

The Implementation of Learning Activities in the Block Center at the Integrated Islamic Kindergarten – Nur Hikmah

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ABSTRACT

The block center is an essential component of kindergarten learning activities, functioning to develop children's motor, cognitive, social, emotional, and spiritual abilities in an integrated manner. In the context of integrated Islamic education, the block center serves not only as a medium for constructive play but also as an effective tool for instilling Islamic values such as cooperation, honesty, discipline, and responsibility. This study aims to describe the implementation of learning activities in the Block Center of the Integrated Islamic Kindergarten – Nur Hikmah, emphasizing the integration between children's developmental aspects and Islamic values. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The data were analyzed interactively through the stages of reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that learning in the Block Center is conducted through the learning by playing approach and the Beyond Centers and Circle Time (BCCT) model, positioning children as active subjects. Teachers act as facilitators and motivators through scaffolding stages before, during, and after play, integrating Islamic values such as prayer, mutual respect, and gratitude. Activities involving building and designing structures with blocks enhance children's motor coordination, logical thinking, creativity, and social skills. The internalization of Islamic values nurtures spirituality, empathy, and discipline. In conclusion, learning in the Block Center plays a vital role in shaping intelligent, virtuous, and 21st-century-skilled children while reinforcing the core objective of Islamic education—to cultivate insan kamil (a well-rounded human being) from early childhood.

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1. Introduction

Early childhood education in kindergarten is designed to support children's holistic growth and development. The learning process at this stage emphasizes thematic and play-based approaches, in which children are encouraged to learn through enjoyable and meaningful direct experiences. One widely adopted approach is the center-based learning system, which enables children to actively engage in activities aligned with their interests and developmental stages. One of the most important centers in early childhood education is the Block Center. In this center, children are given opportunities to play and build using a variety of blocks that differ in shape, size, and color. Activities in the Block Center are not only enjoyable but also highly educational. Through concrete experiences, children develop

cognitive skills such as logical thinking, spatial understanding, and basic problem-solving. Additionally, their psychomotor abilities are refined through activities such as stacking, lifting, and arranging blocks that require hand–eye coordination.

From an affective perspective, the Block Center provides space for children to express emotions, curiosity, and confidence while creating something meaningful. In terms of social development, children learn to collaborate, share roles, communicate, and negotiate with peers when building structures together. Thus, the Block Center serves as a holistic medium that supports four domains of child development: cognitive, affective, social, and psychomotor. The implementation of Block Center learning can also be examined from the perspective of educational psychology, particularly through behaviorism and humanism theories. From the behaviorist viewpoint, children's learning occurs through stimulus and response, where desired behaviors are strengthened through praise or positive reinforcement from teachers. For example, when a child successfully builds a particular structure, the teacher gives praise or recognition, motivating the child to keep trying and learning. The Block Center provides an ideal setting to develop positive behaviors gradually through consistent repetition and reinforcement.

Meanwhile, humanistic theory emphasizes self-actualization and respect for each child's unique potential. In this context, the Block Center offers children the freedom to create according to their imagination and interests. They are encouraged to choose the types of blocks and designs they wish to build without pressure or specific demands on outcomes. The teacher serves as a mentor who fosters a warm, safe, and respectful learning environment. This approach encourages children to feel valued, confident, and to grow into independent and responsible individuals. In the context of an Islamic-based kindergarten, the implementation of learning in the Block Center is also directed toward instilling Islamic values from an early age. Teachers act not only as facilitators of play and learning but also as moral role models who guide children to practice discipline, honesty, responsibility, and mutual respect in accordance with Islamic teachings. For instance, children are taught to recite *bismillah* before beginning activities, express gratitude for their work, and maintain cleanliness and order in the play environment as forms of responsibility and good conduct. These habits also function as a form of positive behavioral reinforcement, consistent with behaviorist principles.

Through this comprehensive and integrative approach, learning in the Block Center not only develops children's cognitive and physical aspects but also shapes strong character and spirituality. The combination of educational psychology and Islamic values makes the Block Center an ideal environment for nurturing intelligent, creative, and morally upright children who are ready for subsequent stages of education. Based on the background above, the research questions of this study are as follows: (1) How is learning implemented in the Block Center of an Islamic-based kindergarten? (2) What is the teacher's role in guiding children during Block Center learning activities? (3) How do activities in the Block Center support the cognitive, affective, social, and psychomotor development of children? (4) How are behaviorist and humanistic approaches applied in Block Center learning activities?.

