Requirements to activate children's Islamic education concepts learning in childhood education classes

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Abstract

The requirements for activating the teaching of Islamic education assume a critical role in enhancing teachers' competencies, augmenting their knowledge, honing their skills, and deepening their understanding of Islamic education. These requirements are essential for achieving the desired educational goals in this domain. The objective of this study is to identify the requirements necessary for activating the learning of Islamic education concepts among young children (aged 5-7 years) during early childhood education classes. To achieve this aim, a convenient sample of 37 early childhood education teachers was selected from the northern region of Jordan. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which were validated and tested for reliability. Qualitative research procedures were employed to analyze the collected data. The study findings revealed a set of crucial and indispensable prerequisites for promoting the learning of Islamic education concepts in early childhood education classes. These prerequisites were classified into six principal categories, which comprised: developing the child's holistic personality, selecting appropriate learning methods and strategies for children, utilizing and designing illustrations and learning tasks, analyzing learning materials, adopting an integrated approach, and evaluating children's learning. Based on these findings, several recommendations were proposed to enhance the professional and pedagogical competencies of early childhood education teachers, enabling them to promote and activate the learning of Islamic education concepts among young children.

Keywords: requirements, young children, Islamic education.

Introduction

The formative years of early childhood have a profound influence on the development of a child's personality. As these years can only be recalled as memories,

it is crucial to optimize their potential. Early childhood education in the age of technological and scientific advancement is guided by a futuristic perspective that emphasizes the holistic development of children across various domains, including cognitive, psychological, social, emotional, skill, and perceptual abilities (Abdul Rahman, 2020; Beblawi, 2012; Fawares & Fawaris, 2022; Khasawneh, Al-Barakat, & Almahmoud, 2023; Sativa, Fatmawati, & Romadhon, 2023; Uysal, Aydemir, & Genç, 2017; Vellymalay, 2012).

This emphasizes that the nurturing of a child's character involves not only the physical and cognitive domains but also encompasses all facets of their linguistic, social, moral, and emotional makeup, among others. Acknowledging the significance of preparing children and fostering their character development, the Jordanian Ministry of Education has prioritized the incorporation of comprehensive curricula for early childhood education (Khasawneh et al., 2023; Taher, 2020).

Islamic education is considered a fundamental element of school curricula that children must learn in the early stages of life, given its primary objective of fostering the development of the child's mental, social, emotional, and psychological aspects, based on the foundations and principles of Islam. This enables the formation of normal behavior in individuals from an early age (Ilham, 2020; Khaidir & Suud, 2020; Paull, Whitsed, & Giriardi, 2016; Sativa et al., 2023; Zarkhuan et al., 2022). The significance of Islamic education is evident in its potency, the multitude of its fields, and its comprehensive approach, which encompasses the spiritual, cognitive, and physical dimensions, regulating human thought, behavior, and emotions based on religious principles (AL-Ahmadi, 2006). This aligns with the overarching goal of the early childhood education curriculum, which aims to foster the child's holistic development across all aspects of their personality (Al-Anani, 2005; Irshid, Khasawneh, & Al-Barakat, 2023; Khasawneh, Al-Barakat, & Almahmoud, 2022; Qandil & Badawi, 2023). Thus, incorporating Islamic education in early childhood has become an imperative and a humanitarian issue in light of the challenges faced by children, including deviation, poor upbringing, and deviation from their innate nature (Ayuningsih, Syafaruddin, & Amiruddin, 2020; Tolchah & Mu'ammar, 2019).

The paramount objective of the early childhood education stage is to foster the comprehensive development of the child through the implementation of the Islamic education curriculum. Consequently, the role of early childhood education teachers in building the child's personality and preparing them based on Islamic principles has become crucial in guiding their behavior and reflecting their values (Ayuningsih et al., 2020; Fawares & Fawaris, 2022; Sativa et al., 2023; Tolchah & Mu'ammar, 2019).

As such, the role of early childhood education teachers entails a significant responsibility, requiring them to be well-versed in educational and psychological theories, methods, and appropriate teaching strategies for the early childhood stage (Al-Barakat et al., 2023a; Al-Barakat, Al Ali, & Al-Hassan, 2022a; Al-Hassan, Al-Barakat, & Al-Hassan, 2012). To accomplish this, the training and preparation of teachers during their service are of utmost importance, given the critical role of teachers in the educational process, alongside the current inadequacy in terms of both quantity and quality of teachers (Al-Barakat et al., 2022b). The teacher of Islamic education, in particular, plays an integral role in achieving the objectives of Islamic education, with high expectations associated with their performance (Al-Ghamdi & Al-Najem, 2020; Hindi, 2010).

Psychological theories emphasize the importance of learning concepts through learning programs and activities that promote children's understanding of Islamic education concepts in childhood education classrooms, such as; constructivist learning model emphasizes that children's interaction with the learning environment and exposure to positive models of Islamic education can significantly enhance their learning and understanding of Islamic concepts in childhood education classrooms (Irshid et al., 2023; Khasawneh et al., 2022).

Moreover, constructivist learning highlights the importance of building upon children's prior knowledge and experiences (Fraihat, Khasawneh, & Al-Barakat, 2022; Irshid et al., 2023; Khasawneh et al., 2022, 2023). By leveraging children's cultural and religious backgrounds, an educational environment can be created that facilitates the development of their understanding of Islamic education concepts. In this context, active learning emphasizes the role of activity and active participation in the learning process. By providing opportunities for interaction and active engagement in learning

activities related to Islamic education, children's involvement with Islamic concepts and their comprehension can be enhanced (Fraihat et al., 2022; Irshid et al., 2023; Khasawneh et al., 2022, 2023).

The significance of teacher training, especially for early childhood education teachers, is evident in the diverse and complex roles that contemporary teachers are expected to fulfill. The teacher's responsibility extends beyond the implementation of educational policies to include guiding and organizing their students' learning, providing support and direction amidst the cultural changes of the current era (Al-Banna, Al-Mutairi, & Darwish, 2020; Al-Barakat et al., 2022a).

Al-Harbi (2018) highlights that in-service training is a valuable approach for enhancing the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs, as it enriches theoretical knowledge and develops practical experiences, while shaping teachers' attitudes and philosophies towards teaching situations. Specifically, Karagiorgi and Symeou (2007) emphasize the significance of teacher career development as a primary tool for enhancing teacher competence. In this regard, Yaakob et al. (2020) assert that the professional development of teachers should be grounded in identifying their training needs, as the success of career development hinges on accurately determining the requirements for activating the teaching of Islamic education.

