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Islamic educational and cultural values in Indonesian puppetry art: a systematic literature review

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ABSTRACT

The increasing influence of modernization and technological advances has led to a decline in student involvement with traditional cultural practices, including the medium of wayang art as a medium for Islamic education. This systematic study identifies Islamic educational values in the characterization and storytelling of wayang art in Indonesia. It then analyzes the pedagogical implications of its use as a medium for Islamic education. This study analyzed 38 article documents published in the study years (2014–2024) from searches in five major databases (Scopus, ScienceDirect, SINTA, DOAJ, and Google Scholar) to answer two research questions. The results of the study show that the performances of the Punakawan and Pandawa Lima characters have four Islamic educational values, namely *akhlak*, *aqidah*, worship, and social, which teach humans to do good and avoid evil, respect teachers, make good use of knowledge, emphasize the importance of prayer, remember Allah SWT to obtain guidance and spiritual strength, be democratic, honest, and tolerant. In addition, there are five implications of using wayang media in Islamic education, including strengthening the identity of Islamic teachings, providing integration of religious culture, strengthening Islamic character education, providing innovation in interactive learning media, and providing convenience as a medium for preaching. This study shows that wayang art has proven effective as a means of learning and preaching in spreading Islamic teachings to various levels of society. Therefore, innovation is needed so that wayang art remains relevant and is not forgotten by future generations amidst the rapid development of increasingly modern digital media.

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1. Introduction

The art of puppetry is one of the cultural heritages that has an important role in the Indonesian people's lives on Java Island, especially in conveying moral values and Islamic religious teachings (Nurrochsyam & Purwana, 2024; Siringo-Ringo et al., 2022). Since the time of Wali Songo, the art of puppetry has been used as a da'wah medium to spread Islam in a way that is more acceptable to the community (Foley, 2021). Through characters in puppet stories, such as the story of Pandawa Lima and Punakawan characters, Islamic messages such as honesty, patience, justice, religion, and spirituality can be conveyed in depth to the community (Malik, 2024). In addition, puppetry is entertainment and an effective means of learning, especially for the younger generation to understand Islamic teachings in a cultural context lokal (Adi, 2023). By maintaining the culture of puppet art as a medium of Islamic education, the community can continue to preserve Islamic religious values and local culture in harmony so that they do not fade along with the development of an increasingly modern era (Ulfah et al., 2025). Therefore, the role of puppet art as an educational means must continue to be developed, both through traditional

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performances and adaptations in modern media, so that Islamic values remain relevant to the development of the times (Ghani, 2015).

Islamic education in Indonesia is very important to develop human resources and a person's religious character because this is a country where the majority of the population is Muslim (Nurdin, 2020; Susanti et al., 2024). However, as a universal phenomenon in the increasingly developing digital era, it is evident that the awareness of the younger generation of puppet art culture as an Islamic educational medium has regressed (Sugiri, 2023). With the rapid development of technology and social media, the younger generation's interest in traditional arts, such as puppetry, is decreasing. They are more interested in digital content that is more instant and interactive compared to puppet shows that require an in-depth understanding (Lazuardi et al., 2020). As a result, the younger generation ignored many Islamic values contained in puppet stories (Setiawan, 2022). The contribution of puppet art teaches various important aspects of Islam, such as morality, leadership, and piety. Without serious conservation efforts, the current modernization will increasingly disturb this cultural art (Lutfianto & Junaidi, 2023). Thus, there needs to be a new strategy in packaging puppets so that they remain in demand by the younger generation, such as through the era of digitalization in the form of social media content that attracts more attention.

So far, several previous studies that focus on Islamic education and puppet art in Indonesia can be used as three main trends. First, the study focuses on "Wayang Kulit," which explores the values of Islamic education, such as teaching moral values (Arifin, 2018; Hidayat, 2020; Purwanto, 2019), Islamic character values (Ningrum, 2014; Widiartoro, 2019), and cultural values (Arifin, 2023; Nurohmah, 2022), tolerance values (Laila Ulfa et al., 2024), and also as a da'wah medium (Setiawan, 2022; Sidik, 2014). The art of puppetry is a traditional art rich in philosophy. It is seen as an effective medium to convey Islamic teachings, such as honesty, justice, and wise leadership, that are relevant to modern life (Masruroh, 2023; Tricahyo & Nursalam, 2025). Second, a study that analyzes the role of puppeteers (*dalang*) as informal educators in spreading Islamic values. As a narrator and interpreter of puppet stories, a puppeteer often inserts religious messages in his performances that use puppets as a tool of da'wah and moral education, especially in rural communities in Java (Ardhi et al., 2019; Darmastuti, 2023; Dian, 2020; Raudatul, 2022). Third, research examines figures in puppet art, such as Punokawan (Semar, Gareng, Petruk, and Bagong) (Saputra, 2021). This figure teaches humans always to help each other, do good to others, and have a high sense of confidence and motivation in carrying out every task or work (Anugrahini, 2017; Azami, 2014; Saputra, 2021). Selain itu penokohan wayang Pandawa Lima (Yudistira, Bima, Arjuna, Nakula, Sadewa). This figure is known as a hero who is and has a noble character because he respects and treats everyone well (Prasojo & Arifin, 2022; Rosid, 2021).

Overall, there has been no research that specifically identifies the values of Islamic education in the characterization and narrative of puppet art in Indonesia, which then analyzes the pedagogical implications of its use as an Islamic educational medium through the SLR map approach. Therefore, this article differs in presenting new theoretical concepts while filling in the gaps of previous research that can be a reference for future research. This research is expected to significantly contribute, especially in Indonesia and globally, to introducing puppet art as a means of education and da'wah media to spread Islamic values that can be widely applied in people's lives. The results of this research are expected to enrich the understanding of the relationship between Islamic education and puppet art culture, especially for educators, so that they can develop innovations in the learning process through technological developments. In this way, students are expected to love and appreciate cultural heritage more without neglecting it amid the progress of the evolving times.

1.1. Research purposes

Given the development of technology and the influence of popular culture, puppetry faces challenges in maintaining its relevance. This research aims to find new strategies for adapting Islamic values into puppet performances with a more modern approach so that it can attract the attention of the younger generation. This research focuses on the period (2014–2024) to analyze previous research trends and the extent to which the influence of education in puppetry has grown significantly. This research aims to collect, analyze, and synthesize empirical data regarding the use of puppet art media as a tool in Islamic

education. This study is a systematic, comprehensive, and retrospective scientific reflection designed to answer predetermined research questions using a structured and explicit methodology. The systematic literature review (SLR) process in this study is compiled based on the following research questions (RQ):

RQ1: How are the values of Islamic education in the characterization and narrative of puppet art in Indonesia?

