

Reconceptualizing Islamic Primary Education: A Comparative Multiple Case Study of a Qur'anic–Montessori Hybrid Pedagogical Framework in Indonesia and Malaysia

Ade Aspandi, Aip Syarifudin, Muhammad Azhar Muttaqin, Mamat Rahmatullah

¹Universitas Islam Al-Ihya Kuningan, Indonesia

²Universitas Muhammadiyah Cirebon, Indonesia

³International Islamic University Malaysia, Malaysia

⁴Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses the gap between Islamic value-based education and contemporary child-centered pedagogies, which are often examined separately in previous research. It aims to analyze how an integrative Qur'anic curriculum can be effectively implemented within a Montessori-based framework in Islamic primary schools across Indonesia and Malaysia. This research employs a qualitative multiple case study design, using comparative analysis of selected Islamic schools that adopt integrative and Montessori-inspired practices. The findings indicate that integrating Qur'anic values with Montessori pedagogy fosters a holistic learning environment that supports students' cognitive, social, emotional, and spiritual development. The use of mixed-age classrooms and prepared learning environments encourages autonomy, collaboration, and meaningful engagement, while spiritual practices are embedded within daily learning activities as lived experiences. This study contributes by proposing an integrative Qur'anic–Montessori model as a hybrid pedagogical framework that bridges religious education and modern learner-centered approaches. The findings offer practical and theoretical implications for developing holistic and value-oriented Islamic education systems in both local and broader international contexts.

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Corresponding Author:

Ade Aspandi

Universitas Islam Al-Ihya Kuningan, Indonesia. Email: adeaspandi@unisa.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Islamic primary education is increasingly challenged to reconcile academic achievement with the cultivation of character and spiritual depth. Within a contemporary curriculum perspective, the integration of Qur'anic values is understood not merely as the inclusion of religious content but as the embedding of ethical, spiritual, and worldview dimensions across all learning experiences (Nasution et al., 2025; Suhertini et al., 2025). This integrative orientation positions religion as a lived and internalized framework that informs students' cognitive, social, and moral development (Badri & Malik, 2024; Pallathadka et al., 2023). At the same time, Maria Montessori's pedagogical philosophy offers a child-centered approach that emphasizes autonomy, experiential learning, and developmental sensitivity. In this regard, Montessori education can be positioned as a pedagogical bridge that enables the operationalization of integrative Qur'anic values within a structured yet flexible learning environment (Anisaturrizqi et al., 2025). The convergence of these two perspectives reflects broader global shifts toward holistic education, faith-

based learning, and 21st-century competencies that prioritize not only knowledge acquisition but also meaning-making and personal growth (Razak, 2025; Fahmi et al., 2025).

A growing body of literature highlights the potential of holistic, student-centered learning environments to enhance children's overall development. Montessori-based settings, for instance, are widely recognized for fostering independence, concentration, and intrinsic motivation through carefully prepared environments and self-directed activities (Demangeon et al., 2023; Sezgin & Şener, 2024). Empirical studies further demonstrate the positive impact of Montessori education on social integration, resilience, and the diverse needs of learners, including gifted students (Demangeon et al., 2025; Scippo, 2025). Similarly, studies in Islamic education emphasize the importance of integrating spiritual values to support students' ethical awareness and psychological well-being (Alhamuddin et al., 2025; Ibrahim et al., 2023). However, much of this literature tends to present these approaches in isolation. Research on Montessori education often privileges cognitive and developmental outcomes while giving limited attention to spiritual or religious dimensions, whereas studies on Qur'anic or Islamic education frequently focus on doctrinal transmission and moral instruction without sufficiently engaging with contemporary pedagogical innovations (Hasibuan et al., 2025; Nurliah, 2024). In addition, findings related to mixed-age classrooms, although generally positive, remain contested regarding scalability, institutional readiness, and alignment with formal education systems (Anisaturrizqi et al., 2025). These inconsistencies suggest that existing studies have not fully addressed how integrative and pedagogical dimensions can be systematically combined within a coherent educational model.

The educational contexts of Indonesia and Malaysia offer a relevant comparative setting for examining this issue. Both countries share strong Islamic educational traditions while simultaneously engaging with global educational reforms (Kosim et al., 2023). Malaysia has shown relatively advanced progress in integrating innovative pedagogical approaches within Islamic schooling, including adaptations of Montessori-inspired environments. In contrast, Indonesia presents a more diverse and decentralized landscape, where efforts to integrate character and spiritual education vary significantly across institutions (Rohman et al., 2024). This contrast provides an opportunity to explore how integrative curriculum models are interpreted, adapted, and implemented across different socio-educational contexts. At a broader level, such comparative inquiry contributes to international discussions on how faith-based education systems can respond to the demands of holistic and future-oriented learning.

