



Analysis of Prayer-Movement Introduction Methods in Developing the Religious and Moral Values of Early Childhood Learners

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis metode pengenalan gerakan sholat sebagai strategi mengembangkan aspek nilai agama dan moral anak usia dini di TK Nusa Indah II, Desa Ampelu, Kecamatan Muara Tembesi, Kabupaten Batang Hari, Provinsi Jambi. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif, dengan pengumpulan data melalui observasi terstruktur, wawancara semiterstruktur kepada guru kelas, orang tua, dan anak, serta dokumentasi lapangan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pengenalan gerakan sholat melalui demonstrasi, peniruan, dan pembiasaan efektif menumbuhkan perkembangan nilai agama dan moral. Observasi terhadap anak fokus memperoleh skor kualitas metode 3,14/4 dan skor perkembangan 2,50/4, dengan capaian keseluruhan 71% yang dikategorikan Berkembang Sesuai Harapan (BSH). Tantangan utama yang dihadapi adalah konsentrasi anak yang mudah teralih dan waktu kegiatan yang terbatas, sementara bimbingan aktif orang tua di rumah memperkuat proses pembiasaan. Penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa pengenalan gerakan sholat yang kontekstual dan berorientasi praktik—khususnya ketika dihubungkan dengan pengalaman ibadah autentik seperti sholat di masjid—memperkuat internalisasi nilai agama dan moral pada anak usia dini.

Kata Kunci: Gerakan Sholat; Nilai Agama Dan Moral; Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini; Pembiasaan; Pengembangan Karakter

Abstract

This study analyzes the method of introducing prayer movements (*gerakan sholat*) as a strategy to develop the religious and moral values of early childhood learners at TK Nusa Indah II, Ampelu Village, Muara Tembesi District, Batang Hari Regency, Jambi Province. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, with data collected through structured observation, semi-structured interviews with the classroom teacher, parents, and children, and field documentation. The findings reveal that introducing prayer movements through demonstration, imitation, and habituation effectively fosters religious and moral development. Observation of the focal child yielded a method-quality score of 3.14/4 and a developmental score of 2.50/4, with an overall achievement of 71%, categorized as Developing as Expected (*Berkembang Sesuai Harapan/BSH*). The main challenges identified were the children's easily distracted concentration and limited activity time, while active parental guidance at home reinforced the habituation process. The study concludes that a contextual, practice-oriented introduction of prayer movements—particularly when connected to authentic worship experiences such as praying at the mosque—strengthens the internalization of religious and moral values in early childhood.

Keywords: *Prayer Movements; Religious And Moral Values; Early Childhood Education; Habituation; Character Development*

Introduction

Early childhood education (ECE) constitutes a strategic foundation for shaping human personality and character. During the early years, children are in a golden age in which every educational stimulus can be absorbed optimally. One developmental domain prioritized in early childhood education is that of religious and moral values, which forms the basis for the later emergence of religious, honest, respectful, and responsible attitudes.

Within national regulation, religious and moral values are designated as one of the six developmental domains of early childhood. Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 137 of 2014 concerning National Standards for Early Childhood Education affirms that the religious and moral domain encompasses the ability to recognize one's religion, perform acts of worship, behave honestly, be helpful, polite, and respectful, and maintain personal and environmental cleanliness [1]. These provisions serve as both the legal and the pedagogical basis for ECE institutions in developing programs that introduce worship, including the introduction of prayer movements.

As one of the pillars of Islam, prayer (sholat) involves concrete, observable physical movements, making it relatively easy to introduce to young children through imitation and habituation. Introducing prayer movements is not aimed solely at training motor skills; it also serves as a gateway for internalizing spiritual and moral values such as discipline, cleanliness, humility, and respect toward God and fellow human beings.

Nevertheless, the practice of introducing prayer movements in ECE institutions faces several challenges, including children's easily distracted concentration, limited activity time, and the need for continuity of habituation between the school and home

environments. These challenges call for an appropriate, contextual, and practice-oriented method so that the goal of developing religious and moral values can be achieved effectively.

TK Nusa Indah II, located in Ampelu Village, Muara Tembesi District, Batang Hari Regency, Jambi Province, is one ECE institution that actively conducts prayer-movement introduction activities for Group B children (aged 5–6 years). This institution was selected as the research site because it operates a worship-habituation program documented through Daily Lesson Plans (RPPH) and teachers' daily notes.

