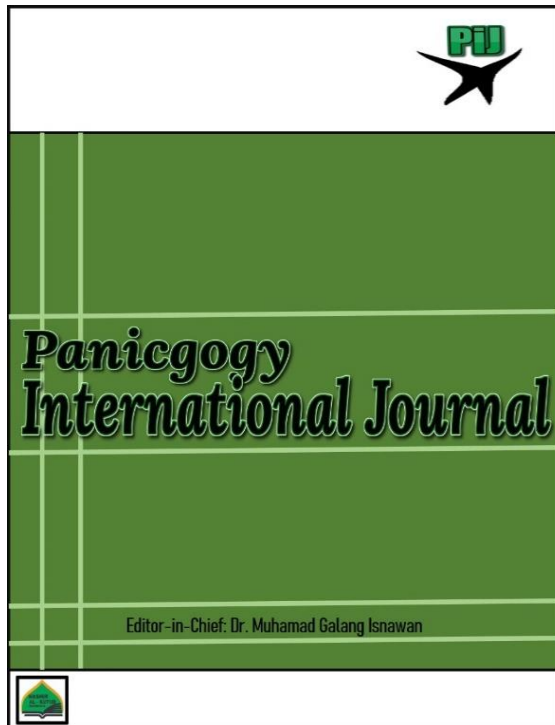


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**Fitrah-Based education as an alternative paradigm for character development in early childhood education: a narrative review**

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## **Fitrah-Based education as an alternative paradigm for character development in early childhood education: a narrative review**

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### **Abstract**

This study aimed to analyze the concept of Fitrah-Based Education (FBE) as an alternative paradigm for character development in Early Childhood Education (ECE). This approach emphasized the importance of exploration, experience, and play in fostering children's character in alignment with their natural fitrah. The research employed a narrative review method by examining and analyzing various literature sources related to the concepts, principles, and implementation of FBE in ECE. Data sources included scientific journals, books, and relevant educational policy documents. The analysis involved comparing different perspectives on FBE, identifying supporting factors and challenges in its implementation, and exploring the most effective learning models for character development based on fitrah. The findings indicated that FBE had significant potential in shaping children's character naturally and holistically. Exploration- and play-based learning enabled children to develop moral, social, and emotional values in ways that aligned with their developmental stages. Furthermore, the active involvement of teachers and parents played a crucial role in ensuring the success of this approach. Key supporting factors in implementing FBE included a deep understanding of the fitrah concept, flexible educational policies, and a conducive learning environment for children's development. Thus, FBE could serve as a more humanistic and developmentally appropriate character education approach in early childhood. Collaboration among educators, parents, and policymakers was essential to optimize the implementation of FBE within the ECE system, ensuring that children developed optimally according to their natural fitrah. Future research focused on developing practical guidelines and strategies for the effective integration of FBE in various early childhood education settings, as well as exploring its long-term impact on children's character development across different cultural contexts.

**Keywords:** Fitrah-Based Education, Character Development, Early Childhood Education, Narrative Review

### **1. Introduction**

Fitrah Based Education (FBE) is an educational approach based on the natural potential that every child possesses from birth (Pratiwi, 2023). This concept emphasizes that each individual has unique tendencies and characteristics that need to be optimally developed in accordance with their innate nature (Muniroh, 2020). In FBE, education does not solely focus on academic aspects but also on strengthening character, spirituality, and social skills (Pratiwi et al., 2023). By understanding and nurturing children according to their fitrah, the learning process becomes more natural, enjoyable, and meaningful, resulting in individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also emotionally and spiritually balanced (Eldarifai et al., 2024).

The significance of FBE in the modern education system lies in its ability to accommodate individual differences and provide space for each child to develop according to their best potential. Amid an education system that is often standardized and uniform, FBE offers a more humanistic approach by valuing each child's uniqueness (Haris, 2023). Through this method, children are educated not merely to meet academic demands but to grow into individuals with self-awareness, empathy, and a love for lifelong learning (Nuraida et al., 2022). Thus, FBE can be a solution for creating a generation that is more independent, creative, and capable of making positive contributions to society.

