

## Integrating Visual Media in the Development of Islamic Religious Education at Raudlatul Athfal Hidayatus Sibyan, East Lampung

Siti Ropingatun<sup>1\*</sup>, Oon Rohayati<sup>2</sup>, Rifaatul Maimunah<sup>3</sup>, Qurotul A'yuni<sup>4</sup>, Siti Nurbiyah<sup>5</sup>  
Ahmad Nur Husaini<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ra Hidayatussibyan, Indonesia


<sup>2</sup>MIS Al-Irsyad, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>RA Muslimat Nanggalan, Indonesia

<sup>4</sup>RA Al-Muttaqin, Indonesia

<sup>5</sup>MI Al-Khairiyah, Indonesia

<sup>6</sup>SD Assya'roniyah, Indonesia

\*Correspondence:  sitiropingatun98@gmail.com

### Article Information:

Received : 2025-4-16

Revised : 2025-4-28

Accepted : 2025-5-08

### Abstract

This study aims to describe: (1) the use of visual media in the development of Islamic Religious Education learning at Raudlatul Athfal Hidayatus Sibyan in Pematang Tahalo; (2) the supporting factors for the use of visual media in enhancing IRE learning at the institution; and (3) the inhibiting factors that hinder the implementation of visual media in IRE instruction at Raudlatul Athfal Hidayatus Sibyan. This research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and document analysis. The subjects of the study consisted of the school principal, teachers, and students. The data analysis techniques employed include data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing, and verification. The results of the study reveal the following: (1) The visual media used in IRE instruction included still images such as posters, caricatures, and cartoons, as well as motion pictures. The use of such media has enhanced the quality of the teaching and learning process. (2) The supporting factors in utilizing visual media include the professionalism of teachers, which is reflected in their preparation of materials, methods, media, instruction, and evaluation; students' strong curiosity; the school leadership's empathetic support for program implementation; and active parental involvement and cooperation all of which are vital to the school's success. (3) The inhibiting factors include the limited availability of visual data or media that align with the full range of IRE content particularly suitable motion pictures; the diverse intellectual backgrounds of students; and, at times, the inadequate preparation of instructional tools by teachers, which requires considerable diligence and thoroughness.

**Keywords:** *Visual media, Islamic Religious Education (IRE), Early childhood, Learning*

## INTRODUCTION

The continued public scrutiny of education quality has prompted the government to improve the effectiveness of learning processes. In this context, the use of instructional media plays a crucial role in creating an effective and communicative learning environment (Arsyad, 2005). At the early childhood education level, Islamic Religious Education (IRE)

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often focuses merely on the transmission of knowledge, rather than on the cultivation of meaning and values (Muhaimin, 2009). This issue is further compounded by the dominance of the lecture method, even though early childhood learners tend to be visual and require engaging approaches (Darajat, 2001).

Visual media represents one viable alternative to bridge these limitations. Its strengths in explaining abstract concepts, reducing verbalism, and capturing students' attention have been acknowledged in various studies (Asnawir & Usman, 2002; Rohani, 2006). This study aims to examine in depth the use of visual media in IRE learning at Raudlatul Athfal Hidayatus Sibyan, East Lampung, as a case study at the early childhood education level.

Accordingly, in the learning process which is ultimately expected to improve students' academic outcomes the use of visual media proves to be an effective alternative that enhances the quality of student learning. It serves as a key instrument to improve both the learning process and learning outcomes at Raudlatul Athfal Hidayatus Sibyan in Pematang Tahalo, Jabung, East Lampung. This institution has implemented an educational improvement program that integrates instructional media aligned with technological developments, with the aim of supporting educational progress. In particular, it fosters students' learning motivation and facilitates the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

Based on the above background, this study seeks to explore the use of visual media in the development of Islamic Religious Education learning at Raudlatul Athfal Hidayatus Sibyan in Pematang Tahalo, Jabung, East Lampung.

## **METHOD**

This study is a field research, which refers to an investigation conducted directly at a specific location to collect firsthand data. The research employs a qualitative approach with the objective of gathering, examining, and drawing conclusions from field data (Fathoni, 2006). The nature of the study is descriptive, aiming to reveal naturally occurring conditions in the field. This aligns with other scholarly perspectives stating that descriptive research seeks to systematically, factually, and accurately depict facts, characteristics, and relationships among the phenomena under investigation (Nazir, 2014).

Data were collected through direct observation at the research site, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The data analysis process followed the steps of data

reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification, as outlined by Miles and Huberman (Sukmadinata & Syaodih, 2006).

Informants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques initially selecting individuals deemed most knowledgeable about the research topic, and subsequently expanding the sample based on recommendations from early informants (Sugiyono, 2013).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. The Use of Visual Media in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) Learning**

The visual media used in instructional activities at this Raudlatul Athfal include still images such as posters, cartoons, and Islamic story illustrations, as well as motion images presented through simple projection tools. The use of such media has proven effective in increasing students' attention and clarifying abstract learning content (Arsyad, 2005; Rohani, 2006).