In educational literature, the requirements for activating the teaching of Islamic education are often described as the disparity and the gap between the current outcomes and the desired outcomes (Abdul Aziz, 2013; Al-Barakat & Al-Hassan, 2009; Al-Barakat et al., 2023a; Ayuningsih et al., 2020; Fawares & Fawaris, 2022; Zarkhuan et al., 2022). Hindi (2010) posits that meeting the requirements for activating Islamic education necessitates changes in teachers' knowledge and experiences, which should be included in their training programs to enhance their performance. Al-Rashidi (2019) and Zarkhuan et al. (2022) define the requirements for activating Islamic education as the disparity between the expected and actual performance, stemming from a lack of knowledge, experience, or attitudes.

The preceding definitions suggest that the requirements for activating Islamic education serve as a means of enhancing teachers' competencies and achieving the educational institution's desired objectives (Abdul Aziz, 2013; Al-Barakat et al., 2023b;

Fraihat et al., 2022). Hence, the existence of these requirements indicates the presence of performance issues among teachers, which can be addressed through effective and constructive training. The effectiveness of training relies on accurately identifying the requirements for activating Islamic education (Irshid et al., 2023; Khasawneh et al., 2022; Zarkhuan et al., 2022).

The initial step in determining the necessary requirements for activating Islamic education involves identifying the required type of training (Hamada, 2019; Zarkhuan et al., 2022). Educational literature (Abanmy, 2014; Hamada, 2019; Hamadneh, 2007; Khasawneh et al., 2023) suggests that identifying these requirements contributes to specifying the training objectives, designing the program, selecting the means and materials, and determining the program's implementation and evaluation methods. Three approaches to identifying training requirements for activating Islamic education are evident in the educational literature (Abdul Aziz, 2013; Al-Shadaifat, 2015; Alqadi, 2016; Hussin & Tamuri, 2019; Irshid et al., 2023; Salem, 2019; Sativa et al., 2023; Zarkhuan et al., 2022):

1. The organizational analysis approach involves identifying the organizational goals, examining the administrative and operational structures, and analyzing the efficiency indicators to identify the areas requiring training for activating Islamic education.

2. The operations approach entails studying and analyzing the tasks performed by the organization's members and identifying the knowledge and skills that they lack.

3. The individual approach focuses on measuring the individual's performance in their role, identifying the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that require development to improve their job performance.

Meeting the requirements for activating Islamic education yields several benefits, including enriching teachers' pedagogical knowledge, enhancing their practical skills, and fostering positive attitudes towards education and learning situations (Irshid et al., 2023; Sativa et al., 2023). Thus, the preparation and training of early childhood education teachers occupy a pivotal position in global educational systems (Al-Barakat et al., 2023a; Al-Hassan et al., 2012). The significance of meeting the requirements for activating Islamic education among teachers arises from the current developments in the Jordanian educational system, which necessitate the preparation of teachers capable of nurturing the

individual's personality from the early childhood stage, enabling them to make informed decisions in their community in the future (Paull et al., 2016).

Facilitating and activating effective learning environments for early childhood education requires an emphasis on diversity and inclusivity. This necessitates creating learning environments that are inclusive and respectful of the diversity of cultures and beliefs within the community. Teachers should be mindful of the needs and beliefs of all students and endeavor to establish an environment where all children feel valued and respected.

In addition to the aforementioned aspects, early childhood learning environments should adopt an assessment-for-learning approach, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive assessment system to monitor each child's progress and evaluate the curriculum's effectiveness (Kirk, Knaus, & Rogers, 2022; Rankin et al., 2022; Sarah, Kate, & Peter, 2021). Continuous evaluation of the teaching and learning process is essential to ensure that it is effective and that the children are meeting the desired outcomes. This can be achieved through regular assessments, observations, and feedback from parents and teachers, as well as ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers to ensure that they remain updated with the latest teaching methods and best practices (Beatson et al., 2022; Cohrssen et al., 2023; Kirk et al., 2022; Rankin et al., 2022; Sarah et al., 2021). Effective assessment and evaluation practices, according to Al-Hassan and Al-Dhafiri (2019), can help teachers identify areas of strength and weakness in their teaching and curriculum and make necessary adjustments to improve children's learning experiences.

Similarly, several educators (Beatson et al., 2022; Black et al., 2023; Mikati & Uchitel, 2023; Sarah et al., 2021) emphasize that to ensure the effective learning of Islamic education concepts, teachers may follow these steps:

- Understanding child development: Teachers should possess a comprehensive understanding of the developmental stages of children, encompassing their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. This knowledge enables them to design a curriculum that caters to the specific needs and interests of each age group.

- Utilizing appropriate teaching methods: Teachers should employ teaching methods that are appropriate for the age of the children they are teaching. For

instance, young children learn best through play, so teachers should incorporate games, songs, and other interactive activities into their lessons.

• Implementing age-appropriate materials: Teachers should select learning materials that are suitable for the age of the children. For instance, picture books, stuffed animals, and other tactile objects may be used to facilitate the learning process for young children.

• Considering the children's interests: Teachers should consider the interests of the children they are teaching. For instance, if a child displays a keen interest in animals, the teacher could incorporate lessons about animals into the curriculum.

• Adapting the curriculum as necessary: Teachers should remain flexible and willing to adapt the curriculum as necessary to accommodate the needs and interests of the children. For instance, if a child struggles with a specific concept, the teacher could offer additional support to aid comprehension.

• Seeking feedback: Teachers should actively seek feedback from parents and colleagues to ensure that the curriculumis suitable for the age group they are teaching. This feedback can help teachers identify areas that require improvement and make necessary adjustments.

Based on the above steps, teachers can ensure that the curriculum for Islamic education is age-appropriate, engaging, and effective for young children.

The novelty of the subject matter concerning the training of early childhood educators endows this study with its significance. Its importance, thus, lies in the knowledge it will furnish to the field of scientific research, which will subsequently offer the authorities within the Jordanian Ministry of Education feedback on the extent to which in-service training programs fulfill the requirements of early childhood education teachers. As identifying the requirements for activating Islamic education among teachers constitutes the principal key to formulating effective training programs, this study's utmost value lies in its revelation of the training requirements that early childhood education teachers still require in the domain of teaching Islamic education. Such an accomplishment contributes to the enhancement of the professional competence of early childhood education teachers. Consequently, this approach aligns with one of the Jordanian Ministry of Education's primary objectives concerning the professional development of teachers,

particularly since the first years of schooling aim to instill desirable changes in children's behavior, habits, and life skills from an Islamic perspective. the current study derives its significance from the participation of early childhood education teachers in identifying the training requirements in teaching Islamic education provides a compelling rationale for conducting this study. In this regard, Al-Barakat et al. (2023a) has emphasized the crucial role that early childhood education teachers play in planning training programs. Thus, contemporary educational perspectives underscore the significance of the teachers' involvement in determining the training requirements. Apart from the abovementioned, this study represents an objective response to various research endeavors that have indicated the need for in-service training among early childhood educators to enable them to embrace the orientations of the Ministry of Education towards the knowledge economy.

