

Drawing Activities in Introducing the Pillars of Islam to Early Childhood Learners

M. Rusdi¹, Eka Damayanti^{2*}, Nurul Muawia³, Nurbaeti Syam⁴, Wahyuni⁵

^{1,2,3,4}Prodi Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini, Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan, Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar, Jl. H.M. Yasin Limpo No. 36 Samata, Gowa, Indonesia. 92118

⁵TK Kasih Ibu, Jl. Lapakaka, Desa Bojo Baru, Kec. Mallusetasi, Kab. Barru, Sulawesi Selatan. Indonesia. 90753

rusdi.tahir@uin-alauddin.ac.id¹, eka.damayanti@uin-alauddin.ac.id^{2*}, nurulmuawia@uin-alauddin.ac.id³, nurbaetisyam@uin-alauddin.ac.id⁴, wahyuni@gmail.com⁵

Abstract

Instilling Islamic values in early childhood requires learning strategies that are concrete, engaging, and developmentally appropriate. The Pillars of Islam, as fundamental concepts in Islamic teachings, are often difficult for young children to understand when introduced only through verbal explanation and memorization. This study aimed to describe children's understanding, participation, and learning engagement during drawing activities designed to introduce the Pillars of Islam. A descriptive quantitative approach was employed involving 10 children aged 4–6 years at TK Kasih Ibu. Data were collected through observation, documentation, and assessment of children's drawings. The observation instrument covered cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects and was reviewed by experts to ensure content validity. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics through mean score calculation, supported by descriptions from observation and documentation. The findings showed that the overall mean score was 2.97, which falls within the Developing as Expected category. Children were actively engaged in drawing activities, were able to use drawing tools appropriately, and began to relate drawings to worship activities in the Pillars of Islam. However, children's conceptual understanding still required reinforcement through repetition, dialogue, and teacher scaffolding. Therefore, drawing activities can serve as a visual learning strategy that helps children recognize religious concepts in a more concrete and enjoyable way.

Keywords: drawing activities; Islamic religious education; Pillars of Islam; visual learning

Abstrak

Penanaman nilai-nilai Islam pada anak usia dini memerlukan strategi pembelajaran yang konkret, menarik, dan sesuai dengan tahap perkembangan anak. Rukun Islam sebagai konsep dasar ajaran Islam sering kali sulit dipahami apabila hanya disampaikan melalui penjelasan verbal dan hafalan. Penelitian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan pemahaman, partisipasi, dan keterlibatan belajar anak dalam kegiatan menggambar yang dirancang untuk mengenalkan Rukun Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kuantitatif dengan melibatkan 10 anak usia 4–6 tahun di TK Kasih Ibu. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, dokumentasi, dan penilaian hasil karya gambar anak. Instrumen observasi mencakup aspek kognitif, afektif, dan psikomotorik serta ditelaah oleh ahli untuk memastikan validitas isi. Data dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif melalui perhitungan skor rata-rata, kemudian diperkuat dengan deskripsi hasil observasi dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan skor rata-rata keseluruhan sebesar 2,97 dan berada pada kategori Berkembang Sesuai Harapan. Anak terlibat aktif dalam kegiatan menggambar, mampu menggunakan alat gambar dengan baik, dan mulai mengaitkan gambar dengan aktivitas ibadah dalam Rukun Islam. Namun, pemahaman konseptual anak masih memerlukan penguatan melalui pengulangan, dialog, dan scaffolding guru. Dengan demikian, kegiatan menggambar dapat

menjadi strategi pembelajaran visual yang membantu anak mengenal konsep keagamaan secara lebih konkret dan menyenangkan.

Kata Kunci: kegiatan menggambar; pembelajaran visual; pendidikan agama Islam; Rukun Islam

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INTRODUCTION

The instillation of religious values in early childhood plays an important role in shaping children's character and establishing a foundation of faith from an early age. One fundamental material that should be introduced to children is the Pillars of Islam, which serve as basic guidelines for practicing religious life. However, young children often experience difficulty understanding abstract religious concepts, including the sequence and meaning of the Pillars of Islam, when these concepts are delivered mainly through verbal explanation and memorization-oriented approaches (Rahmawati, 2023). The limited use of engaging learning media may also reduce children's participation and interest during religious learning activities (Wahyuni & Madjid, 2022). In addition, the family environment contributes to children's religious development because parental involvement and reinforcement at home may influence children's understanding of Islamic teachings (Rozinah et al., 2024). Therefore, contextual, concrete, and developmentally appropriate learning approaches are needed to support early childhood religious learning.