The problem that arises when education does not align with the FBE concept is the

loss of children's natural potential due to a rigid and uniform learning system. Many schools implement methods that focus solely on academic achievement without considering students' interests, talents, and unique characteristics. As a result, children are forced to learn in ways that do not align with their fitrah, leading to stress, loss of motivation, and even burnout in learning. Additionally, an overly rigid approach to assessing student success, such as strict exam standards, can make them feel undervalued and lose self-confidence.

Moreover, education that is not based on FBE often neglects students' spiritual, emotional, and social aspects. Children growing up in a system that prioritizes cognitive development without considering character and moral growth may struggle to understand life values. They may experience difficulties in social interactions, lack empathy, or even lose their sense of purpose in learning because they do not find meaning aligned with their fitrah. Therefore, it is essential for the education system to accommodate students' natural potential through a more holistic approach so that they can grow into well-balanced, happy individuals who positively contribute to society.

This study examines FBE as an alternative paradigm for building student character in Early Childhood Education (PAUD) through a narrative review approach. The study is conducted by analyzing various literature, including scientific journals, books, and policy documents discussing the concept of fitrah-based education in the context of PAUD. The primary focus of this research is to understand how the FBE approach can be applied in shaping early childhood character in accordance with their natural potential. Using descriptive analysis, this study explores the fundamental principles of FBE, implementation strategies in learning, as well as the challenges and opportunities of its application in PAUD settings.

In the analysis process, this research highlights how a learning environment that aligns with children's fitrah can support their moral, social, and spiritual development. One of the key aspects examined is teaching methods based on experience and exploration, such as learning through play and meaningful social interactions. Additionally, this study discusses how educators and parents can play a role in guiding children according to their natural potentials and interests without coercion. Thus, the findings of this study are expected to provide insights for educators, policymakers, and parents in designing a more holistic education system oriented towards optimal character development in children. To achieve these objectives, several research questions were raised, including:

- 1.1. What are the basic concepts of Fitrah-Based Education (FBE)?
- 1.2. What strategies can be implemented for FBE in Early Childhood Character Education?
- 1.3. What are the challenges and opportunities in implementing FBE in Early Childhood Education?

## **2. Method**

### **2.1 Research Design**

This study employed a narrative review design, a qualitative research method aimed at exploring, synthesizing, and analyzing various literature related to Fitrah-Based Education (FBE) in shaping children's character in early childhood education (PAUD). A narrative review was chosen as it allowed the researcher to understand the development of theories, concepts, and practices implemented in this field. This study not only identified the fundamental principles of FBE but also evaluated its implementation and effectiveness in character development for young children.

### **2.2 Research Object**

The object of this research was the concept and implementation of Fitrah-Based Education in character education for early childhood learners. The study focused on: (a) The fundamental principles of FBE in early childhood education, including the concept of fitrah in education and approaches suited to children's developmental stages. (b) Fitrah-based learning strategies, such as play-based methods, environmental exploration, and

experiential learning. (c) Challenges and opportunities in implementing FBE in early childhood education, including obstacles in applying fitrah-based curricula and strategies for optimizing this approach.

### **2.3 Data Collection**

Data for this study was collected through a literature review from various academic sources and educational policy documents. The data collection process began with source identification, where the researcher searched for relevant literature from indexed scientific journals such as Scopus, WoS, and Sinta, as well as reference books, conference proceedings, and policy documents related to character education in PAUD and FBE. Next, a selection process was conducted based on specific criteria, ensuring that the chosen literature was directly related to Fitrah-Based Education and character education in PAUD, published within the last five years to maintain relevance and up-to-date information, and derived from highly credible sources, including reputable journals, empirical research, or official educational policy documents. After selecting the literature, the researcher proceeded with coding and categorization, in which each piece of literature was classified according to predefined themes, such as FBE principles, implementation strategies, and its challenges and opportunities. This structured approach allowed for a comprehensive analysis of existing studies and ensured that the findings were systematically organized.

