



# Learning Space Management Nurul Islam Nature School (SANI) Jember to Cultivate Children's Spirituality

## Istifadah

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## Abstract

Learning space is a fundamental need in education. The availability of space for educational institutions is a necessity to accommodate all learning activities. This is no exception for early childhood education. The purpose of this study was to describe and analyze the management of the learning space to foster the value of children's spirituality. The research was conducted at the Nurul Islam Islamic School (SANI) at the Nurul Islam Islamic Boarding School Jember. The study focused on the analysis of the learning space for early childhood based on the theory of Taylor et al. (2009), as well as several other relevant theories. Data was extracted through observation, interviews, documentation and photography and analyzed in three steps: data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification based on source triangulation. In this study, it was found that the management of the SANI learning space is a development of Taylor theory, namely the content, context, learning process, and spiritual values of the pesantren tradition in managing the SANI learning space.

**Keywords:** *learning space management; spirituality; eraly childhood*


## Abstrak

Ruang belajar merupakan kebutuhan fundamental dalam pendidikan. Ketersediaan ruang bagi lembaga pendidikan merupakan keniscayaan untuk mewadahi segala aktifitas pembelajaran. Tak terkecuali juga pada pendidikan anak usia dini. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan dan menganalisis manajemen ruang belajar untuk menumbuhkan nilai spiritualitas anak. Penelitian dilakukan di Sekolah Alam Nurul Islam (SANI) pondok pesantren Nurul Islam Jember. Studi difokuskan pada analisis lingkungan belajar untuk anak usia dini berdasarkan teori Taylor dkk. (2009) serta beberapa teori lain yang relevan. Data digali melalui observasi, wawancara, dokumentasi dan fotografi dan dianalisis dengan tiga langkah: kondensasi data, penyajian data, dan menarik simpulan atau verifikasi berdasarkan triangulasi sumber. Dalam penelitian ini ditemukan bahwa, manajemen lingkungan belajar SANI merupakan pengembangan dari teori Taylor & Enggass, yaitu adanya aspek konten, konteks, proses pembelajaran, dan nilai spiritualitas tradisi pesantren dalam pengelolaan ruang belajar SANI.

**Kata kunci:** *manajemen ruang belajar; spiritualitas; anak usia dini*

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## Introduction

In carrying out educational activities, the existence of a learning space is an urgent need in the learning process. The urgency of the learning space is becoming more fundamental when it comes to early childhood education (PAUD). This is possible because the characteristics of the learning space at the PAUD level will be different from the characteristics of the learning space at other levels of education. In this regard, (Barrett et al., 2019) stated that "the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) places the learning space as the subject of learning innovation to guide the development of 21st century education". In Appendix IV Number 146 (Kemendikbud, 2014) concerning Early Childhood Education (PAUD) curriculum ) stated that, " Learning is a process of interaction between educators and children through playing activities in a safe and fun 'learning space' using various learning resources". The concept of early childhood learning is child centered . The learning approach used is a scientific approach which includes a series of processes of observing, asking, gathering information, reasoning, and communicating. The whole process requires the use of all the senses as well as various sources and learning media.

The last decade has seen the emergence of research on learning spaces, particularly qualitative studies or post-occupancy evaluations of informal learning spaces. (Romlah & Sagala, 2021) stated that, "fulfillment of adequate and quality facilities and infrastructure affects the growth and development of early childhood". In the same vein, (Shafira et al., 2022) say that, "children's social emotional development is not only influenced by the psychological space, but the physical space also has a large enough contribution". Regarding this, (Rachman, 2020) emphasized that, "if it is associated with the existing learning process, it can take place optimally and support children's development. So, it is very necessary to create a comfortable and conducive learning space for children.

Learning does not only happen in the classroom but also happens outside the classroom anywhere and anytime. This allows new strategies to accommodate changing demands and apply a new paradigm of more enjoyable learning. Boyd in (Istifadah, 2020) stated that, "the basic foundation of the learning space in AUD is an effort to approach learning and teaching in relation to the use of play-based learning ". Mariana in (Lestari & Prima, 2019) said that, "Outdoor learning spaces are beneficial and effective in helping the development of children who have varied multiple intelligences, so the outdoor playground learning space must be a part that needs to be managed properly. good and serious. Related to this, (Istifadah, 2020) added that, "as an embodiment of the concept of a play-based learning space , outdoor learning space provides a broad arena for stimulation of physical and psychological growth and development of early childhood as stated in the SIDIKNAS Law ". (Arisanti, 2017) asserts that, "the task of education management includes integrating and utilizing the space as educational resources as effectively and efficiently as possible". What was conveyed by Boyd, Mariana, Istifadah, and Arisanti above shows the importance of the learning space in the learning process. However, even though today management discourse has become an important part of education , studies on management related to pedagogical practice and its correlation with the learning space have not been widely carried out. Some of the studies above have not specifically mentioned the concept of managing the learning space in question.

