

Early Childhood Education in the Perspective of Luqman al-Hakim in The Qur'an

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ABSTRACT This study explores early childhood education from the perspective of Luqman al-Hakim as presented in Surah Luqman (12–19), emphasizing the integration of spiritual, moral, emotional, and social development within a holistic Islamic framework. Using a qualitative, textual, and thematic analysis approach, the research examines Luqman's counsel as a model of value-based education rooted in tawhid, gratitude, moral discipline, humility, parental guidance, and social responsibility. The findings reveal that faith formation is positioned as the foundational dimension of a child's development, shaping worldview, ethical identity, and behavioural orientation. Parental involvement emerges as the central mechanism of early education, characterized by wisdom-based dialogue, compassion, and exemplary conduct. The guidance of Luqman is shown to function as an early model of character education that aligns with contemporary holistic education principles, demonstrating the relevance of classical Islamic pedagogy to modern discourse. This study suggests that Luqman's educational philosophy offers a meaningful framework for designing spiritually grounded and ethically responsive early childhood programs in Muslim contexts. By restoring the balance between intellectual growth and moral-spiritual formation, Luqman's perspective contributes a timeless paradigm for nurturing dignified, reflective, and socially responsible children in today's world.

Keywords: *Early childhood education, Character Formation, Luqman Al-Hakim, Islamic Education, Qur'anic Pedagogy, Moral Development, Tawhid, Parenting in Islam.*

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood represents a decisive phase in human development in which the foundations of personality, faith, moral behavior, social relationships, and intellectual capacity are formed. Scholars in psychology and education note that the first eight years of life constitute a critical “window of opportunity” in which neural, emotional, and behavioral systems develop rapidly and are highly responsive to environmental influences (Clark et al., 2020). During this period, children do not merely acquire basic academic skills, but they construct attitudes, values, and worldviews that shape their future character and life trajectories. Therefore, early childhood education (ECE) is increasingly recognized as a strategic effort to ensure holistic human

development and to cultivate ethical, responsible, and emotionally balanced members of society (Engdahl & Furu, 2022).

Within the Islamic intellectual tradition, education has never been limited to the transfer of knowledge or technical competencies. Rather, it encompasses the comprehensive development of the individual spiritually, morally, emotionally, intellectually, and socially within a framework of faith and divine consciousness (Hanif & Prasetyaningtyas, 2023). Children are regarded as an amanah (trust) and blessing from God who must be nurtured with love, protection, discipline, and moral guidance from the earliest stages of life. The Qur'an and the Sunnah place great emphasis on righteous upbringing (tarbiyah), highlighting the role of families and communities in shaping the moral and spiritual identity of children. Islamic history records numerous figures whose wisdom and conduct serve as models for educational guidance, among whom Luqman al-Hakim occupies a particularly distinguished position.

Luqman al-Hakim is presented in the Qur'an as a wise and reflective figure whose counsel to his son embodies a comprehensive philosophy of moral and spiritual education. His teachings, preserved in Surah Luqman (Qur'an 31:12–19), provide insight into the principles of faith formation, ethical conduct, humility, social responsibility, and emotional maturity. The Qur'an explicitly connects Luqman's character with divine wisdom, affirming: "And We certainly gave Luqman wisdom: 'Be grateful to Allah'" (Qur'an 31:12). This verse indicates that wisdom in Islam is intimately connected with gratitude, humility, and moral awareness, and that such virtues must be consciously nurtured within the family through deliberate teaching. The dialogical format of Luqman's counsel addressed lovingly with the phrase "O my son" serves as a pedagogical model grounded in affection, empathy, and personal engagement.

In contemporary discourse on early childhood education, scholars highlight the importance of home-based learning environments and parental involvement in shaping children's development. The family is considered the child's first school, where essential values, habits, and relational patterns are formed. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory articulates that the microsystem particularly the family exerts the strongest influence on a child's cognitive and socio-emotional development (Hayes et al., 2022). This theoretical perspective aligns closely with Luqman's example, in which guidance emerges not from institutional authority but from a caring and morally grounded parental relationship. In Islamic pedagogy, therefore, parents are regarded as the primary educators responsible for establishing a faith-centered and nurturing environment.