### **2.4 Data Analysis**

The collected data was analyzed using content analysis with a descriptive-qualitative approach. The analysis process began with data reduction, where the researcher selected and filtered relevant information from the literature, discarding irrelevant data and categorizing the information into thematic groups. Next, the data presentation phase involved structuring the categorized information into a narrative description, illustrating relationships between various findings from the literature. Finally, in the conclusion drawing stage, the researcher interpreted the data by comparing relevant theories, evaluating the effectiveness of Fitrah-Based Education (FBE) in character education for PAUD, and identifying both challenges and opportunities in its implementation. This structured analysis ensured a systematic and comprehensive understanding of FBE in early childhood character education.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

### **3.1 Basic Concepts of Fitrah-Based Education (FBE)**

#### ***3.1.1 Definition and Fundamental Principles of Fitrah-Based Education***

Fitrah-Based Education (FBE) is an educational approach based on the concept of fitrah, which refers to the natural potential endowed by God from birth (Khaira et al., 2023). In Islam, fitrah is often associated with purity, faith, and the innate human ability to recognize truth and goodness (Turiansyah & Darmawan, 2023). This approach emphasizes that every child has unique potential that should be developed in alignment with their natural disposition (Purnama & Ulfah, 2020). Therefore, fitrah-based education aims to nurture every aspect of a child's being—intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual—through a process that aligns with their natural development.

The main principle of FBE is that education should align with the gradual development of a child's fitrah and should not impose anything contrary to their nature (Fauzi et al., 2023). One key principle is nature and nurture, where education not only focuses on academic aspects but also on character development and moral values embedded in the child (Dahuri, 2023). This principle teaches that the role of parents and educators is not to "shape" children according to their own desires but rather to facilitate their natural growth according to their potential.

Additionally, FBE upholds the principle of education based on love and role modeling. Children learn most effectively through strong emotional connections with parents and teachers who serve as role models in their lives. Fitrah-based education rejects education methods that rely on pressure or coercion, as these can harm a child's natural

development. Instead, this approach prioritizes enjoyable, exploratory, and interest-based learning experiences, enabling children to grow and develop optimally in a supportive environment.

Fitrah-Based Education also highlights the importance of balance between intellectual, spiritual, and life skills aspects. Education is not merely about transferring knowledge but also about guiding children to recognize and understand their purpose in life. Thus, fitrah-based education emphasizes contextual learning that is relevant to children's lives, helping them connect acquired knowledge with real-life experiences. This approach encourages children to become independent, responsible individuals who are aware of their role in society.

Ultimately, Fitrah-Based Education aims to cultivate individuals with integrity, creativity, and a balanced life. By understanding and developing children's fitrah appropriately, education becomes a natural and meaningful process rather than a mere mechanical transfer of knowledge. Through this approach, a generation is expected to emerge with self-awareness of their potential, harmonious relationships with their surroundings, and the ability to contribute positively to society and the world.

### ***3.1.2 Philosophical, Psychological, and Pedagogical Foundations of FBE***

#### **Philosophical Foundations**

FBE is rooted in a strong philosophical foundation, particularly in understanding human nature and the purpose of education. Philosophically, this approach is based on the view that every individual is born with fitrah—an innate potential that must be optimally developed. In Islam, the concept of fitrah refers to the state of purity and the fundamental human ability to recognize truth and an inherent inclination toward goodness. Therefore, fitrah-based education aims to nurture this potential naturally, without coercion or manipulation that contradicts human nature.

Moreover, in the philosophy of education, FBE rejects mechanistic approaches that perceive children as passive objects in the learning process (Anam, 2022). Instead, education should be a child-centered process, recognizing them as unique individuals with different needs and potentials. FBE also emphasizes the balance between intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects, ensuring that learning is not only academic but also contributes to character and moral development. Thus, this approach aims to shape a whole person capable of fulfilling their roles and responsibilities in life.

The philosophy of FBE also underscores the importance of relationships between humans and God, other people, and the universe (Fitri et al., 2024). Education is not only meant to produce intellectually intelligent individuals but also to cultivate deep spiritual awareness. Therefore, FBE encourages children to seek the meaning of life, understand moral values, and live harmoniously with their environment. Based on this principle, FBE becomes a more holistic and meaningful educational approach for children's development.

