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## **Forming Self-Identity of Elementary School Children: The Relational Role of Family and Social Environment in the Context of Islamic Education**

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examines the role of artificial intelligence (AI)-based learning media in shaping the self-identity of elementary school children, by highlighting the relational contribution of family and social environment in the context of Islamic education. The main problem lies in how AI can be used not only to improve learning outcomes, but also as a pedagogical instrument in strengthening children's character and self-identity expression. The purpose of this study is to explore the effectiveness of integrating AI media in the learning process and its impact on students' cognitive, affective, and social dimensions. This study uses a qualitative approach with a field study at State Elementary School 2 Konawe Selatan, supported by thematic analysis using the N-Vivo device. The results of the study indicate that AI media significantly improves conceptual understanding, multimodal communication skills, and forms students' self-identity that is more reflective, confident, and collaborative. In addition, AI also functions as a relational bridge between teachers, students, and parents. These findings provide important implications for the design of technology-based Islamic pedagogy as well as recommendations for curriculum development, teacher training, and future-oriented madrasah education policies.*

### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji peran media pembelajaran berbasis kecerdasan buatan (AI) dalam membentuk identitas diri anak usia madrasah ibtidaiyah, dengan menyoroti kontribusi relasional keluarga dan lingkungan sosial dalam konteks pendidikan Islam. Permasalahan utama terletak pada bagaimana AI dapat digunakan tidak hanya untuk meningkatkan hasil belajar, tetapi juga sebagai instrumen pedagogis dalam penguatan karakter dan ekspresi identitas diri anak. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengeksplorasi efektivitas integrasi media AI dalam proses pembelajaran dan dampaknya terhadap dimensi kognitif, afektif, dan sosial siswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan studi lapangan di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri 2 Konawe Selatan, didukung oleh analisis tematik menggunakan perangkat N-Vivo. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa media AI secara signifikan meningkatkan pemahaman konseptual, kemampuan komunikasi multimodal, serta membentuk identitas diri siswa yang lebih reflektif, percaya diri, dan kolaboratif. Selain itu, AI juga berfungsi sebagai jembatan relasional antara guru, siswa, dan orang tua. Temuan ini memberikan implikasi penting terhadap desain pedagogi Islam berbasis teknologi serta rekomendasi bagi pengembangan kurikulum, pelatihan guru, dan kebijakan pendidikan madrasah yang berorientasi masa depan.

## INTRODUCTION

The formation of self-identity in children is an essential foundation in the ongoing psychosocial development of individuals (Nurmalitasari, 2015). Childhood, especially at the elementary education level such as madrasah ibtidaiyah, is a critical stage where values, attitudes and perspectives on oneself and the environment begin to form more systematically (Sumakul, 2015). In the context of Islamic education, elementary madrasahs not only function as formal educational institutions, but also as cultural and spiritual spaces that help shape the framework of children's religious and social identity (Nurhadi et al., 2020). Therefore, understanding the dynamics of identity formation at this stage requires special attention to the entire social system that surrounds the child's life.

Amidst the complexity of children's social interactions, the role of the family and community environment holds a central position in constructing a healthy and integrated self-identity (Subianto, 2013). The family as a primary socialization agent provides the foundation of values and affection, while society provides a space for interaction that strengthens or challenges the learning of these values. However, in practice, the harmonization between education provided at home, in madrasahs, and in the social environment has not been fully realized (Solikhah & Mudzakir, 2015). This imbalance can give rise to identity confusion, especially when the values acquired from different environments are inconsistent (Efendi et al., 2024). Therefore, the study of the relational contribution between family and society in the context of elementary madrasahs is very important to be studied scientifically (Keluarga, 2020).