At the same time, the modern world is experiencing rapid social, technological, and cultural transformations that profoundly affect the upbringing of children. Digital media exposure, secular materialistic values, shifting family structures, and weakening communal bonds increasingly shape children's developmental contexts. These dynamics may contribute to challenges such as decreased parental engagement, value confusion, emotional instability, and moral relativism among young learners (Sadownik, 2023). Many educational systems emphasize academic achievement and technical competence while paying insufficient attention to ethical development, spiritual grounding, and character formation. As a result, there is growing concern that education risks becoming fragmented producing individuals who are intellectually capable yet morally unanchored and socially disconnected.

In response to these concerns, scholars and practitioners have increasingly called for holistic and value-based approaches to early childhood education. Such approaches recognize that children are moral and spiritual beings whose emotional security and ethical sensibilities must be nurtured alongside cognitive growth (Damariswara et al., 2021). Within Muslim communities, this concern is further intensified by the need to preserve Islamic identity and values in a rapidly globalizing world. Parents, educators, and policy-makers have therefore sought guidance from classical Islamic teachings to inform the development of child-centered, faith-based educational frameworks that integrate spiritual and moral formation into everyday learning.

The teachings of Luqman al-Hakim offer a rich and timeless foundation for such efforts. His first and most emphatic instruction to his son is the affirmation of monotheism: "O my son,

do not associate anything with Allah. Indeed, associating partners with Him is a great injustice” (Qur’an 31:13). This underscores that the core of Islamic education is the cultivation of *tahwīd*, or awareness of God’s oneness. Faith is not presented as an abstract theological doctrine but as a moral compass that shapes identity, purpose, and ethical orientation. From a developmental perspective, early internalization of spiritual meaning can contribute to emotional resilience, self-regulation, and a sense of belonging and purpose (Musa, 2022). Thus, Luqman’s guidance reflects a deeply holistic vision of education that addresses both the inner and outer dimensions of the child.

Furthermore, Luqman emphasizes the virtues of gratitude, prayer, patience, humility, and social responsibility. He advises his son to establish prayer, promote good, avoid wrongdoing, and remain steadfast in adversity (Qur’an 31:17). These teachings correspond to contemporary concepts of socio-emotional learning, which highlight perseverance, empathy, self-discipline, and moral awareness as essential competencies for healthy development (French & Forero Bucheli, 2024). Luqman also warns against arrogance, harshness, and excessive pride, encouraging moderation in behavior and speech (Qur’an 31:18–19). These instructions promote emotional intelligence and respectful interpersonal conduct. In Islamic terminology, they contribute to the cultivation of *adab*, or proper moral etiquette, which has long been regarded as a central goal of education.

Despite the richness of these teachings, there remains a significant gap in contemporary scholarship regarding the systematic integration of Luqman’s wisdom into formal early childhood education discourse. While many Islamic studies highlight the moral significance of Luqman’s counsel, fewer works examine it through the lens of developmental psychology, early childhood pedagogy, or educational philosophy. As a result, the potential contribution of Luqman’s teachings to modern ECE frameworks remains underexplored. This is particularly important in Muslim-majority societies where educational systems often struggle to balance modern curricular demands with faith-based moral formation.

Moreover, many Muslim parents and educators face practical challenges in translating Qur’anic teachings into everyday parenting and instructional strategies. Without clear theoretical grounding and pedagogical interpretation, religious teachings may be presented in a didactic or authoritarian manner that does not align with best practices in early childhood development. The Qur’anic example of Luqman, however, demonstrates a gentle, dialogical, and emotionally supportive approach. His wisdom is conveyed through conversation, reasoning, and affection, reflecting an educational style that respects the child’s dignity and supports intrinsic moral growth rather than external conformity alone.

Therefore, studying early childhood education from the perspective of Luqman al-Hakim is both timely and significant. It allows for the recovery of an authentic Islamic educational paradigm that emphasizes holistic development, spiritual grounding, and moral excellence. At the same time, it opens space for dialogue with contemporary educational theories, demonstrating that Islamic pedagogy is not opposed to modern knowledge but rather enriches and complements it. Such an exploration contributes not only to the academic field of Islamic education but also to practical efforts to design family-centered and value-based learning environments for young children.