In the Islamic perspective, learning space management can be approached with al Gazali's thinking. The metaphysical world of Islam pays quite intense attention to the form and creation of the built space (space). Al Gazali in (Akkach, 2005) puts the analogy of "looking at the sky" as the starting point for cosmology and metaphysics related to procedural aspects of creation. This analogy becomes a framework for interpreting the divine paradigm into architectural form (space). Al Gazali's main concern remains sticking to the process by giving a reference to the verse: "He created the heavens without pillars which you can see and He put the mountains (on the surface of) the earth so that the earth would not shake you; and breed in him all kinds of animals. And We send down rain from the sky, then We grow on it all kinds of good vegetation." (Surat Luqman [31]:10). Al Gazali's understanding refers to space

as a cosmos in complexity, beauty, and order. This cosmological reason hides something deep about the divine wisdom that commands Muslims to contemplate the wonders, beauty, and wisdom of God's creation (macrocosmos).

Thus the final estuary of al Gazali 's thoughts in the worldly practice of managing the built space above will lead to the spiritual aspect. (Sarnoto, 2021) said that, "the educational process in Islam aims to form human beings who have noble character, become servants of Allah who are always obedient to serve and prosper the earth as part of social beings". As an obedient servant of God, education is treated as a result of the learning process that produces a straight person and has a strong *aqidah*, so that he is free from *shirk* to become a human being, who is physically and spiritually intact and can live naturally by practicing the values of piety. Awareness of the importance of the space in life can be instilled in children from an early age. (Saeful, 2021) stated that, "The educational environment has a significant influence on the educational process. The environment serves to support the teaching and learning process in a sustainable manner". Ramayulis in Saeful emphasized that, "the Islamic educational environment has an important role in the success of Islamic education". The mental development of the child is greatly influenced by the state of the environment. The environment can have a positive and negative influence on the growth and development of a child's soul. Furthermore, (Dodi, 2018) said that, "in general, spiritual-based education focuses its attention on spirituality as the main potential in driving every act of education and teaching, in this case it is understood as a source of normative inspiration in educational and teaching activities, and at the same time spirituality as educational goals".

The Natural School of Nurul Islam (SANI) is an early childhood education institution managed by the Nurul Islam Islamic Boarding School (PP. NURIS) Jember. The location selection was carried out using a comparative method in various aspects related to the learning space at similar institutions in Jember Regency. With the increase in the number of students, the availability of sufficient land resources, and the response to the demands for change encourages the PP. NURIS caretaker assembly to the growth of thinking about the importance of planning aspects of the learning space in developing *pesantren*. At this stage an idea emerged from the caretaker assembly about a Natural School with space-based learning. For this reason, the establishment of the Nurul Islam Natural School (SANI) in 2018 is a concrete answer in launching the program.

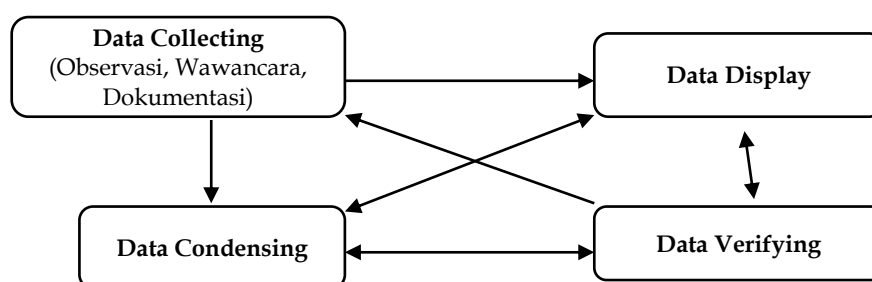
This research is directed to explore the conceptual framework of the interaction of pedagogy and the learning space which has not been discussed much in previous studies. SANI was chosen because it has a distinction where a learning space is developed in order to realize PP. NURIS's new vision to get closer to nature. Some of the descriptions of learning space management and its review from an Islamic perspective above underline the focus in this study which emphasizes; *First* , provide a description of how the management of the learning space at the Natural Nurul Islam School (SANI) Jember?. *Second* , analyze what is the relationship between changes in pedagogical practices and the demands for changes in the learning space of the Jember Nature Nurul Islam School (SANI). While this research aims to; *First* , identify the main relevant literature and its conceptualization in the design of learning spaces for early childhood. *Second* , draw theoretical implications for policy and practice models in early childhood learning space management.