Early childhood learners tend to understand concepts more easily through concrete and visual experiences than through verbal explanations alone. Piaget (1964) explains that children aged 4–6 years are generally in the preoperational stage, in which symbolic representation becomes an important part of learning. At this stage, children use symbols, images, gestures, and imitation to represent objects or experiences that they encounter. This developmental characteristic indicates that religious learning for young children should be mediated through concrete activities, visual symbols, and meaningful interaction rather than through abstract explanation only. Vygotsky (1978) further emphasizes that children's learning develops through social interaction and scaffolding provided by adults. In religious learning, teacher guidance can help children connect visual representations with the meanings of Islamic teachings.

One learning activity that can support this process is drawing. Drawing activities provide opportunities for children to express ideas and understanding through visual representations that are concrete and meaningful according to their developmental stages. In the context of early childhood learning, drawing activities are also closely related to the arts component within the STEAM approach, which emphasizes creativity, exploration, and meaningful learning experiences (Hartanti & Afandi, 2023). Visual learning media, such as posters and pictures, can also support motivation and participation in early childhood learning activities (Haerudin & Gustiana, 2023). Studies on picture-based learning further show that visual activities can support children's memory and cognitive understanding more systematically (Moneta et al., 2023). Thus, drawing activities supported by visual

media are considered suitable for helping children recognize and understand the Pillars of Islam more engagingly and concretely.

Visual art activities are not merely decorative activities in early childhood education. Knight (2009) argues that art experiences enable children to construct meaning, communicate ideas, and engage with learning through visual forms. Wright (2010) also explains that children's drawings are closely related to meaning-making processes because children use visual symbols to represent experience, imagination, and understanding. In a similar way, Malchiodi (1998) emphasizes that children's drawings can function as a medium for expressing thoughts and perceptions that may not yet be fully communicated through verbal language. These views support the use of drawing activities as a pedagogical strategy for introducing religious concepts to young children.

Although previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of visual media in supporting cognitive and religious learning among young children, most studies have focused on picture books, storytelling, or audiovisual media. Research specifically examining children's understanding of the Pillars of Islam through drawing activities remains limited. Empirical evidence regarding children's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor responses during drawing-based religious learning is also still relatively scarce. This study addresses this gap by examining children's understanding, participation, and learning engagement in introducing the Pillars of Islam through drawing activities.

The Pillars of Islam constitute the fundamental foundation of Islamic teachings, consisting of five principal obligations that guide Muslims in religious life. Introducing the Pillars of Islam to early childhood learners aims to provide children with an initial understanding of worship concepts in a simple and age-appropriate manner. Children's understanding can be observed through their ability to mention the sequence of the pillars, recognize simple meanings related to worship activities, connect visual representations with the corresponding pillars, and demonstrate positive attitudes during religious learning activities.

Based on the problems described above, this study aimed to describe children's understanding and participation during drawing activities related to the Pillars of Islam at TK Kasih Ibu. The study also aimed to provide an overview of how drawing activities can be implemented in Islamic religious learning for early childhood learners. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to studies on Islamic religious education for early childhood and practically to provide references for teachers in implementing visual- and creativity-based learning activities.

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive quantitative approach aimed at describing early childhood children's understanding of the Pillars of Islam through drawing activities. The descriptive design was selected because the study did not compare treatment and control groups; rather, it focused on portraying children's participation, learning engagement, and understanding of religious concepts during the implementation of drawing-based learning activities at TK Kasih Ibu.

The participants in this study were children aged 4–6 years enrolled at TK Kasih Ibu. The study involved 10 children selected using a purposive sampling technique. The participants were selected based on several criteria: (a) children were within the age range

of 4–6 years; (b) they possessed basic cognitive abilities to understand the learning materials; (c) they were able to participate well in learning activities; and (d) they attended the entire series of learning activities conducted during the study.