In conclusion, the teachings of Luqman al-Hakim provide a profound framework for understanding early childhood education as a holistic, relational, and value-driven process. His guidance highlights the integration of faith, ethics, emotional maturity, and social responsibility beginning from the earliest stages of life. In the face of modern educational challenges and societal change, revisiting Luqman’s wisdom offers a constructive and spiritually grounded response. Accordingly, this study seeks to analyze the principles of early childhood education reflected in the teachings of Luqman al-Hakim and to explore their relevance and application within contemporary educational discourse and practice.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative library research design with a thematic textual analysis approach (Sari & Asmendri, 2020). The choice of this design was based on the understanding that the concept of early childhood education in the perspective of Luqman al-Hakim is not an empirical construct observed directly in the field, but rather a normative-philosophical framework embedded within classical Islamic texts, particularly the Qur'an and classical tafsir works. Library research enables the researcher to explore meanings, values, and educational principles contained in textual sources, while thematic analysis allows for systematic identification of key educational themes relevant to early childhood development. Thus, the methodological orientation of this study is interpretive-hermeneutical, seeking to understand the depth of textual meaning rather than measuring causal relationships.

The primary source of the study is Surah Luqman (31): 12–19, which contains the moral and educational teachings of Luqman al-Hakim to his child. These verses serve as the core textual corpus from which the concept of early childhood education is derived. To deepen textual understanding, this research also utilizes authoritative classical and contemporary tafsir works, including Tafsir al-Tabari, Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qurtubi, Tafsir al-Maraghi, and Tafsir al-Misbah. These tafsir texts function as interpretive lenses to clarify key concepts, contextual meanings, and linguistic nuances of the verses. In addition, secondary sources include books and scholarly articles on Islamic education, early childhood development theory, moral education, prophetic parenting, and comparative religious pedagogy. The inclusion of developmental psychology literature such as Piaget's constructivist theory, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (Ashoumi & Yusuf, 2024), and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems approach serves (Khairul Amali et al., 2023) to position Luqman's educational perspective within a broader scientific discourse. This triangulation of Islamic and educational literature allows for a more comprehensive interpretation of the text.

Data were collected through systematic reading, note-taking, coding, and categorization. The researcher first conducted a close reading of Surah Luqman: 12–19 in Arabic to identify key educational messages. Qur'anic lexical meanings were examined using reputable Arabic dictionaries and tafsir commentaries. Each verse was then analyzed to extract educational components such as monotheistic awareness (tawhid), moral character formation, gratitude, parental respect, moderation, self-regulation, and ethical social interaction. These components were recorded in analytic memos. Subsequently, secondary literature was reviewed to identify how scholars interpret the educational implications of these verses. Relevant quotations and theoretical explanations were organized into thematic files. Constant comparison was used to align Qur'anic themes with contemporary early childhood education principles.

Data analysis in this study employed a qualitative thematic approach by examining Surah Luqman, verses 12–19, alongside classical and contemporary exegetical works, through repeated textual reading, coding, and categorization of key concepts related to spirituality, morality, and character formation in early childhood education. The resulting themes such as monotheism as the foundation of education, parental role modelling, moral cultivation, and the development of social awareness were then interpreted hermeneutically to ensure consistency with authoritative tafsir while remaining relevant to modern early childhood education theory.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Foundations of Early Childhood Education in the Counsel of Luqman al-Hakim

The findings of this study demonstrate that the concept of early childhood education in the counsel of Luqman al-Hakim, as recorded in Surah Luqman verses 12–19, emphasizes the integration of faith, moral discipline, and personal development as the core pillars of human formation. The Qur'an narrates that Luqman begins his educational guidance by affirming

gratitude to God as the spiritual foundation for all learning and development (Qur'an 31:12). Classical exegetes such as Ibn Kathir explain that gratitude (shukr) is not merely a verbal expression but a moral orientation that directs human behaviour toward goodness and responsibility (Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*) (Fattah & Wafa, 2025). This principle reflects the view that early childhood education must begin with cultivating orientation toward transcendental awareness and moral consciousness rather than merely transmitting cognitive skills.

This emphasis on spiritual grounding is further elaborated in Luqman's instruction to avoid associating partners with God (shirk), which is described as a great injustice (Qur'an 31:13). The moral and theological clarity embedded in this message highlights the importance of constructing a stable value system from an early age. Scholars such as Al-Ghazali argue that the child's heart is like a blank tablet upon which values are inscribed through education and experience (al-Ghazali, *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*). Therefore, Luqman's instruction reflects an educational process that safeguards the purity of a child's moral consciousness by orienting learning toward ethical monotheism.

