REPRESENTATION OF SPIRITUAL VALUES IN NUSSA DAN RARA ANIMATION AND ITS RELEVANCE TO ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Amid the rapid flow of digitalization and the dominance of visual culture, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) faces strategic challenges in conveying spiritual values to the younger generation. Children growing up in digital ecosystems tend to be more responsive to emotional and visual narratives than to conventional verbal approaches. This study aims to analyze the representation of spiritual values in the animated series Nussa and Rara and to explore its relevance to Islamic education in the digital age. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach and content analysis method, this research examines selected episodes based on three main categories: worship, jihad (in its broader ethical sense), and exemplary character. The findings reveal that Nussa and Rara consistently deliver Islamic values through narrative, visual, and symbolic elements that align with the developmental psychology of children. These values are not delivered through instruction, but rather internalized through characters, everyday conflicts, and emotionally resonant resolutions. This study shows that animation can serve as an effective medium for strengthening religious attitudes, supporting the affective objectives of the Islamic education curriculum, and bridging learning spaces between school and home. Moreover, the series aligns with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, making it a relevant instrument for thematic, contextual, and character-based learning in contemporary Islamic education.

Keywords: *value representation, Islamic religious education, children's animation, digitalization, independent curriculum.*

INTRODUCTION

In the midst of rapid digitalization and cultural globalization, Islamic religious education is faced with a new reality: the younger generation is more familiar with screens than books (Sofa, Mundir, & Ubaidillah, 2024) . Children now grow up surrounded by visual content, social media algorithms, and digital narratives that come in the form of videos, animations, and interactive games (Fathoni, Prasodjo, Jhon, & Zulqadri, 2023) . On the one hand, these advances open up a wider space for creativity and access to knowledge (Arisanti, Rasmita, Kasim, Mardikawati, & Murthada, 2024) . But on the other hand, a serious challenge arises: how can spiritual and Islamic values be instilled fully in a world that is increasingly fast and instant?

Religious education must not be left behind by the times. It must be able to adapt itself-not by reducing the teachings, but by reconstructing its delivery methods (Hasanah & Sofa, 2025) . It is in this context that animation media emerges as a potential bridge between the lofty values of Islam and the imaginative world of children (Haq, 2022) . Animation has power not only because of its attractive visuals, but because it is able to wrap complex messages into simple, touching stories that are easily digested by the innocent reasoning of children (Gumilang, Wahyuni, Rahayu, & Hamid, 2024) . Thus, animation is not just entertainment; it is the language that children understand today (Akmal, Sudarto, & Khotimah, 2024) .

One local product that has stolen the public's attention is Nussa and Rara, an animated series developed to present Islamic values in a light and fun form (Laurentia Nurillah, Anrial, & Valentine, 2024) . The series features relatable characters, age-appropriate conflicts, and meaningful narratives (Wibowo, 2024) . In each episode, spiritual values such as honesty, worship, adab to parents, the spirit of studying, and mutual respect are displayed explicitly or implicitly (Farah Faizah, 2024) . Nussa and Rara are not just fictional characters, but ideal representations of pious and well-mannered Muslim children, who become a mirror for the audience (Anggraini, 2021) .

In the study of media culture, representation is not a passive reflection of reality, but an active construction that shapes perceptions, meanings, and even value orientations (Santoso, 2025) . Referring to Stuart Hall's theory of representation, media such as animation becomes an arena of meaning production that has a direct impact on the way audiences - in this case children - understand the world and shape their identities (Nugroho, 2023) . Therefore, it is important to examine more deeply how the animation Nussa and Rara represents spiritual values in its narrative, characters, and visualization (Fanshoby, Hasbullah, & Hermansah, 2022) . How are Islamic messages packaged? To what extent are they effective as instruments of religious education? And furthermore, how is its relevance to the learning objectives of Islamic Religious Education at school and at home?

This research comes to answer these questions with a descriptive qualitative approach (Mubarok & Abdurrahman, 2024) . The main objective is to analyze the representation of spiritual values in the animation of Nussa and Rara, and explore its relationship with the process of Islamic religious education in the digital era (Istifarriana, Kurniawan, & Kasmiati, 2021) . The hope is that this study can make a real contribution to the world of Islamic education, especially in formulating learning strategies that are not only informative but also transformative - that touch the hearts of children while shaping their character and spirituality from an early age (Hasanah & Sofa, 2025) .