RQ2: How are the pedagogical implications of using puppet art as a medium of Islamic education?

2. Literature review

2.1. Internalization of Islamic education values

Islamic education is an integral part of the national education system which plays an important role in instilling values and culture and shaping various aspects of behavior in each student (Adnan, 2022; Fajrussalam et al., 2020). This aims to realize an ideal Islamic education, and cooperation from various parties is needed. The main goal is to form a strong Muslim personality based on faith and piety to Allah SWT and has balanced moral, social, and intellectual (Panji et al., 2023) morals. In a religious context, this process begins with accepting religious values, develops through social interaction in society, and finally becomes part of the traditions inherent in life (Irfan & Setiady, 2023). Meanwhile, internalizing Islamic educational values is forming deep spiritual awareness. A person increasingly understands and internalizes the values of Islamic teachings obtained through learning and then integrates them into attitudes, actions, and moral behaviors that are applied in everyday life (Abdul et al., 2022; Chabibi et al., 2025). The internalization of Islamic educational values can change a person's beliefs, leading to *akhlak*, *tauhid* (faith), worship, and community (Ependi, 2020). Besides that, Islamic educational values are divided into two groups. First, the value of divinity (*Illahiyah*), by realizing how great the creation of Allah SWT is; Second, the value of humanity (*insaniyah*), namely through human understanding, cultural development, and human reasoning that shape humans to become better human beings (Shobri, 2021).

2.2. Wayang art culture in Indonesia

Local performing arts are important in people's lives (Arslanbek et al., 2022; Iizuka, 2021) in some parts of the world. Art and culture are likened to museums because of the perception of the public, who view them as places for entertainment performances (Alnasser & Yi, 2023). In Indonesia, the art of puppetry is a cultural heritage that has been known and has been part of the life of the Javanese people for approximately 1500 years. This is an influence of Hindu culture which carries the concept of shadow performances and is known as puppet performances (Anggoro, 2018). In puppetry, the term puppeteer is very good at playing the art of puppetry. The main character puppeteer also often plays the role of the main character who makes stories or scripts in puppet shows. Where the role of the puppeteer who leads is like music and performs various sound effects to create a beautiful atmosphere (Setiawan, 2020). The art of puppetry has several assumptions that are quite intriguing from a mystical point of view. This mystical view is described as "*dalang-wayang-kelir*", the relationship between God and Man (Endraswara, 2018).

Furthermore, the art of puppetry is free from Sunan Kalijaga's efforts in carrying out cultural acculturation which aims to introduce Islamic teachings to the Javanese people. Through this approach, he tries to change people's views to understand that Islam is not a threat but a religion that upholds peace and tolerance (Putri & Zafi, 2022). Sunan Kalijaga implements this strategy to replace the existing classical tradition that is deliberately applied to develop puppet art that aligns with Islamic teachings, remains by the provisions of Islamic law, and directs humans to get closer to Allah SWT (Widyanita, 2023). Until now, the original puppet story is still a story from the books of Mahabharata and Ramayana, which are part of the Hindu holy book that includes elements of Islamic values in the storyline to replace Hindu philosophy and theology (Marsaid, 2016). In addition, there are several very popular figures in Indonesia, the first is Punakawan figures (Semar, Gareng, Petruk, and Bagong) (Saputra, 2021). Second Pandawa Lima figures (Yudistira, Bima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sadewa) (Rosid, 2021). Quote Kompas (Rachman, 2023)



Figure 1. Five popular wayang arts in Indonesia.

Source: <https://www.kompas.com/skola/read/2023/02/23/210000069/5-jenis-wayang-beserta-penjasannya?page=all>.

stated that there are various kinds of puppets that are popular in Indonesia, namely, (a) *wayang kulit*, (b) *wayang beber*, (c) *wayang golek*, (d) *wayang wong*, (e) and *wayang potehi*. This is proof that Indonesia has extraordinary local cultural arts. Here are five very popular puppet images (Figure 1).

3. Method

This section describes the methods applied in reviewing the latest research on Islamic educational values in puppet art culture with a study spanning eleven years of the last year (June 2014 to December 2024 edition). In this study, the authors adopted the PRISMA model (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis) that has been modified, by utilizing five main databases (Scopus, ScienceDirect, SINTA, DOAJ, and Google Scholar) to conduct a systematic review of multiple keywords ("Islamic Education" OR "Islamic Religious Education" OR "Puppet Art Culture" OR "Islamic Character Education" OR "Dakwah Media" AND "Islamic Learning Media").

The systematic literature review (SLR) model is a method that can be used to find, select, and critically assess relevant research to collect and analyze research data to be presented in the form of scientific papers, which are systematically and explicitly structured (Tranfield, 2009). The SLR method offers several benefits that can encourage researchers to conduct future research based on the findings presented in previous publications (Mishra & Mishra, 2023). To ensure the quality and reproducibility of reviews, PRISMA has developed a standardized peer review methodology and uses a list of best practices (Agrawal et al., 2024). The PRISMA model includes four main components: identification, screening, feasibility, and inclusion. The PRISMA flowchart can be seen in Figure 2.

3.1. Systematic review process

This systematic research utilizes five well-known and trusted databases, namely "Scopus, ScienceDirect, SINTA, DOAJ, and Google Scholar" containing tens of thousands of scientific and technical papers, books, reports, and other article documents. This review has been carried out systematically since the edition (2014–2024) through four stages of this study article's search and analysis process.