The problem with this study is that in-service and pre-service teacher training programs do not prioritize fulfilling the requirements of activating Islamic education among early childhood education teachers in the domain of Islamic education. This may be attributable to the training program officials' emphasis on preparing early childhood education teachers in teaching reading, writing, and mathematical skills to children, irrespective of other school curricula, including Islamic education curricula (Al-Barakat et al., 2023b). Given the Jordanian Ministry of Education's directives concerning the significance of the Islamic education curriculum as one of the primary curricula that children must learn, identifying the requirements for activating Islamic education among early childhood education teachers constitutes a crucial starting point for teacher training. In this regard, Al-Hassan et al. (2022) affirms that identifying the prerequisites for activating Islamic education among teachers is the first step in any training program, as it illuminates the reality that teachers confront. The researchers assert that there is a dearth of educational studies that have investigated the matter of the requirements for activating Islamic education among early childhood education teachers, particularly in terms of examining this issue from the perspective of early childhood education school principals, who serve as resident supervisors within their institutions. Consequently, this study aimed to identify the problem by disclosing the estimations of early childhood education teachers regarding the training needs that early childhood education teachers still require. To

accomplish this goal, the study sought to answer the following question: What are the urgent requirements to activate children's Islamic education concepts learning in childhood education classes from teachers' viewpoint?

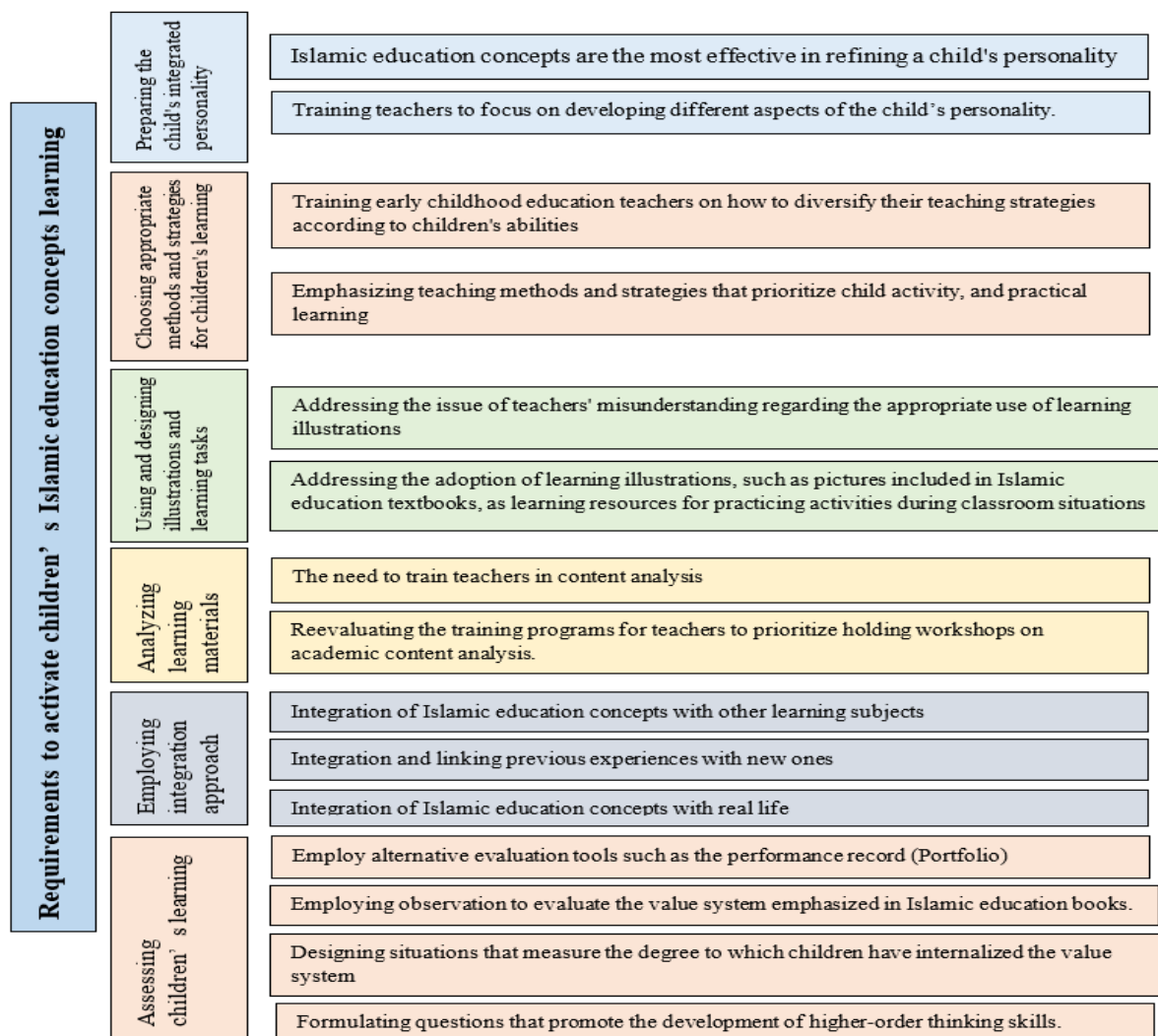Figure 1 below shows the requirements to activate children's Islamic education concepts learning:

Figure 1. Theoretical framework

"Developed by the authors"

Previous Studies

Numerous Educationalists (Abdul Aziz, 2013; Al-Hassan et al., 2012; Paull et al., 2016; Sativa et al., 2023; Zarkhuan et al., 2022) emphasize the critical role of qualified teachers in activating Islamic education concepts in early childhood education. These teachers must possess a comprehensive understanding of Islamic

education and be equipped with the necessary skills to teach young children. Additionally, they should possess knowledge of child development and age-appropriate teaching methods to create an effective learning environment. According to Khalid and Abdul-Rahman (2012), teachers who are proficient in Islamic education and have experience working with young children can establish a nurturing learning environment that promotes children's Islamic identity and development.