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the *content* analysis method as its main strategy (Rozali, 2022) . This approach was chosen because it is in line with the main objective of the study, which is to explore in depth the meanings hidden behind the representation of spiritual values in the animation of *Nussa and Rara*, and explain its relationship with Islamic religious education in the context of digital society (Sarjiati, 2023) . In the qualitative paradigm, reality is understood as a social construction full of meaning, and the researcher's task is to reveal the symbolic layers that shape people's perspectives and behavior, including children as the main audience of animated media (Fanani, Wisudaningsih, & Fatimah, 2023) .

As the primary data source, this study focuses on certain episodes of the *Nussa and Rara* series that explicitly or implicitly display spiritual messages (Hafizah, Sari, Winanda, Hidayatullah, & Harmonedi, 2025) . The episodes were selected purposively, namely based on the consideration that the narrative and visualization contain religious values such as honesty, spirit of worship, respect for parents, social responsibility, and simplicity of life (Dagama, Poppyariyana, & Hurri, 2021) . In addition to the storyline and dialog, data is also collected from visual elements such as Islamic symbols, setting, and character expressions that contain educational values (Handayani, 2023) . To enrich the reading, secondary data in the form of books, scientific articles, and previous research results are used as a theoretical and contextual basis for analysis (Shobirin, 2024) .

Data collection was conducted through three main techniques. First, non-participatory observation of the selected episodes, by scrutinizing in detail the scenes that contain representations of spiritual values. The focus of observation was not only on the verbal content, but also on the visual cues and emotional atmosphere built through the narration (Fadli, 2024) . Second, the documentation technique is carried out by archiving relevant episodes, transcribing dialog transcripts, and collecting supporting documents from the official *Nussa Official* channel and other media that discuss this animation (Fadilla & Wulandari, 2023) . Third, when necessary, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants such as Islamic Religious Education teachers, parents, or media and Islamic education experts, to gain additional perspectives on the effectiveness of the spiritual messages conveyed (Rivaldi, Feriawan, & Nur, 2023) .

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Fatimah & Islam, 2021) . Data reduction was carried out by identifying and sorting out findings that were directly related to spiritual values such as worship, jihad in the broadest sense, and exemplary. The sorted data was then presented in the form of thematic narratives that revealed patterns of representation in the animation (Susanto & Jailani, 2023) . The final stage is conclusion drawing, where the researcher formulates the main findings and connects them with Stuart Hall's representation theory and the framework of spiritual values in Islamic education (Ica, 2024) .

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this study applied source and theory triangulation techniques (Nurfajriani, Ilhami, Mahendra, Afgani, & Sirodj, 2024) . Validation is carried out through testing *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability*, and *confirmability*, so that the conclusions produced are not only academically appropriate, but can also be applied in the broader context of Islamic education (Husnullail & Jailani, 2024) . The entire research process is carried out with reflective awareness, keeping the researcher's position neutral and open to field findings, so that the results compiled are truly born from an honest and measurable scientific process (Yusriani, 2021) .

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Representation of Spiritual Values in Nussa and Rara Animation

Nussa and Rara animation comes as one of the local media products that consciously integrates spiritual values into the world of children. The series does not simply present everyday stories, but also slips strong moral and

spiritual messages in the form of narration, dialogue, visuals, and character behavior. Its gentle, non-patronizing approach and integration with children's daily lives make it a potential educational medium in shaping Islamic character from an early age. Based on the content analysis of several episodes, the dominant spiritual values in the series can be grouped into three main dimensions: the value of worship, the value of jihad, and the value of example. All three are represented consistently and contextually, making them easy for children to understand and imitate.

a. The Value of Worship: Familiarizing Vertical Relationship with Allah SWT

One of the most striking representations of spiritual values in Nussa and Rara's animation is the depiction of worship as a routine and fun activity. Practices of worship such as praying, reciting prayers, reciting the Quran, and saying the words of wisdom are presented not as burdensome obligations, but as expressions of love for Allah. In the episode "Prayer is Obligatory", for example, Nusa is depicted as waking up early for Fajr prayer and excitedly waking up his sister Rara to join the Fajr prayer too, even though Rara refused because she was still sleepy, Nusa did not get angry but persuaded her patiently.