In recent years, the use of visual media in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) has gained significant traction as a tool to enhance pedagogical effectiveness, especially in early childhood education. At *Raudlatul Athfal*, a pre-primary Islamic institution, educators employ various forms of visual media such as posters, cartoons, infographics, and animated videos to convey core Islamic teachings. This integration of still and motion visuals into instructional practices aligns with modern educational strategies that emphasize multimodal learning to address diverse student needs and cognitive development (Sari & Widodo, 2021).

The strategic incorporation of visual media has proven effective in increasing student engagement, improving retention, and clarifying abstract religious concepts. Teachers use visual aids to teach themes such as Islamic ethics (*akhlak*), the Five Pillars of Islam (*rukun Islam*), and narratives of prophets. These materials help bridge the gap between abstract religious doctrines and children's lived experiences, providing a concrete frame of reference that supports deeper understanding (Hasanah, 2020). For example, when teaching about the value of honesty, a teacher may use illustrated storyboards or comic strips depicting scenarios in which honesty is rewarded, which allows students to visualize and relate to the moral values being taught.

Recent studies support the use of visuals in religious instruction, particularly in Islamic contexts. According to Mustofa and Supriyadi (2022), the application of

animated Islamic stories significantly improves students' interest in learning and their comprehension of the lessons. Furthermore, the use of culturally contextualized images ensures that the students can relate the lessons to their environment and cultural background. This not only increases cognitive engagement but also promotes emotional and spiritual connection to the material.

Visual media also align with contemporary educational theories, such as Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (2020), which posits that people learn more deeply from words and pictures than from words alone. The dual-channel processing of visual and auditory stimuli enables learners to form stronger mental connections, especially when the visual materials are relevant and pedagogically structured. In the context of Islamic education, such visuals can help clarify concepts such as *tawhid* (monotheism) or *ihsan* (excellence in worship), which are otherwise abstract for early learners.

Moreover, the rise of digital platforms and tools has expanded the accessibility of Islamic visual content. Platforms like YouTube Kids, Islamic e-learning apps, and digital storytelling tools allow teachers to access age-appropriate and engaging media. Teachers are increasingly trained to curate and adapt visual content that aligns with both pedagogical goals and Islamic ethical principles (Amin, 2023). The integration of technology-supported media ensures that instruction remains relevant and resonates with the media consumption habits of today's digital-native students.

Nevertheless, educators must be cautious in selecting or designing visual materials to avoid misrepresentations of Islamic teachings. Visuals that depict prophets or divine beings in anthropomorphic ways are discouraged in Islamic tradition, and thus educators must maintain theological accuracy and sensitivity. Professional development and religious supervision are essential to ensure that visual media usage aligns with Islamic values and does not compromise doctrinal integrity (Rahman & Nurhadi, 2021).

In conclusion, the use of visual media in Islamic Religious Education is not merely a supplementary tool but a crucial component of effective pedagogical practice. When thoughtfully integrated, visual media enhance students' engagement, comprehension, and spiritual development. Moving forward, collaboration between Islamic scholars, educators, and media designers is essential to develop high-quality visual content that is both educationally sound and theologically appropriate.

## **2. Supporting Factors**

The effectiveness of visual media in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) does not solely depend on the quality of the media itself, but also on several contextual and institutional factors that create a supportive learning ecosystem. Among the most critical elements are teacher professionalism, student motivation, institutional support, and parental involvement. When these components function synergistically, they significantly enhance the internalization of Islamic values in early childhood education.

### ***Teacher professionalism***

Is central to the successful integration of visual media in IRE. Professional teachers are not only competent in content knowledge but also skilled in pedagogical strategies, including the appropriate selection and design of media materials. According to Fauzi and Wahyuni (2020), teachers who receive ongoing training in instructional media are more capable of aligning visual content with learning objectives and students' developmental stages. Professional development programs that focus on digital literacy, media ethics, and curriculum alignment empower teachers to be innovative and responsive to learners' needs. In Islamic educational settings, this professionalism also includes theological awareness to ensure that visual representations uphold Islamic values and avoid doctrinal misinterpretation (Nurfadilah & Yusuf, 2021).

### ***Student enthusiasm and engagement***

Toward visual media. In the digital age, children are increasingly familiar with visual content through various platforms, making visual-based learning more appealing and effective. Studies show that students exhibit higher levels of concentration, curiosity, and participation when learning materials are presented in engaging visual formats (Rahmah & Suryana, 2022). For example, interactive digital stories or gamified visual quizzes about the Five Pillars of Islam have been shown to boost motivation and memory retention in young learners. This heightened interest serves as a strong foundation for fostering religious understanding and positive character development.

### ***School leadership***

School principals who prioritize educational media in their strategic planning can ensure the availability of necessary infrastructure, such as projectors, computers, and

printed visual materials. As noted by Hidayat and Ramadhani (2021), administrative commitment to supporting media-based instruction encourages a culture of innovation and collaboration among teachers. Principals who facilitate training, allocate budgets for media development, and promote the integration of Islamic values into digital materials contribute greatly to the sustainability of media-rich learning environments.