## Methodology

An overview of the management of the learning space at the Natural Nurul Islam School (SANI) Jember, this research This method uses descriptive qualitative analysis with a case study approach . The analysis is designed to provide a systematic and factual description of the process of managing the learning space at SANI. The selection of this location was based on the phenomenon of the management of the SANI study room which was arranged openly ( open plan ) and connected directly to the outside space (outdoor space) which was arranged thematically by the fruits of the archipelago. This is a new thing that is rarely found in similar

educational institutions. Data collection techniques were carried out by observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were made directly to the scene to observe the visual aspects of the SANI learning space in supporting the process of children's learning activities. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore managerial processes related to the management of the SANI learning space based on the emic view background . While the documentation is done to complete the required supporting data.

Informants in this study were determined by purposive sampling. To maintain validity, primary data sources are the results of direct interviews with pesantren caregivers, SANI managers, the field of sarpras, and several ustadzah. Meanwhile, secondary data sources are obtained from research results, scientific journals, books, and SANI learning space management documents that are relevant to the research focus. Data analysis was carried out with an interaction model (Miles et al., 2014) through the process of collecting, condensing data, presenting data (display), and drawing conclusions (verifying) which is described in the figure 1 scheme;



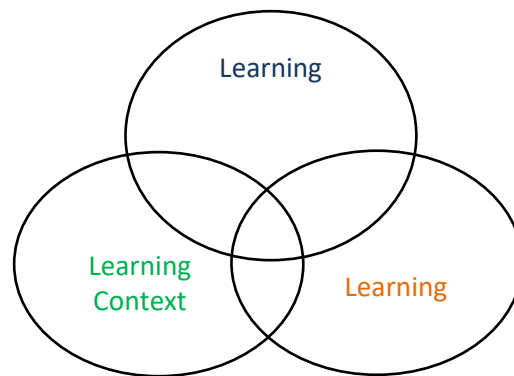
**Figure 1. Data Analisis Techniques**  
Source; Miles, Hubermann & Saldana, 2014

Furthermore, the data collected was analyzed using the theory of Taylor & Enggas. Even though a decade has passed, this theory is still up to date and was chosen because it provides the most relevant alternative in describing the management of the learning space related to the new paradigm in future pedagogic changes.

## Result and Discussion

The initial stage of learning space management for early childhood education (PAUD) needs to provide feedback and ask again, "what is best for students?". This has been confirmed in Number 146 (Kemendikbud, 2014) concerning the PAUD curriculum which states that, "the concept of early childhood learning is child- centered ". In line with this, (Taylor & Enggass, 2009) says that, "an ideal educational space is a carefully designed physical location consisting of natural, artificial, and cultural parts that work together to accommodate learning, active throughout body, mind, and spirit". At this point, Taylor et al. provides a new paradigm on the concept of managing the learning space based on the school curriculum. According to the perception of children, they really need an active role in themselves when they are learning and finding opportunities to be creative. So that the design of the PAUD learning space must be able to accommodate this enthusiasm.

Based on this, the conceptualization of Taylor et al. in managing the SANI learning space based on the school curriculum is formulated based on the content, context, and learning process as figure 2. The schematic on figure 2, shows three aspects of Taylor et al. which are interrelated and give each other consequences in the process of managing the learning space. These three aspects refer to the school curriculum. When aspects of learning content change, it will have consequences for changes in aspects of the context and learning process, and vice versa. That way, this can be used as a flexible model in managing the learning space when there is a pedagogical change wherever and whenever it is applied.