The objectives of this study are to: (1) describe the implementation of Block Center learning in an Islamic-based kindergarten, (2) explain the teacher's role in guiding children during Block Center activities, (3) analyze the contribution of Block Center activities to early childhood cognitive, affective, social, and psychomotor development, and (4) examine the application of behaviorist and humanistic psychology theories in the Block Center learning process. The benefits of this research are as follows: (1) Theoretical Benefits: This study is expected to contribute to the development of early childhood education, particularly regarding the application of behaviorist and humanistic psychology theories in center-based learning. (2) Practical Benefits: For Early Childhood Teachers: To provide references and inspiration

for designing and implementing meaningful learning in the Block Center and understanding the teacher's role as facilitator and mentor; For Islamic Educational Institutions: To serve as input for developing curricula that integrate thematic learning, psychological approaches, and Islamic values; For Parents: To provide an understanding of the importance of constructive play activities in supporting children's growth and development; For Future Researchers: To serve as a foundation for further studies related to center-based learning and psychological approaches in early childhood education.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach. This approach was chosen to obtain an in-depth understanding of the implementation, the teacher's role, and the impact of Block Center activities on children's development. The research was conducted at KB-TK Islam Nur Hikmah, an Islamic-based early childhood education institution located on Jalan Nur Hikmah, Jatimelati, Pondok Melati, Bekasi. The kindergarten has implemented a center-based learning approach, including the Block Center, as part of its thematic and play-based learning activities. The school's vision is to nurture children who are virtuous, independent, and accomplished through enjoyable and meaningful education. The subjects of this study were teachers and children at an Islamic-based kindergarten. The research site was determined purposively, namely KB-TK Islam Nur Hikmah, which has adopted a center-based learning system particularly the Block Center. Interviews were conducted with Luckyana Siswati, S.Pd., the principal of TK Islam Nur Hikmah, and Putri Artya Agityajati, S.Psi., the person in charge of the Block Center. Data collection techniques included observation, interview, and documentation.

These methods were selected to obtain comprehensive and complementary data. Observation was conducted to directly examine the learning process in the Block Center, including the interaction between teachers and children, as well as the way children engaged in constructive play. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), observation is one of the primary means of obtaining context-rich qualitative data, as it allows researchers to understand behaviors in their natural settings:

"Observation is a fundamental method in qualitative research, providing data on behavior and context that are difficult to capture by other means."

(Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10)

Interviews were conducted with teachers to explore information regarding learning strategies, teacher roles in the Block Center, and their perceptions of children's learning activities. Miles and Huberman (1994) explain that interviews allow researchers to gain insights into the meanings behind participants' actions, experiences, and perspectives:

"Interview data help researchers understand participants' perspectives, experiences, and the meanings they assign to events."

(Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 7)

Documentation involved collecting secondary data such as activity photos, daily lesson plans (*Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran Harian*, RPPH), and children's developmental records. This technique functioned to strengthen the results of observations and interviews. Miles and Huberman (1994) state that documents are stable and rich sources of data that can be used for verification and triangulation:

"Documents and records are stable sources of data that can be re-examined and used to triangulate other findings."

(Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 12).

Conceptual Framework

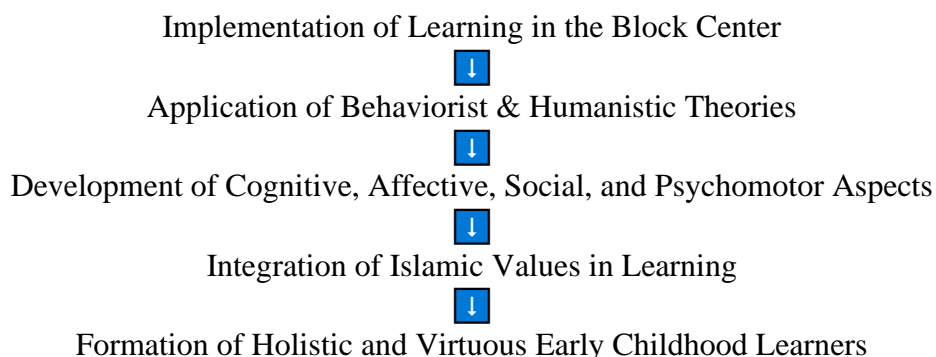
The conceptual framework of this study is based on the interrelationship between the implementation of Block Center learning, educational theories, and Islamic values. The Block Center is viewed as a medium for children to develop various aspects of growth through structured and meaningful play.

