

Managing Religious Values in Early Childhood Education: A Systematic Review of Program Management Practices

Marika Situmorang¹, Winda Dewi Listyasari², Moh. Sofwan Effendi³, Kamaludin⁴
^{1,2,3,4}Manajemen Pendidikan, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Negeri Jakarta

Article Info

Article history:

Received : November 12, 2025

Revised : December 03, 2025

Accepted : January 24, 2026

Keywords:

Religious Program;
Management;
Early Childhood Education;
Religious Habituation;
Systematic Literature Review

ABSTRACT

Religious programs constitute strategic instruments in early childhood education for fostering children's religious character; however, institutional management often lacks systematic, evidence-based frameworks, resulting in implementation variations and inconsistent character outcomes. This systematic literature review, guided by PRISMA, analyzes national and international studies (2015-2025) to examine how religious programs are designed, implemented, and evaluated for religious character development. Thematic analysis mapped management functions; planning, implementation, leadership, and evaluation, revealing that successful character formation depends on structured planning, educators as religious role models, consistent habituation activities, and continuous evaluation. This review contributes to early childhood education management by offering a comprehensive conceptual framework integrating planning, implementation, leadership, and evaluation for optimizing religious program effectiveness, serving as a foundation for institutional evaluation practices.

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.



Corresponding Author:

Marika Situmorang
Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan, Manajemen Pendidikan, Universitas Negeri Jakarta
Jl. Rawamangun Muka – Jakarta Timur, Indonesia
Email: marika.situmorang@mhs.unj.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

In the broader educational context, globalization has increasingly required educational institutions to develop adaptive, context-sensitive, and internationally responsive programs (Zawawi et al., 2025). Although much of this discourse has been discussed in higher education, its implications are also relevant to early childhood education, particularly in ensuring that institutional programs are systematically managed and responsive to changing social contexts.

Early childhood education (ECE) plays a strategic role in fostering children's religious character through the planned and sustained internalization of religious values. Research consistently shows that religious values in early childhood do not emerge instantaneously but develop through continuous processes of habituation, role modeling, and a consistent learning environment (Sarinastitin, 2019; Supriani, 2025); (Anisaturrizqi et al., 2025); (Kurniasih et al., 2025); (Sjamsir et al., 2024) and (Lickona, 1991). In this context, religious programs in early childhood education refer to structured educational activities designed to cultivate children's spiritual, moral, and religious dispositions through worship practices, integrated learning experiences, and institutional daily routines (Fry, 2003; Manora et al., 2023); (Selviani & Simatupang, 2023).

From a theoretical perspective, the formation of religious character in early childhood is closely related to habituation approaches, contextual learning, and the involvement of both school and family environments. Several studies emphasize that worship routines, religious value-based storytelling, and spiritually enriched play activities are effective in enhancing children's religious and moral behaviors (Casini & Listiana, 2024; King, 2010; Kurniasih et al., 2025). In addition, parental involvement as school partners through role modeling and the continuity of religious practices at home plays a crucial role in the successful internalization of religious values in early childhood (Fry, 2003; Husin et al., 2024; Khaironi, 2017; Legi & Legi, 2025; Sjamsir et al., 2024).

Empirical evidence further suggests that children's religious development is influenced not only by instructional approaches but also by how religious programs are managed at the institutional level. Previous studies emphasize the importance of planning, implementation, leadership, and evaluation in the management of religious programs in early childhood education institutions (Arumsari et al., 2023; Hakim, 2022; Winda & Sudarma, 2025) and (Berkowitz & Bier, 2020). Structured planning, spiritual leadership at the institutional level, and policy support have been shown to contribute significantly to the effectiveness of religious value programs (Fry, 2003; Harisa US et al., 2022); (Lin et al., 2025; Winda & Sudarma, 2025). However, the management of religious programs in early childhood education continues to face various challenges, including limited resources, diverse family backgrounds, curriculum overload, and weak systems of continuous evaluation (Mufliana et al., 2024; Munastiwi et al., 2021; Supriani, 2025). These conditions indicate that religious programs in early childhood education need to be understood and examined as educational programs managed through systematic and managerial approaches, rather than merely as a series of habituation activities.

Despite the growing body of research, a review of previous studies reveals several research gaps. Most existing studies continue to emphasize partial aspects of religious program implementation, while research integrating management functions comprehensively from planning and implementation to evaluation, remains limited (Arumsari et al., 2023; Harisa US et al., 2022; Jumiatmoko & Hanafi, 2020). Furthermore, evaluations of religious programs in early childhood education are generally short-term and descriptive in nature, with limited use of valid and sustainable measurement instruments (Jumiatmoko & Hanafi, 2020; Kholila & Khadijah, 2023; Munastiwi et al., 2021). Moreover, there is a lack of literature synthesis that simultaneously maps management dimensions, success factors, implementation barriers, and program outcomes of religious programs in early childhood education within a comprehensive and cross-institutional conceptual framework (Anwar & Cholimah, 2023; Aubrey, 2019; Dari et al., 2025; Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, 2023; Kimathi & Nilsen, 2023; Opazo et al., 2025).