In addition, in the episode "eat not just eat". In this episode, Rara is shown sitting neatly at the dining table. However, despite sitting neatly, Rara immediately ate without paying attention to the manners or rules of eating taught in Islam. Seeing this, Nussa gently reprimanded Rara and reminded her that: Don't just eat, eat using the rules that the Prophet taught. Nussa then taught some eating manners according to the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, namely: Washing hands first before eating - this is part of maintaining cleanliness and health, Saying "Bismillah" before eating - as a form of dhikr and expecting blessings in food, and others.

Visual symbols that support the value of worship are also very prominent. In many scenes, there are neatly laid prayer mats, clean and bright prayer clothes, and house layouts that contain Islamic nuances, such as calligraphy on the walls, prayer clocks, and Qur'an shelves. All this builds a spiritual atmosphere that is natural and not rigid. Children will unconsciously internalize that an Islamic home is not just a place to live, but a spiritual space where faith and morals grow.

b. The Value of Jihad: Interpreting Struggle as a Process of Self-Formation

In Islam, jihad has a broad meaning that is not limited to the context of war, but includes all forms of struggle to become a better person. In the animation of Nussa and Rara, jihad is represented through children's inner conflicts in facing temptations, desires, and situations that require moral decision-making.

Episode "Belajar Jualan" In this episode, Nussa and Rara participate in a cheerful children's bazaar by selling Umma's homemade kue cubit. They are excited to offer their wares to the buyers. However, competition arises when Abdul and Syifa also sell cubit cakes with interesting flavor variations. Rara felt threatened by the competition and began to behave unsportsmanlike. The situation culminates when Mr. Ucok wants to buy in bulk, but Nussa and Rara's wares are almost gone. Nussa then offers Abdul and Syifa's merchandise to Mr. Ucok, which upsets Rara. Through Umma's guidance and self-introspection, Rara realized her mistake and apologized to Abdul and Syifa. They eventually reconciled and worked together.

The episode "Rarra sorry part 2". In this episode, Rarra feels guilty for hurting Iboy's feelings. She is determined to apologize to Iboy at school. However, when Iboy is absent from class, Rarra worries that Iboy's absence is caused by her. Driven by a sense of responsibility, Rarra and her friend Nur decided to visit Iboy's house and apologize in person.

Arriving at Iboy's house, they found Iboy still angry and refusing to meet. Rarra felt disappointed and almost gave up. However, after getting advice from Abah and Umma about the importance of apologizing and forgiving, Rarra regained her spirits. Together with Nussa and Nur, Rarra made a new toy as a form of apology and placed it in front of Iboy's house. Finally, Iboy accepts the toy, signaling that he has forgiven Rarra.

c. Exemplary Value: Cultivating Morals Through Inspirational Figures

Exemplification or uswah hasanah is an important principle in Islam. The Nussa and Rara series builds this value through strong, consistent, and realistic characters. Nussa is portrayed as a boy who is not perfect, but always tries to be better. He shows Islamic morals in various aspects: telling the truth even when it is difficult, helping his parents without being told, accompanying Rara with love, and refusing to respond to friends' pranks with anger.

The episode "jaga amanah part 2". In this episode, Rarra borrows Nussa's rocket toy to use in her storytelling assignment at school. Nussa is hesitant at first, but finally gives permission on the condition that Rarra must take good care of the toy. Unfortunately, the toy was lost, making Rarra feel guilty. With Umma's guidance, Rarra learns about the importance of trust and finally apologizes to Nussa after the toy is found.

Exemplary behavior is also shown through parents. Abah Nussa, for example, is often seen guiding his children through stories, not just giving orders. He uses a dialog approach, building understanding and instilling meaning from each event. The mother appears as a figure of gentleness and firmness, balancing the values of love and discipline. The pattern of parenting in this series strongly supports the value of exemplary in Islamic character education.

d. Visual and Symbolic Language: Amplifying Messages through Islamic Aesthetics

It is undeniable that visual power is an important element in animation. In Nussa and Rara, spiritual messages are not only conveyed through words and actions, but also through graphic design, color, music, and spatial layout. The colors used are predominantly bright and soft-blue, green, white, and orange-that build a positive and child-friendly atmosphere. Mosques, domes, calligraphy, prayer mats and headscarves are depicted not as foreign symbols, but as part of a Muslim child's daily life.