A number of previous studies have examined the management and practice of Islamic education in various contexts. The study by Ade Sofa and colleagues, for example, analyzed the management of Islamic education in the guidance of inmates and found that structured Islamic education—covering the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages—effectively improved religious understanding and behavior [2]. However, studies that specifically analyze methods of introducing prayer movements to develop the religious and moral values of young children remain relatively limited, particularly in the rural context of Jambi Province.

Based on this background, the present study aims to: (1) describe the prayer-movement introduction method applied at TK Nusa Indah II; (2) analyze the impact of this method on the development of children's religious and moral values; and (3) identify the challenges and supporting factors in its implementation. This study is expected to make a practical contribution to the development of worship-learning models in ECE institutions.

Theoretical Review

The development of young children's religious and moral values rests on several

theoretical foundations. First, Albert Bandura’s social learning theory places observation, imitation, and modeling as the principal mechanisms of behavior formation. Bandura argues that cognitive processes play an important role in learning, so that individuals actively interpret and process observed behavior before adopting it [3]. In the introduction of prayer movements, children learn primarily by observing and imitating models—namely teachers and parents.

Second, the constructivist theory developed by Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky emphasizes that knowledge is built by children through social interaction and direct experience within a supportive environment [4]. Young children understand the meaning of worship not through rote memorization alone, but through active engagement and repeated meaningful experiences. These two theories serve as the analytical framework for interpreting the field findings of this study.

Third, in normative terms, the development of young children’s religious and moral values refers to the Standards of Child Developmental Achievement (STPPA) as regulated in Permendikbud Number 137 of 2014. The religious and moral domain therein covers the ability to recognize one’s religion, perform worship, behave honestly and politely, respect others, and maintain personal and environmental cleanliness [1]. The introduction of prayer movements is one concrete manifestation of achieving these indicators, as mapped in Table 1.

Table 1. Mapping of Prayer-Movement Introduction onto STPPA Religious and Moral Indicators

No	STPPA Indicator (Permendikbud 137/2014)	Manifestation in Prayer-Movement Introduction
1	Recognizing one’s religion	Understanding prayer as an act of worship in Islam
2	Performing worship	Imitating prayer movements in

		sequence
3	Maintaining personal cleanliness	Cleaning oneself before prayer (“clean and fragrant”)
4	Respectful and polite behavior	Reverent attitude and respect for the teacher’s rules
5	Recognizing good conduct	Interpreting prostration as praying to God

Source: Compiled by the authors from Permendikbud 137/2014 and field data (2026)

The conceptual framework of this study links the prayer-movement introduction method, teacher and parental modeling, and the resulting development of children’s religious and moral values, as illustrated in Figure 1.

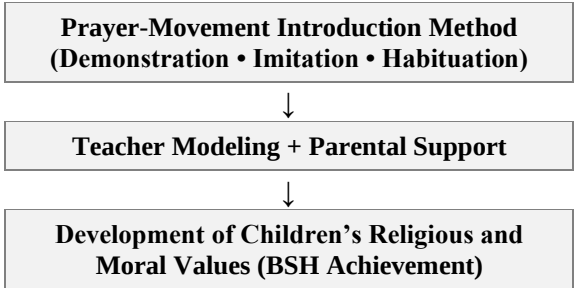


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Source: Developed by the authors (2026)

Relevant Studies and Research Novelty

Recent studies affirm that habituation and modeling are the dominant approaches for developing young children’s religious and moral values. Masturoh and Abdillah found that a variety of religious activities—including the practice of prayer movements—delivered through habituation proved effective in cultivating children’s religious and moral values [5]. Similar findings were reported by Aprillia et al., who showed that optimizing the habituation of dhuha prayer improved the religious and moral achievement of children aged 5–6 years [6]. The consistency of these findings across institutions reinforces the assumption that structured worship habituation has significant pedagogical leverage.

On the technical dimension, Kinanti specifically examined techniques for

introducing the recitation and movements of prayer to children and concluded that the imitation method combined with gradual guidance best suits the developmental characteristics of young children [7]. This view aligns with the study by Bismillah et al., who found a positive effect of prayer practice on children's character formation [8], as well as Meilasari and Ichsan (2024), who mapped modeling, habituation, and storytelling as the three principal methods of instilling religious and moral values [9]. These three studies confirm that the success of worship introduction depends on selecting methods adaptive to children's world of play and imitation.