In the initial stage, we used predefined keywords to search for articles and managed to collect a total of 1236 articles from five databases (1) Scopus – $n=2$ articles; (2) ScienceDirect – $n=4$ articles; (3) SINTA $n=138$; (4) DOAJ – $n=45$ article; and (5) Google Scholar – $n=1047$ article. In this case, for the keyword "Budaya Seni Wayang," we use three common acronyms, namely Islamic "Character Education," "Dakwah Media," and "Islamic Learning Media." As for the keyword "Islamic Education," this study utilizes

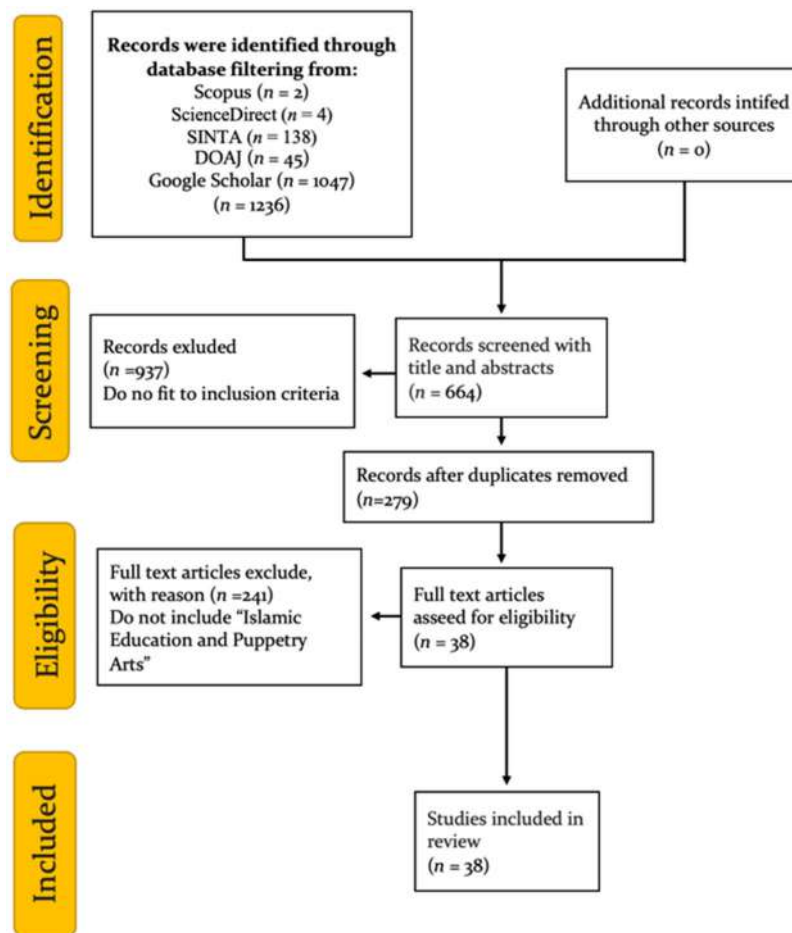


Figure 2. PRISMA protocol flow chart.

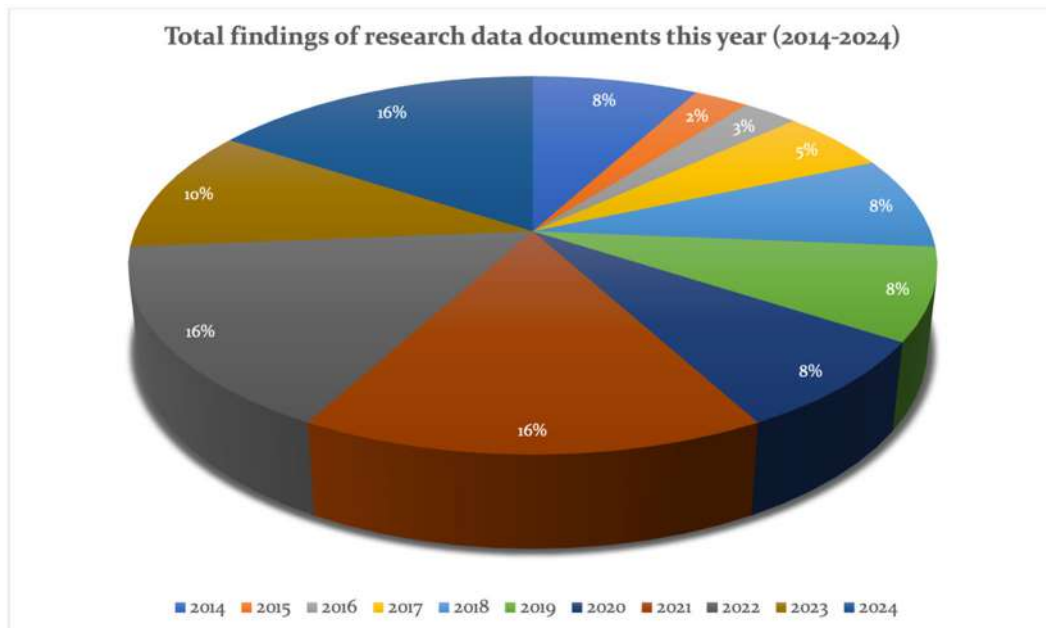
various synonyms from terms commonly used in previous research. Several words that have similar meanings related to Islamic education are applied, including wayang art-based learning in schools, madrasas, Islamic boarding schools, and the exploration of Islamic teaching values in culture. In the second stage, 664 articles were screened, and 279 articles were excluded based on inclusion and exclusion criteria.

The other articles are carefully analyzed in the third stage before being selected for further research. From the selection process, only 38 articles were considered for further analysis. Most articles are removed for various reasons, mainly because they are duplicates, do not use keywords specified in the main body, or do not fall into the category of scientific articles. Some types of bad documents include conference proceedings, books, book reviews, magazines, brief surveys, brief communications, communications, newsletters, discussions, product reviews, editorials, publication notes, and errata. In addition, articles that only mention the term "Islamic Education and Puppet Art Culture" in reference without in-depth discussion, or do not present discussions related to Islamic education and puppet art. The inclusion and exclusion criteria are used systematically in the review presented in [Table 1](#).

In the final stage, we perform an analysis to answer the RQ (see [Section 1.1](#)). A total of 38 articles were selected for systematic review analysis. We apply systematic coding or conduct thematic content analysis to reduce the potential for bias in this research (Clarke, 2021). Then begin the analysis process by carefully reading the abstract of each article to identify relevant themes or subthemes. Each article is thoroughly reviewed to obtain appropriate information supporting the research objectives. In the analysis of thematic content, these units are determined based on themes, where we delve into the narrative or part of the story contained in the stories of puppet art figures to strengthen the discussion as the main finding in this article.

Table 1. Criteria of inclusion and exclusion.