Background sounds such as chanting prayers, adhan, or Islamic children's songs also reinforce the religious atmosphere without feeling stuffy. These nuances are essential for building a spiritual experience that is fun and not pushy. The animation succeeds in making the teachings of Islam down-to-earth, enjoyable, and approachable with love, not fear or obligation.

2. Relevance to Islamic Religious Education

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has the main purpose of forming individuals who are faithful, pious, noble, and able to practice Islamic teachings in real life. However, the biggest challenge of PAI in the digital era lies not in the content of the curriculum, but in the approach and media of its delivery. While today's generation grows up in a colorful, fast, and visual media landscape, many PAI practices still rely on verbalistic, cognitive, and normative approaches. In this context, the animation of Nussa and Rara comes as an alternative media that is potentially able to bridge the gap between the ideality of Islamic values and the digital and visual world of children.

a. Internalization of Islamic Values through Children's Language

Internalization is the process of making a value part of one's consciousness and personality, not just cognitive knowledge. In Islamic Religious Education, value internalization is the core of the formation of good character - character that comes from spiritual awareness, not social coercion or formal obligations. However, this process can only be successful if the values are conveyed in a form that is suitable for the way children think, feel and learn.

Children of elementary school age (7-12 years old) are in the concrete operational phase according to Piaget's theory, which is a phase where they are not yet able to think abstractly and learn more easily from real things that they can see, hear and feel. Thus, the delivery of Islamic values in the form of definitions or lectures is difficult for them to fully absorb. This is where Nussa and Rara becomes relevant, as it uses a visual narrative approach - showing values in the form of stories that are close to children's lives.

A concrete example can be seen in the episode "Shalat itu Wajib", where Nussa wakes up early, prays Fajr, and invites her sister. Here, the value of worship is not preached, but shown as a habit done with love and enthusiasm. The child audience absorbs that prayer is an activity that can be done happily, not for fear of sin. The internalization process occurs because children feel that worship is natural, close, and fun.

Furthermore, symbols such as prayer mats, mosques, bedtime prayers, and sayings such as "Alhamdulillah" that appear repeatedly in various emotional contexts (happy, sad, scared, grateful), create spiritual conditioning in the child's mind. This is a form of symbolic internalization, which psychologically builds positive associations with Islamic teachings.

From the perspective of classical Islamic education, this is in line with the principles of ta'lîm and ta'dîb developed by al-Ghazali and al-Attas: that educating is not just conveying, but shaping the dzauq-feeling towards goodness. Thus, Nussa and Rara not only teach values, but shape the child's feelings and attitudes towards them. This is the initial stage of the formation of a true Muslim personality.

In terms of educational implications, it can show several points such as:

- Teachers and parents can use these episodes as *internalization tools*, and then generate dialogue and reflection with the child: "Why does Nussa wake up at dawn?", "What does it feel like to be honest?"
- The use of these animations should not be passive (just watched), but active (used as a starting point for habituation of behavior at home and school).

On the other hand, there are several challenges that need special attention including:

- Internalization will only be effective if the media used is consistent. If Nussa and Rara are only watched occasionally, while the rest of the time children are treated to other content with conflicting values, then this process becomes disconnected.
- So it is necessary to strategize the integration of Islamic content in children's digital life, not just as a "distraction", but as part of the moral ecosystem.

b. Strengthening Affective Objectives in the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum

Islamic Religious Education in the Indonesian national curriculum-including the Merdeka Curriculum-is designed to cover three main domains: cognitive (knowledge), affective (attitude), and psychomotor (action). However, in its implementation, the affective domain is often a weak point. Values such as sincerity, empathy, compassion and responsibility are taught, but they are more memorized than lived. In this context, Nussa and Rara offer a solution that is highly relevant to strengthening the affective domain.

The affective domain cannot be achieved through lectures alone. It requires a process of emotional affiliation and repetition of moral experiences in contexts close to children's daily lives. Nussa and Rara works directly in this dimension: each episode not only conveys the story, but activates the audience's emotions through a touching plot of conflict and resolution. Children don't just understand that being honest is good, but feel what it's like to be honest, or to be the one who is apologized to by their friends.

For example, in the episode "Rara maaf part 2", the process of Rara feeling guilty for hurting her mom's feelings is shown. She is determined to apologize to her mother. Children who want to watch experience a reflective moment: they witness that apologizing is hard, but reconciling.