Another significant aspect of Luqman's counsel concerns the cultivation of moral character and social responsibility. He advises his child to establish prayer, enjoin good, forbid evil, and be patient in adversity (Qur'an 31:17). These directives represent an early framework of civic, ethical, and spiritual responsibility, guiding children toward self-discipline and compassion in interaction with others. Muslim educational philosophers such as al-Attas (1980) assert that such moral cultivation is central to the creation of an adab-oriented personality, where knowledge, behavior, and belief operate in harmony (Daiber, 2020).

The Qur'an further records Luqman's counsel on humility and emotional regulation, as he instructs his child not to turn his face away from people in arrogance and not to walk proudly upon the earth (Qur'an 31:18–19). These teachings emphasize emotional intelligence, modesty, and respectful social conduct. Contemporary developmental psychology confirms that empathy, emotional control, and prosocial attitudes formed in early childhood significantly influence later social adjustment and mental well-being (Berk, 2018). Thus, the Qur'anic model integrates emotional, social, and spiritual education into a unified pedagogical approach.

Overall, the educational model presented through Luqman's counsel portrays early childhood education as a holistic process in which spiritual orientation, ethical grounding, emotional maturity, and behavioural discipline develop simultaneously (Alfani et al., 2025). This framework aligns with Islamic educational thought that defines human development as an integrated journey toward moral and spiritual excellence rather than fragmented cognitive training. Therefore, the study concludes that the counsel of Luqman al-Hakim provides a timeless paradigm for early childhood education one that nurtures not only intellectual potential but also inner character, faith identity, and responsible social behavior.

2. Parental Role as Moral Guide and Primary Educator

The results also show that Luqman's counsel illustrates the central role of parents as the primary educators of children. The Qur'an explicitly frames the advice within the intimate relational context between "Luqman and his son," demonstrating nurturance, proximity, and dialogical communication (Qur'an 31:13). This narrative structure underscores that education, especially in the early years, emerges most naturally within the family setting where bonds of affection, trust, and moral responsibility already exist.

Classical exegetes further highlight the educational wisdom embedded in this passage. Al-Qurtubi explains that the verse illustrates the pedagogical virtue of wisdom expressed through compassionate instruction rather than coercive authority (al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an) (Shah, 2020). Luqman's manner of teaching is therefore characterized by tenderness, patience, and guidance rooted in deep moral concern. This perspective implies that effective early childhood

education is not merely institutional or formal, but deeply embedded within the lived reality of family-based learning environments.

The pattern of communication employed by Luqman reflects a gentle, dialogic pedagogical model that emphasizes moral persuasion and reflective internalization rather than command-and-control instruction. His counsel invites the child to understand, contemplate, and willingly embrace moral principles. This approach resonates strongly with Vygotskian theory, which asserts that children's learning is mediated through meaningful interpersonal dialogue that scaffolds not only cognitive development but also moral reasoning and language formation (Ashoumi & Yusuf, 2024).

Within the Islamic scholarly tradition, similar emphases on parental responsibility are clearly articulated. Al-Ghazali, for example, stresses that parents bear the moral duty of shaping their children's inner disposition and ethical orientation, noting that the child's heart is like a pure and receptive substance capable of being formed toward good or evil (Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din) (Zur Raffar et al., 2021). Thus, the home becomes the primary locus of value transmission, with parents functioning as both moral exemplars and compassionate guides in the child's journey of faith and character development.

Taken together, these insights reinforce a doctrinal and pedagogical consensus that early childhood education must be relational, empathetic, and grounded in parental example. Luqman's counsel provides a model of spiritually informed parenting that integrates affection, wisdom, and dialogical engagement. Such an approach aligns closely with contemporary views that emphasize the formative power of emotionally secure and value-rich family environments in nurturing holistic child development.

3. Moral Monotheism as the Core Educational Value

A key result emerging from the textual analysis is that the first ethical principle taught by Luqman is monotheism (tawhid) and the firm rejection of associating partners with God (shirk), which is described as "a great injustice" (Qur'an 31:13). This prioritization is deeply significant because it establishes belief in the oneness of God as the ultimate moral and ontological foundation for human life. By positioning tawhid at the beginning of his counsel, Luqman articulates a hierarchy of values in which spiritual orientation precedes and informs ethical behavior. In other words, moral conduct in Islam is not grounded merely in social convention or utility, but in an awareness of divine accountability.