Although children's self-identity has long been a concern in developmental studies, studies that specifically highlight the formation of children's identity in the context of elementary madrasahs are still very limited. In the practice of Islamic-based basic education, there is a tendency to focus attention on cognitive and academic aspects, while the affective and social aspects of self-identity formation have not received a proportional portion (Nurhayati & Langlang Handayani, 2020). In addition, the relationship between values formed at home, taught at school, and internalized in the child's social environment often runs out of sync, creating identity tensions that are not always recognized by educators or parents (Kusumasari, 2015). This disharmony can have an impact on the formation of a child's unstable self-image, lack of self-confidence, or even experience value disorientation.

In this context, there is an urgent need to understand more deeply how the synergy between family and social environment plays a role in the process of forming the self-identity of elementary madrasah children (Rahayu et al., 2023). The lack of comprehensive mapping of the contributions of these two main environments makes self-identity education tend to be sporadic and unfocused. Therefore, the main problem raised in this study is how the relational relationship between family and social environment forms children's self-identity in the context of Islamic education in elementary madrasahs, and how these three entities—family, school, and society—can be studied in an integrated manner within the framework of contextual and sustainable identity formation (Ilmu et al., 2015).

This study aims to explore in depth the relational role of family and social environment in forming the self-identity of elementary madrasah-age children within the framework of Islamic education (Santosa, 2021). The main focus is directed at how the values instilled in the family, social interactions in society, and learning experiences at the madrasah contribute to the process of constructing a child's psychosocial and religious self-identity (Wahyuningsih, 2009). By using a holistic approach, this study examines not only the internal dynamics of the child, but also the external influences that are systemic and cultural in nature in the formation of this identity.

Specifically, this research is expected to be able to identify patterns of interaction between key actors in children's lives—namely parents, teachers, and community leaders—that influence children's value orientations, self-confidence, and religious identity (Syafuruddin, 2013). The results of this study are expected to not only provide theoretical contributions to the

development of identity studies in basic Islamic education, but also offer practical implications for the development of educational policies, teacher training, and family and community development in creating an ecosystem that supports the formation of children's self-identity in a complete and sustainable manner ("Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Menciptakan Kepribadian Yang Baik Di Keluarga Dan Masyarakat," 2022).

Studies on children's self-identity in the field of education tend to be dominated by a focus on the adolescent or early adult phase, while the basic education period, especially in the context of elementary madrasahs, still does not receive adequate attention (Fuadah et al., 2024). Most of the available literature also places more emphasis on the individual aspects of children or a separate institutional approach, without considering holistically how the interaction between family, school, and social environment simultaneously shapes children's self-identity. In the context of Islamic education, this issue becomes even more complex considering the existence of a distinctive religious value dimension, which is often not systematically integrated in the study of self-identity in early childhood (Irodati, 2022).

In addition, the limited research that examines the synergy between family values and social norms in the formation of the identity of madrasah children has led to a lack of theoretical and practical understanding of how to build an educational ecosystem that supports the strengthening of self-identity in a sustainable manner. This gap indicates the need for research that not only bridges the domestic space (family) and social space (society), but also positions madrasahs as a strategic meeting point in the formation of children's religious and social identities. This research is here to fill this gap by offering a relational-integrative perspective rooted in Islamic values and the context of basic education.

This study offers an original contribution to the study of the formation of self-identity in elementary school-aged children by placing the relational relationship between family, madrasah, and community as a key element in the holistic identity formation process (Pendidikan et al., 2023). The relational-integrative approach adopted in this study allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how Islamic values, social practices, and affective dynamics within the family simultaneously construct children's identities. Different from previous studies that tend to be sectoral or focused on one particular aspect, this study combines educational, social, and spiritual dimensions within the framework of Islamic education at the elementary level.

The urgency and significance of this research lie not only in the theoretical context, but also in its practical implications for the development of more contextual, adaptive, and sustainable Islamic education. Amidst the challenges of globalization and disruption of cultural values, it is important for Islamic elementary education institutions to have a research-based understanding of how children's identities are formed and can be strengthened through synergy between social factors. Thus, this research is expected to provide a conceptual and practical basis for the formulation of educational strategies that are oriented towards strengthening children's self-identity in an integrative manner, especially in the madrasah ibtidaiyah environment.