The dimension of modeling enjoys strong theoretical and empirical support. Ritonga et al. position the modeling method as the foundation of Islamic education because children learn most effectively through real behavioral models [10]. Complementarily, Ruswandi et al. demonstrated that parental modeling in worship habituation contributes substantially to the religious development of children aged 4–6 years [11], while Rahmatullah et al. underscored the strategic role of teachers in developing religious and moral values through the synergy of habituation and modeling [12]. These findings reinforce the relevance of Bandura's social learning theory in the context of young children's worship education.

In addition, recent research indicates a shift toward contextual and innovative approaches. Iswantiningtyas et al. developed character-value instillation based on the Pancasila Student Profile through games, affirming that moral values are internalized more strongly when conveyed through meaningful experience [13]. Hamdi even designed a digital-based worship-learning module for dhuha prayer material and demonstrated that contextual media can increase learner engagement [14]. A synthesis of these studies is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Matrix of Relevant Studies and the Position of This Research

No	Researcher (Year)	Research Focus	Relevance to This Study
1	Masturoh & Abdillah (2024) [5]	Ramadhan activities & religious–moral values	Reinforces the effectiveness of worship habituation
2	Kinanti (2023) [7]	Recitation & prayer–movement techniques	Basis for demonstration & imitation methods
3	Aprillia et al. (2024) [6]	Dhuha–prayer habituation, ages 5–6	Reference for religious–moral achievement
4	Ritonga et al. (2024) [10]	Modeling method	Foundation for the model/teacher role
5	Iswantiningtyas et al. (2024) [13]	Game-based character values	Supports the contextual approach
6	Hamdi (2024) [14]	Digital-based worship module	Innovation in worship-learning media

Source: Compiled by the authors from various relevant studies (2026)

Based on this mapping, most prior studies focus on congregational dhuha prayer, general habituation, or character broadly. Studies that specifically analyze the method of introducing prayer movements as a gateway to internalizing religious and moral values—using measurable observation instruments and developmental-achievement categorization (BB–MB–BSH–BSB) in a rural ECE context in Jambi Province—remain very limited. Herein lies the novelty of this study, which combines the analysis of method quality and child developmental achievement simultaneously within a single observational framework.

Research Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. A qualitative descriptive approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon occurring in the field, particularly how the prayer-movement introduction method is designed, implemented, and affects children's development [2]. The study was conducted at TK Nusa Indah II, Ampelu Village, Muara Tembesi District, Batang Hari Regency, Jambi Province.

Setting and Research Subjects

The study was carried out at TK Nusa Indah II in Ampelu Village, Muara Tembesi District, Batang Hari Regency, Jambi Province. The institution was selected because it conducts worship-habituatation activities, including the introduction of prayer movements, documented through RPPH/RPPM and teachers' daily notes. The research subjects comprised Group B children (aged 5–6 years), the classroom teacher, and parents. Subject selection was purposive, choosing informants with knowledge of and involvement relevant to the prayer-movement introduction activities. The focal child for in-depth observation was Sofia Alfatunnisa, with classroom teacher Fitriani, S.Pd., and data collector Hidana.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through four complementary techniques, as detailed in Table 3: (1) structured observation using a prayer-movement observation sheet; (2) semi-structured interviews with the classroom teacher; (3) interviews with parents; and (4) simple interviews with children using easily understood language. Field documentation in the form of activity photographs, RPPH/RPPM, and teachers' daily notes was used as supporting data.

Table 3. Instruments and Data-Collection Techniques

N o	Instrument	Target / Data Source	Aspects Explored
1	Observation sheet	Child (process & development)	Method quality and level of religious–moral development
2	Teacher interview guide	Classroom teacher	Methods, challenges, and impact of activities
3	Parent interview guide	Parents	Support & habituation at home
4	Simple child interview	Child	Child's perceptions & affective experience
5	Documentation	Photos, RPPH/RPPM, daily notes	Supporting evidence of implementation

Source: Research Data-Collection Instruments (2026)

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using a thematic analysis model through three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing [2]. Data validity was maintained through source, method, and time triangulation, ensuring the accountability of the findings. Observation scores were computed from two components—the average method quality (Part A) and the average child development (Part B)—which were then converted into a percentage of achievement and categorized according to the four levels of early childhood development: Not Yet Developing (BB), Beginning to Develop (MB), Developing as Expected (BSH), and Developing Very Well (BSB).