Despite these developments, a clear research gap remains. Existing studies have not sufficiently explained how Qur'anic values can be systematically integrated into a child-centered pedagogical framework, nor how such integration can be managed at the level of curriculum design and classroom practice (Afwadzi et al., 2023; Setiady & Nugraha, 2026). There is also limited empirical research that examines this integration through a comparative lens across different national contexts. Furthermore, the absence of a coherent conceptual model that bridges religious values and contemporary pedagogy underscores the need for more integrative, practice-oriented research, particularly to address ongoing challenges in Islamic curriculum development and pedagogical alignment (Zulkifli et al., 2025; Rohman et al., 2024).

This study addresses this gap by proposing a novel integrative Qur'anic–Montessori framework as a hybrid pedagogical model in Islamic primary education. Unlike previous studies that treat these domains separately, this research offers a synthesized approach that connects spiritual internalization with child-centered learning principles within a structured curriculum management system. This contribution is both conceptual, by articulating an integrative framework, and empirical, by demonstrating its implementation across different educational contexts, including the integration of emerging learning technologies and innovative pedagogical strategies (Firdaus et al., 2026; Mustafa et al., 2025).

Based on this framework, the study aims to analyze how integrative Qur'anic curriculum management is implemented in Montessori-based Islamic primary education in Indonesia and Malaysia, using a qualitative comparative case study approach. Specifically, the research focuses on key dimensions of integration, including curriculum design, classroom structure, and learning practices that support students' cognitive, social, and spiritual development. By doing so, this study seeks to generate theoretical insights into integrative education and practical implications for the development of holistic, value-oriented learning systems, including the role of teacher professional development and reflective practice in sustaining innovation (Masuwai et al., 2024). Ultimately, the research contributes to global educational discourse by offering an alternative model that aligns faith-based education with the principles of holistic and 21st-century learning.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative multiple-case comparative design to examine the implementation of an integrative Qur'anic curriculum management within Montessori-based Islamic primary education. This

design was selected to enable an in-depth exploration of complex educational practices across different contexts while allowing for systematic comparison between cases. A case study approach is particularly appropriate for investigating contemporary phenomena within real-life settings, especially when the boundaries between context and practice are not clearly defined. By comparing cases across Indonesia and Malaysia, this study seeks to identify both shared patterns and contextual variations in the integration of Qur'anic values and Montessori pedagogy.

The research was conducted in four Islamic primary schools, two in Indonesia and two in Malaysia, all of which implement Montessori-inspired learning environments combined with integrative religious practices. These countries were purposively selected for their strong Islamic educational traditions and varying levels of engagement with pedagogical innovation, making them suitable for comparative analysis. The selected schools represent diverse institutional profiles, including urban and semi-urban settings, and varying levels of curriculum development and teacher training. This variation allows for richer insights and strengthens the transferability of the findings across similar educational contexts.

2.2 Participants

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, focusing on individuals directly involved in curriculum implementation. The study involved 18 participants, including school principals, classroom teachers, curriculum coordinators, and several parents. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and classroom observations. Interviews were conducted for approximately 45–60 minutes per participant, either face-to-face or via online platforms, depending on accessibility. Key interview questions explored themes such as: (1) how Qur'anic values are integrated into daily learning activities, (2) how Montessori principles are adapted in Islamic contexts, and (3) challenges encountered in implementing integrative curriculum models. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy.

2.3 Data Collection

In addition to interviews, document analysis was conducted on curriculum frameworks, lesson plans, and institutional guidelines to examine how integrative principles are formally structured. Classroom observations were also conducted during selected sessions to capture real-time interactions, learning environments, and the practical enactment of curriculum integration. Field notes were systematically recorded to complement the interview and document data. The use of multiple data sources enabled methodological triangulation, thereby enhancing the credibility and depth of the findings.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using a thematic analysis approach involving three systematic stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In the open coding phase, raw data were segmented and labeled to identify initial categories related to curriculum integration, classroom practices, and spiritual activities. During axial coding, these categories were organized into broader themes by identifying relationships and patterns across the data. In the selective coding stage, core themes were refined and integrated into a coherent analytical framework. A cross-case analysis was then conducted to compare similarities and differences between Indonesian and Malaysian cases, allowing for the identification of contextual influences and recurring patterns. This analytical process ensured that findings were both grounded in empirical data and analytically robust.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