Furthermore, the learning materials used for teaching Islamic education to young children must be carefully designed to align with their developmental level and interests. The materials should incorporate Quranic verses, Hadith, stories of the prophets, Islamic values, and practices. Al-Qudsi (2014) emphasizes that learning materials should be tailored to meet the cognitive, social, and emotional needs of young children, with a focus on Islamic values, ethics, and morals. Al-Khateeb and Al-Ajlouni (2020) stress the importance of training early childhood teachers to implement child-centered learning approaches, utilizing various learning materials and resources such as books, flashcards, games, and videos. Availability of these materials is essential to facilitate the children's learning process.

Al-Khateeb and Al-Ajlouni (2020) highlight that incorporating multimedia and technology in Islamic education can significantly enhance children's learning experiences, rendering Islamic education more interactive and engaging. Consequently, the learning environment provided must be safe, welcoming, and comfortable, with age-appropriate facilities, materials, and resources. This underscores the importance of creating learning environments that promote and encourage children to learn and explore Islamic education concepts, featuring posters, artwork, and other visual aids that depict Islamic themes and contribute to shaping children's Islamic identity and development.

The previous discussion highlights the necessity of not solely focusing on indoor learning environments but also directing attention towards outdoor learning environments, with parental involvement playing a crucial role. In this regard, educators (Al-Barakat et al., 2022b; Al-Hassan et al., 2022; Alharthi, 2022) stress the importance of engaging parents in their child's education and encouraging them to support the Islamic education curriculum by reinforcing Islamic values and teachings

at home. Al-Fataftah and Al-Qdah (2020) assert that parental involvement in Islamic education can significantly enhance children's Islamic identity and development, particularly if parents are knowledgeable about Islamic education and actively engage in Islamic learning activities with their children. This can be achieved through regular communication with teachers, attending parent-teacher conferences, and participating in school activities and events.

The Jordanian Ministry of Education concentrates on adopting the knowledge economy has led to field studies that reveal how the failure to meet the requirements of activating Islamic education among educational institution workers can negatively affect their psychological outlook towards their institutions. Al-Barakat et al.'s (2022a) study has highlighted how the failure to meet the requirements of activating Islamic education during field training for pre-service teachers constitutes one of the most significant factors negatively impacting students' attitudes towards field training programs. Therefore, meeting the requirements of activating Islamic education among teachers is crucial, and educational institutions must prioritize this matter. It is one of the most vital factors contributing to enhancing the professional competence of teachers and achieving high-quality learning outcomes (Al-Banna et al., 2020). Addressing the requirements of activating Islamic education among early childhood education teachers to teach Islamic education is an essential need that educational institutions must fulfill, given the deficiencies in pre-service teacher preparation programs.

Recognizing the significance of identifying the requirements for activating Islamic education concepts among teachers, several researchers (Al-Banna et al., 2020; Al-Rashidi, 2019; Hamadneh, 2007; Karagiorgi & Symeou, 2007; Lee, 2005) have investigated the means by which Islamic education concepts can be implemented in school education. All studies have concluded that teachers have a profound desire to enhance their professional performance through training programs, which schools can provide to ensure the programs reflect the teacher's training requirements. Additionally, the results suggest that the most pressing training requirements are in the domains of linguistic assessment, language proficiency, and the utilization of educational and computer technology. For the remaining domains, the arithmetic averages fall within the average or less degree.

The preceding studies have primarily focused on examining the assessment of training needs from the perspective of teachers. It is noteworthy that all previous studies have confined the appraisal of training requirements to questionnaires, which may not fully reveal the actuality of teachers' needs. The present study stands out from previous studies by its focus on the requirements for activating Islamic education. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, this study is the first of its kind in the Jordanian context, specifically in the domain of teaching Islamic education in early childhood education classes. Furthermore, this study distinguishes itself in two ways. Firstly, it utilized semi-standardized interviews as a means of data collection, which sets it apart from other studies that did not employ this method. Secondly, the study collected data from the perspective of early childhood education school principals, who serve as resident supervisors within their institutions.

Method

The qualitative research analysis methodology known as the Grounded Theory Approach was employed in the study. This approach focuses on developing a new theory based on data derived from field research, rather than relying on pre-existing theories. The Grounded Theory Approach is characterized by analyzing data gathered from diverse sources such as interviews, observations, and documents. These data are collected and analyzed in an integrated and iterative manner, aiming to discover patterns and new concepts emerging from the data rather than confirming preconceived hypotheses. The data analysis is balanced between field discoveries and theoretical interpretations, resulting in a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. The Grounded Theory Approach provides a robust methodological framework for qualitative research, enhancing the ability to explore and understand complex phenomena and relationships within their natural contexts. Consequently, this methodology contributes to expanding knowledge and developing new theories in the field of study.

Participants

The study aimed to investigate and gather insights from the teachers of childhood education in public schools within Irbid Governorate, Jordan. It specifically focused on

the second semester of the academic year 2022/2023, indicating a specific timeframe for data collection. Irbid Governorate, located in Jordan, comprises six Directorates of Education. This suggests that the study encompassed schools under these Directorates, providing a geographical scope for the research. The participants of the study were early childhood education teachers. It is worth noting that an available sample was used for participant selection. This implies that the researchers selected participants based on their accessibility and willingness to participate, rather than employing random sampling techniques. The sample size for the study consisted of 37 respondents.

Study instrument

To identify the requirements for activating the learning of Islamic education concepts, a semi-structured interview was employed in this study. The interview questions were devised and developed by the researchers, drawing on their expertise in the field of childhood education, considering the specific objectives and research questions of the study. In addition, to referring to educational literature and previous studies related to the subject of the study to gain insights into the key factors and requirements for activating Islamic education (Abanmy, 2014; Abdul Rahman, 2020; AL-Ahmadi, 2006; Al-Banna et al., 2020; Al-Barakat et al., 2023b; Al-Khawaldeh, 2018; Al-Rashidi, 2019; Al-Shadaifat, 2015; AlAli & Al-Barakat, 2023; Alqadi, 2016; Cohrssen et al., 2023; Hamada, 2019; Hindi, 2010; Masithoh, 2019). To ensure the validity of instrument, nine questions were formulated and reviewed by specialists in the domains of teaching methods for Islamic education, early childhood education teachers, and early childhood education supervisors. Based on the experts' opinions, three questions were eliminated, and two were modified. Consequently, the final version of the interview instrument comprised five questions (see appendix 1).