The percentage of achievement was calculated using Equation 1, where P is the achievement percentage, f the obtained score, and N the maximum score.

$$P = (f / N) \times 100\%$$

The research procedure proceeded through four stages, illustrated in Figure 2: planning and instrument development; field data collection (observation, interviews, documentation); data reduction and display; and triangulation and conclusion drawing.

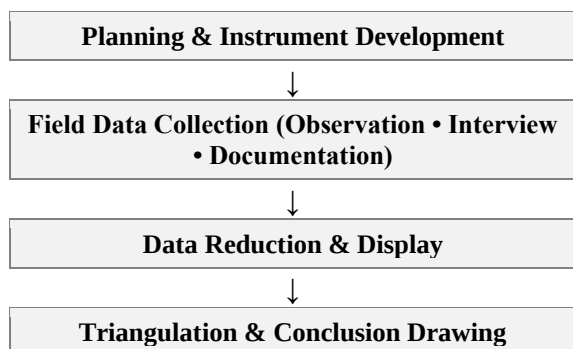


Figure 2. Stages of the Research Procedure

Source: Developed by the authors (2026)

Findings and Discussion

Prayer-Movement Introduction Method

Observation and interview results show that the prayer-movement introduction method at TK Nusa Indah II was implemented through a combination of demonstration, imitation, and habituation. The teacher demonstrated the prayer movements in sequence—from takbiratul ihram, bowing (ruku), and prostration (sujud), through to the closing salutation (salam)—after which the children imitated the movements together. The activity was integrated with the habituation of maintaining personal cleanliness before performing worship.

Interviews with the child reinforced this finding. When asked how she felt while moving as in prayer, the child expressed happiness. She also understood the reason for cleanliness before prayer—“so as to be clean and fragrant”—and interpreted the prostration as a form of “praying to God.” This meaning-making indicates that the introduction of prayer movements did not stop at the motor aspect but reached the dimension of values and morals. A summary of the child interview is presented in Table 4.

In general, the observed stages of the prayer-movement introduction method can be described as follows. First, the preparation stage, in which the teacher settles the children and instills an understanding of the importance of personal cleanliness before worship. Second, the demonstration stage, in which the teacher performs the prayer movements in sequence and slowly so they are easy to follow. Third, the imitation stage, in which the children imitate the movements together under the teacher’s guidance. Fourth, the habituation stage, in which the activity is repeated routinely and reinforced through parental support at home. These four stages proceed cyclically and reinforce one another.

Table 4. Results of the Simple Interview with the Child

No	Question	Child’s Answer
1	How do you feel when you move as in prayer?	Happy
2	Why must you be clean before performing prayer movements?	So as to be clean and fragrant
3	What did you learn from the prostration movement?	Praying to God
4	Can you imitate the prayer movements on your own?	Partly
5	Do you like following the teacher’s rules?	Yes

Source: Field interview results (2026)

This finding is consistent with Albert Bandura’s social learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of observation, imitation, and modeling in behavior formation. Bandura states that individuals tend to imitate behavior they observe in others, especially when that behavior receives reinforcement or recognition [3]. In the context of introducing prayer movements, the teacher acts as the model imitated by the child, so that the teacher’s exemplary conduct becomes a key factor of success.

The cyclical stages of the prayer-movement introduction method are illustrated in Figure 3.

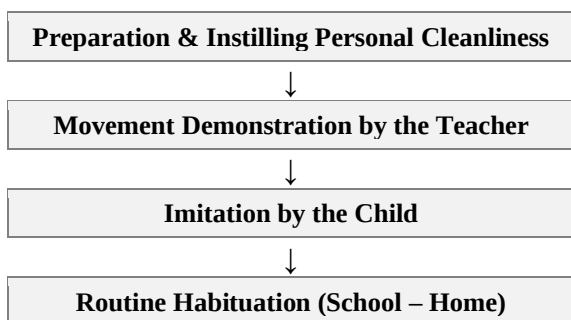


Figure 3. Cycle of the Prayer-Movement Introduction Method

Source: Developed by the authors from observation and interview data (2026)