As an empirical foundation for this study, a systematic literature search was conducted using major academic databases, with Google Scholar serving as the primary search platform. The review process involved duplicate removal, title and abstract screening, eligibility assessment, and full-text evaluation to ensure relevance to early childhood religious education and program management. The overall flow of the literature selection process is presented in Figure 1. Based on these identified issues and research gaps, this article aims to: (1) systematically examine the management practices of religious programs in early childhood education based on previous research findings; and (2) develop a conceptual synthesis of management dimensions, success factors, barriers, and program outcomes as a foundation for program evaluation and development. The novelty of this article lies in its systematic synthesis of the literature that explicitly maps the interrelationships among management dimensions (planning, implementation, leadership, and evaluation), success factors, implementation barriers, and program outcomes, resulting in an evaluative conceptual framework that has not been comprehensively articulated in earlier studies.

METHOD

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach guided by PRISMA principles. The literature search was conducted using major academic databases, including Google Scholar as the primary search platform, complemented by articles indexed in Scopus and DOAJ-listed journals identified through cross-referencing. These databases were selected to ensure broad coverage of both national and international scholarly publications relevant to early childhood education and religious program management.

The data sources consisted of peer-reviewed national and international journal articles published between 2015 and 2025 and compiled in an SLR matrix. The inclusion criteria were defined as follows: (1) studies focusing on early childhood education (ECE) settings; (2) research addressing religious values, religious programs, or character education with a religious dimension; (3) studies explicitly discussing management aspects, including planning, implementation, leadership, or evaluation; and (4) peer-reviewed journal articles available in full text. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria included: (1) studies conducted outside early childhood education contexts; (2) articles focusing solely on theological or doctrinal discussions without educational or managerial perspectives; (3) non-peer-reviewed publications such as opinion papers, editorials, or conference abstracts; and (4) studies lacking sufficient methodological clarity.

The literature review process was conducted in three main stages: literature identification, literature selection, and data analysis. The identification stage involved collecting studies relevant to the management of religious values in early childhood education from the selected databases. The selection stage consisted of screening titles, abstracts, and full texts to ensure alignment with the inclusion criteria. Finally, data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis techniques to synthesize findings based on key themes, including management dimensions, success factors, implementation challenges, and program outcomes. The overall review process is illustrated in Figure 1.

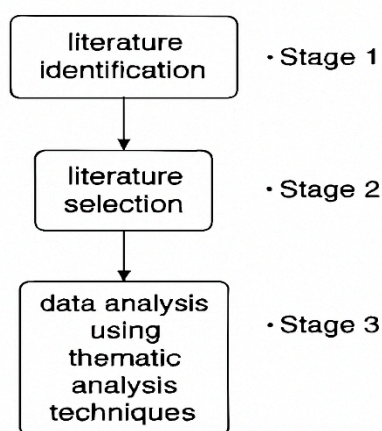


Figure 1. Literature review process.

RESULT

Religious Program Management Practices in Early Childhood Education

The systematic literature review identified that management practices of religious programs in early childhood education (ECE) are systematically distributed across four interconnected dimensions: planning, implementation, leadership, and evaluation. Rather than operating as isolated administrative components, these dimensions collectively constitute an integrated managerial framework that determines the overall quality of religious value internalization in young children. The studies analyzed consistently indicate that the effectiveness of ECE religious programs is substantially contingent upon the degree to which each management dimension is operationalized in a manner that is contextually responsive to the specific characteristics of the institution and its student population.

Planning Dimension

In the planning dimension, the majority of reviewed studies underscore the critical importance of formulating structured religious programs aligned with established ECE curricula. Arumsari et al. (2023), Lin et al. (2025), and Pandia et al. (2023) demonstrate that systematic planning—encompassing the formulation of learning objectives, the selection of developmentally appropriate instructional materials, and the structured scheduling of religious activities—contributes significantly to the consistent and coherent implementation of religious values. Osinaike et al. (2025) and Pandia et al. (2023) similarly affirm that religious programs integrated with national ECE standards tend to yield comparatively more stable service quality outcomes. Nevertheless, a recurring finding across the reviewed literature is that planning processes often remain predominantly administrative in character, insufficiently grounded in the developmental needs of children or the specific sociocultural context of the institution.

