

The Use of Macrame as a Medium of Education and Expression with an Islamic Religious Education Nuance in Aek Pancur Village, Tanjung Morawa District

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the use of macrame as an educational and expressive medium with Islamic Religious Education (PAI) nuances in Aek Pancur Village, Tanjung Morawa District. Macrame, as a form of knot-based handicraft art, has great potential to be integrated into the learning of Islamic values, especially in aspects of morality, work ethics, and Islamic aesthetics. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with data collection techniques in the form of observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data are analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The research results show that macrame training activities are an effective means of instilling Islamic values such as patience, precision, gratitude, cooperation, and *itqan al-'amal* (working with the best quality). Furthermore, macrame serves as a medium for Islamic artistic expression through works such as calligraphy ornaments, wall hangings with a monotheistic theme, and Islamic geometric motifs. This training also has a social and economic impact on the community, with the growth of creative skills, increased self-confidence, and opportunities for craft-based small businesses. Challenges that emerged included time constraints, varying participant abilities, and access to raw materials. Overall, macrame proved to be a relevant educational and expressive medium for strengthening Islamic Religious Education (PAI) values in the community.

Keywords: Macrame, Islamic Religious Education, Creativity, Islamic Artistic Expression.

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Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is a process aimed at developing individuals who are devout, have noble character, and are able to implement Islamic teachings in their daily lives. From Al-Attas' perspective (2011), Islamic education is a process of *ta'dīb*, namely the instilling of *adab* (good character) that encompasses the integration of knowledge, good deeds, and morality. Therefore, PAI focuses not only on the transfer of knowledge but also emphasizes the formation of character and constructive life skills. As stipulated in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, education must be able to develop the potential of students to become individuals with noble character, creativity, independence, and responsibility.

In the context of modern social development, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning approaches need to be adaptive, creative, and contextual. This approach aligns with the experiential learning-based educational paradigm, which emphasizes direct participant involvement in real-life activities as a means of internalizing values (Kolb, 2015). One form of creative activity that can be integrated with Islamic Religious Education (PAI) values is macrame, the art of stringing rope using knotting techniques to create artistic and functional products. Macrame is not just a handicraft activity, but also a medium for character development through the practice of perseverance, patience (*ṣabr*), neatness, beauty (*jamāl*), and responsibility, which are part of Islamic moral values (Qardhawi, 1995).

From an Islamic aesthetic perspective, art is a part of human spiritual expression. According to Nasr (1987), artistic practice in Islam is inseparable from the effort to present beauty that reflects the order of God's creation. Art can be a means of preaching and internalizing religious values as long as it does not conflict with sharia principles. Therefore, macramé activities packaged with Islamic nuances—for example, by incorporating simple calligraphy, ethical symbols, or decorative designs with spiritual value—can be an effective educational medium and a space for religious expression for the community.

Aek Pancur Village in Tanjung Morawa District is an area with significant potential for community creativity-based empowerment activities, but it has not yet optimally utilized handicrafts as a medium for religious learning. Based on initial observations, most adolescents in the village are interested in arts and crafts activities, but there are no programs specifically integrating these activities with moral education and Islamic values. However, a study by Ramdhani (2020) shows that creative arts activities can increase learning motivation, strengthen psychomotor skills, and accelerate the internalization of moral values. Meanwhile, research by Yuliana (2022) confirms that learning that combines manual skills with spiritual development has proven effective in developing religious, disciplined, and collaborative character.

The use of macramé as an Islamic education medium in Aek Pancur Village is relevant and warrants further study. This is not only because macramé is a creative activity easily adopted by the village community, but also because it allows for the internalization of Islamic values through hands-on practice (learning by doing). Through macramé activities, participants can learn about Islamic aesthetics, the importance of patience in knotting intricate knots, the importance of precision as part of the Islamic work ethic, and the values of togetherness and mutual assistance during the creation process.

Furthermore, macramé activities can serve as a means of community empowerment, particularly for youth and village women's groups. This aligns with the view of Zakiyah & Darajat (2018) that community-based religious education has significant potential for shaping social and religious character when packaged through productive activities. Furthermore, macramé crafts can have economic value, opening up opportunities for improving the welfare of village communities through an Islamic-inspired creative economy.