The instrument's reliability was verified by conducting two repeated interviews with seven early childhood education teachers who were not part of the study sample. The first and second interviews were conducted two weeks apart. Subsequently, the two researchers analyzed the interviews, followed by an additional analysis by a colleague of the researchers. The results demonstrated complete consistency between the two analyses, indicating that there were no disparities in the data analysis.

To ensure the attainment of high credibility in data collection, the study adhered to the principles of qualitative research methodology (Cresswell, 2018; Patton, 2015), as outlined below:

- The study aimed to clarify its objectives to the potential interviewees who expressed their willingness to participate in the study. Additionally, the participants were informed that the data obtained during the interviews would be treated with complete confidentiality and solely used for scientific research purposes.

- Prior to conducting the interview, informed consent was obtained from the participant to record the session through audio recording.

- The interview time and location were determined in consideration of the participant's circumstances.

- Before initiating the interview, a friendly and respectful relationship was established with the participant to create a comfortable environment for conducting the interview.

- To encourage the participant to express their perceptions freely, their identity and name were kept confidential, and instead, a number was assigned to each participant.

- The five interview questions were presented to the participant, and to ensure the accuracy of their responses, some questions were rephrased at the end of the interview in different formats, but with the same idea. This approach increased the credibility of the responses from the study sample.

- After transcribing the interview from the recorded tapes, the researcher presented the transcript to the participant to allow them to review and add or delete any information they deemed appropriate. This procedure was a robust indication of the data stability obtained from the personal interview.

To analyze the data collected via the semi-structured interview, the researchers employed the qualitative research analysis methodology (Creswell, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Oliver, 2000), specifically utilizing the grounded theory approach. This approach entailed adopting the concepts and ideas that emerged from the interview data and subsequently identifying their attributes or characteristics (categories) through the following techniques. Firstly, the interviews were transcribed separately on paper. Each word, sentence, and phrase mentioned by the study participants was closely read.

Coding was utilized to categorize the responses. Similar ideas were grouped into sub-categories. Sub-categories were placed within the main categories. To ensure the reliability of the data analysis, a colleague who was a faculty member in the same department as the researchers repeated the analysis process. This process resulted in complete agreement between the analysts regarding the data analysis, based on the main categories and sub-categories. This procedure confirmed the integrity and accuracy of the analysis process. Finally, the responses were analyzed by calculating their frequencies and percentages as distributed within the sub-categories.

Findings and Discussion

Following a close reading of the participants' responses, the study data were analyzed, resulting in the identification of several main categories that comprised a group of sub-categories. The main categories encompassed the following requirements:

1.   Preparation of the child's integrated personality

2.   Selection of appropriate methods and strategies for children's learning

3.   Utilization and design of illustrations and learning tasks

4.   Analysis of learning materials

5.   Implementation of an integration approach

6.   Evaluation of children's learning

Each of these categories will be presented and discussed in the following sections:

The first category- Preparing the child's integrated personality

Based on the data analysis, it was found that 31 (83.78%) of the study participants emphasized the significance of training early childhood teachers in developing a child's personality across all developmental domains within learning environments. The study sample regarded the refinement of a child's personality as fundamental to acquiring Islamic education concepts and inculcating Islamic values in children. The following are some quotes from the responses of the study sample:

Training early childhood teachers should be based on their ability to incorporate Islamic education lessons into the child's personality development across various domains, including social, cognitive, moral, emotional, and others.

The majority of Islamic education concepts emphasize the significance of various aspects, including moral, emotional, social, cognitive, and others. Therefore, it is crucial to integrate all of these areas into the development of children's personalities rather than focusing on a single aspect. Early childhood teachers should be trained to address all of these domains in their teaching practices.

It is essential to develop and foster emotional development within learning environments. Children must be provided with sufficient learning opportunities to develop their feelings and emotions in the context of Islamic education, as this contributes to the integral development of his/her personality.

The aforementioned responses demonstrate the strong conviction of a significant number of early childhood education teachers who were interviewed regarding the urgent need for training teachers to focus on developing various aspects of a child's personality. The substantial attention given to this area of training requirements by the study participants reflects its significant impact in bringing about the desired change in children's education and learning.

The training of teachers on how to plan for developing children's personalities via Islamic education lessons signifies the significant role that Islamic education concepts play in refining and developing a child's personality across multiple domains. The study sample's responses indicated that Islamic education concepts are the most effective in refining a child's personality, given that the objectives of Islamic education in childhood emphasize building an integrated value system for a child's personality from an early age. This finding is consistent with the study by Al-Barakat and Al-Karasneh (2005), which found that Islamic education textbooks for early grades include a value system that forms a solid foundation for shaping a child's personality. The success of inculcating this value system as a lifelong behavior for the child depends on the effectiveness of early childhood education teachers' teaching performance, particularly in planning Islamic education lessons and other subjects.

It is worth noting that early childhood education teachers' emphasis on ton this field from the requirements for activating Islamic education aligns with the Jordanian Ministry of Education's efforts to incorporate knowledge economy principles into school curricula, beginning with early grades. The Ministry of Education, in line with

its orientation towards the knowledge economy, recognizes the importance of linking education to life and developing learners' personalities from early stages. This requires providing children with ample knowledge, skills, and educational opportunities to apply their learning into practice. Consequently, significant attention must be given to the continuous academic, educational, and cultural preparation of teachers, as emphasized by Jawarneh and El-Hersh (2005).

The second category - Choosing appropriate methods and strategies for children's learning

The data analysis results indicated that all interviewees acknowledged the indispensability of developing a series of high-quality training programs that can cater to the needs of teachers to effectively employ the teaching methods and strategies required by the Ministry of Education in the teaching of Islamic education subjects, as there is no other way to attain the Ministry's goals for enhancing children's learning. The following responses provide evidence in support of this argument:

… It is essential to provide early childhood education teachers with the necessary training to enable them to choose the most effective teaching methods that enhance Islamic education concepts, provide support, and achieve the desired learning outcomes.

The conventional teaching methods employed by teachers are not suitable for developing Islamic education concepts. Instead, specific methods designed for teaching Islamic education to children must be utilized, and teachers must be trained on their implementation... yes, it is imperative to raise teachers' awareness of these specialized methods.

In line with its adoption of the knowledge economy principles, the Ministry of Education has tasked early childhood education teachers with utilizing diverse teaching strategies to teach all school curricula, including Islamic education.

The previous responses indicate the urgent need for training requirements for early childhood education teachers, as there appears to be a general weakness in children's learning of Islamic education concepts. Fulfilling these training requirements is crucial in enriching the classroom environment and making it more dynamic and engaging. The researchers believe that these perceptions have a significant impact on the classroom environment's quality, which, in turn, positively affects children's academic performance.