Block Center as a Thematic and Play-Based Learning Environment

The Block Center provides opportunities for children to explore, create, and learn through concrete experiences. Activities involving building and imagining with blocks not only train fine and gross motor skills but also foster logical, spatial, and social thinking abilities. In practice, teachers serve as facilitators who apply behaviorist principles, such as providing stimuli and reinforcement to shape positive behaviors (Skinner, 1953). At the same time, humanistic principles (Rogers, 1983) are implemented by allowing freedom of expression, ensuring emotional security, and appreciating each child's work. These two theories complement each other in creating a learning environment that supports optimal growth. Through Block Center learning, all aspects of children's development cognitive, affective, social, and psychomotor are expected to develop in a balanced manner. This holistic approach aligns with the principles of early childhood education that view children as whole individuals (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).

All learning activities are contextualized with Islamic values, such as reciting prayers before and after activities, reinforcing good character (*akhlaq*), and developing moral integrity through teacher modeling. This integration ensures that learning fosters not only academic growth but also spiritual and moral development, as reflected in *Qur'an Surah Al-'Alaq (1-5)*.

Visualization of the Conceptual Framework



3. Result and Discussion

Implementation of Learning in the Block Center

Based on observations and interviews, activities in the block center are carried out in a structured manner according to the daily schedule. Children are given specific time to play in the block center, either individually or in groups. The teacher prepares various types of blocks (wooden, plastic, magnetic) in different sizes and shapes. The implementation steps include:

- 1) Opening: The teacher invites the children to recite a prayer together and explains the objectives of the activity;
- 2) Main Activity: The children freely choose the blocks and start constructing shapes based on their imagination, such as houses, bridges, mosques, or vehicles;
- 3) Closing: The children are asked to describe their creations and then tidy up the blocks together.

This activity demonstrates a combination of independent and collaborative learning that promotes exploration and social interaction. The teacher functions not only as a supervisor but

also as a facilitator and guide. The teacher provides initial stimulation through questions or project ideas, gives positive reinforcement such as praise for example, “*Masya Allah, what a beautiful mosque you made!*” and assists children when they encounter difficulties while still allowing them space to think and try independently. This approach reflects the application of behaviorist theory (through reinforcement) and humanist theory (through appreciation of the child’s potential and emotional support). From the block center activities, it was found that the children’s cognitive development includes recognizing shapes, counting, creating patterns, and problem-solving when their constructions collapse. Their affective development is reflected in feelings of pride, confidence, and patience when building and presenting their creations. Socially, they learn cooperation, sharing blocks, and communicating with peers. In terms of psychomotor development, hand eye coordination and fine motor skills improve through precise block arrangement.

Interviews with teachers at *KB–TK Islam Nur Hikmah* provided deeper insights into the implementation of learning in the block center:

- 1) Activity planning in the block center is carried out with consideration of learning objectives, children’s developmental stages, and weekly themes. Teachers design activities that align with children’s needs and Islamic educational values.
- 2) The learning objectives include the development of gross and fine motor skills, cognitive abilities (such as logic and problem-solving), language, social-emotional skills, creativity, and imagination. Children are encouraged to build various forms from their imagination such as vehicles, houses, or cities.
- 3) The teacher’s roles include being a facilitator who provides exploration tools, an observer who monitors play without excessive intervention, a companion who documents and reflects with the children, and a questioner who stimulates critical thinking.
- 4) When children experience difficulties, the teacher provides support through open-ended questions, simple examples, repeated instructions, light physical assistance, and motivation to encourage problem-solving independently.
- 5) Teachers observed that children show significant development in cognitive, social, affective, and motor aspects while playing in the block center, indicating that the activity offers rich stimulation.
- 6) Islamic values are naturally integrated, such as reciting prayers before and after activities, cultivating good manners like honesty, patience, and helpfulness, and creating structures related to Islamic culture such as mosques or the houses of pious people.
- 7) The most effective approach, according to teachers, is play-based learning centered on the child. Teachers act as sensitive and supportive facilitators who respond to children’s needs and initiatives.
- 8) Teachers also apply principles of educational psychology, such as reinforcement and appreciation. For instance, through verbal praise: “*Masya Allah, you’ve managed to build a bridge with the blocks!*”
- 9) The challenges encountered include limited teaching aids and passive children. The solutions involve creative use of recycled materials and providing initial stimulation by showing simple building pictures or asking thought-provoking questions.
- 10) The teachers hope that children will continue to develop in all aspects through block center activities, and that more diverse tools and materials will be available — for example, additional accessories or supporting items such as miniature vehicles, toy figures, and natural materials.