Implementation Dimension

The implementation dimension constitutes the most extensively examined aspect in the reviewed literature and reveals considerable methodological diversity across institutional settings. Supriani (2025), Kurniasih et al. (2025), Legi and Legi (2025), and Manora et al. (2023) identify habituation methods as the predominant implementation strategy for instilling religious values, operationalized through daily worship routines, deliberate teacher role modeling, and the systematic integration of moral values into play-based activities. These findings are further corroborated by Kurniasih et al. (2025) and Casini and Listiana (2024), who report that the utilization of religious narratives and developmentally appropriate instructional media can substantially enhance children's contextual moral understanding. Collectively, this pattern of findings suggests that ECE religious program implementation is most effective when oriented toward children's direct lived experiences—consistent with experiential learning approaches (Dewey, 1938)—rather than relying primarily on didactic or verbally mediated transmission of values.

Leadership Dimension

The leadership dimension emerges as a critical determinant of program sustainability and institutional religious culture. Hakim (2022), Jumiatmoko and Hanafi (2020), Pandia et al. (2023), Winda and Sudarma (2025), and Harahap and Armanila (2023) collectively argue that visionary and reflective institutional leadership can effectively foster an adaptive religious culture within ECE settings, one that is responsive to the diverse socioreligious backgrounds of students. Dari et al. (2025) and Pandia et al. (2023), through a comparative analysis of Islamic and Christian ECE institutions, further demonstrate that contextually sensitive leadership exerts a substantially greater positive impact on program effectiveness than standardized or uniform managerial models (Aubrey, 2019; Kimathi & Nilsen, 2023; Nupponen, 2006; Opazo et al., 2025). These findings collectively underscore that the effective management of ECE religious programs is inseparable from leadership capacity in value stewardship, resource governance, and the navigation of complex social relational dynamics.

Evaluation Dimension

The evaluation dimension has received comparatively limited scholarly attention relative to its strategic importance in the management cycle. Kholila and Khadijah (2023), Mufliana et al. (2024), and Jumiatmoko and Hanafi (2020) indicate that the assessment of religious value attainment is predominantly conducted through observational methods and portfolio documentation—approaches that, while developmentally appropriate in principle, remain vulnerable to subjective interpretation and are constrained by a limited range of performance indicators. Emerging efforts to strengthen institutional evaluation mechanisms through digital information systems have been reported by Saugi et al. (2025) and Mufliana et al. (2024), with preliminary evidence of improvements in program monitoring coordination and administrative efficiency. Nevertheless, evaluation continues to be positioned primarily as a terminal administrative formality rather than as a reflective mechanism informing strategic managerial decision-making.

Overall, the synthesis of the reviewed literature indicates that ECE religious program management practices are disproportionately concentrated at the implementation stage, while needs-based contextual planning and continuous, reflective evaluation remain underdeveloped. This imbalance reveals a substantive gap between the intended goals of fostering young children's religious character and the institutional managerial capacity to comprehensively and sustainably manage religious programs. These findings provide an important empirical foundation for the conceptual synthesis presented in the Discussion section.

Success Factors, Barriers, and Outcomes of Early Childhood Religious Programs

Success Factors

Systematic analysis of the included studies indicates that the success of religious program management in ECE is not attributable to any single determinant but emerges from the dynamic interaction among management dimensions, implementing actors, and the institutional sociocultural context. Structured and consistent religious habituation is identified as a primary factor in program success. Supriani (2025), Kurniasih et al. (2025), and Manora et al. (2023) report that the integration of religious activities into daily institutional routines—including structured prayer, acts of simple worship, and the practical enactment of moral values—is substantially more effective in shaping children's religious character than episodic instructional approaches. These outcomes are attained not through cognitive reinforcement alone but through the repeated, contextually embedded internalization of values within children's everyday experiential environments, a process consistent with the principles of social learning theory (Bandura, 1977).

Institutional leadership and educator competence represent a second success factor consistently reported across the literature. Aubrey (2019), Kimathi and Nilsen (2023), Nupponen (2006), Hakim (2022), Asiyani et al. (2023), and Harahap and Armanila (2023) collectively emphasize that ECE institutional leaders occupy a strategic role in articulating an adaptive religious institutional vision and cultivating an organizational climate conducive to the internalization of religious values. Reflective leadership—a capacity extensively examined in educational management scholarship (Fullan, 2001)—enables institutions to navigate the heterogeneity of family and sociocultural backgrounds without compromising the integrity of core program values. At the practitioner level, teacher competence—particularly in behavioral role modeling, classroom management, and reflective pedagogical practice—is consistently identified as a necessary precondition for program effectiveness (Manora et al., 2023; Pandia et al., 2023).

Parental involvement and home-school synergy constitute a third critical success factor with strong and consistent empirical support. Rahmawati and Rachman (2025), Sjamsir et al. (2024), Anwar and Cholimah (2023), and Manora et al. (2023) demonstrate that religious values cultivated within ECE institutional settings are more deeply and durably internalized when reinforced through consistent family-based practices. This finding aligns with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems model, which posits that the family microsystem constitutes the most proximal and developmentally influential context for children's value formation. The implication is that religious program management in ECE cannot be conceptualized or operationalized independently of family engagement as a core component of the institutional management system.