A careful examination of the preceding perceptions highlights a series of conditions that must be considered while meeting the requirements of activating Islamic education among early childhood education teachers. These conditions pertain to the following aspects:

- Training early childhood education teachers on how to diversify their teaching strategies according to children's abilities. The narrative method is particularly emphasized for teaching Islamic education subjects. The researchers posit that the focus on storytelling in training may be attributed to the effectiveness of stories in teaching children. Stories serve as a powerful tool in inculcating values that aim to foster healthy behaviors reflective of a wholesome personality. Educational literature by Buqai (2003), Dweck (2015), Early Childhood Australia (2018), Rawashdeh and Al-Barakat (2007), Alshawareb (2007), and among others, indicates that using stories in teaching children significantly contributes to their emotional and psychological development.

- Emphasizing teaching methods and strategies that prioritize child activity, and practical learning. Teaching methods and strategies are integral components of the school curriculum that significantly contribute to the development of children's learning experiences. The researchers justify that the focus on these requirements for enhancing Islamic education may stem from early childhood education teachers' reliance on traditional teaching methods that fail to promote the development of children's learning experiences. This interpretation is consistent with Al-Khawaldeh's (2018) findings, which indicated that Islamic education teachers' focus still centers on traditional teaching practices aimed at imparting information and knowledge from Islamic education textbooks. Therefore, Al-Khawaldeh suggested that the Ministry of Education should prioritize directing Islamic education teachers towards utilizing modern teaching methods.

Drawing from the preceding findings and responses of the study sample, the researchers conclude that the primary requirement for early childhood education teachers to meet the requirements of activating Islamic education concepts aligns with the Ministry of Education's directions in developing children's abilities from early educational stages to

foster their decision-making skills in educational and learning situations through logical thinking and practical activities. Achieving this goal hinges on utilizing teaching methods and strategies that facilitate effective learning outcomes. Educational literature by Al-Fatlawi (2004), Darwazeh (2005), Dweck (2015), and Early Childhood Australia (2018) suggests that activity-based teaching methods and strategies contribute significantly to raising children's enthusiasm and challenging them to reach knowledge through self-discovery and peer interaction. These methods also enhance their motivation to learn and encourage their active participation in the educational and learning process.

The third category – using and designing illustrations and learning tasks

The data analysis uncovered that a significant proportion of the study sample (97.29%) recognized the significance of training early childhood education teachers and guiding them to design learning tasks and incorporate learning illustrations, such as pictures, drawings, and caricatures, among others. Several respondents conveyed this perspective as follows:

Early childhood education teachers must receive training on utilizing sensory methods.

In my opinion, many early childhood education teachers lack clarity on the optimal use of illustrations.

It is imperative to provide teachers with training on designing learning tasks in classroom environments... Currently, early childhood education teachers do not commonly employ learning tasks... and teaching primarily revolves around presenting the knowledge contained in textbooks.

The preceding responses underscore the significance of training early childhood education teachers on incorporating learning illustrations and designing learning activities. The study subjects' responses indicate that training programs must take into account the following considerations:

1.   Addressing the issue of teachers' misunderstanding regarding the appropriate use of learning illustrations. It appears that a significant challenge in utilizing illustrations in teaching and learning Islamic education subjects is related to teachers' misunderstanding of their proper use. One study sample respondent stated, "*Despite the numerous training courses offered to early childhood education teachers, these*

courses have not succeeded in instilling appropriate educational behavior for using learning illustrations. From the respondents' perspective, learning illustrations are employed only to provide information and not to facilitate knowledge acquisition. To address this issue, teachers must receive training on the appropriate use of learning illustrations." This response highlights teachers' lack of awareness regarding the effective use of illustrations, which is consistent with Al-Hassan et al.'s (2022) findings indicating that early childhood education teachers have misconceptions about utilizing educational illustrations, such as pictures and drawings, as learning resources in developing children's knowledge acquisition skills.

Drawing from the preceding discussion, and considering that Islamic education topics for childhood are replete with images aimed at developing their Muslim personalities, the misuse of such images could lead to negative outcomes that affect children's knowledge acquisition process. Therefore, training on the appropriate use of sensory methods constitutes a crucial requirement for effective learning and knowledge acquisition.

2.   Addressing the adoption of learning illustrations, such as pictures included in Islamic education textbooks, as learning resources for practicing activities during classroom situations. The data analysis results indicate that many early childhood education teachers emphasized the importance of training on how to adopt learning illustrations found in Islamic education textbooks as resources for practicing scientific activities that foster scientific thinking. Some study sample respondents expressed the significance of this training as follows: "*I am surprised that there is a wide scope for practicing activities based on the illustrations contained in the textbooks, but teachers do not make use of them...training teachers on guiding children to contemplate images depicting the greatness of the Almighty Creator significantly contributes to developing their thinking skills.*"

This issue which shows the importance of the requirements of activating Islamic education underscores the significance of proper use of illustrations as a vital means of guiding children to contemplate the creation of the Almighty. This use contributes significantly to instilling the dogmatic aspect in children, particularly since contemplating images that depict the greatness of God is the primary tool for developing a child's thinking.

The fourth category - Analyzing learning materials

According to the data analysis, 89.19% of the participants emphasized the importance of analyzing learning materials as a central requirement for activating the learning of Islamic education concepts. Many teachers consider that content analysis of learning materials helps them achieve the principles of effective learning. As stated by some of the respondents:

The attainment of learning outcomes is directly related to the teacher's ability to analyze the curriculum content into its components.

The development of the child's personality is correlated with the efficacy of training programs aimed at enhancing and developing individuals' performance in the area of content analysis.

The quality of learning materials depends on how the learning content is analyzed. Therefore, teachers must possess the requisite qualifications to analyze learning materials.

The preceding responses demonstrate the study sample's interest in reevaluating the training programs for early childhood education teachers to prioritize holding workshops on academic content analysis. This outcome may reflect the extent of early childhood education teachers' awareness regarding the significance of analyzing content before undertaking any educational action. The study results indicate that such awareness among early childhood education teachers emerged in response to their failure to conduct content analysis of Islamic education subjects. This need was identified based on the challenges faced by early childhood education teachers in their practice.

This outcome highlights the imperative need for training teachers on content analysis, given the absence of such training. The researchers posit that childhood education teachers' interest in this issue may stem from the Ministry of Education's expectation that teachers analyze the academic content as a requisite duty, which mandates analyzing the content of each academic unit before teaching it. This finding aligns with Al-Barakat et al.'s (2022b) observations that teachers' content analysis processes remain limited, which may reflect their perception of the learning materials' sanctity, leading them to evade personal responsibility.

