipline, responsibility, courtesy, and cooperation from an early age. These insights highlight the importance of integrated learning that responds to technological developments while remaining attentive to character formation. The study contributes to a conceptual framework for Arabic learning that brings together linguistic, spiritual, social, and moral dimensions in the digital era. However, its reliance on a literature review means that it does not provide direct empirical evidence of implementation effectiveness in early childhood education settings.

Future research should therefore empirically examine the implementation of Islamic character-based Arabic learning through field studies, experiments, or research and development approaches in diverse early childhood education settings. Further investigation is also needed into the use of digital technologies, AI, and interactive media to support Islamic character development through Arabic learning. For educators and institutional leaders, the findings can inform learning designs that address both language acquisition and Islamic character development in ways that are responsive to young children's needs in the digital era.

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