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Article title and content	An appropriate title that complied with the study's requirements	Does not comply with requirements research and have irrelevant things title
Year of publication	Publications from 2014 to 2024	Publications outside the range specified
Type of publication	Only journal articles and student final assignments (thesis and dissertation)	Reviews, editorials and non-empirical studies
Language	Indonesian and English	Other
Field of article study	Islamic Education and Puppet Art Culture	Other
Accessibility	Full-text articles or open access	Preview articles or articles that require payment

**Figure 3.** Research data acquisition trends (2014–2024).

4. Results

Below we present in the form of a diagram the overall findings of the articles obtained in the research year study (2014–2024) (Figure 3).

The figure shows that the findings in 2014, 2018, 2019, and 2020 obtained documents (3 articles), in 2015 and 2016 (got 1 article), in 2023 got (4 articles), in 2021, 2022, and 2024 obtained (6 articles). As for more details of the document, we can present it in Table 2.

Based on the data obtained in Table 2, there are six types and research approaches. Each type is: (1) Library Research: (19 articles), (2) Qualitative (Field Study): (12 articles), (3) Qualitative (Case study): (2 articles), (4) Phenomenology (Field Study): (1 articles), (5) Classroom Action Research (PTK): (2 articles), and (6) Research and Development (R&D) (2 articles). The types of documents include (journal articles, conferences, theses, and dissertations). For more details, we present it in Figure 4.

As seen in Figure 4, the trend of research on Islamic education and wayang arts and culture in Indonesia that has been carried out so far is of the "Library Research" type. Of course, this can make it easier for future researchers to use different kinds of research from previous research.

5. Discussion

5.1. The values of Islamic education in the characterization and narrative of puppet art in Indonesia

Many social and cultural variables greatly influence the diversity of life in modern Indonesia. The spread of social groups based on religion is caused by differences in religious practices and beliefs embraced

Table 2. Research article document trends (2014–2024).

No	Author	Type	Topic	Method
1	Azami (2014)	Thesis	"Humanist Values in the Character of Wayang Semar Characters and Their Relevance to Islamic Religious Education"	Library Research
2	Ningrum (2014)	Thesis	"The Role of Punakawan Figures in Wayang Kulit as a Character Cultivation Media in Bendosewu Village, Talun District, Blitar Regency"	Qualitative (Field Study)
3	Sidik (2014)	Thesis	"Wayang Kulit as a Da'wah Media (Intercultural Communication Approach to the Ki Yuwono Wayang Kulit Performance in Bangorejo Village, Banyuwangi)"	Qualitative (Field Study)
4	Rokhimah (2015)	Thesis	"The Value of Compliance of Wayang Werkudara Characters and Their Relevance to Islamic Religious Education (A Study of the Islamic Moral Book in the Sacred Bima Karya Teguh Play)"	Library Research
5	Marsaid (2016)	Journal	"Islam and culture: Wayang as an Islamic Education Media in the archipelago"	Library Research
6	Anugrahini (2017)	Thesis	"Profile of Ideal Islamic Religious Education Teachers in the Character of Wayang Semar and Its Relevance to Law No. 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers"	Library Research
7	Zainnuri (2017)	Journal	"Gunungan Wayang Sadat: The Study of Its Religious Values and Its Relevance in Fine Art Learning in High Schools"	Qualitative (Field Study)
8	Arifin (2018)	Journal	"Promoting Wayang Kulit as a Media in Internalizing Islamic Values"	Library Research
9	Priyanto (2020)	Conference	"Strategy for the Preservation of the Puppet Art Tradition in the Modern Era: A Case Study of Wayang Museum in Jakarta"	Qualitative (Case study)
10	Romdhiani (2018)	Thesis	"Application of Wayang Golek Art as a Learning Media for Islamic Religious Education at Al-Istiqomah Islamic Boarding School Sukabumi"	Phenomenology (Field Study)
11	Purwanto (2019)	Thesis	"Internalization of Religious Values in the Education of Wayang Kulit Puppeteers: A Case Study at the Padharasa Salatiga Wayang Kulit Art Studio"	Qualitative (Field Study)
12	Khalifah (2019)	Thesis	"Islamic Religious Education Based on Local Culture: A Study of PAI Values in Wayang Kekayon Khalifah Lakon Mulabukaning Da'wah Rasul by Ki Lutfi Caritagama"	Qualitative (Field Study)
13	Widiantoro (2019)	Thesis	"Internalization of the Values of Sufism Moral Education in the Performance of Wayang Kulit Lakon Dewa Ruci: A Case Study in the Wayang Kulit Ngudi Laras Cepoko Ngrayun Ponorogo Association"	Qualitative (Field Study)
14	Farkhatun (2020)	Journal	"The Use of Wayang Media to Introduce the Example of <i>Wali Songo</i> in Islamic Religious Education and Ethics Lessons"	Qualitative (Field Study)
15	Dian (2020)	Thesis	"The Values of Islamic Education of Ki Enthus Susmono in the Play of Semar Mbangun Kayangan"	Library Research
16	Hidayat (2020)	Thesis	"The Value of Moral Education in Wayang Kulit and Its Relevance to Islamic Religious Education: A Video Study of the Play Semar Mbangun Kahyangan Sanggit Ki Warseno Slenk"	Library Research
17	Foley (2021)	Journal	"Searching for Wayang Golek: Islamic Rod Puppets and Chinese Woodwork in Java"	Library Research
18	Rosid (2021)	Thesis	"Analysis of Islamic Character Values in the Characterization of the Pandawa Lima Puppets in the Mahabarata Story"	Library Research
19	Saputra, (2021)	Journal	"The Contribution of Punakawan Figures to Wayang Kulit Performances to Islamic Education to the Community"	Library Research
20	Hana and Yusuf (2021)	Journal	"Sufistic Values of Wayang Semar Figures and Their Implications for Islamic Education"	Library Research
21	Roziqin (2021)	Thesis	"The Relevance of the Value of Moral Education in the Gandamana Luweng Sanggitan Ki Seno Nugroho Wayang Play with Islamic Religious Education"	Library Research

(continued)

Table 2. Continued.