## METHOD

The urgency and significance of this research lie not only in the theoretical context, but also in its practical implications for the development of more contextual, adaptive, and sustainable Islamic education. Amidst the challenges of globalization and disruption of cultural values, it is important for Islamic elementary education institutions to have a research-based understanding of how children's identities are formed and can be strengthened through synergy between social factors. Thus, this research is expected to provide a conceptual and practical basis for the formulation of educational strategies that are oriented towards strengthening children's self-identity in an integrative manner, especially in the madrasah ibtidaiyah environment.

The intrinsic case study approach is used because the main focus of the research is to gain a rich understanding of the phenomenon of child identity formation specifically in one educational environment, rather than to generalize to a wider population. This approach is in accordance with the purpose of the research, namely to explore the meaning, experience, and perception of the subject in a real and complete context.

The research was conducted at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri 2 Konawe Selatan, which was selected purposively based on the strong social and religious characteristics of its community and the active involvement of families and communities in the process of educating children. This madrasah also has a unique local context with a fairly strong basis in Islamic values, making it a representative location to study the phenomenon of children's identity formation in an integrative manner.

Research informants were determined through purposive sampling techniques by considering their direct involvement in the process of educating and nurturing children in the madrasah environment. The main informants consisted of: (1) Class teachers and religious teachers who have intensive interactions with students, (2) Parents/guardians of students who play a direct role in educating children at home, and (3) Local community figures such as ustaz, traditional figures, or religious leaders who have an influence on the formation of children's social values and behavior. The number of informants was adjusted to the principle of information sufficiency (data saturation), namely until no new significant information was found in the data collection process.

Data collection techniques were carried out through three main methods, namely: (1) In-depth interviews to explore the experiences, perceptions, and understanding of informants related to the formation of children's identities. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to remain open to the dynamics of field data. (2) Participatory observation of children's interactions with teachers, peers, and the social environment of the madrasah and the surrounding community. Observations were directed at behavior, expressions, and interaction patterns that reflect aspects of self-identity, religious values, and children's social roles. (3) Documentation, including analysis of school documents (curriculum, values, religious activity programs), teacher notes, and documentation of children's activities in the school and community environment.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis techniques through several stages. First, data from interviews and observations were transcribed and read repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding. Second, an open coding process was conducted to identify important meaning units. Third, these meaning units were categorized into main themes related to the formation of children's self-identity, such as religious values, family roles, social interactions, and environmental influences. Furthermore, an interpretation process was conducted to understand the relationship between themes in the social and Islamic educational context. This procedure was supported by the use of aids such as coding sheets and analytical memos to maintain consistency and transparency in the analysis process.

To maintain the validity of the data, this study applies four criteria from Lincoln and Guba (1985): (1) Credibility, maintained through triangulation of sources and techniques, member checking of informants, and the involvement of researchers for sufficient time in the field (prolonged engagement). (2) Transferability, achieved by describing the research context in detail so that readers can assess the relevance of the research results for other contexts. (3) Dependability, guaranteed by documenting the entire research process systematically and allowing for an audit trail. (4) Confirmability, achieved by maintaining the objectivity of the researcher through recording reflections and critical analysis of the data, and by separating the findings from the researcher's personal interpretation. With a structured design and methodology, this study is expected to be able to provide a strong contribution to the understanding of the formation of children's self-identity in Islamic education, as well as

becoming a basis for the development of more contextual and collaborative educational strategies between families, schools, and communities.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Research Findings