The results of this study indicate that the implementation of learning in the block center not only provides enjoyable play experiences but also supports children’s holistic development. These findings align with behaviorist theory, which emphasizes the importance

of reinforcing positive behavior, and humanist theory, which highlights the need for self-actualization in a supportive environment. Furthermore, the integration of Islamic values within block center activities adds a spiritual dimension to the learning process, aligning with the goals of Islamic education to cultivate morally upright and monotheistic individuals.

Behaviorism Theory in Early Childhood Learning

Behaviorism is one of the main foundations of educational psychology, emphasizing that learning is a change in observable behavior resulting from the relationship between stimulus and response. Leading figures such as John B. Watson, Edward L. Thorndike, Ivan Pavlov, and B. F. Skinner emphasized that human behavior is formed through conditioning and reinforcement carried out repeatedly (Schunk, 2012; Berger, 2020; Gazzaniga, Heatherton, & Halpern, 2018). In the context of early childhood education, behaviorism is applied through habituation, practice, and the provision of positive reinforcement. Children learn from the consequences of their behavior if a behavior is followed by praise, attention, or a reward symbol, they are more likely to repeat it (Mash & Wolfe, 2019). Therefore, good behavior in play-based activities can be cultivated by creating a conducive environment that consistently provides positive reinforcement.

Affandi (2023) states that the fundamental principles of behaviorism are highly relevant to shaping children's character through direct experience and repetition of positive actions. In center-based learning, such as the Block Center, children engage in activities that stimulate discipline, cooperation, and responsibility through the habituation of behaviors reinforced by the teacher. For instance, the teacher provides a stimulus in the form of instructions or examples, the child responds through action, and the teacher gives positive reinforcement in the form of verbal praise or a star mark as a form of reward (Zainiyati, 2010; Thornbury, 2006). This theory also emphasizes the teacher's role as the designer of the learning environment. In the context of *Kelompok Bermain TKIT Nur Hikmah*, the application of behaviorism is evident through repetitive daily routines and the reinforcement of positive social behaviors, such as sharing, cooperating, and taking turns. Thus, learning in the Block Center not only develops cognitive abilities but also fosters prosocial behaviors in children through positive reinforcement and consistent habituation (Hartono & Zumrotin, 2013; Maemonah, 2017).

Humanism Theory in Early Childhood Education

In contrast to behaviorism, which focuses on observable behavior, humanism emphasizes the holistic development of human potential, especially emotional and spiritual aspects. This theory is rooted in the ideas of Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, who viewed education as a process of *humanizing humans* (Gazzaniga et al., 2018; Berger, 2020). Maslow (1970), through his *hierarchy of needs*, explained that each individual has layered needs from physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, to self-actualization. A child cannot learn optimally unless their basic and emotional needs are met. Rogers (1969) added that learning should be based on personal experience (*experiential learning*) and supported by a warm, caring environment. The teacher acts as a facilitator who provides *unconditional positive regard* unconditional acceptance of the child (Schunk, 2012; Thornbury, 2006).

According to Zainiyati (2010), applying the humanistic approach in early childhood education requires teachers to appreciate each child as a unique individual with different learning paces and styles. Children learn best when they feel valued, safe, and given opportunities to express themselves. In the context of the Block Center, children are given the freedom to imagine, create, and experiment with structures according to their own ideas without pressure on the final result (Hartono & Zumrotin, 2013; Purnama et al., 2021). Moreover, the humanistic approach fosters children's intrinsic motivation, as they learn not for external rewards but to gain personal satisfaction and joy in learning. Teachers create a safe,

inclusive, and empathetic learning atmosphere that values the learning process rather than just the outcome. This aligns with Berger's (2020) view that early childhood education should foster emotional warmth and self-confidence so that children can grow into independent, confident, and empathetic individuals. Thus, the humanistic theory serves as a foundation for teachers at *TKIT Nur Hikmah* to cultivate a child-centered learning environment, which not only provides academic education but also develops the children's emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions in a balanced manner (Affandi, 2023; Inayah et al., 2024).