This is in accordance with the principles in Bloom's taxonomy of the affective domain, where there are five stages: receiving, responding, valuing, organization, and characterization. Most PAI learning stops at the receiving stage, but Nussa and Rara move children to the responding and valuing stages-children not only know, but begin to like and imitate the value.

In classical Islamic education, the affective domain is the doorway to the soul. The scholars emphasized the importance of tazkiyatun nafs (purification

of the soul) before imparting knowledge. Therefore, value education must be preceded by touching the heart. Nussa and Rara touch the heart through characters who are alive, relatable, and undergo moral transformation from time to time. When Nussa makes a mistake, she is not judged, but dialogued with and guided. Children absorb this as a model of how to improve themselves, not with fear, but with awareness.

In terms of educational implications, it can show several points such as:

- Teachers can use a particular episode to reflect on values before the lesson begins. For example, before discussing the theme "Praiseworthy Morals", students are asked to watch an episode and write down one value they learned.
- At home, parents can use certain scenes as a basis for counseling their children. For example, when children lie, parents can say, "Remember when Nussa was honest even though she was afraid? You can do that too."

On the other hand, there are several challenges that need special attention including:

- The affective domain requires reinforcement across time. Children will not immediately change just because they watch one episode. So it takes consistency between viewing, parental guidance, and teacher exemplary.
- If teachers and parents are not actively involved in linking values to children's real-life experiences, then affective meaning will quickly evaporate.

***c.* Answering the Challenges of Islamic Education in the Age of Disruption**

The era of disruption is characterized by rapid, unpredictable changes that touch almost all aspects of life, including education. In this context, Islamic Religious Education faces a double challenge: first, how to maintain the essence of Islamic teachings amid the flood of digital information that is permissive, instant, and consumptive; second, how to convey religious values to a generation that is more familiar with gadgets and moving images than books and lectures.

Today's children - often called the Alpha generation - live in a reality dominated by visual content, speed and interactivity. They grasp the message of a 60-second video on TikTok faster than a paragraph in a textbook. They also form moral, social and emotional perceptions through digital narratives, not just from parents or teachers. If religious education does not adapt to the character of this era, then Islamic values will be left behind, even marginalized in the cognitive and affective space of children.

Nussa and Rara animation offers an answer to this challenge. It is a form of media ijtihad, a renewal of the means of conveying religious values in a format that suits children's technological culture. It does not change the substance of Islamic teachings, but conveys the essence of these teachings through a medium that children like: short stories, funny characters, simple conflicts, light music, and touching emotional resolutions.

For example, in the episode "jaga amanah part 2", the conflict experienced by Rarra not only teaches the meaning of keeping trust in concept, but also presents the process of attitude formation through real experience. The world of children is closely related to toys as a symbol of ownership and fun. When Rarra borrows Nussa's toy and then loses it and feels guilty, she

experiences emotional pressure that leads her to understand that trust must be kept seriously. The values of responsibility, honesty, and the courage to admit mistakes are presented simply but powerfully. So, Islamic education in the era of disruption can answer the challenges of the times by making moral values no longer feel abstract, but present contextually, applicable, and relevant to the world of children.

In this context, Nussa and Rara not only convey religious messages, but also shape digital moral awareness, which is the ability of children to recognize, assess, and respond to values in visual and media contexts. This is an important skill in the era of disruption, as values are no longer delivered only by teachers, but by thousands of media channels that continue to shape children's perceptions every day.

From the point of view of Islamic education, this effort is in line with the principle of al-hikmah dâllatul mu'min, that wisdom belongs to believers wherever it is found. As long as the method does not violate the principles of sharia, then it may be used in order to maintain religion. In fact, in the modern context, not using relevant media can actually result in the loss of opportunities to instill values effectively.

In terms of educational implications, it can show several points such as:

- Schools and madrasahs can start designing a digital thematic curriculum, with the integration of animated media as one of the learning resources. For example, each moral theme in PAI books can be paired with a particular episode of *Nussa and Rara* as an introductory media.
- PAI teachers need to be equipped with media literacy to be able to contextually link digital narratives with religious values. Not all digital content is Islamic; it needs sorting and mentoring.