Development of the Child's Religious and Moral Values

The recapitulation of observation scores for the focal child showed an average method quality (Part A) of 3.14 out of 4 and an average child development (Part B) of 2.50 out of 4. Based on the computation of these two components, the child's overall achievement reached 71%, categorized as Developing as Expected (BSH). Score details are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Recapitulation of Observation Scores for the Focal Child

Assessment Component	Score	Maximum Score
Average Method Quality (Part A)	3.14	4.00
Average Child Development (Part B)	2.50	4.00
Overall Achievement	71%	100%
Achievement Category	Developing as Expected (BSH)	

Source: Automatic score recapitulation of the observation sheet (2026)

A comparison of the Part A and Part B scores is shown in Figure 4. The higher method-quality score (3.14) relative to the child-development score (2.50) is depicted on a 0–4 scale.

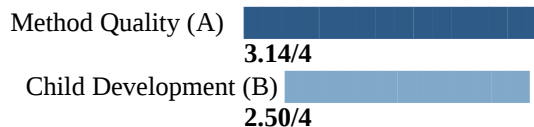


Figure 4. Comparison of Part A and Part B Scores

Source: Developed by the authors from observation data (2026)

The BSH achievement indicates that the child was able to imitate most prayer movements independently and began to grasp the values they contain, although she still required ongoing guidance and reinforcement. The higher method-quality score (3.14) compared with the child-development score (2.50) suggests that the introduction method was well designed, but that internalization in the child requires more time and more intensive habituation.

Challenges and Supporting Factors

Based on interviews with the teacher, two main challenges arose in implementing the prayer-movement introduction: children's easily distracted concentration and limited activity time. Even so, the teacher considered that the activity produced a clearly visible positive change in the children's behavior. Field notes recorded that the child became more orderly and focused in learning the prayer movements.

On the family side, the parent interview revealed active support in guiding the child's worship habituation at home. The parents hoped the child would become diligent in worship and respectful toward both parents and elders. This family support is an important contributing factor that strengthens the continuity of habituation between school and home. A summary of the challenges and supporting factors is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Challenges and Supporting Factors in Implementation

Aspect	Challenge	Supporting Factor
Learning Process	Children's concentration easily distracted	Teacher modeling & demonstration

Time	Limited activity time	Scheduled routine habituation
Family	Need for home-school continuity	Parents actively guiding
Behavioral Impact	Value internalization needs time	Clearly visible positive change

Source: Teacher and parent interview results (2026)

The finding regarding the importance of home-school continuity is reinforced by the teacher's notes, which emphasized the need for continuous learning between home and school. This aligns with the constructivist theory of Piaget and Vygotsky, which stresses the importance of a supportive environment and active participation in the learning process [4]. Children build their understanding of values and morals through consistent social interaction, with both teachers and parents.

An interesting reflective note emerged from the field observation: children become more focused in learning prayer movements when taken to the mosque, because they experience an authentic atmosphere of worship. This finding implies that contextual worship experience in a real setting can strengthen children's motivation and reverence, while affirming that the learning of religious values cannot be confined to the classroom alone.

Discussion

Overall, the findings of this study confirm that introducing prayer movements through demonstration, imitation, and habituation is an effective strategy for developing young children's religious and moral values. This effectiveness aligns with the provisions of Permendikbud Number 137 of 2014, which place the ability to perform worship and maintain personal cleanliness as indicators of religious and moral development [1].

The results are also consistent with prior findings showing that structured, value-based Islamic education can drive positive

behavioral change [2]. In the early childhood context, this structure is realized through teacher modeling (per Bandura's theory [3]) and consistent social-environment support (per constructivist theory [4]). The success of introducing prayer movements is therefore inseparable from the synergy of learning method, educator modeling, and family support.

A practical implication of these findings is that ECE institutions need to design worship-introduction programs oriented not only toward mastering movements but also toward providing contextual and meaningful worship experiences, and toward forging close partnerships with parents to ensure continuity of habituation.

When linked to prior findings, the results of this study both reinforce and broaden the existing body of knowledge. The Developing as Expected (BSH) category obtained by the focal child is consistent with the reports of Masturoh and Abdillah (2024) and Aprillia et al. that scheduled worship habituation drives the development of religious and moral values in a positive direction [5], [6]. However, unlike most studies that highlight congregational dhuha prayer, this study affirms that the prayer movements themselves—when introduced through gradual demonstration and imitation as emphasized by Kinanti—are sufficient to become a medium of value internalization at ages 5–6 [7].