Holistic Development in Early Childhood Education

The holistic approach in early childhood education is based on the notion that every child is a whole individual who develops through the interaction of physical, cognitive, social-emotional, moral, and spiritual aspects. Berger (2020) highlights that child development is integrative and multidimensional, meaning that effective learning engages all aspects of development simultaneously. This approach is also emphasized by Gazzaniga et al. (2018), who argue that children's development cannot be separated from their social and emotional contexts. Meaningful play activities, such as those in the Block Center, serve as effective means to integrate all aspects of development through exploratory and collaborative learning experiences. Children learn logical thinking, emotional regulation, communication, and motor skills simultaneously (Purnama et al., 2021; Abidin et al., 2019).

Hartono and Zumrotin (2013) assert that early childhood education should foster a balance between physical and spiritual development so that children grow into healthy, intelligent, and virtuous individuals. In Islamic-based education contexts such as *TKIT Nur Hikmah*, this holistic approach also encompasses a spiritual dimension, including the habituation of values such as monotheism (*tauhid*), gratitude, and moral responsibility through daily activities (Yunus, 2016). Practically, learning activities in the Block Center integrate six key aspects of child development:

- 1) Religious and moral values: children learn honesty, responsibility, and gratitude;
- 2) Motor skills: children develop hand-eye coordination while arranging blocks;
- 3) Cognitive skills: children understand concepts of shape, balance, and space;
- 4) Language: children express ideas and describe their creations;
- 5) Social-emotional skills: children learn cooperation, empathy, and conflict resolution;
- 6) Art and creativity: children use imagination to create new forms (Purnama et al., 2021; Haryanto & Affandi, 2023).

Therefore, the holistic approach becomes a vital foundation for implementing learning in the Block Center, as it nurtures children's potential comprehensively and harmoniously, in line with the goals of Islamic education to form *insan kamil*—a complete human being who is balanced in intellect, body, and soul.

The Essence of Integrating Islamic Values in Early Childhood Education

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is a fundamental phase in shaping a child's character, personality, and spirituality. In the context of Islamic education, the learning process aims not only to develop cognitive and motor abilities but also to instill Islamic values as lifelong moral and spiritual guidance. Pulungan and Hayati (2024) explain that the integration of Islamic values in early childhood education aims to shape individuals who are faithful, knowledgeable, and possess noble character through contextual learning appropriate to children's developmental stages. This integration encompasses two dimensions:

- 1) Substantial dimension, which refers to the inclusion of Islamic values within the content and objectives of learning.
- 2) Procedural dimension, which involves applying Islamic principles and manners (*adab*) throughout the teaching and learning interactions.

In institutions such as Integrated Islamic Kindergartens (*TK Islam Terpadu*), Islamic values are not only taught through memorization of prayers or short verses of the Qur'an, but are also internalized in every play and thematic learning activity, including those in the Block Center. Thus, activities such as building structures, cooperating, or helping friends become effective means of instilling values of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), patience, discipline, and responsibility.

The Concept of Islamic Values in Early Childhood Education

According to Satjono (n.d.), the core values of Islamic education include tauhid (belief in the oneness of Allah), ibadah (worship and servitude to Allah), akhlaq (moral conduct), and 'ilm (knowledge). These four values serve as the primary framework for developing Islamic-based learning activities, even within play environments. For example:

- 1) The value of tauhid is nurtured by helping children realize that every creation of Allah has order and balance, as seen when they build stable block structures.
- 2) The value of ibadah is practiced through habitual prayers before and after play.
- 3) The value of akhlaq is cultivated through helping others, taking turns with toys, and maintaining cleanliness.
- 4) The value of 'ilm is expressed by allowing children to explore and ask questions, as curiosity is a natural part of the pursuit of knowledge.

Nurlina et al. (2024) emphasize that integrating religious values into early character education should be conducted consistently and naturally, not through indoctrination but through real-life examples and meaningful experiences. In the context of block center learning, Islamic values can be integrated through play activities that promote cooperation, creativity, and appreciation for peers' work.