Barriers

The review identifies a set of recurring structural and contextual barriers that impede program effectiveness across institutional settings. Resource limitations—encompassing constraints in funding, learning facilities, and contextually relevant instructional media—represent the most pervasive challenge documented in the literature (Khaironi, 2017; Supriani, 2025; Jumiatmoko & Hanafi, 2020; Pandia et al., 2023). The financial dependency of private ECE institutions on external funding sources introduces programmatic instability and implementation inconsistency, thereby undermining the sustainability of religious habituation practices.

A further significant barrier pertains to the heterogeneity of students' social, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Kurniasih et al. (2025), Anwar and Cholimah (2023), and Manora et al. (2023) note that divergences in parenting philosophies, family religiosity levels, and socioeconomic conditions differentially influence children's receptiveness to and internalization of religious programming. In this context, ECE program managers face the dual and at times competing imperatives of maintaining value consistency while simultaneously upholding inclusivity and sociocultural sensitivity—a tension recognized in the broader

character education literature (Lickona, 1991). This issue also resonates with broader discussions on inequality, power relations, and social justice in education, which emphasize the need for educational programs to remain sensitive to diverse social backgrounds and unequal access to educational resources (Zawawi & Setiawan, 2025).

With respect to assessment-related barriers, Kholila and Khadijah (2023) and Munastiwi et al. (2021) report that authentic assessment approaches—while conceptually aligned with ECE pedagogical principles—continue to encounter practical limitations pertaining to subjective interpretation and the absence of standardized, cross-institutionally applicable performance indicators. These limitations complicate systematic program evaluation and the accumulation of comparable evidence regarding program effectiveness.

Program Outcomes

In terms of documented program outcomes, cross-study evidence indicates that ECE religious programs are generally associated with measurable improvements in children's religious character, manifested in the development of worship habits, behavioral discipline, prosocial moral attitudes, and positive interpersonal conduct. Arumsari et al. (2023) and Kholila and Khadijah (2023) report relatively high attainment in Expected Development (ED) and Very Good Development (VGD) indicators for religious and moral value dimensions. Harahap and Armanila (2023) and Winda and Sudarma (2025) document improvements across six character dimensions through project-based integrative pedagogical approaches. A number of studies additionally document broader social outcomes, including enhanced interreligious tolerance and the early foundations of religious moderation (Hakim, 2022; Harisa US et al., 2022).

Notwithstanding these positive findings, the review identifies the long-term sustainability of program outcomes as a critical concern. Longitudinal evidence reported by Mufliana et al. (2024) and Pandia et al. (2023) reveals a discernible attrition in children's religious character following graduation from ECE when continuity in both the family environment and subsequent educational settings is not maintained. This finding reinforces the argument that outcomes of ECE religious programs should not be conceptualized as static developmental endpoints but as provisional indicators within a longitudinal character formation process, the trajectory of which is substantially conditioned by the quality and continuity of the broader educational ecosystem surrounding the child (Sjamsir et al., 2024).

Discussion

Toward an Integrated Model of ECE Religious Program Management

The findings of this systematic review reveal a consistent and theoretically significant pattern: the management of religious programs in early childhood education is most effective when conceptualized as a cyclical, integrated system rather than as a discrete sequence of administrative procedures. This conceptualization challenges the prevalent institutional tendency, documented across numerous included studies, to treat planning as primarily bureaucratic, implementation as both central and sufficient, and evaluation as peripheral. Such compartmentalization is theoretically untenable and practically counterproductive to the sustained development of children's religious character.

The disproportionate institutional focus on implementation, while explicable given the immediacy of classroom-based value transmission, reflects a systemic managerial imbalance with substantive consequences for program sustainability. As the longitudinal evidence demonstrates (Mufliana et al., 2024; Pandia et al., 2023), children's religious character as developed during ECE is susceptible to attrition in the absence of reinforcement within subsequent educational contexts and the family environment. This finding is theoretically coherent with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems framework, which holds that developmental outcomes are not the product of any single institutional context but are co-determined by the quality and coherence of multiple, nested environmental systems. The practical implication is that ECE religious program management must be designed with explicit attention to ecosystem continuity—not merely within-institution habituation—as a core managerial objective.