The learning activities were conducted in three meetings during December 2025. Each meeting lasted approximately 45 minutes and focused on introducing the Pillars of Islam through drawing-based learning activities. During each session, the teacher introduced the learning material using simple explanations and visual media, guided children in drawing activities related to the Pillars of Islam, and encouraged them to explain the meaning of their drawings as a reflection of their understanding.

Data collection techniques in this study included observation, documentation, and assessment of children's artwork. Observation was conducted to examine children's participation levels, learning interest, and ability to understand the Pillars of Islam during the learning process. Documentation in the form of children's drawings was used as supporting data to identify children's understanding of the material presented. The research instruments consisted of observation sheets of children's activities, learning achievement assessment sheets, and documentation of children's artwork.

The observation sheet was developed based on indicators of early childhood development and Islamic religious learning competencies covering cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. To ensure content validity, the instrument was reviewed by experts in early childhood Islamic education and early childhood learning assessment. The experts evaluated the relevance, clarity, and appropriateness of each indicator to the research objectives and the developmental characteristics of children aged 4–6 years. Revisions were made based on expert suggestions before the instrument was used in the study. Scoring consistency was supported by clear assessment criteria and consistent observation procedures across the three learning sessions. Each indicator was assessed using the same four-point rating scale to help maintain consistency in scoring and reduce observer subjectivity during data collection.

The observation indicators used to assess children's understanding and participation during drawing activities related to the Pillars of Islam are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Observation Indicators of Children's Understanding of the Pillars of Islam

No	Assessed Aspect	Success Indicator
A. Knowledge (<i>Cognitive</i>)		
1	Recognizing the Five Pillars of Islam	Children are able to mention several Pillars of Islam independently or with assistance.
2	Understanding the Simple Meaning of Worship	Children are able to explain in simple terms the meaning of the worship represented in their drawings.
3	Relating Drawings to Worship Activities	Children are able to identify drawings and mention the corresponding Pillar of Islam.
B. Attitude (<i>Affective</i>)		
4	Demonstrating Enthusiasm During Activities	Children appear enthusiastic while participating in drawing activities
5	Appreciating Peers' Artwork	Children demonstrate positive attitudes toward their peers' artwork without mocking them
6	Showing Interest in Religious Values	Children ask questions or show interest when the Pillars of Islam are explained.

C. Skills (Psychomotor)		
7	Using Drawing Tools	Children can hold and use drawing tools (crayons/colored pencils) with good fine motor coordination.
8	Drawing Process	Children are able to create lines or drawings according to the instructions provided during the activity.
9	Independence	Children are able to complete the drawing activities independently from beginning to end.

The learning activities were conducted through several stages. First, the teacher provided an explanation about the Pillars of Islam using simple and child-friendly language. Second, the teacher introduced visual examples and demonstrated simple drawing activities related to each Pillar of Islam. Third, children carried out drawing activities according to the instructions provided. Finally, children were encouraged to explain their drawings as a form of expressing their understanding of the learning materials.

The data were analyzed using descriptive quantitative analysis supported by qualitative descriptions from observation and documentation. Data obtained from observations, documentation, and assessment of children's artwork were classified based on indicators of understanding of the Pillars of Islam, participation levels, and children's involvement during the learning process. Furthermore, mean scores were calculated to identify children's levels of understanding and participation during the implementation of drawing activities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings indicated that early childhood learners demonstrated positive levels of understanding and participation in recognizing the Pillars of Islam through drawing activities. The observation data obtained from the ten children who participated as research subjects are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Observation Results of Children's Ability in Recognizing the Pillars of Islam

No	Initial	Item									Total	Mean
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I		
1	I	2	3	3	4	3	3	4	2	4	28	3.11
2	J	3	2	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	31	3.44
3	Z	3	3	2	4	3	4	4	4	3	30	3.33
4	S	2	3	2	4	3	3	4	2	1	24	2.67
5	K	2	2	2	3	4	2	4	4	4	27	3.00
6	A1	2	3	3	4	3	3	4	4	4	30	3.33
7	Y	2	3	2	4	3	3	4	3	4	28	3.11
8	A2	2	2	2	3	2	3	4	4	2	24	2.67
9	H	3	1	2	3	3	2	4	4	4	26	2.89
10	M	2	1	2	2	3	2	3	3	1	19	2.11
Mean											26.7	2.97

Notes:

A = recognizing the Five Pillars of Islam; B = understanding the simple meaning of worship; C = relating drawings to worship activities; D = demonstrating enthusiasm; E = appreciating peers' artwork; F = showing interest in religious values; G = using drawing tools; H = drawing process; I = independence. Score 4 = BSB; 3 = BSH; 2 = MB; 1 = BB.