No	Author	Type	Topic	Method
22	Febrianto (2021)	Thesis	"Increasing the Activeness and Understanding of Islamic Religious and Ethical Education Materials Through Wayang Media"	Classroom Action Research (PTK)
24	Prasojo and Arifin (2022)	Journal	"Manifestation of the Transformation of Islamic Teachings in the Puppet Character of Pandawa Lima in the Mahabharata Story"	Library Research
25	Raudatul (2022)	Thesis	"Islamic Education Values in the Art of Wayang Punakawan by Dalang Iyan in East Kelayan, Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan"	Qualitative (Field Study)
26	Nurohmah (2022)	Thesis	"The Dimension of Islamic Education in the Character of Semar in the Story of Wayang Kulit Lakon Mbangun Kayangan"	Library Research
26	Wedi (2022)	Thesis	"Islamic Education Based on Local Culture of Wayang Punakawan in Kangkung Village, Bumi Waras District"	Qualitative (Field Study)
27	Setiawan (2022)	Journal	"Polemic and Reasons for Reusing Wayang and Gamelan as A Medium for Contemporary Preaching Islam Religion in Central Java, Indonesia"	Phenomenology (Field Study)
28	Rochmanah (2022)	Thesis	"The Values of Islamic Education in Werkudara's Life as a Play of Dewa Ruci in the Book of Serat Dewa Ruci by Damar Shashangka"	Library Research
29	Adi (2023)	Conference	"Dewa Ruci Graphic Narrative Adaptation: Popular Media to Introduce Classical Wayang Mythology and Alternative Character Education Content for Generation Z"	Library Research
30	Arifin (2023)	Thesis	"The Values of Islamic Education in Wayang Kulit Performance in the Tradition of Earth Alms in Kalisalak Village, Kebasen District, Banyumas Regency"	Qualitative (Field Study)
31	Darmastuti (2023)	Thesis	"The Values of Islamic Education in the Art of Wayang Kulit: A Study of the Puppeteer Ki Akhbar Samudro with the Play of Sheikh Subakir"	Library Research
32	Masykur and Soleh (2023)	Journal	"The Art of Puppet Performances in the Perspective of Fiqh and Spirituality of Islamic Art Seyyed Hossein Nasr"	Library Research
33	Widodo (2024)	Journal	"Digitization of Wayang Tavip as a Media for Promoting the Art of Da'wah"	Research and Development (R&D)
34	Rahmatita et al. (2024)	Journal	"Examining the History and Socio-Cultural Values in the Banjar Puppet Show"	Qualitative (Field Study)
35	Pradipa et al. (2024)	Journal	"Philosophical Values in the Art of Wayang Kulit for the Formation of Cultural Identity of Generation Z Indonesian Muslims"	Library Research
36	Najih et al. (2024)	Journal	"Implementation of Wayang Media to Improve Nationalist Character Education of Students of SDN Sawunggaling Surabaya"	Classroom Action Research (PTK)
37	Noegroho (2024)	Journal	"Early Childhood Character Education Utilizing Innovative Communication Media Wayang Beber Fable"	Qualitative (Field Study)
38	Nurasiah (2024)	Dissertation	"Implementation of Wayang Media to Improve Nationalist Character Education of Students of SDN Sawunggaling Surabaya"	Research and Development (R&D)

by each society (Saragih et al., 2022). In addition, religious harmony can be well maintained if all social and cultural groups are also responsible for maintaining peace. On the other hand, the harmony of religious people will be disrupted if the relationship between religious people in this socio-cultural aspect is more widespread. This includes new social conflicts that will arise due to the current global crisis (Mulyasana et al., 2020). In this context, the traditional art of wayang was recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2003 as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, and it represents a cultural heritage that is vulnerable to not being used due to the lack of contemporary protection (Priyanto, 2020). Of course, the art of puppetry must be preserved and further developed for future generations (Dian, 2020). The following are four Islamic educational values contained in puppet art figures in Indonesia (Table 3).

First, *Akhlak Values*. As in the story of the Pandavas against Kurawa in the puppets, it is not just a war story but also a reflection of the battle between good and evil that is always present in human life.

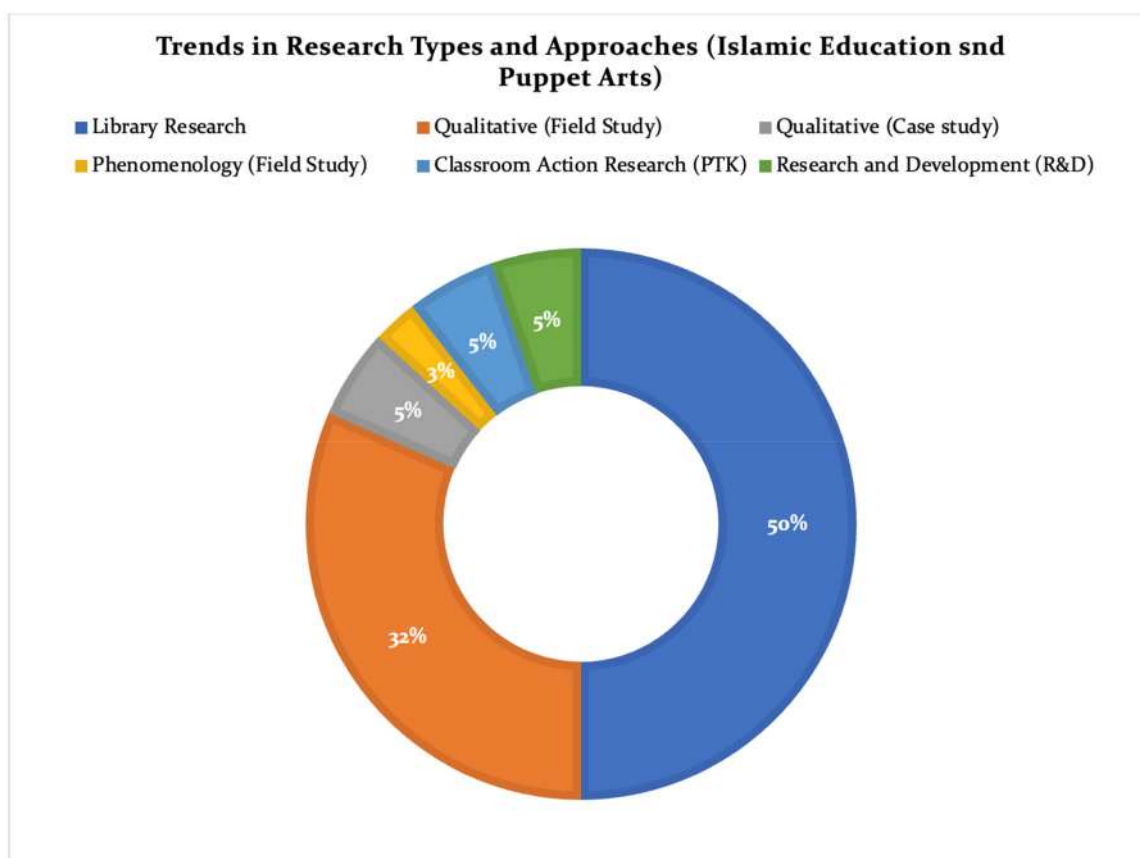


Figure 4. Trends in research types and approaches.