On the other hand, there are several challenges that need special attention including:

- Islamic media still lags behind in terms of production and distribution compared to secular content that dominates digital platforms. To make animations like *Nussa and Rara* truly effective, systemic collaboration between educators, content creators and the government is needed.
- There is a risk of the child becoming only a passive consumer. Therefore, this content should be integrated with active strategies: discussions, Q&A, small projects, or reflections on values in real life.

d. Supporting the Integration of Formal and Family Education

One of the fundamental principles in Islamic education is that the learning process does not only take place in formal institutions such as schools or madrasah, but also and even especially in the family environment. This concept is in accordance with the words of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH:
"Every child is born in a state of fitrah, so it is his parents who make him a Jew, Christian, or Majusi" (HR. Bukhari and Muslim).

This means that the role of parents as the first and main educators is central in the formation of children's spirituality and character. However, in contemporary social reality, the role of family education is often weakened due to various factors: parents' busyness, lack of religious literacy in the household, and the dominance of uncontrolled entertainment media. As a result, there is a discrepancy between the values taught at school and the upbringing at home.

This is where Nussa and Rara animation offers a strategic contribution as a medium that can bridge the formal and family education spaces.

In each episode, Nussa and Rara presents a portrait of an ideal Muslim family that is warm, communicative, and educational. The father and mother characters are not just complementary to the story, but active characters who accompany, direct, and model children. Nussa's father, for example, is portrayed as a wise and open figure, who advises without patronizing and educates with dialogue, not orders. Nussa's mother is a motherly figure who is patient, loving, yet firm in instilling manners and values.

This interaction creates a very relevant model for parents in the real world. It shows that spiritual education does not have to be strenuous, but can be instilled through small habits - inviting children to pray together, reciting prayers during meals, discussing emotions, or conveying values with hugs instead of anger. More importantly, the animation subtly conveys that educating children is a dialogic and affective process, not a one-way domination.

In addition, this animation provides a concrete opportunity for collaboration between school and home. At school, teachers can use Nussa and Rara as an introductory media for learning values, then ask students to retell the content of the story to parents at home. At home, parents can watch the story with their children and have a light dialog about the lessons learned from the story. This kind of interaction not only strengthens the understanding of values, but also builds spiritual communication between parents and children.

In the concept of tarbiyah Islamiyah, this is in line with the tandzimul bi'ah approach - the formation of an educational environment that is socially and spiritually conducive. If the school and family both present consistent value content, then the process of forming an Islamic personality becomes more solid and integrated.

A concrete example of integration:

- After watching the *"Learning to be Honest"* episode at school, students are asked to write down their honest experiences at home and discuss with their parents. Parents are asked to write a short feedback as part of the *home-school communication sheet*.
- At home, parents can choose one episode per week to watch with their children, and then make an agreement together about one value that will be practiced together for one week (e.g. greeting every time you enter the house).

Challenge:

- Not all parents have the awareness or knowledge to use *Nussa and Rara* as an educational tool. So there needs to be an Islamic media literacy program for parents, so that they are able to use this animation as an educational tool, not just entertainment.
- School support is needed in providing simple guidelines or *modules* for family *use of Islamic animation*. For example: episode lists, value themes, discussion questions and practice examples.

e. Strategic Media for Independent Curriculum Implementation

The Merdeka Curriculum, as the latest national education framework in Indonesia, emphasizes a learning approach based on character strengthening, learner differentiation, and real-life context. One of the main indicators of its

success is the formation of the Pancasila Student Profile, one of the dimensions of which is "faith, fear of God, and noble character". This dimension is identical to the spirit of Islamic Religious Education. However, the challenge is how to realize this great goal through approaches and media that suit the learning styles of digital generation students. This is where Nussa and Rara occupy a strategic position as learning media that supports the philosophy and direction of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum.

First, Nussa and Rara supports the principle of relevant and contextualized learning. The episodes are designed based on real-life situations of children, such as conflicts between siblings, lazy studying, fear of being scolded, or the desire to play that interferes with responsibility. These are everyday problems of Indonesian children, lightly packaged and given meaningful resolutions. This is very much in line with the life-based learning approach advocated by the Merdeka Curriculum, which is learning that is directly connected to the dynamics of students' lives.

For example, when the teacher wants to discuss the topic of honesty in moral material, he can play the episode "Belajar Jujur", then ask students to identify the conflict, the feelings of the characters, and the values instilled. From there, the teacher can encourage students to make personal reflections or project assignments, such as writing down their honest experiences in a diary or making a short video about the importance of honesty. Thus, Nussa and Rara is not only a tool, but also a trigger for project-based learning and personal reflection.