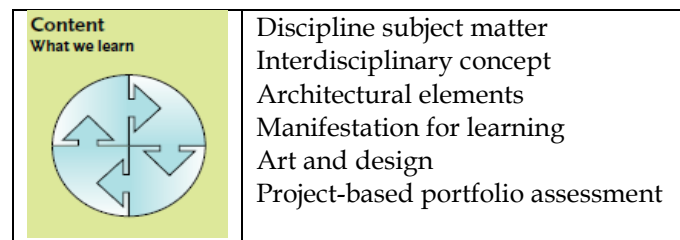


**Figure 2. Curriculum-based Learning Room Management Model**

Source: Taylor et al. 2009

### Learning Content

As an educational institution under the auspices of the Nurul Islam Islamic boarding school, spirituality is the main content of the Nurul Islam Natural School (SANI). Taylor et al. said that, learning content is a distinction for schools about what to learn which is described in the following figure;



**Figure 3. Learning Content for School Facility Planning**

Source: Taylor et al. 2009

In schools, content usually takes the form of subject matter discipline. It should be noted that although subject matter disciplines are often taught separately, learning theory states that the mind will work holistically. Interdisciplinary thinking is the goal. The content contained in each subject area is related to certain concepts (ideas) that we want children to master. Concepts are ideas or understandings, from the concrete to the abstract that are formed in the minds of students. Concepts must be able to make important inter-disciplinary interconnections that have broad meanings that apply to a variety of learning situations. Related to this can be seen in the results of the interview with Kusairi as follows;

*"For that one,.... From the beginning, we had the concept of a natural school (SANI). Because it's a natural school, so we design this institution, we design it for learning ,... not only indoor, but also outdoor education..." (Interview, April 8, 2021)*

Kusairi's statement above is in line with what was conveyed by kiai Muhyidin in the results of the interview as follows;

*"Yes it is still being sought.... the model, what is the method , ... so that what has been planned by the curriculum is in accordance with what is expected". "In terms of spiritual values, it was planned.... We try to organize teaching and learning activities in outdoor open spaces like this, sometimes on the hill there , or in this gazebo, moving around so as to reduce boredom". (Interview, April 22, 2021)*

Furthermore, Gus Rahmatullah said as follows;

*" Yes.... want to make the pesantren more natural. Children learn more to nature. So that they feel, right here , they have ... it has been five years that this road requires all students to be in a dormitory, ... in a hut. So the students become students, the students become students, it is obligatory... one unit. So we want to provide a comfortable place for the children." ( Interview, 22 April 2021)*



The statement in the results of interviews with several informants above can illustrate that from the beginning the spiritual aspect was the main emphasis of learning at SANI. This is also supported by the statement to make pesantren closer to nature. Based on field observations, the researchers also observed the existence of learning content which was reflected in the activity of coloring pictures of fruits and animals. In addition, learning content is also reflected in play activities carried out outside the classroom ( outdoor space ) with fairly complete game properties.

The description above provides an explanation that, once planners are aware of this continuum of meaning, they can build inventive encounters with predetermined concepts into the physical learning space. The vision and mission to be achieved by the institution or school are also included in the scope of learning content that must be studied by planners as benchmarks that can be realized in the design of the physical space of the study room.

## Learning Context

The context of learning is all methods for using learning in the setting of the physical and thematic space both indoors (*indoor space*) and outside (*outdoor space*). The learning context is the physical setting in which learning occurs which includes the built space, natural space, and cultural space. This means that the entire school location, including the yard, is part of the planning and can be used optimally as a learning resource which is described in the figure 4.

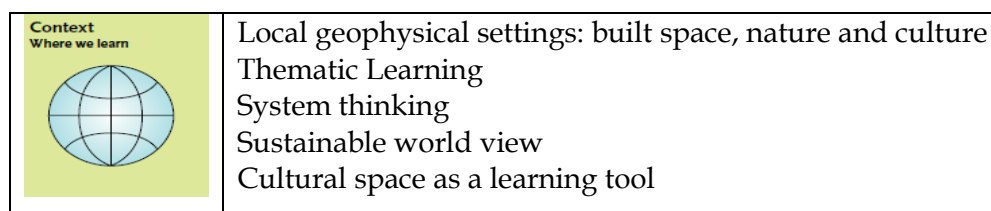


Figure 4. Learning Context for School Facility Planning

Source: Taylor et al. 2009

The learning context implies about the community, culture, and connections that can be found in the real world. The learning context is also an overview or abstract, thematic setting for learning. The spatial planning and spatial programming stage should be able to reveal the organization of the educational curriculum as the basic principles to be applied at each site, as well as the unique parameters derived from the physical space. Study space planning must consider ethnicity, culture, and local wisdom as part of their understanding of the learning context. To understand this, it can be seen in the results of the interview with kiai Muhyidin as follows;