In Islam, this concept aligns with the principle of “*Amar Ma’ruf Nahi Munkar*,” namely calling for good and preventing evil. Pandawa, with its honest, just, and wise nature, symbolizes Islamic values that society must uphold, such as social justice, integrity, and patience in the face of tests (Malik, 2024). This story teaches that in social life, one must dare to uphold justice despite facing great challenges, especially with the ruler (Katupalli & Kaparwan, 2024). Meanwhile, the story of Bima in search of Tirta Amerta depicts the journey of humans in seeking knowledge and truth. Islam emphasizes that seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim (Zustiyantoro et al., 2022). The struggle of this figure shows that useful knowledge is not obtained easily but through patience, perseverance, and sacrifice (Widiantoro, 2019). On the other hand, to improve the quality of the education system, respect for teachers is a very important aspect because this is one of the main factors for learning success. With a respectful attitude towards teachers, the teaching and learning process can be conducive to student development (Muttaqin et al., 2024). In this case, teachers who feel appreciated will be more motivated to provide the best teaching for students. Meanwhile, students who have good ethics towards teachers will also get great benefits, including blessings in studying (Chabibi et al., 2025). Therefore, this story teaches that the search for knowledge must be done with good intentions and manners toward teachers to provide moral guidance for the community in doing good to fellow humans and seeking knowledge for the demands of the times.

Second, *Aqidah Values*. The story of Dewa Ruci in the puppet tells the story of Bima’s journey in searching for the essence of the truth. He met a small, luminous figure, Dewa Ruci, who taught the true meaning of life and spirituality (Abbas et al., 2024). In Islam, this story can be interpreted as a journey to understanding *tauhid*, namely the awareness of the oneness of Allah SWT., which teaches that spiritual search is not a mere physical journey but a journey of the heart and mind in getting closer to Allah SWT (Fatoni, 2019). In the era of materialism and hedonism, many people are trapped in the search for worldly happiness but still feel spiritually empty (Fauzi, 2019). As the character of Bima teaches, the essence of true happiness does not lie in wealth or power but in the understanding of monotheism and

Table 3. Characterization and narrative of characters in Wayang art.

Puppet figures	Islamic education values	Narrative findings
1. Punakawan: Semar, Gareng, Petruk, and Bagong.	<i>Akhlak Values</i>	As the story of the Pandavas Lima against Kurawa depicts the battle between good and evil, this is in line with the Islamic principle of “ <i>Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar</i> .” Then the story of Bima seeking Tirta Amerta (Water of Life), this describes the struggle of human beings in seeking the truth, respecting teachers and useful knowledge.
2. Pandawa Lima: Yudistira, Bima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sadewa.	<i>Aqidah Values</i>	As in the story of Dewa Ruci, where Bima met a small luminous figure who gave the teachings of life, in Islam this is interpreted as a spiritual journey towards understanding <i>tauhid</i> (belief that Allah SWT is the Almighty God, the One and Only One). In the Islamized version of wayang, the concept of God is replaced by Allah SWT., so that humans worship only Allah and involve Allah in all their activities.
	<i>Worship Value</i>	In some plays, such as the character of Arjuna as a figure who prays a lot and dhikr to get spiritual guidance and strength, reflects the value of <i>mujahadah</i> (as an effort to get closer to Allah SWT). In addition, the Pandawa character before the war, this story tells the story of always <i>tawakal</i> (surrender to Allah SWT).
	<i>Social Values</i>	Puppet art figures such as Punakawan who tell the story of defending the weak and giving advice to the ruler (leadership) to be in line with the concept <i>ukhuwah islamiyah</i> (brotherhood in Islam). Not only that, this figure teaches the importance of democratic values, national spirit, honesty, tolerance, cooperation, help in helping the community, being fair and peaceful, which is in line with Islamic teachings on <i>Islah</i> (peace).

closeness to Allah SWT (Malik, 2024). In Islam, this concept is by the command to dhikr, contemplation, and the importance of patience in seeking knowledge to deepen religious knowledge to understand the true purpose of life (Aljunied, 2025). Therefore, this story gives a moral message that humans must continue to try to understand the essence of life, stay away from actions that lead to error, and always try to get closer to Allah SWT to avoid bad deeds so that humans worship only Allah and involve Allah in all their activities.

Third, *Worship Value*. As in the character of Arjuna as a puppet performer, he depicts a figure who always prays, meditates, and dhikr to obtain spiritual guidance and strength (Glass, 2003). This attitude reflects the concept of *mujahadah*, namely seriousness in worship and getting closer to Allah SWT (Rokhimah, 2015). Not only that, Arjuna's story shows that before taking major action, one must seek guidance and strengthen one's spirituality so that one's actions are in line with the path of righteousness (Meyer, 2016). In Islam, this is in line with the command to always dhikr and *tawakal* (surrender to ask for the help of Allah SWT). This attitude does not mean resignation without effort, but making maximum efforts and leaving the results to Allah SWT (Muslih et al., 2021). This attitude is very relevant in modern life, especially when facing economic difficulties, job competition, life tests, etc. (Romdhiani, 2018). From this story, people can learn that true strength is not only physical or strategic but also from a strong relationship with Allah SWT. so that a person can face every challenge in life calmly and confidently.