To ensure the study's trustworthiness, several validation strategies were employed. Credibility was enhanced through data triangulation, member checking, and prolonged engagement with the research context. Transferability was supported by providing thick descriptions of research settings and participants. Dependability and confirmability were ensured through the maintenance of an audit trail, including detailed documentation of data collection, coding decisions, and analytical procedures. Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout the study. All participants provided informed consent prior to data collection, and anonymized identities and institutional information were maintained in confidentiality. The study also adhered to institutional ethical guidelines and received ethical clearance from the relevant academic authority.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Implementation of Integrative Qur'anic Curriculum in Montessori-Based Learning

The findings indicate that implementing an integrative Qur'anic curriculum involves embedding spiritual values across daily learning activities rather than treating them as separate subjects. This pattern was consistently observed in both Indonesian and Malaysian cases, although the forms of implementation varied.

In the Indonesian cases, classroom observations showed that integration occurred through routine-based activities. For example, in one observed session, students began the day with a collective prayer followed by a short reflective discussion led by the teacher. During a mathematics lesson, the teacher linked problem-solving activities to values such as honesty and responsibility. One teacher explained:

“We do not teach religion as a separate lesson only. Every subject must reflect values, so children understand that learning and faith are connected.” (Teacher, Indonesia Case 1).

Similarly, in Malaysian cases, integration was embedded within structured lesson planning and classroom routines. However, the process appeared more systematically documented. Lesson plans explicitly included columns linking learning objectives with Qur’anic values. A curriculum coordinator noted:

“Each activity already has a value component. Teachers are trained to connect academic content with Qur’anic principles in a consistent way.” (Curriculum Coordinator, Malaysia Case 2).

Classroom observations in Malaysia also showed structured transitions between activities, where spiritual practices such as dhikr or short supplications were integrated into learning sequences. Compared to Indonesian cases, Malaysian practices appeared more standardized at the institutional level, while Indonesian practices were more flexible and teacher-driven. The second finding shows that curriculum integration is supported by collaborative planning and thematic learning structures. Across all cases, teachers reported working together to design lesson plans that connect multiple subjects under shared themes. In Indonesia, this process was described as adaptive and evolving:

“We adjust themes based on students’ needs. Sometimes the integration is not written formally, but it happens in practice.” (Teacher, Indonesia Case 2).

In contrast, Malaysian schools demonstrated more formalized planning mechanisms, including scheduled curriculum meetings and documented integration frameworks. Classroom observations confirmed that thematic learning was implemented across subjects such as language, science, and religious studies within a unified topic. Despite these differences, both contexts showed alignment between academic content and value-based learning.

The third finding highlights the role of institutional support and stakeholder involvement in sustaining curriculum integration. In all cases, school leaders facilitated implementation through training sessions, internal workshops, and regular evaluations. A school principal in Malaysia stated:

“Integration will not work without continuous teacher training. We monitor how values are applied in classrooms.” (Principal, Malaysia Case 1).

In Indonesian contexts, institutional support was present but less formalized, often relying on informal discussions and peer collaboration among teachers. Parental involvement was also observed in both contexts, particularly through communication channels that reinforced value-based practices at home. A parent commented:

“What children learn at school is continued at home, especially daily habits like prayer and discipline.” (Parent, Indonesia Case 1)

Table 1. Cross-Case Comparison of Integrative Qur’anic Curriculum Implementation

Component	Indonesia Cases	Malaysia Cases
Spiritual Integration	Embedded in daily routines (flexible)	Embedded and systematically structured
Lesson Planning	Adaptive, teacher-driven	Formalized and documented
Thematic Learning	Implemented but less standardized	Consistently implemented across subjects
Institutional Support	Informal collaboration and limited training	Structured training and regular evaluation
Parental Involvement	Communication-based reinforcement	Structured school-home engagement programs

Cross-case analysis shows that both contexts share a common pattern of integrating Qur’anic values into learning activities but differ in structure and institutionalization. Indonesian schools tend to emphasize flexibility and teacher autonomy, while Malaysian schools tend to emphasize systematization and institutional control. Despite these differences, all cases reflect a shift away from fragmented subject-based instruction toward integrated learning experiences. The data show that integrative curriculum practices are

enacted through classroom routines, lesson planning, and institutional support systems. These findings are consistently supported by interview data, classroom observations, and document analysis across cases.

3.2 The Role of Mixed-Age Classrooms in Enhancing Learning Dynamics

The findings show that mixed-age classrooms (ages 6–9) facilitate peer-based learning, shaping both academic engagement and social behavior. This pattern was consistently observed across all cases, although the intensity and structure of interactions differed between Indonesian and Malaysian contexts.