*"In the future, planning has to start. After my children are both adults to take care of this pesantren, I start to invite and ask for help from people who can design, can plan.... "Yeah, we weren't really concerned about this at first. But after we invited professionals who understand how to design, it turns out that the pesantren has become more organized. Like the one at SANI, and the new buildings in recent times, almost everything has been better designed and planned." Including this garden, it looks more comfortable and the children are happy here with these fruity toys and chairs." (Interview, April 8, 2021)*

Kiai Muhyiddin's statement regarding the layout of the Nurul Islam Natural School above is supported by the statement of the expert (architect) who designed the Nurul Islam Nature School as follows;

*"Yes.... After I heard all about the Nature School idea from Ning Lidia, I started to think about how to unite this new NURIS institution consisting of PAUD, TK, and MI. Cluster layout pattern with outdoor space as a binder and orientation center of some of the spaces above is the most likely choice for that purpose. This is because they are more able to fulfill their flexibility*

according to the caregiver's wishes because later the classes will be planned with an open concept." (Interview, April 10, 2021)

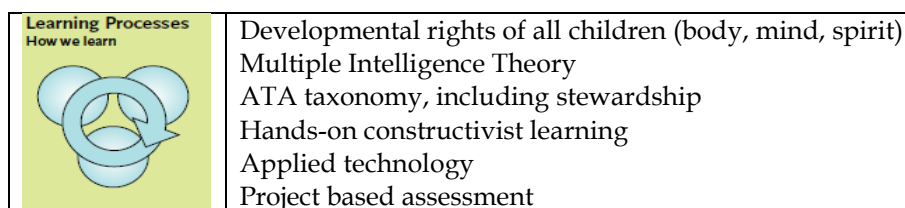
What is stated by the kiai and architect above is supported by Ustadz Kusairi as follows;

"Then ... this outdoor space is really needed by kindergarten or playgroup institutions or those of that age.... Because when it's outdoors , children are happier. The enthusiasm is higher. In class, they are bored. Saturated , ... every day already in class. So, just a distraction, when they are outside the children are more enthusiastic." (Interview, April 8, 2021)

The statements of the three informants above describe the implementation of the natural school concept which is reflected in the use of *outdoor space* as a SANI learning space. The existence of SANI is to bring comfort to the students so that they feel more happy and at home when studying at the pesantren. According to Ustadz Kusairi's explanation, students' enthusiasm will be more stimulated when they are in an *outdoor space* . But in the perspective of kiai Muhyiddin, *outdoor space* is a medium that is needed in Islamic boarding schools to refresh boredom due to the concentration of students' daily activities in the room (classroom). Based on field observations, researchers also observed visually the existence of a learning context that was reflected in the exploration of *outdoor space management*.

### Learning process

Taylor et al. said that, the learning process is how the development of learning occurs in various ways throughout the body, mind, and spirit. Learning must be understood as a lifelong process ( *long life education* ). Substantially, learning is a process to hone skills, retrieve information, and problem solving processes. The learning process is about how we learn. In this case, of course, there will be the possibility of different ways or methods of learning even though there are rules in state and national school standards. This difference has important implications for the provision of how we design an appropriate learning space. This is possible because we know that not everyone learns the same way . Various learning theories have provided insight into how people construct perceptions and process information (learning) starting from Jean Piaget's exploration of the stages of learning development to Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Thus the learning process becomes very important and decisive for the design of school facilities because they provide an active view of the students. Taylor et al. describes the learning process as figure 5.



**Figure 5. Learning Context for School Facility Planning**

Source: Taylor et al. 2009

Students are not identical products produced by factories. Several instructional strategies based on the learning process deserve further discussion here, including spacial (nature) based learning models. All these learning models are very stimulating for the development of all children. However, this instructional and practice model cannot operate effectively and does not find spatial support in traditional classrooms as it exists today. For this reason, a new paradigm and spatial reconstruction are needed to provide space for pedagogical changes that occur in the future. Regarding this, it can be described in an interview with Ustadz Kusairi as follows;

"Because it's a nature school, we design this institution, we design it for learning ,... not only indoor, but also outdoor education. Then , ... this outdoor space is really needed by kindergarten or playgroup institutions or those of that age" (Interview, April 8, 2021).