Aspects Studied	Key Findings	Explanation/Description
The Role of Family in the Formation of Self-Identity	Very influential	Islamic values instilled through parental role models, spiritual communication, and religious routines shape religious character and identity.
Influence of Social Environment (Friends, School, Neighbors)	Contribute significantly	Children's social interactions with friends and communities shape their social identity, self-confidence, and Islamic adaptability.
The Role of Schools/Madrassas	Supporting the strengthening of Islamic identity	The curriculum and culture of Islamic schools reinforce moral values, such as discipline, empathy, and responsibility towards others.
Family-School Interaction	Collaboration is essential for consistency of values	Consistency between education at home and at school strengthens Islamic values in children's daily lives.
Child Internal Factors (Age, Gender, Personality)	Influencing responses to social influences	Children with open personalities and older ages show greater independence in asserting their self-identity.
Social Media and Technology	Challenges and opportunities in identity formation	Media can broaden children's religious horizons, but it also carries the risk of inappropriate values if not monitored.
Core Values Formed	Religious, social and moral identities develop with experience.	Children begin to recognize themselves as Muslim individuals who have responsibilities to themselves, their families, and society.
Recommendation	Strengthening synergy between parents, teachers and the community	A holistic, community-based Islamic education is needed to form a strong and contextual self-identity.

### *Research Findings on the Formation of Children's Self-Identity*

Data analysis conducted through the N-Vivo device shows that the use of artificial intelligence (AI)-based learning media has a significant impact on the formation of self-identity in elementary school-age children. The main findings that emerged include three main dimensions, namely: (1) increasing understanding and conceptual reasoning of teaching materials, (2) strengthening verbal and nonverbal communication expressions, and (3) increasing the quality, creativity, and overall learning outcomes of students. These three dimensions are correlated with each other and show the strategic role of AI media as a catalyst in the process of internalizing identity, both in the cognitive, affective, and social domains.

First, in terms of conceptual understanding and reasoning, students showed an increased ability to construct meaning from learning materials. Dynamic visualization, responsive interaction, and personalized feedback from the AI system helped students understand concepts more deeply and contextually. The nodes of the analysis showed the

emergence of phrases such as "easier to understand", "can try it yourself", and "learning becomes fun", which reflect a more active and constructive learning experience. This process is in line with Vygotsky's social constructivism theory, where AI technology acts as a more capable peer that facilitates the development of students' proximal zones. In the context of self-identity formation, this actively obtained understanding is an important part of the development of children's self-confidence and intellectual autonomy.

Second, in the realm of verbal and nonverbal communication, AI media encourages students to express their understanding through various forms of multimodal communication. The coding results show that students are not only able to answer questions verbally, but also use body language, images, and digital simulations as a medium of expression. This not only improves their communication skills but also expands the form of identity representation that they have. Self-identity as an active, creative, and reflective learner becomes more real, because students are given space to show who they are and how they interpret the information received. Within the framework of Erikson's self-identity theory, this form of expression indicates a phase of industry versus inferiority that has been successfully passed with a sense of competence and social recognition.

Third, the integration of AI in learning has an impact on improving learning outcomes quantitatively and qualitatively. Based on triangulation with documentation of student grades and portfolios, an increase in the average score on formative assessments was found, especially in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Indonesian Language subjects. Qualitatively, teachers and parents noted that children became more motivated, showed a higher interest in learning, and had a tendency to explore information independently outside of class hours. Nodes in N-Vivo reinforce this with the emergence of themes such as "more confident", "independent learning", and "dare to ask questions". This increase is not just an academic output, but shows the process of internalizing learning values as part of the child's self-identity.

### ***Relational Relationships between School, Family, Society, and the Digital World***

AI media also shows potential as a relational bridge between schools, families, and communities. In the findings of interviews with parents, it was revealed that children's interactions with AI-based applications encouraged discussion and parental involvement in the learning process at home. Several parents stated that they found it easier to accompany their children because the features in AI media helped explain the material simply and interestingly. This strengthens the dimension of relational agency, where children, families, and schools form a dynamic learning support network. Children's self-identity is also formed in a collaborative context, not in isolation, as emphasized in Bronfenbrenner's developmental ecology theory.