Hence, training teachers on educational content analysis is an indispensable element of the educational-learning process in any educational system, given its direct

correlation with the teacher's success in nurturing and educating young learners. The improvement of early childhood education teachers' performance rests upon their professional development in content analysis. In this context, content analysis is the primary tool for diagnosing the educational contents, including concepts, information, ideas, values, and societal issues. Therefore, the effectiveness of the teacher's performance in analyzing the educational content is critical for the development and enhancement of the educational-learning process (Dweck, 2015; Early Childhood Australia, 2018; Hayes, 2012; New South Wales Ministry of Health, 2017; Schunk, 2009; Sequeira, 2012).

The fifth category - Employing integration approach

The data analysis results revealed that 30 (81.08%) of early childhood education teachers consider the integration of Islamic education concepts in learning as a crucial requirement for activating Islamic education, upon which the teacher's success in inculcating Islamic values and ideals depends. The following quotes substantiate this perspective:

In my view, emphasizing the integration of Islamic education concepts in learning is a paramount principle that fosters effective learning, capable of comprehending knowledge and its integration.

.... Actually, the teacher requires training on the integration of Islamic education knowledge with knowledge from other subjects.... Furthermore, it is essential to provide training on how to integrate the topics taught in previous classes with new topics.

…. In my opinion, it is highly crucial to train teachers on integrating Islamic education lessons seamlessly into everyday life.

Integration plays a significant and beneficial role in learning Islamic education concepts.... The concepts of Islamic education outlined in the Holy Quran are closely linked to the daily realities of life. Therefore, early childhood educators must establish a form of integration between learning Islamic concepts and the daily life situations.

A thorough examination of the data analysis reveals that the pressing requirements for activating Islamic education among early childhood education teachers in terms of integration in teaching Islamic education revolve around four dimensions, which can be summarized as follows:

1. Integration of Islamic education concepts with other learning subjects

The study sample's responses affirm that authors of Islamic education textbooks for early childhood education ought to establish links with other academic subjects. This linkage involves connecting Islamic education concepts with relevant concepts in other educational subjects, thereby promoting knowledge integration. For instance, Islamic education discusses the concepts of rain and its formation, which children learn in the science subject. Hence, it is imperative to integrate the concepts of Islamic education on rain formation with the water cycle in nature in the science subject. This integration facilitates and enhances children's learning of Islamic education concepts.

The data analysis results indicate that early childhood education teachers face a challenge in linking Islamic education concepts with other subjects, despite their complementary nature. The absence of this teaching practice among early childhood education teachers presents a significant obstacle to achieving the educational goals intended for children, with negative consequences for their learning development. Highlighting the importance of this integration, Al-Barakat et al. (2022a) affirmed that linking Islamic education concepts with other academic subjects considerably contributes to developing an integrated Islamic personality in terms of faith, religious knowledge, morals, and values.

Emphasizing the horizontal integration pattern between subjects, which represents one of the fundamental principles of effective teaching, is crucial. The significance of this type of integration arises from the interdependence among children's ideas. In the early stages of their education, children begin thinking about whole objects before focusing on specific details or parts. The child maintains the unity and integration of knowledge throughout this process.

In the view of the researchers, childhood education teachers' inclination towards prioritizing this type of integration as a requirement for activating Islamic education among early childhood educators is attributable to contemporary educational trends that emphasize the application of the constructivist approach in developing children's knowledge. This is particularly relevant since the educational experience in childhood is an integrated whole that cannot be fragmented. Human

nature necessitates acquiring experiences in an integrated manner, irrespective of the academic subject (Carusi, 2003; Gales & Yan, 2001).

2. Integration and linking previous experiences with new ones

The significance of training in this type stems from the importance of previous experiences acquired by children in earlier classes. These experiences serve as the foundation for new experiences, leading to the term "vertical integration." All experiences gained by the child are interdependent, and integrating them contributes significantly to realizing that effective learning occurs only in light of previous experiences. From this perspective, the constructivist theory in teaching children emphasizes this type of integration. Educationalists such as Schunk (2009) and Sequeira (2012) have highlighted that knowledge is progressively organized based on previous experiences and the learner's developmental growth. Thus, linking previous learning with subsequent learning is one of the primary factors that promote meaningful learning for the learner.

3. Integration of Islamic education concepts with real life

This type of integration highlights the significance of the experience gained from Islamic education lessons in becoming one of the manifestations that children apply in their daily lives. Achieving this objective requires linking Islamic education lessons with the child's life. Educational literature, including Al-Hassan et al. (2022), Schunk (2009), and Sequeira (2012), emphasizes the importance of this integration type in imparting realism and vitality to Islamic education lessons. This integration reflects a genuine interaction between practical life and the teachings of the Islamic religion ordained by God Almighty.

Considering the preceding points and the fact that children in their early years are indivisible wholes, and Islamic knowledge is an integrated unit, the emphasis on training teachers on various integration methods is a crucial requirement. This necessitates the development of specialized training programs aimed at achieving this objective.

The sixth category - Assessing children's learning

The data analysis results indicated that 29 participants (78.37%) from the study sample acknowledged the pressing need for training requirements among early childhood education teachers concerning the evaluation of children's learning of Islamic education concepts. The following quotes may illustrate this point:

The evaluation of a child's learning of Islamic education relies on either observation or the creation of situations that reveal the child's behavior towards it.... This highlights a crucial training requirement for teachers, which involves providing them with training on utilizing observation and creating situations that assess a child's learning.

In my view, assessment constitutes one of the essential educational and learning processes, and therefore, requires significant emphasis.... I noticed that the training programs attended by early childhood education teachers did not adequately address this aspect.... Early childhood educators lack appropriate evaluation procedures.... I see that they deal with assessing children....

Early childhood education teachers lack the necessary understanding of the evaluation procedures utilized for assessing children's learning in Islamic education….

In my observation, teachers evaluate child based on his/her knowledge acquisition.... The assessment process neglects to measure the extent to which children possess and practice the Islamic values outlined in Islamic education textbooks.

.... the lack of suitable assessment tools necessitates a reevaluation of training programs....

At present, the Ministry of Education mandates the use of assessment tools such as the performance record (Portfolio).... However, these tools do not exist in practice.... The teachers lack the necessary knowledge and skills to utilize them.