Furthermore, Kusairi added that, it is possible for other formal institutions such as junior high school or high school to have *outdoor learning*. Because when it's *outdoors*, children are happier. The enthusiasm is higher. If they are in class every day they will be bored. So, when outside the children are more enthusiastic. What was conveyed by Kusairi in the interview above is in line with the statement of kiai Muhyidin as follows;

*"Yes.... Think development. ....but at that time the process of knowledge transformation took place. So how the learning can take place is not burdensome to the children, as well as feel good about learning it. You don't feel constrained, if you look at the vast spaciousness, then the cold atmosphere, the cold weather, then the wind is smooth, of course, school children have more spacious hearts. So there is no burden, instead happy and happy. Yes... you can just see that, the kids will enjoy it."* (Interview, April 22, 2021).

What was conveyed by Kusairi and kiai Muhyidin above is supported by Ustadzah Karina's statement as follows;

*"As far as I know, it's because at SANI there are a lot of games. So they don't only get theory, but directly practice it. I guess, for example introduced fruit. So there, in the SANI park, what kind of fruit is there? So it's not only taught in the classroom but also outside like that. So they can also get theoretical knowledge, the second one can also get real knowledge. For example, in the class they are given a theory about various kinds of fruit, now in reality, outside they also know firsthand when they are in the SANI garden "* (Interview, April 22, 2021).

Manifestations: Outdoor Learning Zones (continued)		
Architectural Element: Gardens		
Enhanced Design Potential	Educational Implications (Concepts)	Active Learning Experience (ATA Taxonomy)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Raised bed gardens of all kinds</li> <li>▶ Container gardens</li> <li>▶ Vary types of gardens for learning: vegetable, herb, insect, ethnic/cultural, rock, flower, butterfly, historical.</li> <li>▶ Consider access for the community when school is in session and during summer.</li> <li>▶ Water/irrigation systems</li> <li>▶ Water recycling systems, cisterns for rain collection, canals</li> <li>▶ Farms: trees, orchards, crops</li> <li>▶ Provide composting bins.</li> <li>▶ Tool sheds</li> <li>▶ Greenhouse with seed bank</li> <li>▶ Landscaping, bulbs, etc., around all schools</li> <li>▶ See designer perspective forum articles about agriculture in the classroom and the school farm.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Biology (parts of plants, animals, insects)</li> <li>▶ Life cycle</li> <li>▶ Growth</li> <li>▶ Health, nutrition</li> <li>▶ Food groups</li> <li>▶ Earth science</li> <li>▶ Fine and gross motor skills</li> <li>▶ Ecology</li> <li>▶ Habitat</li> <li>▶ Agriculture</li> <li>▶ Irrigation</li> <li>▶ Food distribution systems</li> <li>▶ Commerce</li> <li>▶ Symmetry</li> <li>▶ Counting</li> <li>▶ Vocabulary, labeling</li> <li>▶ Intergenerational social interaction</li> <li>▶ History</li> <li>▶ Stewardship</li> <li>▶ Cooperation</li> <li>▶ Community</li> <li>▶ Cultures</li> <li>▶ Volunteer</li> <li>▶ Solar cycles, seasons</li> </ul>	<p><b>Observation and multisensory discovery:</b> Work in gardens, smell flowers, taste foods, examine textures, and compare.</p> <p><b>Data collection:</b> Dissect plants and label parts.</p> <p><b>Concept formation:</b> Plant a seed, measure and record its growth and diagram the life cycle.</p> <p><b>Problem solving:</b> Conduct scientific experiments with plants. What do they need to survive? Plant insect gardens and collect specimens. Create a geometrical garden layout.</p> <p><b>Valuing:</b> Partner with a local charity and grow food to help feed others. Ask community members for gardening tips and help.</p> <p><b>Stewardship:</b> Investigate ways to recycle and collect rainwater and use it to water gardens.</p>

Figure 6. ATA Taxonomy Manifestations in Outdoor Learning  
 Source: Taylor et al. 2009

Based on observations in the field, the researchers observed the existence of a learning process that was carried out both *indoors* and *outdoors*. Theoretical learning materials are mostly done *indoors*, while *practical, experience* and *play learning* materials are mostly done *outdoors*. The three things above are; content, context, and learning process work together



curricular to provide a simplistic understanding of the framework for organizing ideas that can be applied generally to planning learning spaces for early childhood education or other educational institutions.

In understanding this process, Anne Taylor introduced the ATA Taxonomy (Anne Taylor Associates) which consists of six steps as follows; 1) Multisensory observation and discovery, 2) Data collection, 3) Concept formation, 4) Problem solving, 5) Assessment, 6) Service. The ATA taxonomy is useful for all parties in designing the concept of learning activities in any learning situation and at all age levels. Teachers can use taxonomies as systems, mindsets, or instructional strategies to be used over and over again. Architects can use taxonomies to determine the types of activities children should be experienced in learning settings, and to plan spaces that support those activities. Related to this can be seen in the picture 6.