Second, this animation is in line with the principle of learning differentiation. In Merdeka Curriculum, teachers are encouraged to accommodate the diversity of student learning styles-visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and multimodal. Nussa and Rara combines visual (pictures), auditory (music, dialog), and emotional (story and conflict) elements, making it accessible to different types of learners. Children who have difficulty understanding the material through text can understand more easily through animated videos, especially if accompanied by discussions and follow-up activities.

Third, Nussa and Rara supports the social emotional learning approach that is now an important part of character-based learning. Each episode touches on aspects of children's emotions - shame, disappointment, pride, fear, anger, joy - which are directly linked to moral decision-making. This is very effective in building character competencies, such as self-awareness, empathy, social skills and responsibility. These values cannot be taught through theory, but must be experienced and lived. This animation creates the space for that experience symbolically.

Fourth, in terms of curriculum implementation, Nussa and Rara opens up a large space for interdisciplinarity and collaboration between subjects. For example:

- In PAI, students learn the value of patience from certain episodes.
- In Bahasa Indonesia, they rewrite the storyline or create new dialog based on the characters.
- In Cultural Arts, they draw their favorite scenes or redesign character costumes.

- In Informatics, they can create digital storyboards based on the stories they have watched.

This is in line with the spirit of the Merdeka Curriculum, which does not rigidly separate disciplines, but rather encourages collaboration across fields to form a whole person.

Practical implications:

- Teachers can design thematic learning units based on specific episodes of *Nussa and Rara*, which include pre-watch (content prediction), during-watch (note the value) and post-watch (discussion, project, reflection) activities.
- Schools can hold a "character-focused thematic class" once a week, using media such as *Nussa and Rara* as the centerpiece.

Challenges and opportunities:

- Teacher training is needed to not only use this media as entertainment, but as a strategic pedagogical tool. Teachers need to understand how to link the animation content with learning outcomes.
- It takes the active involvement of schools and families in building a learning environment that supports the use of Islamic media. If there is no continuity between viewing and action, the values learned can be quickly lost.

CONCLUSION

This research is based on the urgent need to reconstruct the approach of Islamic Religious Education in the midst of digitalization that changes the way children learn, interact, and understand values. In this context, Nussa and Rara animation comes not only as an entertainment product, but as an alternative representation of Islamic values education packaged in the language of the times.

Through content analysis of a number of episodes, it was found that this animation contains a strong and consistent representation of Islamic spiritual values. The value of worship is represented not only through prayer rituals and prayers, but also as light and fun daily habits. The value of jihad is shown in a broad sense: the spirit of learning, restraint, doing good, and facing challenges with earnestness. Meanwhile, the value of exemplification is clearly present in the behavior of the characters, both children and parents, which shows that Islam is not only a teaching system, but a way of life.

What makes this animation deeply relevant to Islamic Religious Education is its success in transforming Islamic values into emotional and moral experiences that children can relate to. It does not teach directly, but invites subtly. It does not speak as a teacher, but as a peer in the form of a beloved character. In this case, Nussa and Rara has functioned as a medium for internalizing values, reinforcing religious attitudes, and connecting the world of children with the noble teachings of Islam.

Furthermore, this animation also provides a concrete answer to the challenges of today's curriculum and pedagogy. It supports affective approaches that are often overlooked in religious learning; offers learning media that suit children's digital lifestyles; and opens up space for integration between school and family education. In addition, Nussa and Rara is highly compatible with the spirit of the Merdeka

Curriculum, which emphasizes project-based, contextualized learning and character building.

Thus, it can be concluded that Nussa and Rara is not only worthy of being seen as a learning tool, but also as a real form of adaptive, transformative and communicative Islamic education. It shows that spiritual values do not have to be taught rigidly, but can be presented gently-with stories, visuals, and empathy. In the midst of a crisis of attention and the dominance of value-free global media, this animation is a small, bright space: a place where Islam is taught with love, displayed by example, and instilled with awareness.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to express their deepest gratitude to Mr. Ahmad Khumaidi, M.Pd.I. and Mrs. Yeniati Ulfah, M.Pd.I. for their meaningful guidance, advice, and support during the process of writing this article. Gratitude is also expressed to the journal editorial team for the opportunity given to publish this article. The author also expresses his deep gratitude to his beloved parents who always provide encouragement and prayers in every step of this academic journey.

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