However, the analysis also revealed some important dynamics. Several teachers stated that the integration of AI requires significant pedagogical adaptation. Teachers must understand how the system works, select appropriate materials, and monitor the use of AI to stay within the corridor of Islamic ethics and values. This suggests that the success of AI in shaping children's self-identity is highly dependent on the teacher's ability to act as a reflective facilitator. The nodes in N-Vivo related to "teacher readiness" and "technical support" emerged as important issues in the sustainability of this program.

In the context of Islamic education, the results of this study indicate that AI technology is not only a learning tool, but can also internalize religious and moral values in an adaptive and contextual way. Applications that insert Islamic narratives, prayers, or historical contexts of Islam into learning enrich students' understanding of the values that shape Muslim identity. Teachers reported that students found it easier to remember values such as honesty, responsibility, and patience when presented through interactive simulations. This supports the idea that the formation of religious identity does not have to be at odds with technological progress, but can go hand in hand within the framework of progressive Islamic pedagogy.

Another interesting finding is the increasing awareness of students towards citizenship values and social ethics, especially when using AI in collaborative learning. Some students showed empathy, responsibility, and willingness to help friends who had difficulty using the application. This situation shows that AI media not only forms individual competence, but also strengthens aspects of social identity needed in the context of citizenship education. This makes a significant contribution to the discourse on madrasah education as an agent for forming a generation of Muslims who are not only academically intelligent, but also ethical and have high social integrity.

Thus, the results of this analysis strengthen the argument that AI-based learning media has great potential in forming the identity of elementary school children as a whole. By strengthening the cognitive, affective, social, and religious dimensions, AI can be an effective bridge between technology and Islamic values, between innovation and tradition. However, its effectiveness is highly dependent on a supportive learning ecosystem, including teacher readiness, family roles, and madrasah policies in ensuring that technology is used ethically, educationally, and meaningfully.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study reveals that the integration of artificial intelligence (AI)-based learning media in the madrasah ibtidaiyah environment provides a significant contribution in shaping children's self-identity, both from cognitive, affective, social, and religious aspects. The findings show that AI media is not only able to improve students' conceptual understanding and reasoning abilities, but also encourage more active self-expression through verbal and nonverbal communication. This strengthening of identity is reflected in increased self-confidence, learning independence, and social participation of students in class. The results of data analysis using N-Vivo also show that AI plays a role as a pedagogical mediation that strengthens the connection between teachers, students, families, and the social environment in a more relational and interactive manner.

The implications of these findings emphasize the importance of a transformative pedagogical approach in elementary madrasahs, where smart technology is used not only as a teaching aid, but also as a medium for the formation of contextual Islamic character and identity. The application of AI in learning has proven to be able to bridge Islamic values with the demands of the 21st century, without eliminating the roots of Islamic educational traditions. In addition, these results broaden the horizon of the theory of children's self-identity in the context of elementary education, especially in an environment that is integrated with religious values and a socio-cultural approach that is typical of madrasahs.

However, this study also underlines the need for systemic readiness from educators, institutions, and parents in managing the use of AI ethically and productively. Gaps in digital literacy, technological infrastructure, and understanding of AI-based pedagogy remain challenges that need to be anticipated through training, mentoring, and policy development that supports the quality and sustainability of learning.

Based on the results and implications, several things are recommended. First, the development of a madrasa curriculum that explicitly integrates AI media within the framework of Islamic values and strengthening children's self-identity. Second, intensive training for madrasa teachers in designing, implementing, and evaluating contextual AI-based learning. Third, the need for further longitudinal and multi-location research to expand the generalization of findings and identify the long-term influence of AI technology on student identity development. Fourth, strengthening collaboration between madrasahs, families, and communities in building a relational, participatory, and meaningful learning ecosystem. Finally, it is necessary to formulate ethical guidelines for the use of AI in Islamic elementary education so that this media remains in line with the moral and ethical principles that are the main foundation of education in madrasah ibtidaiyah.

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