#### **Psychological Foundations**

Psychologically, FBE is based on the understanding that every child has distinct and unique developmental stages (Sulaimawan & Nurhayati, 2023). This approach aligns with Piaget's cognitive development theory, which states that children learn through active experiences and interactions with their environment. Therefore, in FBE, education is designed to follow the child's natural development without imposing concepts they are not yet ready to comprehend. This approach is also consistent with Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development, which emphasizes that children learn more effectively when they receive guidance suited to their level of readiness.

Additionally, the psychological approach in FBE is based on intrinsic motivation theory. Children are more motivated to learn when they feel valued, have the freedom to explore, and experience a sense of ownership over their learning process. Therefore, FBE avoids learning methods based on coercion or punishment, which can hinder children's psychological development. Instead, this approach prioritizes creating a safe, comfortable learning environment that supports children's emotional growth.

FBE also considers psychological aspects in building children's confidence and independence. Through experiential and exploratory learning methods, children are encouraged to discover answers independently, develop curiosity, and construct understanding based on real-life experiences. Thus, fitrah-based education helps children cultivate a positive mindset, resilience, and readiness to face life's challenges.

### **Pedagogical Foundations**

From a pedagogical perspective, FBE emphasizes that education should be oriented toward the natural development of a child's fitrah and should not contradict their developmental stages (Azzam & Leany, 2024). In practice, FBE employs learning approaches based on experience, reflection, and exploration. Methods such as project-based learning, problem-based learning, and contextual approaches are integral to FBE's pedagogical strategies. These methods enable children to engage actively, connect their knowledge with real life, and develop critical and creative thinking skills.

The pedagogical approach in FBE also highlights the role of educators as facilitators rather than the sole source of knowledge. Educators in FBE are expected to create an inspiring learning environment and build strong emotional connections with students. Consequently, children feel more valued and are encouraged to learn with intrinsic motivation rather than external pressure.

Additionally, FBE promotes learning through role modeling and social interaction. Children learn not only from theoretical instruction but also from real-life experiences gained through interactions with parents, teachers, and their surroundings. Therefore, this approach encourages active parental involvement in children's education, as the family plays a crucial role in shaping character and moral values from an early age.

Overall, the pedagogical approach in FBE focuses on meaningful, contextual, and interest-driven learning. By giving children the freedom to explore and discover their potential, fitrah-based education aims to nurture individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also emotionally, socially, and spiritually balanced.

### **3.1.3 Differences Between FBE and Other Character Education Approaches**

FBE differs fundamentally from other character education approaches, particularly in how it perceives and develops children's potential. FBE is based on the idea that every child is born with fitrah—an innate potential that should be developed naturally. In contrast, conventional character education approaches often aim to shape or instill character through externally imposed values. In traditional character education, values are typically instilled through instructional methods, such as rules, punishments, or rewards, whereas in FBE, values develop naturally through experiences, interactions, and explorations aligned with children's developmental stages.

The other difference lies in the approach to the role of educators and the learning environment. Fitrah-Based Education (FBE) emphasizes that parents and teachers act as facilitators who help children discover and develop their natural disposition, rather than as figures who actively shape or change the child's character. Meanwhile, in conventional character education, educators often take on an authoritative role, directly teaching values and controlling children's behavior through external regulation. The FBE approach is more organic and child-centered, whereas traditional character education is more structural and oriented toward compliance with established norms.

In terms of learning methods, FBE relies more on experience-based, exploratory, and exemplary approaches. Children are encouraged to learn through real interactions with their environment, family, and community. In conventional character education, the methods used are more instructional, such as lectures, discussions, or moral exercises designed to instill specific values. FBE believes that character cannot be taught like an academic subject but must grow naturally from deep and reflective life experiences.

Moreover, FBE adopts a more holistic perspective on child development, encompassing intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects in a balanced manner. Conventional character education tends to focus more on moral and social aspects, such as

discipline, responsibility, and cooperation. Meanwhile, FBE emphasizes that every aspect of a child's development should be in harmony with their natural disposition, thereby shaping not only socially good character but also supporting the child's psychological and spiritual balance in life.

From a long-term perspective, conventional character education is often oriented toward achieving specific behaviors deemed good by society. In contrast, FBE aims to help children discover their authentic identity and develop an awareness of their life purpose based on values that naturally emerge within them. In this regard, FBE does not only shape individuals who conform to social standards but also individuals with high self-awareness, critical thinking abilities, and intrinsic motivation to develop according to their unique potential.