Based on this urgency, this study was conducted to comprehensively analyze how macrame is utilized as an educational medium and expression within Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in

Aek Pancur Village. This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of creative learning models in Islamic Religious Education (PAI), as well as practical contributions to the village community in creating productive, religious, and sustainable educational activities.

Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Basis: Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Character Education Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has a dual purpose: transmitting religious knowledge and developing morals/character in accordance with Islamic values. In contemporary Islamic Religious Education literature in Indonesia, character building is described as an important output of the Islamic education process, combining cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects, thus fostering morality and good character in students. Empirical studies on the implementation of character through PAI emphasize the role of the curriculum, project-based learning models, and teachers as role models in instilling religious and social values.

The findings of this study confirm that learning strategies that emphasize active participation, behavioral examples (*uswah*), and practice (*amal*) are more effective than purely textual instruction. Therefore, integrating practical activities (e.g., crafts, community-based projects) into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) can be a promising pathway for internalizing religious values in students' daily lives.

2.2 Skills-Based Learning and Experiential Learning

Skills-based learning and experiential learning emphasize learning through direct experience (learning-by-doing), reflection, and the application of real products. In the context of vocational education and arts and culture (SBdP) subjects, this approach has been reported to increase student motivation, psychomotor skills, and creativity. Studies on the application of project-based learning models and interactive multimedia to craft learning have shown positive results on technical skills and work attitudes. An important implication is that structured craft activities can be designed as learning units that integrate technical competencies and character values.

The connection with Islamic Religious Education (PAI) arises when these skills activities are formulated to also include value objectives (moral/spiritual) so that the technical activities simultaneously become a vehicle for value learning (e.g., patience, precision, cooperation). Contemporary PAI literature confirms the effectiveness of learning approaches that combine technical competencies and religious character formation.

2.3 Macrame as a Learning Medium: Empirical Evidence and Pedagogical Potential

Macrame—the art of weaving knots into decorative or functional products—has received attention as a skills-based learning material in several educational studies in Indonesia. Descriptive and developmental studies indicate that macramé is effective in developing students' creativity, psychomotor skills, and interest in arts and crafts. Several studies have also tested the use of digital learning media (video tutorials, interactive multimedia) to teach macramé techniques, with valid and acceptable results for participants. These findings suggest that macramé is not simply a manual technique but can be positioned as a systematic learning module within a skills curriculum.

From a pedagogical perspective, macramé offers several advantages: (1) the gradual complexity of the technique allows for a multi-level learning cycle; (2) the final product can be linked to the local context (home decorations, bags, hangers), making it culturally and economically relevant; (3) the creation process requires patience and precision, which can easily be integrated into character learning objectives. Studies on media development (multimedia/video) for macramé learning also confirm that media support accelerates technique mastery, although the instructor's role remains crucial for fostering values and aesthetics.

2.4 Art, Islamic Aesthetics, and Religious Expression

The literature on art in the Islamic tradition highlights two important points: art as an aesthetic manifestation that can reflect spiritual values, and art as a legitimate medium for communicating values as long as it does not conflict with sharia principles. Educational studies emphasize that incorporating Islamic aesthetic elements and symbolism into craft products (e.g., geometric motifs, simple calligraphy that adheres to regulations) can transform craftwork into a medium for religious expression and local da'wah (Islamic outreach).

In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), this allows artistic activities to incorporate a spiritual dimension—not merely technical skills. The practice of integrating religious values into craftwork requires pedagogical sensitivity to ensure that aesthetic expression does not lose its value context. The role of the teacher/mentor is crucial in mediating the technical and religious aspects so that participants can understand the meaning behind the motifs and the creation process.

2.5 Community Empowerment, the Creative Economy, and Implications for Villages

Studies on empowerment based on the craft and creative economy subsectors in rural areas demonstrate dual potential: (1) increasing the capacity of local human resources through skills training; (2) creating economic value through marketable creative products. Studies in various villages confirm that interventions based on local potential (songket, weaving, crafts) can strengthen community welfare if supported by market access, business management training, and collaborative models. Therefore, the macrame program, designed as both a religious education (PAI) learning module and an economic empowerment unit, has the potential to improve welfare while fostering the religious character of the community.

Research on the creative economy and empowerment emphasizes the need for integration between technical, managerial, and marketing network aspects; without these aspects, the economic impact of craft skills will be limited. Therefore, the ideal macrame intervention design should include production training components, value learning, and a simple entrepreneurship module.