Fourth, *Social Values*. The Punakawan character in the art of puppetry has an important role as a wise advisor and defender of the weak, which aligns with the concept of *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (brotherhood in Islam) (Ningrum, 2014; Wikayanto et al., 2023). As in the Punakawan characters (Semar, Gareng, Petruk, and Bagong), Not only are they companions to the knights but also provide criticism and advice to the ruler (leader) to continue to act justly and wisely (Azami, 2014). This figure's role reflects Islam's teachings, which emphasize that leaders must listen to the people's voices and act for the common good to

serve their people (Abdillah, 2022). In addition, Punakawan figures also teach values that are in line with Islamic teachings, such as democracy, national spirit, honesty, tolerance, cooperation, and justice (Hidayat, 2020; Rosid, 2021). In social life, attitudes such as helping, deliberating, maintaining peace, and staying away from disputes with fellow human beings must be truly implemented to create a sense of togetherness and foster a sense of affection (Arifudin, 2020). Punakawan's performance in modern life has significant relevance. Amid social conflicts and injustice, the figure taught the community always to remind leaders to maintain a harmonious life (Anugrahini, 2017). So that the play Punakawan teaches that every individual has the responsibility to uphold justice, help others, and maintain unity and peace in line with the teachings of Islam.

5.2. Pedagogical implications of the use of puppet art as a medium of Islamic education

By adhering to Islamic principles, Sunan Kalijaga's efforts to introduce religious teachings to be more accepted and known by all Javanese people through the art of puppetry in Indonesia (Prasojo & Arifin, 2022). The art of puppetry, which has been acculturated with Islamic teachings, effectively conveys religious messages in a contextual and easier-to-understand manner (Arifin, 2018). In addition, the art of puppetry has a strong existence as a medium of Islamic education because it can convey moral messages and religious values more interactively and contextually compared to the art of calligraphy or theater in other Islamic traditions (Lutfianto & Junaidi, 2023). Wayang not only presents the story of Islamic values but also invites the audience to understand the teachings of Islam through symbols that are easy to understand and relate to daily life (Widiantoro, 2019). Unlike calligraphy, which focuses more on the aesthetics of Arabic writing, or Islamic theater, which tends to be limited to certain texts, wayang can adapt various stories from Islamic history and moral teachings in the Qur'an (Wai Weng, 2024). This method aligns with contextual learning, where Islamic values are communicated through local cultural stories to create an Islamic character, teaching tolerance, brotherhood, and peace (Hana & Yusuf, 2021; Rahmatita et al., 2024).

Puppet art media has a distinctive narrative and visual power; it can be packaged in digital forms, such as animation, interactive videos, or virtual performances broadcast through platforms like YouTube (Pratiwi, 2024). In contrast to Islamic religious lectures on YouTube, which are generally monologues (Nur'aeni & Ramdan, 2023), wayang art presents a more interactive approach. Islamic values are conveyed through a storyline that touches emotions and is more easily accepted by various levels of society, especially adults (Pradipa et al., 2024). On the other hand, the advantage of wayang as an Islamic educational medium also lies in its ability to adapt to technological advances without eliminating its inherent cultural elements (Wang & Tseng, 2023). By adopting digital elements such as games and interactive comics based on puppets, this art can attract more attention to children and teenagers already familiar with the technology (Ghani, 2015). Therefore, puppets are part of cultural heritage and play an important role in spreading Islamic values amid modern developments that continue to move forward. Here are five implications of the use of puppet media in Islamic education.

First, providing strengthens the identity of Islamic teachings. The art of puppetry, which contains Islamic values, is an effective communication medium and a source of inspiration that many people can imitate daily (Khalifah, 2019). Some communities and educational institutions preserve cultural heritage for Islamic religious events, such as "*selamatan, tolak bala, and syukuran*." These have been assumed as the values of materialism and capitalism brought by globalization because they have become the values of struggle in history (Ependi, 2021; Mulya & Fauziah, 2024). In addition, puppet art performances also increase spiritual awareness. Students are invited to deepen the importance of spiritual values such as teaching discipline in worship, obeying the commands of Allah SWT, and staying away from His prohibitions in their daily lives. The story of the Semar character has several dimensions, including ideological dimensions and religious, intellectual, and consequential practices that are in line with the practice of community life (Nurohmah, 2022). Semar's character reflects the character of an ideal Muslim because he is humble, helpful, and not greedy. He is described as a figure with strong physical and mental strength and acting as a wise mentor, setting a good example in the personal life of every student (Saputra, 2021). Therefore, the character of Semar is known as a wise and calculating figure. He can get along with anyone, both upper and lower class.

Second, providing religious cultural integration. Wayang art can develop critical and reflective thinking in understanding Islamic teachings through cultural symbols that are rich in meaning (Prahmana & Istiandaru, 2021). In puppet shows, religious messages are conveyed by puppeteers through various interesting and varied ways (Hatley, 2008). In addition, the philosophical values contained through puppet characters are expected to inspire the younger generation to imitate, apply and understand religious teachings conveyed in community life (Sari et al., 2024). This form of strategy is an important foundation to build creativity and innovation among students and the younger generation in Indonesia, so that it can foster a sense of love for culture while strengthening religious values in their lives (Pradipa et al., 2024). For example, the type of Wayang Kulit performance has a positive image among students and the community because its religious values can be communicated easily. One of the messages conveyed is to instill the spirit to do good and stay away from evil, which is in line with the principle of “*amar ma’ruf nahi munkar*” which is appropriate in the teachings of Islam (Malik, 2024). In the tradition of puppetry, this concept is also known as “*memory haying betrayal Agung*,” namely maintaining harmony and goodness in community life and teaching humans to respect their respective religious teachings and beliefs. This is certainly an educational means that encourages generations to get closer to Allah SWT through understanding the religious values conveyed in puppet performances to be implemented in community life (Purwanto, 2019).

Third, providing strengthening Islamic character education. With the wisdom of puppet art, this traditional art media plays a role in helping to shape changes in students’ social behavior so that it can filter the influence of modern culture to create a multicultural-based environment (Afiah et al., 2020). For example, performances that present Punakawan characters are often used as a learning medium for children (Hidayanti, 2024). At this stage of development, children need strong character development so that educators can educate them through the stories of the puppet characters (Nurasiah et al., 2022). Puppet stories can also inspire the development of children’s characters who can teach noble qualities, get used to discipline in worship, behave honestly, care for the environment, and be responsible. This helps stimulate children’s thinking to apply these values in daily life (Sugiri, 2023; Wedi, 2022). In addition, as in the puppet characters “Gandamana Luweng” There is a value of character education, namely (a) *tawadhu’*, such as respecting others regardless of social status and easily interacting well with everyone; (b) *husnudhon*, for example, a person who behaves well has a good prejudice against Allah SWT, himself, and others. He does not feel envious of the favors that Allah gives to others and can accept criticism with an open attitude; (c) *ta’dhim*, such as greeting the teacher with greetings, when speaking politely, and always listening to the teacher when delivering lessons in class (Roziqin, 2021). This can form a character that cares, empathizes, and is responsible for social welfare.