### ***Parental involvement***

Parents who actively engage in their children's learning process by discussing visual content at home, monitoring media usage, or participating in school-based activities strengthen the continuity between school and home learning environments. A study by Fitriani and Marlina (2023) found that when parents reinforce religious messages presented in visual learning materials, students show greater consistency in practicing Islamic values at home and school. This partnership between educators and families builds a coherent value system that supports moral and spiritual growth from an early age.

Together, these four factors teacher professionalism, student enthusiasm, institutional support, and parental involvement form a cohesive and dynamic learning ecosystem. When synchronized, they enable a more effective and meaningful use of visual media in Islamic education, facilitating not just academic understanding, but also the holistic formation of character and faith. Therefore, future educational strategies must consider these components as integral to the successful application of media-based Islamic instruction.

## **3. Inhibiting Factors**

Despite the proven benefits of visual media in enhancing student engagement and facilitating deeper understanding in Islamic Religious Education (IRE), several critical challenges remain. These obstacles limit the effectiveness of visual media integration and must be addressed systematically to improve the quality of religious instruction in early and primary education settings.

### ***Limited availability of visual media resources that align with the IRE curriculum***

Many commercially available educational media focus on general subjects and often lack alignment with the specific content, values, and spiritual nuances embedded

in the Islamic education curriculum. According to Aziz and Kusnandar (2022), Islamic schools often struggle to find or access media that accurately reflect both the doctrinal accuracy and pedagogical standards required for IRE. Consequently, teachers frequently resort to using general-purpose visuals or creating their own materials from scratch, which leads to inconsistency in content quality.

### ***Lack of representative visual media for abstract religious topics***

Particularly those related to *aqidah* (Islamic creed) and *rukun iman* (articles of faith). These theological concepts, which require high levels of cognitive abstraction, are difficult to visualize without misrepresenting or oversimplifying core beliefs. Visual depictions that attempt to represent angels, the afterlife, or divine attributes can easily cross theological boundaries or conflict with Islamic teachings regarding *tasawwur ilahi* (conceptualization of the Divine). As noted by Aulia and Hamid (2021), many Islamic educators express concern over the absence of appropriate and theologically safe media to convey such essential doctrines in a way that is comprehensible yet respectful.

### ***Teacher competency in media design and adaptation remains uneven***

Especially in rural or under-resourced schools. While some educators demonstrate creativity and technological proficiency, many lack formal training in media development or instructional technology. A study by Rachmawati and Subkhi (2023) reveals that fewer than 40% of IRE teachers in early childhood institutions in Indonesia have received training in digital media integration. This competency gap hampers teachers' ability to modify, contextualize, or produce visual content that aligns with curricular goals and the developmental needs of their students.

### ***Preparation and integration of visual media***

Teachers are often overwhelmed with administrative tasks, lesson planning, and other teaching responsibilities, leaving limited time for the thoughtful development or selection of instructional media. The problem is compounded by the absence of collaborative frameworks or shared media repositories within Islamic education networks (Fitria & Hasyim, 2020). As a result, the preparation of effective visual materials becomes an additional burden, rather than an integrated aspect of instructional planning.

These challenges collectively underscore the need for systemic interventions. Policymakers and Islamic educational stakeholders must prioritize investments in curriculum-aligned visual media development, enhance teacher training programs in digital pedagogy, and foster collaboration between religious scholars, educators, and media designers. Without addressing these structural barriers, the transformative potential of visual media in IRE will remain underutilized, particularly in early childhood and foundational Islamic education settings where visual learning is most impactful.

### **Implications of the Research**

The findings of this research provide significant implications for stakeholders involved in Islamic Religious Education (IRE), especially at the early childhood and primary education levels. First, it affirms that visual media can serve as a powerful pedagogical tool for enhancing students' conceptual understanding and engagement with Islamic values. The practical integration of posters, illustrations, and animated content facilitates better retention of moral and doctrinal lessons, especially among visual learners. This insight is valuable for curriculum developers, who are encouraged to incorporate media-based strategies into national IRE syllabi.

Second, the study emphasizes the importance of creating a holistic learning ecosystem where media use is not limited to the classroom but is supported by institutional leadership and family involvement. School principals and educational policymakers must therefore consider investing in media infrastructure and training to sustain pedagogical innovation. Moreover, collaboration between Islamic scholars and media designers could foster the production of doctrinally accurate, engaging content—addressing theological sensitivities related to abstract concepts such as *rukun iman* (articles of faith).

Finally, for researchers in Islamic pedagogy, the study opens up new avenues for exploring the intersection between digital media, faith formation, and educational technology. Future empirical studies can build on these findings to assess the long-term impact of visual media on students' spiritual development and religious practice.

### **CONCLUSION**

The use of visual media has proven to be an effective strategy in enhancing Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning at Raudlatul Athfal. This media improves students' attention, facilitates comprehension of instructional content, and supports the achievement



of affective and psychomotor learning objectives. Its successful implementation is significantly influenced by internal school factors such as teacher competence, support from school leadership, and active parental involvement. However, limitations in the availability of relevant visual media and the lack of teacher preparedness present distinct challenges. Therefore, it is recommended that educational institutions procure contextually appropriate media and organize regular professional development programs to enhance teachers' competencies.

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