Research Methodology

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. The qualitative approach was chosen to understand the phenomenon in depth related to the process of utilizing macrame as an educational and expressive medium with Islamic Religious Education (PAI) nuances in the socio-cultural context of the Aek Pancur Village community. Case studies allow researchers to explore empirical reality intensively, in-depth, and holistically in a particular context that is considered unique (Yin, 2018). In this research, the focus of the case study is directed at the process of learning macrame, forms of Islamic nuanced expression, internalized PAI values, and the social dynamics of participants during the activity. This approach is relevant because the purpose of the research is not to measure cause-and-effect relationships, but rather to understand how the practice of macrame functions as an educational and expressive medium in fostering Islamic religious values in the village community.

Results

The macrame training held in Aek Pancur Village was a series of non-formal educational activities aimed at developing community creativity, particularly among youth and housewives. The program was designed to integrate Islamic Religious Education (PAI) values—such as patience, perseverance, beauty (ihsan), cooperation (ta'awun), and Islamic work ethics—into the macrame craftmaking process.

Observations showed that participants were highly enthusiastic about the training because: macrame was easy to learn for participants without a craft background, the activities provided

a positive medium for self-expression, and the inclusion of religious values made the training not only economically oriented but also spiritually and educationally. Overall, the training proceeded in an orderly and dynamic manner, demonstrating good collaboration between the trainers, participants, and community leaders.

Interviews revealed that participants experienced an increased understanding of the Islamic values applied in the macrame-making process. These values include: (1) The value of patience in the process of tying the rope repeatedly, (2) The value of precision (*amanah*) which is understood as part of Islamic work ethics, (3) The value of *ihsan*, namely presenting beauty as a form of devotion to Allah, (4) The value of gratitude, because it can produce useful work. Participants stated that the macramé-making process taught them to take their time, maintain focus, and work wholeheartedly—in line with Islamic teachings on professionalism (*itqan al-'amal*).

Observational data showed that the hands-on (demonstration) training method made the learning process more participatory, communicative, interactive, and encouraged collaboration. This type of learning aligns with the principles of Islamic education, which emphasize learning by doing and internalizing values through experience (Al-Abrasyi, 2010).

Based on data triangulation, the macramé training resulted in tangible behavioral changes, including increased perseverance and discipline, patience and persistence, the ability to work collaboratively in groups, and an increased sense of responsibility in completing projects. These changes align with the goals of moral education in Islam as explained by Al-Ghazali (2011). The Aek Pancur Village community expressed positive appreciation for this activity because it: revitalized the educational atmosphere in the village environment, improved women's economic skills, and served as a means of disseminating Islamic values through art. Some participants even started producing macramé for sale, thus having a small but progressive economic impact.

Some of the obstacles encountered include: Good quality macrame rope is not easy to find in the village, The price of materials is relatively high so that not all participants can afford it, Participants who are new to the craft need more time, Knot errors often occur at the initial meeting, Participants who have household chores find it difficult to attend all sessions. However, these obstacles can be overcome through intensive mentoring, simplification of the macrame model, and provision of materials by the committee.

Based on data analysis, this training is effective as a medium for education and expression with an Islamic nuance because: (1) Integrates practical skills and PAI values harmoniously, (2) Creates creative, fun, and meaningful learning, (3) Encourages the improvement of morals, character, and skills, (4) Produces creative Islamic works that are aesthetic and have *da'wah* value, (5) Provides socio-emotional and economic impacts for the community.

4.1 Macrame as an Educational Medium from an Islamic Education Perspective Research results indicate that macrame functions not only as a handicraft but also as an effective educational medium. This finding aligns with Al-Attas' (1993) view that Islamic education is a process of internalizing manners and moral values through real-life experiences (experiential learning).

In macrame training, participants experience a learning process that is not solely cognitive, but also involves affective and psychomotor aspects. Practice-based learning (learning by doing), as explained by Dewey (1938) and emphasized by Al-Abrasyi (2010), is able to instill Islamic values more deeply than lectures alone.