Habituation and Experiential Learning: Theoretical Alignment

A particularly robust and cross-contextually consistent finding in this review is the demonstrated superiority of habituation-based implementation strategies over didactic, verbally mediated approaches to religious value transmission. The consistent embedding of religious values within daily institutional routines—through structured prayer, deliberate moral role modeling, and value-integrated play activities—functions as a form of procedural enculturation that operates at both the behavioral and dispositional levels of children’s development. This is conceptually consonant with Bandura’s (1977) social learning theory, which foregrounds the centrality of observational learning and behavioral modeling in the acquisition of social and moral competencies, and with Dewey’s (1938) philosophy of experiential education, which holds that learning is most enduring when grounded in direct, contextually meaningful experience.

The practical implication for curriculum design and pedagogical planning is significant: the selection and sequencing of religious learning activities should be explicitly informed by experiential learning principles, prioritizing the embodied, habitual enactment of values over episodic instructional units that remain disconnected from the child’s lived daily experience. This reorientation necessitates a more deliberate and theoretically grounded approach to the planning dimension—one that moves decisively beyond administrative compliance toward needs-based, contextually responsive curriculum development.

Leadership as a Strategic Managerial Determinant

The literature reviewed consistently identifies leadership as a pivotal and multidimensional determinant of program quality, operating at both the visionary-strategic and operational levels of institutional management. The construct of reflective leadership—characterized by the sustained capacity to critically examine institutional practices, integrate evaluative feedback, and adapt strategically to evolving contextual demands—emerges as particularly salient in the ECE religious program management context (Fullan, 2001; Sergiovanni, 1992). The finding that contextually adaptive leadership consistently outperforms standardized managerial frameworks across diverse institutional settings (Dari et al., 2025; Pandia et al., 2023) carries important policy implications: it militates against the imposition of uniform religious program management models and advocates instead for institutional autonomy that is moderated by reflective professional practice and accountability structures.

Furthermore, the evidence that institutional leaders play a constitutive—rather than merely administrative—role in shaping organizational religious culture substantiates a values-based leadership perspective (Fry, 2003). Within this framework, the alignment of institutional mission, managerial behavior, and programmatic content is treated not as incidental but as a deliberate strategic priority. The development of such alignment requires investment in leadership formation that extends beyond technical administrative competence to encompass reflective, culturally responsive, and value-driven professional capacities.

Evaluation as Reflective Feedback Mechanism

Perhaps the most strategically significant managerial deficit identified in this review is the systematic underutilization of evaluation as a mechanism for evidence-informed, continuous program improvement. The prevailing dominance of observational and portfolio-based assessment, while developmentally appropriate in principle, is constrained by persistent challenges of inter-rater subjectivity and the absence of validated, standardized performance indicators applicable across institutional contexts (Kholila & Khadijah, 2023; Munastiwi et al., 2021). The emergent integration of digital information systems into program monitoring (Mufliana et al., 2024; Saugi et al., 2025) represents a promising directional development but remains insufficiently theorized, structurally embedded, and scaled to constitute a genuine evaluative infrastructure.

A more robust and theoretically defensible approach to evaluation would reposition assessment not as a terminal administrative act but as a reflective feedback mechanism embedded throughout the managerial cycle—informing contextual planning, shaping implementation strategies, and providing empirical grounding for institutional leadership decisions. This conceptual reorientation is consistent with quality improvement frameworks in educational management (Fullan, 2001) and with scholarly arguments for more rigorous, criterion-referenced assessment practices in character education (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). Achieving this

reorientation in practice will require investment in both the technical infrastructure for assessment and the professional capacity of practitioners to interpret and act upon evaluative data.