Based on Table 2, the overall mean score obtained by the participants was 2.97, which falls into the category of Developing as Expected (BSH). These findings indicate that, in general, the children were able to recognize and understand the basic concepts of the Pillars of Islam through drawing activities. Most participants obtained mean scores ranging from 2.67 to 3.44, reflecting relatively good participation and understanding during the learning process.

Child J obtained the highest mean score (3.44), followed by children Z and A1, who each obtained a mean score of 3.33. These scores were in the Developing Very Well (BSB) category. These children were able to participate actively, relate drawings to worship activities, and explain the meaning of their drawings with relatively little assistance. In contrast, child M obtained the lowest mean score (2.11), which was categorized as Beginning to Develop (MB). This result indicates that some children still required additional guidance, repeated explanation, and more intensive teacher assistance during the activities.

A more detailed analysis of each observation indicator shows that the highest mean score was obtained in the psychomotor aspect, particularly in the indicator of using drawing tools, with a mean score of 3.90. This indicates that most children were able to use crayons or colored pencils appropriately and showed good fine motor coordination during the drawing activities. The indicator of demonstrating enthusiasm also obtained a high mean score of 3.50, suggesting that drawing activities successfully encouraged children's active involvement and interest in religious learning.

In contrast, the cognitive indicators, including recognizing the Five Pillars of Islam, understanding the simple meaning of worship, and relating drawings to worship activities, each obtained a mean score of 2.30. These results indicate that although children showed enthusiasm and adequate drawing skills, their conceptual understanding of the Pillars of Islam still required further reinforcement. This finding suggests that drawing activities may be more effective as an entry point for engagement and visual expression, but teacher scaffolding, repetition, and verbal reinforcement are still needed to strengthen children's religious conceptual understanding.

The findings of this study show that drawing activities helped children represent religious concepts visually, making abstract concepts easier to recognize according to their developmental stage. This finding is in line with Knight (2009), who states that visual art activities provide opportunities for young children to communicate ideas, construct meaning, and express understanding through concrete representations. In addition, Wright (2010) explains that children's drawings are closely related to meaning-making because children use visual symbols to represent experiences, imagination, and understanding. Malchiodi (1998) also emphasizes that children's drawings can serve as a medium for expressing thoughts, feelings, and perceptions that may not yet be fully communicated through verbal language. Therefore, drawing activities in this study can be understood not merely as artistic activities but as visual-representational learning experiences that help children express their understanding of the Pillars of Islam.

The implementation of visual and creative learning activities also created an enjoyable and interactive learning atmosphere. Children appeared enthusiastic during the activities and showed interest when discussing the Pillars of Islam and explaining their drawings. This finding can be interpreted through Piaget's (1964) view that children at the preoperational stage learn more effectively through concrete and symbolic experiences

than through abstract verbal explanation alone. Vygotsky's (1978) concept of scaffolding also explains that teacher guidance during drawing activities can help children connect visual symbols with the meanings of Islamic teachings. Thus, the learning atmosphere observed in this study was shaped not only by the use of visual media but also by teacher-child interaction, children's visual expression, and the classroom learning context.

The findings further indicate that drawing activities supported children's engagement during classroom learning. Most children appeared focused and actively involved while completing drawing tasks related to the Pillars of Islam. This suggests that drawing provides an active learning experience because children are not only listening to explanations but also constructing visual representations of the concepts being introduced. Wright (2012) argues that art-based learning enables children to express ideas, emotions, and understanding through multiple modes of representation. In this study, several children were also able to explain the meanings of their drawings in front of peers and teachers, indicating that drawing activities may support cognitive understanding, self-confidence, communication skills, and classroom engagement.