The dominant role of teacher modeling in these findings aligns with the conclusions of Ritonga et al. (2024) and Rahmatullah et al. that the quality of the behavioral model determines the quality of the behavior imitated by the child [10], [12]. Meanwhile, the contribution of parental guidance at home confirms the findings of Ruswandi et al. on the significance of family modeling in worship habituation [11]. The gap between the method-quality score (3.14) and the child-development score (2.50) can be read through the contextual learning-innovation framework proposed by Iswantiningtyas et

al. and Hamdi: value internalization will proceed faster when conventional methods are enriched with meaningful experience and media relevant to the child's world [13], [14]. The findings of Meilasari and Ichsan, who position habituation, modeling, and storytelling as the principal methods, further support the recommendation to diversify methods in this study [9].

More broadly, the difference between the method-quality score (3.14) and the child-development score (2.50) can be interpreted as the distance between the quality of learning design and the level of internalization within the child. From a constructivist perspective, this gap is reasonable because the formation of understanding and attitudes requires time, repetition, and continuous social interaction [4]. The BSH achievement in a single observation cycle is therefore a positive result that indicates a promising developmental trajectory.

The finding regarding the importance of teacher modeling also has implications for the development of ECE educators' competence. Consistent with social learning theory, the quality of the model observed by the child determines the quality of the behavior imitated [3]. Improving teachers' skills in demonstrating prayer movements correctly, patiently, and enjoyably is thus an indispensable need in efforts to develop children's religious and moral values.

Finally, the reflective note on the children's enthusiasm when taken to the mosque affirms the affective and spiritual dimension of worship learning. The experience of being in an actual place of worship provides multisensory stimulation and a sacred atmosphere difficult to replicate in the classroom. This opens opportunities for developing experiential learning models that integrate mosque visits as part of the worship-introduction curriculum in ECE institutions.

Theoretical Implications and Novelty Contribution

Theoretically, this study offers three contributions. First, it strengthens the applicability of Bandura's social learning theory in the domain of young children's worship education by showing that the modeling and imitation of models (teachers and parents) is the core mechanism of success in introducing prayer movements [3], [10], [11]. Second, it affirms the relevance of Piaget's and Vygotsky's constructivism in understanding the gap between the quality of method design and the level of value internalization in children, which demands repetition and continuous social interaction [4], [13]. Third, this study contributes a dual-analysis model—assessing method quality (Part A) and child developmental achievement (Part B) simultaneously—that can be replicated in other ECE contexts.

Practically, these findings suggest that worship introduction in ECE should not stop at mastering the sequence of movements, but should be enriched through contextual worship experiences, relevant media, and close partnership with families [9], [14]. A summary of these contributions is presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Synthesis of the Study's Theoretical and Practical Contributions

Dimension	Contribution	Supporting References
Theoretical	Affirming social learning theory in ECE worship education	[3], [10], [11]
Theoretical	Explaining the method–internalization gap via constructivism	[4], [13]
Methodological	Dual-analysis model of method quality & child achievement	This study
Practical	Strengthening	[9], [14]

	contextual worship experience & innovative media	
Practical	School-home synergy in worship habituation	[6], [11]

Source: Developed by the authors (2026)

Conclusion

This study concludes that the prayer-movement introduction method at TK Nusa Indah II, Ampelu Village, Muara Tembesi District, Batang Hari Regency, was implemented through demonstration, imitation, and habituation, and proved effective in developing young children's religious and moral values. The focal child's developmental achievement fell within the Developing as Expected (BSH) category at 71%, supported by a method-quality score of 3.14/4 and a child-development score of 2.50/4. The main challenges were children's easily distracted concentration and limited activity time, while the principal supporting factors were teacher modeling and active parental guidance at home. Contextual worship experiences, such as being taken to the mosque, proved to strengthen children's focus and the meaningfulness of their learning. Accordingly, ECE institutions are advised to strengthen the continuity of habituation between school and home, integrate authentic worship experiences, and optimize the allocation of activity time. Further research is recommended to examine the effectiveness of this method in larger populations, over longer observation periods, and through longitudinal designs to measure the long-term sustainability of children's religious and moral development as well as the formation of religious character.

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