A Cyclical Conceptual Framework for ECE Religious Program Management

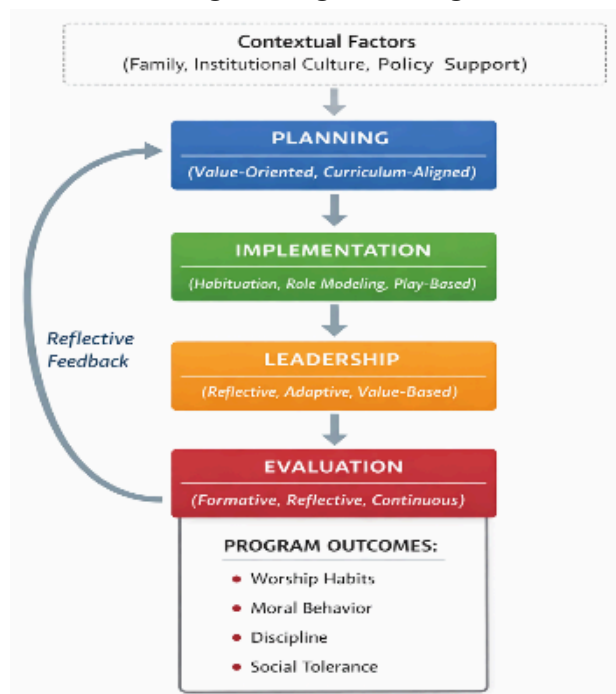


Figure 2. Conceptual framework for religious program management in ECE

Synthesizing the findings across all included studies, this review proposes a conceptualization of ECE religious program management as a cyclical and interdependent system comprising four mutually reinforcing components: (1) contextually grounded and needs-responsive planning; (2) habituation-based, experientially oriented implementation; (3) adaptive, reflective, and values-based leadership; and (4) data-informed, reflective evaluative feedback. As illustrated in Figure 2, program outcomes are positioned not as terminal goals but as iterative feedback indicators that continuously inform and refine the managerial cycle. This model underscores the inherently processual character of religious character development in early childhood—a process that transcends institutional boundaries and is substantially conditioned by the quality of family–school partnerships and the continuity of the broader educational and social ecosystem (Sjamsir et al., 2024).

This conceptual framework carries substantive implications for institutional practice, policy formulation, and future research. At the institutional level, the framework calls for greater investment in needs-based planning processes and systematic, sustainable evaluation infrastructures. At the policy level, it advocates for leadership development programs that cultivate reflective, culturally responsive, and values-driven managerial competencies in ECE institutional leaders. For the research community, the framework identifies several productive directions for future inquiry: longitudinal studies tracking the developmental trajectory and sustainability of religious character beyond the ECE phase; comparative studies of program management models across diverse sociocultural, theological, and institutional contexts; and advances in the methodological rigor and cross-institutional validity of religious and moral character assessment instruments. Future studies may also empirically test the proposed conceptual framework using quantitative modeling approaches, such as partial least squares–structural equation modeling, which has been applied in recent educational research to examine relationships among institutional support, learning systems, and student readiness outcomes (Ilhamuddin et al., 2026).

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review highlights the strategic role of religious program management in early childhood education (ECE) in shaping children's religious character, emphasizing that its effectiveness depends on the integration of key managerial dimensions. Cross-study evidence consistently shows that structured religious habituation, teacher role modeling, and the integration of religious values into daily activities are more effective than episodic, instruction-based approaches. Curriculum-aligned planning, adaptive leadership, parental involvement, and contextual sensitivity emerge as critical success factors. However, persistent structural and contextual barriers such as limited resources, diverse family backgrounds, and weak evaluation mechanisms continue to constrain program effectiveness. Most studies indicate that evaluation practices remain subjective and short-term, limiting their capacity to capture the sustainability of value internalization beyond the ECE stage. Longitudinal findings further suggest that program outcomes should be understood as part of an ongoing character formation process influenced by family environments and subsequent educational experiences. Based on this synthesis, religious program management in ECE can be conceptualized as a cyclical and continuous system linking contextual planning, habituation-based implementation, adaptive leadership, and reflective evaluation toward the development of children's religious character. Program outcomes are therefore better positioned as interim indicators of an evolving managerial process rather than terminal goals, providing a more realistic basis for evaluating both effectiveness and limitations.

Theoretically, this review extends the educational management literature by reframing religious program outcomes in early childhood education as interim indicators within a continuous managerial cycle, rather than final endpoints, thereby strengthening the conceptual linkage between management processes and character education outcomes. Practically, the findings suggest several recommendations: (1) strengthening needs-based and context-sensitive program planning beyond administrative compliance; (2) implementing consistent, integrated habituation approaches with teachers as central role models; (3) enhancing reflective and sustainable evaluation through clearer indicators and digital monitoring systems; and (4) embedding home-school synergy as an integral component of program management. Future research should prioritize longitudinal and context-rich empirical studies to examine the sustainability of program impacts and to test the applicability of the proposed conceptual framework across diverse ECE settings.

REFERENCES

- Anisaturrizqi, R., Crismono, P. C., & Yanuardianto, E. (2025). Assessing the relevance of Montessori education in contemporary contexts using bibliometric analysis. *JP (Jurnal Pendidikan): Teori Dan Praktik*, 10(2), 156–173. <https://doi.org/10.26740/jp.v10n2.p156-173>
- Anwar, N. A. O., & Cholimah, N. (2023). Strategi penanaman nilai agama dan moral di PAUD. *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 7(6), 7649–7660. <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v7i6.4759>
- Arumsari, T. K. S., Afandi, T., Angki, S., & Latifah, A. (2023). Pengelolaan pembelajaran nilai-nilai agama Islam pada pendidikan anak usia dini (PAUD) di Pos PAUD Kharisma Desa Sidoharum. *UNISAN JURNAL: Jurnal Manajemen Dan Pendidikan*, 2(8), 249–256. <https://journal.an-nur.ac.id/index.php/unisanjournal>
- Asiyani, G., Afandi, N. K., & Asiah, S. N. (2023). Perencanaan komunikasi kemitraan untuk mendukung pelaksanaan awal pengembangan anak usia dini holistik integratif. *Jurnal Anak Usia Dini Holistik Integratif (AUDHI)*, 6(1), 37. <https://doi.org/10.36722/jaudhi.v6i1.1973>
- Aubrey, C. A. (2019). What early childhood leadership for what kind of world? *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 20(1), 65–78. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1463949119828145>
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Prentice Hall.
- Berkowitz, M. W., & Bier, M. C. (2005). *What works in character education: A research-driven guide for educators*. Character Education Partnership.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Harvard University Press.
- Casini, C., & Listiana, A. (2024). Penanaman nilai pendidikan akhlak pada film Riko bagi anak usia dini. *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 8(1), 71–82. <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v8i1.4657>
- Dari, P. W., Lestari, S. D., & Susanti, U. V. (2025). Manajemen pemasaran lembaga PAUD: Menerapkan pembiasaan nilai moral dan agama untuk meningkatkan perilaku belajar anak. *Edusiana: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 3(1), 119–126. <https://doi.org/10.70437/edusiana.v3i1.1168>

- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. Macmillan.
- Fry, L. W. (2003). Toward a theory of spiritual leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 14(6), 693–727. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2003.09.001>
- Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. Jossey-Bass.
- Hakim, T. R. (2022). Implementasi nilai-nilai pendidikan agama Islam dalam membina moderasi kehidupan beragama. *Edukasiana: Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan*, 1(4), 192–200. <https://doi.org/10.56916/ejip.v1i4.188>
- Harahap, H. S., & Armanila, A. (2023). Prinsip kepemimpinan moral spiritual sekolah dalam pembangunan karakter PAUD di TK Nurul Hidayah Kabupaten Serdang Bedagai. *Indonesian Journal of Early Childhood: Jurnal Dunia Anak Usia Dini*, 5(2), 435–446. <https://doi.org/10.35473/ijec.v5i1.1999>
- Harisa US, H. U., Asiah, S. N., & Hamdani, R. (2022). Manajemen perencanaan, pembelajaran dan penilaian AUD berbasis nilai-nilai agama Islam. *Journal of Instructional and Development Researches*, 2(6), 234–240. <https://doi.org/10.53621/jider.v2i6.171>
- Husin, H., Maisah, M., Hakim, L., & Asrulla, A. (2024). Manajemen strategik program studi Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi dalam menghadapi globalisasi. *Journal of Education Research*, 5(4), 4799–4809. <https://doi.org/10.37985/jer.v5i4.1455>
- Ihamuddin, M. F., Purwoko, B., Haq, M. S., Naqiyah, N., & Zawawi, A. A. (2026). Assessing the influence of the UNESA Career Center LMS on students' readiness for studying abroad through partial least squares–structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). *Multidisciplinary Science Journal*, 8(10), 2026660. <https://doi.org/10.31893/multiscience.2026660>
- Jumiatioko, & Hanafi, M. (2020). Titik lemah perkembangan moral anak usia dini pada lembaga PAUD berbasis keagamaan. *Jurnal AUDI: Jurnal Ilmiah Kajian Ilmu Anak Dan Media Informasi PUD*, 5(2), 91–98. <https://doi.org/10.33061/jai.v5i2.4393>
- Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi. (2023). *Merdeka belajar episode 26: Transformasi standar nasional dan akreditasi pendidikan tinggi*. <https://itjen.dikdasmen.go.id/web/merdeka-belajar-episode-26-transformasi-standar-nasional-dan-akreditasi-pendidikan-tinggi/>
- Khaironi, M. (2017). Pendidikan karakter anak usia dini. *Jurnal Golden Age*, 1(2), 82. <https://doi.org/10.29408/goldenage.v1i02.546>
- Kholila, A., & Khadijah, K. (2023). Optimalisasi aspek perkembangan nilai agama dan moral pada anak usia dini. *Murhum: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 4(1), 419–428. <https://doi.org/10.37985/murhum.v4i1.237>
- Kimathi, E., & Nilsen, A. C. E. (2023). Managing categories: The role of social technology in kindergarten teachers' work to promote early intervention and integration. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 24(4), 425–437. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14639491211045419>
- King, P. E. (2010). Religion, spirituality, and positive youth development: What do we know? *Applied Developmental Science*, 14(3), 121–124. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2010.516672>
- Kurniasih, N., Mayasari, M., Nurhaedah, N., & Hidayat, Y. (2025). Implementasi pembelajaran nilai agama dan moral melalui metode pembiasaan di PAUD Al-Barkah. *Jurnal Intisabi*, 2(2), 224–243. <https://doi.org/10.61580/itsb.v2i2.88>
- Legi, H., & Legi, D. G. D. (2025). *Kingdom mindset manajemen pendidikan Kristen berbasis nilai-nilai kerajaan Allah*. <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Rx1ZEQAAOBAJ>
- Lickona, T. (1991). *Educating for character: How our schools can teach respect and responsibility*. Bantam Books.
- Lin, Y., Kadir, M. A. A., & Kaur, D. (2025). Preschool educators' perceptions on values education. *Education Sciences*, 15(2), 140–155. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci15020140>
- Manora, H., Khasanah, N. L., & Akip, M. (2023). Manajemen kurikulum merdeka pendidikan Islam anak usia dini. *Bouseik*, 1(1), 1–15. <https://jurnal.staibsllg.ac.id/index.php/bouseik/index>
- Mufliana, W., Harun, H., Syamsudin, A., & Ratnawati, S. (2024). Pengembangan aplikasi SI-PAUD sebagai media penilaian perkembangan anak usia dini. *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 8(1), 109–120. <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v8i1.5911>
- Munastiwi, E., Rahmatullah, B., & Marpuah. (2021). The impact of Islamic religious education on the development of early childhood religious and moral values during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia and Malaysia. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 10(1), 49–66. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2021.101.49-66>
- Nupponen, H. (2006). Framework for developing leadership skills in child care centres in Queensland, Australia. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 7(2), 146–161. <https://doi.org/10.2304/ciec.2006.7.2.146>
- Opazo, M. J., Pardo, M., Rupin, P., & Galdames, S. (2025). School leaders' perceptions, practices and