Overall, the fundamental difference between FBE and other character education approaches lies in the perspective on children, the learning methods used, the role of educators, and the ultimate educational goals. FBE emphasizes a natural process in character formation, whereas conventional character education focuses more on external interventions. With a more organic and child-centered approach, FBE provides space for more authentic, balanced, and innate development for each individual.

### **3.2 Implementation Strategy of FBE in Early Childhood Character Education**

#### **3.2.1 Exploration and Experience-Based Learning**

Learning in Fitrah-Based Education (FBE) emphasizes exploration and experience as the primary approaches to helping children develop their natural potential (Pratiwi et al., 2023). This concept is based on the belief that every child possesses innate qualities that need to be nurtured naturally through interaction with the environment and direct experiences. Exploration allows children to discover the meaning of what they learn, while experience provides opportunities for them to internalize values and skills more deeply. In this approach, children are not forced to passively receive information but are given the freedom to ask questions, try, and experience the learning process independently.

Exploration-based learning in FBE involves activities that encourage children to think critically, creatively, and reflectively. For example, children are invited to observe nature, conduct simple experiments, or participate in projects that challenge their problem-solving skills. Additionally, experience-based learning is implemented by providing opportunities for children to learn from everyday situations, such as cooperating in household tasks, interacting with the community, or taking on roles in social activities. Through this approach, learning does not only take place in the classroom but also in real life, allowing children to understand concepts in a more contextual and meaningful way.

Besides providing direct experiences, FBE also emphasizes the importance of reflection in the learning process (Salma et al., 2023). Children are encouraged to reflect on their experiences, understand the lessons learned, and connect them with the values they develop. This reflection process helps children comprehend the meaning of each activity they engage in and promotes natural character growth. In conventional education approaches, reflection is often overlooked as the focus is on the final results, whereas in FBE, reflection is an essential part of learning to develop self-awareness and deeper understanding.

By prioritizing exploration and experience, learning in FBE becomes more flexible, contextual, and aligned with children's natural development. Children do not only acquire academic knowledge but also develop life skills, moral values, and spiritual awareness in harmony with their innate potential. This approach provides children with the opportunity to grow and learn more authentically, without pressures that hinder their creativity and curiosity. Thus, FBE offers a more holistic learning model centered on the needs and natural development of each child.

#### **3.2.2 The Role of Play in Strengthening Fitrah-Based Character**

Play is a natural activity that plays a crucial role in strengthening fitrah-based character in children. In the concept of Fitrah-Based Education (FBE), play is not merely a

recreational activity but serves as a primary means for children to develop their potential naturally. Through play, children learn to understand their environment, build social interactions, and explore various values and skills that shape their character. This process allows children to grow in accordance with their fitrah without external pressures, resulting in more authentic and sustainable character development.

In the context of character building, play helps children internalize essential values such as honesty, cooperation, responsibility, and empathy. For example, in role-playing games, children can understand different perspectives and experience various social situations. Strategy-based games, such as puzzles or board games, train children to think critically, be patient, and make wise decisions. Through play interactions, children also learn to manage conflicts, negotiate, and understand the consequences of their actions, ultimately contributing to the development of a more mature personality.

Besides its social and cognitive aspects, play also contributes to emotional and spiritual balance in children. When playing, children feel free to express themselves, explore their emotions, and face challenges without fear of failure. Play in a supportive environment helps build confidence and independence. In FBE, spiritually meaningful play activities, such as playing in nature or engaging in reflective games, also contribute to developing self-awareness and fostering a connection with the Creator and the environment.

Parents and educators play a vital role in creating a safe and supportive play environment for children. In the FBE approach, adults do not merely supervise but also facilitate play activities that help children find meaning in every experience. By providing opportunities for children to play independently or in groups, parents and educators help cultivate strong, adaptive character traits that align with their natural potential.

Thus, play is not just a means of entertainment but also an effective method for naturally shaping children's character. Through various types of play, children can explore their fitrah, learn from experiences, and build a balanced personality in intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual aspects. Therefore, in fitrah-based education, play is an essential component that must be supported and facilitated to ensure children develop according to their natural disposition.