Strategies for Integrating Islamic Values in Early Childhood Learning

Integrating Islamic values into early childhood education requires strategies that align with the characteristics of young children, who learn best through learning by playing and modeling adult behavior. Sufiani, Putra, and Raehang (2022) found that internalizing Islamic values in *Raudhatul Athfal* (Islamic preschools) is carried out through three approaches:

- 1) Habituation approach training children to perform good deeds repeatedly, such as greeting others, sharing toys, and expressing gratitude;
- 2) Modeling approach teachers serve as moral exemplars whose actions can be emulated by children;
- 3) Integrative approach linking Islamic values with all learning activities, including science, art, and motor skills.

Ananda (2017) further emphasizes that teachers should create an Islamic learning environment through the arrangement of classrooms, routines, and learning media that contain Islamic messages. Consequently, moral and religious values are not treated as separate lessons but become part of an enjoyable and meaningful learning experience.

Implementation of Islamic Values in the Block Center

The Block Center represents one of the Beyond Centers and Circle Time (BCCT) approaches, which focuses on construction based and exploratory learning. From an Islamic educational perspective, the Block Center offers significant potential as a medium for internalizing Islamic values, as it combines children's physical, social, cognitive, and emotional activities within a single process. The integration of Islamic values in the Block Center can be implemented through several stages:

- 1) Environmental setup (*pijakan lingkungan main*) designing a play environment with Islamic themes, using materials that reflect Allah's creation, and ensuring cleanliness and orderliness.

- 2) Pre-play stage (pijakan sebelum bermain) beginning the activity with a collective prayer and reminders of good manners, such as “Let’s play patiently and not fight over the toys.”
- 3) During play (pijakan saat bermain) teachers model cooperative behavior, honesty, and appreciation of others’ creations.
- 4) Post-play reflection (pijakan setelah bermain) children are guided to discuss the meaning of their activities, for example, “We learned that a strong building must support each part, just as we should help one another.”

Pulungan and Hayati (2024) stress that the internalization of Islamic values must involve emotional and spiritual engagement. This means that children should not only understand the rules but also feel the meaning of Islamic values through joyful and heartfelt play experiences.

The Relevance of Islamic Value Integration to Holistic Child Education

Islamic education views children as beings of *fitrah* individuals born with an innate potential to recognize Allah and righteousness. Therefore, early childhood education should nurture all aspects of this *fitrah* physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual in a balanced and harmonious manner. This perspective aligns with Nurlina et al. (2024), who assert that character education based on religious values directly contributes to the development of children’s spiritual quotient and social quotient. When Islamic values are fully integrated into learning, children do not only become academically intelligent but also develop strong moral and spiritual sensitivity. At *TK Islam Terpadu Nur Hikmah*, the implementation of Islamic-themed block center learning represents a form of Islamic holistic education, where play activities serve as a means to develop the child’s potential within the framework of *tauhid* (oneness of God). Through constructive exploration, children learn about the order, balance, and beauty of Allah’s creation, while also practicing noble character in their social interactions.

Previous Studies

Research on block center learning has been widely conducted, both nationally and internationally, demonstrating that constructive play using blocks significantly influences early childhood development across various domains cognitive, social, emotional, and moral-spiritual. Lyu (2023), in a study titled *The Effectiveness of Block Play and Pretend Play in Early Childhood Development*, emphasized that both block play and pretend play significantly enhance children’s problem-solving, communication, and creative thinking skills. The research showed that constructive play enables children to experiment with new ideas and develop spatial imagination, which serves as a crucial foundation for future literacy and numeracy. This supports the notion that block center activities are not merely physical but stimulate higher-order thinking skills in early learners.

Furthermore, Ode, Samad, and Samad (2021), through a descriptive study titled *Analysis of the Implementation of Block Center Learning in Children Aged 5–6 Years*, examined the application of the center based learning model in an Indonesian ECE institution. They found that the implementation of learning scaffolds before, during, and after play plays a key role in shaping children’s learning routines. Through block play, children demonstrated balanced development in six major domains: religious and moral values, physical-motor, cognitive, social-emotional, language, and art. The study revealed that the success of block center learning depends largely on the learning environment’s readiness, teacher roles, and teachers’ ability to observe and document learning outcomes effectively.