Ibn Kathir interprets this passage as teaching that tawhid is the foundational value upon which all moral behavior rests, precisely because it situates the human being within a conscious relationship of responsibility before God. From this perspective, shirk is described as a grave injustice not only in theological terms but also in relation to the self, because it distorts the natural disposition (fitrah) toward recognizing divine unity. Theologically, this reading aligns with broader Islamic scholarship which emphasizes that tawhid provides the ultimate ethical reference point for human conduct, dignity, and identity (Linnhoff, 2020). Thus, Luqman's guidance is not merely doctrinal instruction but a comprehensive framework for moral formation.

In the context of early childhood education, tawhid functions as a worldview-forming principle that shapes a child's perception of self, purpose, and moral responsibility. When children are gently introduced to the awareness of God's presence and beneficence, they begin to understand their lives as meaningful, purposeful, and morally accountable. This early grounding prevents identity fragmentation and offers a stable inner compass for navigating social and ethical challenges. Such formation is particularly significant during early childhood, when cognitive, emotional, and moral schemas are beginning to crystallize.

Contemporary Muslim educational theorists therefore stress that cultivating God-consciousness (taqwa) in early development nurtures self-regulation, humility, gratitude, and empathy (Maman et al., 2022). A child who learns that all actions are carried out before the gaze of a just and merciful God is more likely to internalize ethical discipline rather than rely solely on

external enforcement. In this regard, spiritual formation supports not contradicts the aims of modern pedagogy, which increasingly emphasizes intrinsic motivation, emotional intelligence, and reflective moral reasoning.

This perspective is also compatible with secular developmental theory which recognizes that children who internalize coherent and meaningful moral frameworks display stronger prosocial behavior, ethical consistency, and emotional stability (Grabowski, 2022). Such frameworks help children to organize experience, interpret social expectations, and develop a sense of moral agency. Tawhid, understood as an integrating principle, offers precisely this kind of coherence by rooting values such as honesty, respect, compassion, and responsibility in a transcendent moral order.

Thus, the counsel of Luqman demonstrates that spiritual formation is not peripheral but central to a comprehensive educational paradigm. Rather than treating religion as an optional or decorative element, the Qur'anic narrative presents it as the heart of character development and holistic human growth. Early childhood education inspired by Luqman's wisdom therefore seeks not only to cultivate intellectual competence, but also to nurture spiritually grounded, ethically responsible, and emotionally balanced children who recognize their accountability before God and their moral obligations toward others.

4. Character Education and Formation of Ethical Behaviour

Another significant finding is that Luqman's counsel prioritizes the cultivation of ethical character traits, including kindness toward parents, humility, patience, and social responsibility. The Qur'an emphasizes obedience and compassion toward parents, even when differences of belief occur, provided no injustice is committed (Qur'an 31:14–15). This indicates a model of moral education grounded in respect, relational sensitivity, and ethical autonomy. Al-Tabari explains that this teaching fosters balanced loyalty, upholding family ties while simultaneously preserving spiritual integrity (Jami' al-Bayan). Thus, the Qur'anic narrative positions the family as the first arena of moral learning, where values such as respect, gratitude, and compassion are instilled during early development.

In addition to filial piety, Luqman urges his son to establish prayer, enjoin good, avoid evil, and endure hardship with resilience (Qur'an 31:17). These actions together form a comprehensive moral curriculum that emphasizes discipline, ethical activism, and perseverance in the face of difficulty. Through this guidance, the Qur'an constructs an educational model in which ethical behaviour is not merely theoretical but expressed through consistent practice. Such principles echo modern character education theory, which highlights moral agency, civic responsibility, and behavioural self-management as essential outcomes of effective moral instruction (Damariswara et al., 2021).

The Qur'an also warns against arrogance and excessive self-display, encouraging humility and moderation in conduct and speech (Qur'an 31:18–19). These teachings underscore the importance of emotional intelligence and self-regulation in shaping socially responsible behaviour. Islamic scholars describe this approach as *akhlaq* pedagogy, where moral refinement is cultivated through spiritual awareness and disciplined behavioural training. In this framework, humility is not weakness, but a marker of inner maturity and ethical consciousness.