Fourth, providing innovative interactive learning media. One form of innovation in interactive learning is by utilizing digital technology. Puppet art can be combined with multimedia, such as animation, video, and interactive applications that allow students to participate directly in the story (Mohamad Ali et al., 2025; Wang & Tseng, 2023). Using puppet puppets as a learning medium has been proven to increase the effectiveness of the student learning process. So far, teachers’ efforts in learning by using “Wayang Beber Fabel” present stories with relevant material content as an innovative and interactive teaching tool, which helps students understand their world more engagingly and contextually (Noegroho, 2024). In addition, puppet-based media also improves student understanding so that the learning process can run more effectively and optimally. This is supported by the results of research that show that learning with puppets can increase the active involvement of students, and has an impact on significantly increasing the motivation of learning outcomes (Febrianto, 2021; Najih et al., 2024). Wayang functions as entertainment and an educational means that can attract students’ interest through stories full of Islamic values (Zainnuri, 2017). By integrating puppets into learning, educators can create a more lively, interesting, and easy-to-understand learning atmosphere for students so that they can better introduce local culture to them.

Fifth, providing convenience as a da’wah medium. The art of puppetry has become an effective communication medium for spreading moral values and Islamic teachings to the community (Muslih et al., 2021; Sidik, 2014). In each performance, the art of puppetry contains a religious message that is conveyed symbolically by the social context as a means of da’wah. This can reach various circles that reflect the reality of human life independent of the cultural essence of the Javanese people (Tricahyo &

Nursalam, 2025). Wayang art, as part of traditional arts, has long been used as a means of da'wah in teaching Islam. With an interesting storyline and unique characters, wayang can direct the community toward the goal of Islamic art as an effective da'wah medium in conveying religious values (Masykur & Soleh, 2023). Normatively, puppet performances can adjust to artistic targets, which create positive things, give birth to scientific discussions, unite the ummah, and become a da'wah medium for the community. Not only that, like the character played "Semar Mbangun Kahyangan," This story describes inviting humans as servants who truly believe and devote themselves to Allah SWT, which is reflected in the life of a person's personality to become a better and virtuous person (Hidayat & Bustam, 2022). Thus, puppet art as a medium of Islamic education in da'wah enriches the way of conveying Islamic teachings and maintains cultural traditions that are part of society.

Furthermore, puppetry has been proven to be a learning medium that can be adapted into digital formats to reach a wider audience (Febrianto, 2021). For example, animation-based puppet shows can be used as educational content on social media platforms, where the younger generation is more interested in learning Islamic values more interactively (Nurasiah, 2024). In addition, puppets with Islamic-based gamification applications can improve the learning experience by providing challenges that teach Islamic stories through puppet characters (Irhas et al., 2022). Through this method, Islamic religious values such as honesty, piety, and justice can be taught through a game mechanism that creates learning innovations by learning developments in the 21st century (Ehrlich, 2021). Using puppets in the digital world can also enrich Islamic lecture methods by using social media, where puppet performances can be packaged in the form of interesting educational video content (Dwi Susilo et al., 2021). So, the art of puppetry remains in harmony with the dynamics of the times and contributes to strengthening the understanding of Islamic religious values and preserving cultural heritage in modern society that continues to change.

However, along with the development of the times in the current digital era, the younger generation's interest in puppetry has decreased. Children and adolescents interacting more with modern technology such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and other platform applications now tend to be less familiar with these traditional cultural values. This condition has triggered concerns about the loss of understanding of future generations of puppet art as an important part of Indonesia's cultural heritage. According to Joanes (2024), More innovative, interactive, and interesting learning methods are needed to make it easier for the younger generation to understand and appreciate the culture of their ancestors. Amid a waning interest in puppetry, new, more relevant approaches are becoming increasingly important. One of the efforts that can be made is to develop puzzle-based game applications that offer an interactive learning experience. By combining elements of entertainment and education, the mini-games in this application are designed to maintain the diversity of the game and increase player appeal. Each puzzle successfully arranged will display information about puppet characters so that children can learn about Indonesian culture while still enjoying games with technological developments.

6. Conclusion

This research discusses the values of Islamic education in puppet art that significantly impact students. The results of the study show that the art of puppetry not only functions as entertainment, but also as a means of learning and da'wah that can broaden students' horizons during the learning process. Through the storyline and characters, puppetry can convey educational values that align with Islamic teachings and local cultural wisdom. In the context of Islamic education policy, puppetry can be integrated into a curriculum combining religious teachings with digital technology so that students can understand Islam more contextualistically and in a more relevant way to daily life. Meanwhile, preserving this culture can strengthen the art of puppetry as part of the Islamic heritage in Indonesia. By combining Islamic values in puppet shows, the younger generation can be more interested and introduce cultural heritage to the art of puppetry so that it is not ignored. In addition, in modern pedagogical practice, puppet media can bridge conventional learning methods by utilizing digital technology to create teaching innovation products for students. This allows puppet media to be used through digital media such as digital animation or gamification which are more in demand by the younger generation and still contribute to Islamic education without leaving elements of local culture.

The study of Islamic education and puppet art culture carried out in the search (2014–2024) with the SLR method faces methodological and contextual limitations. One of the main challenges is the limitation of resources that specifically discuss the integration of Islamic values in the art of puppetry. In addition, many previous studies tended to be descriptive without an empirical approach that was analyzed in depth. In the context of Indonesian culture, it also affects the interpretation of Islamic values in puppet art, so it is difficult for researchers to generalize the acquisition of research documents that have been obtained. This requires further research using more exploratory methods and based on empirical data to gain a comprehensive understanding. Therefore, we recommend specific research questions for future research agendas, such as the effectiveness of digital puppet art as a teaching medium in Islamic education and examining pedagogical frameworks that can optimize the use of puppets in character learning. Thus, this can facilitate future research in using puppets as a learning medium in schools, madrasas, and Islamic boarding schools, so that this artistic, cultural heritage continues to be preserved for future generations.

Disclosure statement

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