## Discussion

Referring to the Taylor et al. formula, the findings in this study are discussed based on the content, context, and learning process as follows; According to *Learning Content*. The findings of this study are corrective or rather add to the theory proposed by Taylor et al. which emphasizes the importance of integrating pedagogy in the physical space of the learning space. Space, both physical and virtual, can have an impact on learning related to togetherness, exploration, collaboration, and discussion. (Koza, 2004) explain that, "the classroom arrangement is essential in providing a safe environment for a child to learn and explore. The layout of the classroom must meet your needs as a teacher and the needs of all your students". Match to Taylor et al. (Oblinger, 2006) stated that, "we know that space can have a significant impact on teaching and learning. Exactly how we bring together space, technology, and pedagogy will continue to evolve". It is supported by (Kapur, 2018) stated that, "as the dynamics of education continue to evolve, teachers are empowered with the ability to change the model of learning, making it intensely interactive". As a result, He continued that the current technological revolution necessitates a major restructuring of education, with new curricula and pedagogy.

Learning can occur in the classroom (*formal*), at other times it can occur by chance due to interactions between individuals (*informal*). At this point, the Taylor et al. thesis finds significance in the practice of organizing learning content. Although in general the content of SANI learning materials is almost the same as the content of learning content in other similar early childhood education institutions. However, this study also finds other facts, which enrich the Taylor et al. thesis above. Although not in the overall content, the study conducted found an introduction to the basic aspects of spirituality to all students. Aspects of the basics of this spirituality on various occasions are often introduced early to children. This can be said as a representation of the interdisciplinary concept as offered by Taylor & Enggass. Spiritual values and traditions that develop in Islamic boarding schools (*culture*) are the core of all learning content provided at the Natural Nurul Islam School (SANI). This aspect is a characteristic that is always emphasized when starting learning or ending learning by reading prayers together. Discipline material that is shown and is always repeated in each of these subject matter will find manifestations and provide convenience in obtaining clarity of universal meaning for children.

Thus, what was conveyed by kiai Muhyidin, Gus Rahmatullah and Kusairi above can be said to be a manifestation of Taylor & Enggass' learning content in managing the SANI learning space which is arranged openly and close to nature. This is also in line with al Gazaly's view to look at the surrounding natural space as a way to be more aware of the existence of God as the Creator. The physical world (*learning space*) is a concrete object that encourages students to actively learn not only about the content of the lesson, but also leads them to a more fundamental understanding of the ideas, patterns, and principles that underlie the universe. Students will interact by using these manifestations in the space as an experience

and learning tool guide. Understanding the physical learning space as a manifestation of learning ideas or concepts is an example of wisdom that must be pursued and developed further. The two photos on figure 7 provide an overview of the content of learning the basics of spirituality in the form of activities to color the forms of objects created by God. This activity is supported by the form of a study room that is open and close to nature. Thus enthusiasm will be triggered and stimulate children's creativity.



**Figure 7. Spirituality basics learning content with the method of coloring the forms of God's creation**

Source: researcher observation 2021

According to *the Learning Context*, this study found a theoretical fit between the concepts offered by Taylor et al. and the physical form of geophysical management of the existing learning space. SANI's study rooms are openly designed with an outdoor *space* as a play area which is thematically arranged by the fruits of the archipelago. As Lynch argues, "spaceal image is the result of a two-way process between humans and their space". The main key of his study concluded that the formation of mental maps lies in the physical clarity (*imageability*) of the external space that takes place in the process of constant interaction. (Garrick, 2010) stated that, "outdoors offers a rich landscape of sensory experiences that stimulates the whole body". He continued that it is the sharp contrast in sensory experience that can offer the burst of energy associated with going outside and the sensation of freedom from the more dulling effects of the indoor environment. Young children learn through their senses, and through movement and sensory experiences provide the essential first-hand experience of the world. (Briefs & Educ, n.d.) explain this meant that, "simply being outdoors was not necessarily enough to foster environmental knowledge or understanding in ways that contributed to meaningful environmental interests and behaviors in later adulthood". What mattered was the child's orientation to nature and the fostering of their interest via content supplied by parents. Being outside was not necessarily equated with understanding nature as for some adults the environment simply provided the resources for their childhood imaginative games and activities.