Taken together, these teachings illustrate that Luqman's counsel does not isolate moral education from spiritual formation. Instead, it integrates faith, ethics, and social conduct into a unified educational vision. The development of ethical character is presented as a lifelong process beginning in early childhood and nurtured through example, reflection, and guided practice. This holistic orientation aligns closely with Islamic educational philosophy, which views human development as the harmonization of belief, behaviour, and intellect.

Therefore, the model of moral education derived from Luqman's guidance offers a profound paradigm for contemporary early childhood education (Wanto & Jalwis, 2021). It

highlights the centrality of parental influence, structured moral practice, emotional regulation, and humility as foundational values. By linking personal character formation with spiritual awareness, the Qur'anic narrative provides a timeless framework that remains relevant for shaping ethical, responsible, and spiritually grounded individuals in modern educational contexts.

5. Holistic Development: Cognitive, Spiritual, Social, and Emotional Dimensions

The data further reveal that the counsel of Luqman supports a holistic model of development encompassing spiritual, cognitive, social, and emotional domains. His guidance demonstrates that education is not merely the transmission of information, but the nurturing of the whole human person. The emphasis on gratitude, reflection, and awareness of divine wisdom (Qur'an 31:12) illustrates that intellectual growth in Islam is inseparable from spiritual consciousness. Learning, therefore, is framed as a process that deepens both understanding and faith.

At the cognitive level, Luqman's counsel encourages reasoning and contemplation as foundations of intellectual maturity. The Qur'anic narrative highlights the value of reflection upon divine signs and life experiences as means of developing sound judgement. Such emphasis on reflective thinking aligns closely with educational psychology, which recognizes metacognition and meaning-making as essential components of higher-order learning. Thus, Luqman's guidance promotes the cultivation of critical awareness grounded in ethical purpose.

Social and emotional development are also embedded within Luqman's teachings. Instructions such as walking moderately, lowering one's voice, and displaying humility in interaction (Qur'an 31:18–19) emphasize emotional regulation, respect, and social harmony. These behavioural guidelines illustrate that emotional intelligence and interpersonal ethics are central to the educational process. Children are guided not only to know what is right, but to embody respectful, balanced conduct in daily life.

This integrated approach resonates strongly with contemporary early childhood education frameworks, which recognize that learning involves interconnected developmental pathways rather than isolated domains (Clark et al., 2020). Modern pedagogy stresses that spiritual wellbeing, emotional stability, social competence, and intellectual growth mutually reinforce one another. In this sense, the Qur'anic model articulated through Luqman anticipates key dimensions of holistic, child-centred education promoted in global discourse today.

Islamic education scholars further argue that the ultimate aim of learning is the balanced cultivation of intellect (*'aql*), soul (*ruh*), character (*akhlāq*), and body (*jasad*) (Nufus, 2021). Luqman's counsel reflects precisely this equilibrium, demonstrating that human development must nurture moral depth alongside intellectual capability. Education is therefore concerned not only with preparing children for economic participation, but with shaping ethically grounded and spiritually aware human beings.

Accordingly, the counsel of Luqman not only confirms classical Islamic educational ideals but also parallels modern international paradigms of holistic development. It offers a timeless educational vision in which faith, ethics, cognition, and social conduct are integrated within a coherent developmental framework. This synthesis reinforces the relevance of Qur'anic pedagogy for contemporary early childhood education, providing guidance that is spiritually rooted, psychologically sound, and socially constructive.

6. Implications for Modern Early Childhood Education

The findings suggest that the perspective of Luqman al-Hakim provides a highly relevant educational framework for modern early childhood contexts. His counsel reflects an approach in which spirituality, ethics, and emotional development are not treated as separate domains but are deeply interwoven within the child's moral formation. This holistic vision contrasts with many contemporary systems that prioritize measurable academic outcomes over character development, emotional wellbeing, and spiritual grounding. In this sense, Luqman's teachings

serve as a corrective lens through which educators can re-examine the purposes of education and the nature of human flourishing.