### ***3.2.3 The Role of Teachers and Parents in Fitrah-Based Character Education***

In fitrah-based character education, the involvement of teachers and parents is crucial in supporting children's natural development. Teachers and parents are not merely instructors but also facilitators who help children discover and develop their innate potential. Character education in this approach does not impose external values but rather guides children in recognizing, understanding, and actualizing the values that already exist within them. Therefore, teachers and parents need to create a conducive environment and serve as role models in fostering children's character naturally.

As educators in schools, teachers are responsible for delivering a learning process that aligns with children's natural development. This can be achieved by using teaching methods that emphasize exploration, experience, and healthy social interaction. Teachers also play a role in instilling moral values through activities relevant to children's lives, such as reflective discussions, educational games, and project-based activities that encourage cooperation and empathy. Through this approach, children learn from real-life experiences rather than merely memorizing theoretical moral concepts.

Meanwhile, parents serve as children's first role models in character education. Daily family interactions provide the initial environment where children learn about life values such as honesty, responsibility, patience, and compassion. Therefore, parents must set positive examples through their attitudes and actions, as children tend to imitate the behaviors they observe. Additionally, effective communication between parents and children is essential in fitrah-based character education. Listening, understanding, and providing support for children's emotions and experiences help them internalize moral values more deeply.

Collaboration between teachers and parents is the key to success in fitrah-based character education. When there is alignment between the values taught at school and those practiced at home, children gain a more consistent and meaningful learning experience. Teachers and parents must work together to understand children's needs and development, ensuring that the education provided truly aligns with their natural disposition. Through this approach, character education is not solely the responsibility of educational institutions but becomes a natural process that grows and develops in children's everyday lives.

### **3.3 Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing FBE in Early Childhood Education**

#### ***3.3.1 Challenges in Implementing FBE in School and Family Environments***

The implementation of Fitrah-Based Education (FBE) in school and family environments faces various challenges that can hinder its effectiveness (Fitriana et al., 2024). One of the main obstacles is the lack of understanding among teachers and parents regarding the concept of FBE itself. Many educators and parents are still accustomed to conventional educational approaches that emphasize academic achievement over character development based on fitrah. As a result, FBE implementation often lacks full support as it is perceived to be less relevant to the existing curriculum demands.

In the school environment, another challenge that arises is the limited time and resources available for implementing a fitrah-based approach. The education system, which is oriented toward academic targets and examinations, often makes it difficult for teachers to adopt exploratory and experiential methods, which are fundamental to FBE. Additionally, large class sizes and a lack of training for teachers in fitrah-based learning strategies can lead to suboptimal implementation of FBE in schools.

Meanwhile, in the family environment, the biggest challenge is parenting styles that are not yet aligned with FBE principles. Many parents are accustomed to authoritarian or permissive parenting styles, making it difficult for children to receive balanced guidance in developing their fitrah. Moreover, parents' busy schedules with work and other activities often limit their involvement in their children's character education. The lack of quality time between parents and children can hinder the internalization of character values that FBE seeks to cultivate.

To overcome these challenges, synergy between schools and families is needed to understand and apply the FBE concept more comprehensively. Training for teachers and parents on the fundamental principles of FBE, integrating fitrah values into the curriculum, and creating a learning environment that supports children's exploration can be initial steps to addressing these barriers. Furthermore, stronger communication between schools and families is necessary to ensure that FBE implementation is aligned and has an optimal impact on children's development.

#### ***3.3.2 Supporting Factors for the Success of Fitrah-Based Character Education***

The success of Fitrah-Based Education (FBE) in character development is influenced by several key factors that support its implementation in both school and family environments. One crucial factor is a deep understanding of the concept of fitrah in education among teachers and parents. Educators and parents who comprehend the core principles of FBE will be more capable of implementing learning strategies that align with children's developmental stages, allowing character values to be instilled naturally rather than being forced. Training and mentoring for teachers and parents are critical steps in raising awareness of the importance of fitrah-based education.

A conducive learning environment is also a key factor in supporting the success of FBE-based character education. Schools and homes must provide a safe, comfortable atmosphere that encourages children's exploration in understanding life values. An environment rich in positive social interactions, experience-based activities, and educational games will help children internalize good character in accordance with their fitrah. Moreover, the availability of educational infrastructure, such as teaching materials

aligned with FBE principles and flexible learning methods, plays a role in facilitating this process.