Based on the preceding quotes, it is evident that there is an immediate training requirements among early childhood education teachers concerning the instruction of Islamic education. This training should focus on the following requirements:

➢ Employing observation to evaluate the value system emphasized in Islamic education books.

➢ Designing situations that measure the degree to which children have internalized the value system.

➢ Formulating questions that promote the development of higher-order thinking skills.

➢   Employ alternative evaluation tools such as the performance record (Portfolio).

The early childhood education teachers' perceptions of these requirements were a result of negative practices observed among Islamic education teachers, such as an overemphasis on cognitive evaluation methods that rely on memorization and recall, while overlooking other aspects of children's growth. Additionally, the lack of diversity in the use of assessment tools was a concern, as the tools were limited to textbook-based questions and answers.

This result suggest that the assessment process was not constructed based on the child's activity, such as projects, archival files, activities, homework, rating scales, self-evaluation, and other similar methods. Consequently, training requirements in this area may indicate the prevalence of traditional perceptions among early childhood educators regarding the evaluation of children's learning.

Hence, this result are inconsistent with contemporary educational perceptions that advocate for a diverse range of evaluation methods and discourage the use of conventional evaluation tools that predominantly focus on knowledge acquisition (Al-Barakat & Al-Hassan, 2009; AlAli & Al-Barakat, 2022; Qandil & Badawi, 2023).

Conclusions, Recommendations and Limitations

The identification of requirements to activate the implementation of Islamic education concepts has gained significant attention, particularly with the Jordanian Ministry of Education's efforts to enhance the proficiency of early childhood education teachers in teaching all academic subjects. The development of teaching competence is a continuous and complementary process that involves regularity and consistency. Hence, the current study reached a major conclusion that role of early childhood education teachers in teaching Islamic education is critical, and they need more care and attention. The present study has shed light on the pressing need for training programs that address the urgent requirements of early childhood education teachers, as achieving the desired outcomes of the Islamic education curriculum for young children is not possible without such programs.

The study's conclusion revealed that early childhood education teachers' strong focus on the cognitive aspect of Islamic education instigated the research

participants to highlight the pressing need for training requirements that promote child-centered and active learning practices. The education of a child encompasses not just cognitive aspects but also emotional, social, and motor skills aspects of their personality. Therefore, child-centered learning involves the holistic development of all aspects of the child's personality in a comprehensive manner. Achieving this requires training programs that familiarize early childhood education teachers with the demands of growth in the early stages of life, so that every aspect of the child's growth takes its natural path in development, through carrying out a range of activities that contribute to the child's personality development across various aspects.

Moreover, the study highlights that achieving an integrated personality in children is directly related to the extent to which early childhood education teachers take into account the requirements of activating Islamic education. This includes integrating the child's learning experiences with their previous experiences and connecting the branches of Islamic education with other academic subjects. Therefore, training programs for early childhood education teachers should prioritize the educational, social, and psychological foundations that contribute to the development of an integrated learning experience for young children. Additionally, the training programs must provide various models of integration in teaching Islamic education to children. It is imperative that those responsible for training programs give significant attention to these aspects.

Furthermore, the study concludes that activating children's learning of parenting concepts necessitates the training of early childhood education teachers in utilizing multiple teaching methods and strategies, analyzing children's learning materials, and employing appropriate assessment tools for evaluating children's learning. To achieve this objective, it is imperative to focus on training teachers in selecting appropriate teaching methods and strategies that allow children to develop self-confidence and take responsibility. Additionally, providing children with the freedom to express their ideas through various forms of movement, speech, drawing, acting, playing, and other means is crucial. These aspects require significant attention and care during teacher training programs.

It is noteworthy that effective training programs aimed at developing teachers' abilities to analyze content will enhance early childhood educators' capacity to create educational materials that facilitate or enhance learning situations. This approach moves beyond relying solely on textbooks as the primary source of learning for both the learner and the teacher.

In particular, it is crucial to prioritize the training of early childhood education teachers on appropriate evaluation procedures for Islamic education in childhood. This training should consider recent trends in evaluating children's learning through alternative assessment tools that focus on the child's activity and practical performance.

Based on the preceding discussion, this study suggests that the Jordanian Ministry of Education should reevaluate its training programs for early childhood education teachers. The training should prioritize the development of teachers' competencies to enable them to:

1. plan and design learning outcomes based on child positivity and activity

2. design learning activities that harness children's abilities and promote their personality development.

3. Apply an integrative approach to children's learning that connects various academic subjects.

4. Utilize effective teaching methods and strategies to reinforce children's learning.

5. Analyze learning materials to identify areas for improvement and development.

6. Employ appropriate assessment tools that align with the child's activity and practical performance to evaluate the level of children's learning.

The current study has several limitations, including a sample size limited to early childhood education teachers who teach in the northern region of Jordan during the second semester of 2022/2023. Additionally, the study focuses solely on identifying the urgent requirements for activating Islamic education among early childhood education teachers from their own perspective. Moreover, the data collection tool is restricted to semi-structured interviews. Therefore, future research should concentrate on evaluating the effectiveness of training programs in enhancing the teaching practices of early childhood education teachers in the area of Islamic education. Furthermore, further studies should investigate the extent to which teachers possess the principles of effective teaching and learning of Islamic education curricula at the early childhood education stage.

Institutional Review Board Statement

Having reviewed the details submitted by the applicant regarding the above named research project, the Research Ethics Committee at King Faisal University grants its ethical approval to the protocol. Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by the committee at any time. The committee may request a regular report on the progress of the project to ensure that researchers are committed to the highest ethical standards. Researchers are held accountable for the storage, retention and security of original data obtained from projects. Any substantial alterations to the project or emerging events or matters that may affect the ethical acceptability of the project must be reported immediately to the committee via email (ialjreesh@kfu.edu.sa) or phone (0096615899773).

Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement

The authors declare that all other data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article and its supplementary information files. Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

Conflicts of Interest

This manuscript has not been published or presented elsewhere, in part or in entirety, and is not under consideration by another journal. There are no conflicts of interest to declare. On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there are no conflicts of interest.

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Appendix (1)

Interview Schedule (Interview Questions)

1. Do you think that teaching Islamic education needs any development in the pedagogy of learning and teaching? Yes, no, how?

2. From your point of view, what is the role of the teacher in activating the teaching of Islamic education concepts?

3. Do you think that there are specific requirements in teaching and learning children that must be implemented in teaching the concepts of Islamic education?

4. What is your vision of the role of the child's centered learning in activating the requirements of teaching Islamic education concepts?

5. In general, what are your most prominent recommendations to activate the teaching of Islamic education concepts in light of the educational reform movement in Jordan?