In a more specific context, Salim, Hidayat, and Santika (2025), in their research *The Implementation of the Block Center Learning Model in Stimulating Fine Motor Skills of Early Childhood at PAUD Plamboyan 3, Karawang*, found that building with blocks of various shapes and sizes enhances children’s hand–eye coordination, finger strength, and precision. The findings indicate that block-based learning is effective not only for cognitive development

but also for improving fine motor skills, which serve as a foundation for writing readiness and later academic tasks.

Similar findings were supported by Heisner (2005) in the article *Telling Stories with Blocks: Encouraging Language in the Block Center*, which explored the relationship between block play and language development. Heisner found that children who frequently engage in block play tend to speak more actively, negotiate, and use new vocabulary while collaborating on building projects. Through such activities, children not only develop social interaction but also strengthen expressive and receptive language skills. From an educational policy perspective in Indonesia, Saugi (2023), in *Block Center Learning of Sekolah Penggerak*, linked block center learning with the concept of the Pancasila Student Profile. He emphasized that constructive activities such as block building support values of cooperation, independence, and creativity three essential character dimensions for 21st-century learners. The article highlights the relevance of the block center model to Indonesia's *Merdeka Belajar* (Freedom to Learn) curriculum, which focuses on strengthening children's character and essential competencies.

Additionally, Michael (2015), in the NAEYC publication *Using Blocks to Develop 21st Century Skills*, explains that block play serves as an effective medium for developing the four core 21st-century competencies critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. He argues that this activity helps children understand relationships between shapes, spaces, and logical structures, while fostering curiosity, teamwork, and perseverance in problem-solving. This work stands as one of the key international references emphasizing that block center learning has broad implications for future competency development. The most relevant study was conducted by Aulia (2024) through a case study titled *The Implementation of the BCCT Block Center Learning Model to Enhance Early Childhood Cognitive Development: A Case Study at TKIT 1 Qurrota A'yun Ponorogo*. The study found that the Beyond Centers and Circle Time (BCCT) model successfully enhanced children's cognitive abilities, particularly in classification, balance, and spatial imagination. Moreover, Aulia emphasized that the center-based model offers active, collaborative, and meaningful learning experiences, consistent with the principles of *learning by doing* and the Islamic approach that highlights values of responsibility and gratitude. These findings strongly align with the current study's focus on block center learning implementation in Integrated Islamic Kindergarten settings.

Overall, these studies demonstrate that block center learning plays a strategic role in developing children's holistic potential—covering physical, cognitive, social, emotional, moral, and spiritual domains. Each study also highlights the crucial role of teachers as facilitators who create conducive play environments and encourage children's independent exploration. Therefore, the present research holds a significant position in enriching the academic discourse on block center learning in Islamic integrated educational institutions, particularly in integrating humanistic and spiritual values with a structured constructive-behaviorist approach.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study regarding the implementation of learning in the Block Center at an Islamic-based kindergarten, it can be concluded that:

- 1) The implementation of block center learning is well-structured and enjoyable. Children are given the freedom to be creative and to learn through concrete experiences by constructing various forms and structures using blocks.
- 2) Teachers play a vital role in facilitating the learning process. They act as guides who provide stimulation, motivation, and positive reinforcement to encourage children to be active, creative, and confident.

- 3) Activities in the Block Center holistically support children's cognitive, affective, social, and psychomotor development. Through these activities, children learn about shapes and spatial concepts, practice social interaction, manage emotions, and enhance fine and gross motor skills.
- 4) The application of behaviorist and humanist theories is reflected in the teacher's approach, which emphasizes reinforcement, appreciation, and recognition of both the learning process and outcomes. Children are provided with opportunities to express themselves and develop their potential in a supportive and nurturing environment.
- 5) Block center learning also serves as an effective medium for instilling Islamic values, such as discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and gratitude. The habits of reciting prayers and demonstrating good moral conduct (akhlak al-karimah) are integral parts of the learning process.

5. Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following suggestions are proposed:

- 1) For Kindergarten Teachers: It is recommended to continuously develop creative and enjoyable learning strategies in the Block Center, while strengthening the integration of Islamic values in every activity.
- 2) For Educational Institutions: It is important to provide adequate facilities and resources to optimize Block Center learning and to offer professional development training for teachers, particularly related to psychological approaches in early childhood education.
- 3) For Future Researchers: It is suggested to expand this study by examining the long-term effects of block center activities on children's development, or by conducting comparative studies between the Block Center and other learning centers within the context of Islamic education.

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