Strong collaboration between schools and families is another determinant of FBE's success. When the values taught at school align with those practiced at home, children will have a more consistent and meaningful learning experience. Good communication between teachers and parents—understanding children's development, discussing challenges, and finding solutions together—can enhance the effectiveness of fitrah-based character education. Through synergistic collaboration, schools and families can support each other in guiding children to develop according to their potential and fitrah.

In addition to internal factors, educational policies that accommodate fitrah-based approaches are also essential for FBE's success. Policies that allow flexibility in teaching methods, reduce excessive academic pressure, and provide space for exploratory and experience-based learning will greatly aid in the broader implementation of FBE. With support from various stakeholders—teachers, parents, the environment, and educational policies—fitrah-based character education can be optimally implemented and positively impact children's holistic development.

### ***3.3.3 Effective Models for Implementing FBE in Early Childhood Education***

The implementation of Fitrah-Based Education (FBE) in Early Childhood Education (PAUD) must be effectively designed to align with children's natural development. One applicable model is an exploration- and experience-based approach, where children are given the freedom to learn through interactions with their environment. In this approach, children are encouraged to find meaning in their experiences—whether through play, artistic activities, or social interactions with peers and educators. FBE-based learning emphasizes the natural aspects of children's development, ensuring that each child grows according to their unique potential without excessive academic pressure.

One of the main strategies in an effective FBE implementation model is the use of play-based learning as the primary means of building children's character and skills. Play is not just a recreational activity but a medium for children to develop social, emotional, and cognitive skills. In the context of FBE, games are designed to align with the values to be instilled, such as cooperation, empathy, responsibility, and independence. For instance, role-playing games can help children understand moral values in everyday life, while nature-based exploratory games can foster curiosity and love for the environment.

Additionally, the involvement of teachers and parents in the learning process is crucial in the FBE implementation model for PAUD. Teachers should act as facilitators who guide children in exploring their fitrah rather than merely as instructors. Meanwhile, parents are expected to actively participate in their children's education by providing consistent learning experiences at home. Collaboration between teachers and parents ensures that fitrah-based learning is more effective, as children receive continuous support in shaping their character and personality.

To ensure that the FBE implementation model in PAUD runs optimally, support from educational policies is also necessary. A flexible curriculum, learning methods that are not solely focused on academic outcomes, and policies that promote exploration- and experience-based learning should be integrated into the early childhood education system. This way, fitrah-based education becomes not just an ideal concept but a practical approach that genuinely supports children's holistic development in accordance with their natural fitrah.

## **4. Conclusion**

Fitrah-Based Education (FBE) offers an alternative paradigm for character development in Early Childhood Education (PAUD) by emphasizing children's natural development. This approach is based on the principle that every child has inherent potential that must be nurtured naturally through exploration, experiences, and interactions with their environment. Unlike conventional education, which often emphasizes academic aspects

from an early age, FBE focuses more on character formation through enjoyable, fitrah-based learning experiences that align with children's developmental stages.

The success of FBE implementation in the PAUD system heavily depends on several factors, such as teachers' and parents' deep understanding, a conducive learning environment, and flexible educational policies. Play-based and exploratory learning models serve as the primary strategies in this approach, allowing children the freedom to learn in ways that match their developmental characteristics. Furthermore, strong collaboration between teachers and parents is essential to ensuring that fitrah-based education is consistently applied in both school and home settings, enabling children to have a holistic and meaningful learning experience.

Considering its various advantages, FBE can be an alternative solution for fostering children's character development in a more holistic and natural manner. The implementation of this approach not only helps children understand moral and social values but also cultivates independence, creativity, and self-awareness. Therefore, commitment from multiple stakeholders—including educators, parents, and policymakers—is needed to promote FBE as part of an early childhood education system that is more humanistic, adaptive, and oriented toward fitrah-based character development. Future research focused on developing practical guidelines and strategies for the effective integration of FBE in various early childhood education settings, as well as exploring its long-term impact on children's character development across different cultural contexts.

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