The integration of spirituality with ethical and socio-emotional learning offers a vital counterbalance to instrumental and outcome-driven models of education. Current scholarship increasingly critiques approaches that reduce education to economic productivity, standardized testing, or technical skill acquisition. Instead, there is a growing call for values-based and humanistic approaches that nurture compassion, care, and moral responsibility in young learners (Acquah & Katz, 2020). Luqman's counsel closely parallels this educational philosophy by centering gratitude, humility, patience, and moral accountability as core developmental goals.

Furthermore, the dialogic and compassionate pedagogy reflected in Luqman's guidance aligns closely with relational and socio-cultural theories of learning. His teaching is framed as an affectionate conversation between parent and child, emphasizing empathy, trust, and reflective engagement rather than rigid authoritarianism. This resonates with socio-cultural perspectives that view learning as a relational process embedded within meaningful social interactions, cultural practices, and community norms. Education, from this perspective, is not merely cognitive training but a process of guided participation in morally grounded ways of life.

The Qur'anic narrative also reinforces the continuing importance of the family and moral community in shaping early childhood development. Luqman's wisdom is transmitted not through formal institutional instruction, but through intimate parental guidance within the home. This highlights that moral identity, emotional security, and spiritual awareness are cultivated most effectively within stable, loving, faith-guided family environments. Modern research increasingly supports this view, demonstrating that children's wellbeing and ethical competence are profoundly influenced by relational quality, parental modeling, and community values.

At the same time, these findings indicate that Islamic early childhood education should resist the fragmentation that often occurs between religious and secular domains. Rather than compartmentalizing worship, ethics, academic learning, and social interaction into isolated spheres, the Qur'anic perspective encourages a unified educational vision rooted in tawhid. This principle integrates all dimensions of life under the awareness of divine presence and purpose, thereby fostering coherence in children's developing worldview.

Such a paradigm encourages educators to design learning environments that harmoniously integrate spiritual practices, ethical reflection, exploratory learning, play-based discovery, and social participation. In doing so, education becomes not only a process of intellectual enrichment but also one of spiritual awakening and character formation. The perspective of Luqman al-Hakim thus provides a meaningful philosophical foundation for shaping holistic early childhood education that is both authentically Islamic and responsive to contemporary developmental insights.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the concept of early childhood education in the perspective of Luqman al-Hakim, as reflected in Surah Luqman verses 12–19, represents a holistic and value-based educational framework that integrates spiritual, moral, social, and emotional development. The Qur'anic narrative emphasizes that the formation of faith and gratitude to God forms the foundational pillar of education. This theological grounding is not merely ritualistic but shapes worldview, ethical responsibility, and personal identity from an early age. Accordingly, tawhid serves as the central axis around which all aspects of child development revolve, guiding attitudes, decisions, and relationships. This reinforces the principle that Islamic education is fundamentally directed toward cultivating God-conscious, morally upright, and reflective individuals.

The findings also highlight the irreplaceable role of parents as primary educators in the moral and spiritual formation of children. Luqman's counsel demonstrates a dialogic, compassionate, and wisdom-based pedagogical approach that prioritizes relational trust and

moral persuasion rather than coercion. This model is consistent with both classical Islamic scholarship and contemporary developmental theory, which recognize the family as the core environment where values, emotional security, and ethical identity are shaped. Education in this perspective is therefore characterized by close guidance, empathetic communication, and exemplary behaviour that children internalize through lived experience.

Furthermore, the results affirm that the counsel of Luqman embodies a comprehensive character education framework encompassing obedience to parents, humility, patience, self-discipline, and social responsibility. These teachings correspond with modern notions of holistic development and demonstrate that Islamic education has long emphasized integrated growth rather than fragmented learning outcomes. By harmonizing spiritual devotion with ethical practice and social interaction, Luqman's guidance presents an educational paradigm that nurtures both inner integrity and outward conduct.

Finally, this research contributes to the theoretical discourse on Islamic early childhood education by elucidating Luqman's counsel as an integrative philosophy rooted in wisdom (hikmah), faith, and moral refinement. It suggests that contemporary Muslim educators can draw upon this Qur'anic framework to develop early childhood models that are spiritually grounded, ethically robust, and developmentally responsive. In an era increasingly driven by utilitarian and outcomes-based education, the perspective of Luqman al-Hakim offers a restorative paradigm that places meaning, virtue, and human dignity at the heart of learning. Thus, early childhood education inspired by Luqman's teachings is not only religiously authentic but also profoundly relevant to the holistic formation of children in the modern world.

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