The values internalized through macrame-making activities include: Patience, as the macrame knotting process requires time and repetition. Accuracy and trustworthiness, which reflect the Islamic work ethic. *Ihsan* (beauty and superior quality), because every piece of work is encouraged to be done to the best of one's ability. Gratitude, because the ability to create is seen as a gift from God. Thus, macrame becomes an effective medium for Islamic character education in the context of village society.

4.2 Internalization of Moral Values through Creative Activities: An Analysis of Morals from Al-Ghazali's Perspective

The results of the study indicate that participants experienced positive behavioral changes, such as greater patience, diligence, discipline, and appreciation for the process. This aligns with Al-Ghazali's moral theory (*Ihya' Ulum al-Din*), which states that habituating regular and positive activities can shape a person's character (*tahdhīb al-nafs*). The process of making macramé requires consistency, continuity, precision, and emotional control. This process, according to Al-Ghazali, is an effective means of training the soul to become more stable and have noble morals. Therefore, macramé is not only an artistic medium but also a means of *tazkiyah* (purification of the soul).

4.3 Macrame as a Medium for Self-Expression with Islamic Nuances: An Islamic Art and Aesthetic Perspective

Research findings indicate that participants' macrame works often feature Islamic nuances, such as calligraphy, crescent-star ornaments, and Islamic latticework motifs. This means that this training provides a space for Islamic artistic expression (*fann Islami*) that is relevant to the teachings of monotheism.

According to Nasr (1987), Islamic art is not merely a matter of form, but a means of bringing spiritual values into everyday life. Macrame fulfills the following elements: regularity (symmetry), harmony, repetition of motifs, and simplicity, which are characteristics of Islamic aesthetics. Thus, macrame activities have become a form of cultural *da'wah* through art (*da'wah tsaqafah*), as Rahman (1982) argued that art can be a subtle yet effective medium for internalizing religious values.

4.4 The Role of Macrame Training in Community Empowerment

Data shows social impacts in the form of improved skills and the creation of small-scale economic opportunities. These findings support the concept of community-based education (UNESCO, 2017), which states that non-formal education can increase community capacity and encourage independence.

From an Islamic perspective, this activity aligns with the principles of mutual assistance and community empowerment, as stated in QS. Al-Mā'idah: 2. Macrame training not only improves participants' skills but also has the following impacts: increased self-confidence, improved social engagement, strengthened relationships between residents, and a spirit of small business. Thus, macrame training can be viewed as a form of empowerment based on Islamic values.

4.5 Challenges and Critical Analysis of Training Implementation

Despite its effectiveness, macramé training faces the following challenges: (1) Limited raw materials. The cost of quality rope is quite high, hindering low-income participants. This emphasizes the importance of institutional support or local sponsorship. (2) Differences in participant skill levels. Beginner participants require more time, necessitating a differentiated instruction-based training model. (3) Unequal training time. Female participants are often tied to households, so a flexible schedule is essential for inclusive training. This analysis shows that training success is greatly influenced by managerial management and facility support.

Conclusion

Based on the research and analysis conducted, several important conclusions were obtained as follows: Macrame is effective as an educational medium in internalizing the values of Islamic Religious Education. Macrame training activities successfully instill various moral values such as patience, precision, trustworthiness, cooperation, and *itqan al-'amal*. The process of making macrame requires concentration, order, and perseverance, thus becoming a means of cultivating noble morals according to Al-Ghazali's views and the principles of Islamic education.

Macrame became a medium for Islamic artistic expression that strengthened the participants' religious identity. Participants successfully produced works with Islamic nuances, such as calligraphy motifs, crescent-star shapes, and geometric compositions that aligned with Islamic aesthetics. Macrame art became a vehicle for visual preaching and creative expression of the community, reflecting spiritual values. The macrame training had a socio-emotional and economic impact on the community of Aek Pancur Village. This training increased social participation, self-confidence, and skills in producing marketable products. Some participants began producing macrame as small businesses, thus contributing to community empowerment based on Islamic values. The implementation of the training faced several technical and managerial challenges. These challenges included limited time for participants, access to macrame raw materials, and differences in skill levels. However, these obstacles were overcome through ongoing mentoring, provision of materials, and flexible learning models. Overall, macrame is highly relevant for use as a medium for Islamic education and expression in the community. Macrame is not only an artistic activity, but also a means of character education, creativity development, and community empowerment in accordance with the goals of Islamic education which touch on cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects.

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