The conception of the SANI learning space that is open and close to nature can also be said to be a justification for Garrick and Briefs & Educ. It is also matching to al-Gazali's concept of *spatial sensibility of cosmological balance and Ibn Arabi's concept of transcendence unity*. Al Gazali in (Akkach, 2005) stated that, "Humans are a small universe (*microcosm*) which becomes a unified part of the land or nature as a large universe (*macrocosmos*)". Thus, every human effort in managing space always leads to the attitude of submission to the oneness of God (*transcendental*).

Looking at the photo on Figure 8, it clearly shows that there is a representation of the context of learning based on the space (nature). The SANI study room, which is designed in an *open plan*, will support visual interaction between students and the natural space.

Meanwhile, the features of *outdoor space* which are arranged thematically will encourage students to interact directly. In the end, this interaction process will form spatial sensitivity as proposed by Howard Gardner as one part of the development of children's intelligence. This is also in line with and supports the *spatial sensibility* and transcendent unity as offered by al Gazaly.



**Figure 8. Context of Learning aspects of spirituality with the thematic arrangement of the Indonesian fruit outdoor space**

Source: researcher observation 2021

According to *the Learning Process*, it was found that there was a match between the statements put forward by (Harrison & Hutton, 2013) which said that, "the future design of learning spaces, in order to facilitate the changing pedagogical practices needed to support a mass higher education system with its greater student diversity". It was anticipated. That issues arising might include the implications for learning space of changing student demands, new pedagogies and technological advance". As stated by Harrison & Hutton, early childhood education is a learning process that is in the pre-operational phase and the transition to the operational phase. Thus, the development of an space (nature) based learning curriculum implemented by SANI found a theoretical basis as a forum for exploratory searches for children. At this point, the open concept of the study room and the natural features of the thematically managed SANI study room provide an opportunity to accommodate the developmental rights of students' bodies, minds, and souls. Besides that, the arrangement of the learning space also refers to one element of (Bornstein & Gardner, 1986) theory of multiple intelligences which states that "the spatial aspect is an important part of the development of children's intelligence". Gardner stated that, the future learning space design model is learning based on *learning by doing*. Thus, the *open plan form of the study room* and the various thematic features in the SANI *outdoor space* will encourage them to explore, touch, and explore objects that interest children.

Although much of the information can be summarized in textbooks, the actual learning process carried out by SANI in open landscapes offers more meaningful learning. Direct and intuitive experience allows for student identification and engagement with the subject matter so that the learning process becomes more optimal. It can be said that the concept of space-based learning applied at the Natural Nurul Islam School (SANI) is the embodiment of the various learning theories put forward by the experts above. Besides that, the concept of open plan study room and thematic arrangement of *outdoor space* found a theoretical meeting point with the opinion of Howard Gardner and al Gazaly who jointly place space as a trigger in evoking a *sense of spirituality*.

Looking at the photos above, it can clearly describe the manifestation of the learning process in managing the learning space of the Natural Nurul Islam School (SANI), both *indoor* and *outdoor*. The surrounding landscape in the form of rice fields and hills allows the SANI learning space to be more exploratory in facilitating the learning process in the pre-operational



and concrete operational phases that require more searching for variations in exploratory arenas. This natural physical existence becomes part of the learning landscape with classrooms that are clearly and openly expressed. The placement and selection of colors and materials can ensure that the school is not isolated and appears to be part of its landscape. The outdoor space is also green and based on biodiversity with the property of local fruit landscapes. This display strengthens SANI's relationship with nature and local life so that it becomes feasible in promoting spaceal (nature)-based schools.



**Figure 9. Indoor and outdoor learning process**

Source: researcher observation 2021

## Conclusion

The management of the learning space at the Natural Nurul Islam School (SANI) is based on the spiritual values typical of traditional pesantren. Practically speaking, the goal of pesantren to be closer to nature brings a fairly basic pedagogical change in content, context, and learning process. Spatially, this brings significant changes related to the management of the physical learning space. The SANI learning space that is open to nature encourages students' enthusiasm in the learning process. Early Childhood education institution under the auspices of the Nurul Islam Islamic boarding school which is rich in '*values and spirituality*'. For this reason, in managing the learning space, these spiritual values must be maintained and continuously improved with a number of managerial efforts through adaptation and a series of agreements with the pesantren community. Thus the learning space management model based on spiritual values will become *the new rule* as a model *platform* in responding to pedagogical changes applied in planning the learning space of the Nurul Islam School of Nature (SANI).

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