Similarly, Telaumbanua and Bu'ulolo (2024) stated that drawing activities contribute to the development of children's creativity, concentration, and fine motor skills. Fadhillah et al. (2020) also found that visual art activities in open-ended learning provide opportunities for children to explore imagination and creativity more optimally. These findings are consistent with the present study because children were able to participate actively in drawing activities while expressing ideas related to religious learning materials.

The use of visual learning media, such as posters illustrating the Pillars of Islam, also supported children's understanding during the learning process. Visual representations helped children recognize symbols and sequences related to the Pillars of Islam more systematically and concretely. These findings are in line with Sidiq et al. (2025), who reported that visual media can help children understand abstract religious concepts while increasing learning participation and motivation. Masnuna and Okalia (2020) also explained that picture-based learning media can facilitate children's understanding of Islamic concepts in a more engaging manner. The use of visual learning media is also relevant to Haerudin and Gustiana (2023), who found that visual media can support children's learning motivation in early childhood education.

The findings also showed that some children still demonstrated lower levels of understanding and participation during the activities. This condition may be related to differences in concentration, learning readiness, prior religious exposure, language ability, and individual developmental characteristics. Hadi (2017) emphasized that understanding individual differences is important in achieving effective educational processes, while Zagoto et al. (2019) explained that learners possess diverse learning characteristics that may influence learning outcomes. In early childhood religious learning, teachers therefore need to provide differentiated guidance and repeated opportunities for children to connect visual symbols with religious meanings.

Overall, the findings indicate that drawing activities can support early childhood religious learning by providing concrete and enjoyable learning experiences. Through drawing activities, children were able to participate actively while recognizing the basic concepts of the Pillars of Islam through visual representations. This finding is also relevant to Ismail et al. (2019), who explained that Islamic visual art activities can support children's

social development and classroom interaction. Visual arts help children communicate understanding and connect learning experiences with their social environment (Knight, 2009). Therefore, drawing activities can be considered a relevant and developmentally appropriate learning activity for introducing Islamic religious concepts to early childhood learners in a meaningful, engaging, and concrete manner.

However, the findings should be interpreted with caution. Although most children demonstrated positive participation and understanding, variation in individual scores indicates that drawing activities may not produce the same learning outcomes for all children. In addition, this study employed a descriptive quantitative design involving a limited number of participants from a single kindergarten. As a result, the findings cannot be generalized to all early childhood education settings. Future studies may employ experimental or mixed-method approaches with larger and more diverse samples to further investigate the effectiveness of drawing-based learning activities in Islamic religious education.

Despite these limitations, this study contributes to early childhood Islamic education in several ways. First, it provides empirical evidence that drawing activities can be utilized as a visual-representational learning strategy for introducing the Pillars of Islam. Second, the study demonstrates that children's understanding of religious concepts can be observed not only through verbal responses but also through visual expressions reflected in their drawings. Third, the findings support the integration of creative and child-centered learning approaches in Islamic religious education, thereby enriching pedagogical practices that often rely heavily on memorization and teacher-centered instruction.

CONCLUSION

This study found that drawing activities supported children's understanding of the Pillars of Islam by facilitating visual representation, active participation, and meaningful engagement during the learning process. The average score of 2.97, categorized as Developing as Expected (BSH), indicates that most children were able to recognize the sequence of the Pillars of Islam, relate drawings to worship activities, and demonstrate positive attitudes toward religious learning.

The novelty of this study lies in the use of drawing activities as a visual-representational learning strategy for introducing the Pillars of Islam while simultaneously examining children's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor responses in an early childhood Islamic education context. Unlike previous studies that focused mainly on storytelling, picture books, or audiovisual media, this study highlights children's self-generated drawings as a medium for expressing and assessing their understanding of religious concepts.

Practically, the findings imply that early childhood teachers can integrate drawing activities into Islamic religious learning as an engaging, child-centered, and developmentally appropriate approach. Drawing can be used not only as a creative activity but also as an instructional and assessment strategy to explore children's understanding of religious values. Nevertheless, this study was limited by its small number of participants and single research setting. Future studies are recommended to involve larger samples and employ experimental or mixed-method designs to examine the effectiveness of drawing-based learning in early childhood Islamic education.

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