- aspirations about schoolification in ECEC. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/14639491251387763>
- Osinaike, J. M., Busingye, J. D., Ani, N. C., Abdulganeey, I. B., Ozokoye, C. G., & Umekwe, E. (2025). Social-emotional learning in Nigeria's K–16 education system: A systematic review of implementation and gaps. *Path of Science*, 11(7), 1001. <https://doi.org/10.22178/pos.120-1>
- Pandia, W. S. S., Naim, M. A., & Siddique, M. (2023). Student growth, qualities, and abilities in developing religious ideals from childhood: Which approach works? *Assyfa Journal of Islamic Studies*, 1(1), 130–142. <https://doi.org/10.61650/ajis.v1i1.320>
- Rahmawati, D. S., & Rachman, A. U. (2025). Implementasi penguatan pendidikan karakter anak usia dini. *Journal of Education and Pedagogy*, 2(1), 27–35. <https://doi.org/10.62354/jep.v2i1.34>
- Sarinastitin, E. (2019). Pendidikan holistik integratif untuk pembentukan karakter anak usia dini. *Jurnal Lonto Leok Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 2(1), 95–102. <https://doi.org/10.36928/jllpaud.v2i1.1467>
- Saugi, W., Azainil, A., Haeruddin, H., & Buhari, M. R. (2025). Designing an integrated information system for collaborative quality assurance in early childhood education. *As-Sibyan: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 10(2), 211–224. <https://doi.org/10.32678/assibyan.v10i2.11534>
- Selviani, F., & Simatupang, D. (2023). Analysis of the development of religious and moral values in children aged 5–6 years in PAUD Penabur Filadelfia Suka Dame Kutalimbaru District. *Indonesian Journal of Advanced Research*, 2(8), 1183–1192. <https://doi.org/10.55927/ijar.v2i8.5400>
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (1992). *Moral leadership: Getting to the heart of school improvement*. Jossey-Bass.
- Sjamsir, H., Rozie, F., Ayu Dewi, S., & Liana, H. (2024). Parental role: Internalization of the development of independent, disciplined, and responsible character values for children aged 5–6 years. *JPUD - Jurnal Pendidikan Usia Dini*, 18(1), 18–29. <https://doi.org/10.21009/jpud.181.02>
- Supriani, Y. (2025). Manajemen lingkungan sekolah yang Islami di taman kanak-kanak. *Jurnal Studi Islam*, 4(1), 31–42. <https://doi.org/10.47902/al-akmal.v4i1.403>
- Winda, N. L. I. W., & Sudarma, I. K. (2025). Strategi kepemimpinan kepala PAUD dalam menghadapi tantangan era digital. *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Citra Bakti*, 12(1), 230–241. <https://doi.org/10.38048/jipcb.v12i1.4944>
- Zawawi, A. A., & Setiawan, R. (2025). Introduction to global social problems: Understanding inequalities of power and social justice: Isaac Zvi Christiansen. (2025). New York: Routledge, 528 pp., \$190 hardcover, €49.99 paperback. ISBN 9781003602880. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2025.2575819>
- Zawawi, A. A., Suryani, M., & Museyibzada, R. (2025). Globalisasi pendidikan tinggi Indonesia: Analisis program beasiswa IISMA sebagai representasi mobilitas akademik internasional. *Al-Irsyad: Journal of Education Science*, 4(2), 188–200. <https://doi.org/10.58917/aijes.v4i2.220>