In the Indonesian cases, classroom observations indicated that peer mentoring occurred naturally during learning activities. Older students were observed assisting younger peers with tasks, particularly literacy and numeracy exercises. In one observed session, an older student guided a younger peer in reading a short passage and correcting pronunciation. A teacher explained:

“We rarely separate students by ability. Older children help the younger ones, and that process is part of learning itself.” (Teacher, Indonesia Case 1).

Younger students were also observed learning by watching their peers before attempting tasks independently. This form of observational learning was especially visible during hands-on activities using Montessori materials. The classroom environment allowed students to move freely and choose tasks, creating multiple opportunities for interaction.

In Malaysian cases, similar patterns were identified, but with more structured teacher facilitation. Peer mentoring was intentionally incorporated into lesson activities, with teachers assigning older students the role of “learning guides.” A teacher noted:

“We encourage older students to take responsibility for helping others, but it is guided so that the learning remains focused.” (Teacher, Malaysia Case 2).

Classroom observations in Malaysia showed that mixed-age interaction was often integrated into planned group work, with clearer instructional sequences compared to Indonesian cases. This indicates a more structured approach to managing peer interaction.

The second finding indicates that mixed-age classrooms support differentiated learning through flexible pacing and varied levels of task engagement. Across all cases, students were observed working on different activities simultaneously, based on their individual readiness. Teachers primarily functioned as facilitators, moving among students to provide guidance when needed. In Indonesia, this flexibility was largely informal and depended on teacher discretion. One teacher stated:

“Each child progresses differently, so we do not force them to move at the same speed.” (Teacher, Indonesia Case 2).

In contrast, Malaysian schools implemented more structured differentiation, supported by documented learning progressions and activity sequencing. Teachers used observation records to monitor student development and adjust tasks accordingly. Despite these procedural differences, both contexts demonstrated that mixed-age settings allow students to learn without strict time constraints or uniform expectations.

The third finding shows that mixed-age classrooms foster a collaborative classroom climate characterized by reduced competition and increased social interaction. Observations across all cases indicated that students interacted across age groups without rigid hierarchies. Younger students approached older peers freely, while older students demonstrated a sense of responsibility in assisting others.

In Indonesian classrooms, this interaction appeared spontaneous and socially driven. In Malaysian classrooms, similar interactions were observed but often embedded within structured activities. A school leader in Malaysia noted:

“Mixed-age classrooms help students learn cooperation early, but we guide the process to maintain balance.” (Principal, Malaysia Case 1).

Teachers in both contexts reported fewer behavioral disruptions in mixed-age settings compared to conventional classrooms. Students were more engaged in activities and less focused on competition.

Table 2. Cross-Case Comparison of Learning Dynamics in Mixed-Age Classrooms

Aspect	Indonesia Cases	Malaysia Cases
Peer Mentoring	Natural and spontaneous interaction	Structured and guided peer roles
Observational Learning	Informal observation during activities	Integrated into planned learning sequences
Learning Flexibility	Teacher-driven, adaptive pacing	Systematically monitored and documented

Social Interaction	Freely developed across age groups	Facilitated within structured group activities
Classroom Climate	Cooperative and non-competitive (informal)	Cooperative with structured classroom management

Cross-case analysis indicates that while both contexts use mixed-age classrooms to support interaction and flexibility, they differ in their structures and instructional control. Indonesian cases emphasize organic interaction and teacher autonomy, whereas Malaysian cases demonstrate more systematic planning and monitoring of peer learning processes. Despite these differences, peer mentoring, observational learning, and flexible pacing were consistent across all cases. The data show that mixed-age classrooms serve as settings where students engage in shared learning experiences across different levels of ability and age. Interview data, classroom observations, and institutional documents from both countries support these findings.

3.3 The Role of Prepared Environment and 7M Framework in Holistic Development

The findings demonstrate that the prepared environment serves as a central element in organizing learning experiences that allow students to engage independently while remaining within a structured setting. In all observed cases, classrooms were arranged to enable students to access materials freely, move between activities, and work at their own pace. This spatial organization was not merely physical but also reflected a consistent learning pattern in which students were expected to take responsibility for their own engagement.

In the Indonesian cases, this environment appeared more flexible and adaptive. Learning materials were placed on open shelves without rigid categorization, allowing students to select activities based on interest and familiarity. During classroom observations, students were seen simultaneously engaging in reading exercises, hands-on materials, and Qur'anic memorization without direct instruction at every step. As one teacher explained:

"We prepare the environment so children can learn by themselves. The teacher only guides when needed." (Teacher, Indonesia Case 1)

In contrast, Malaysian classrooms displayed a more structured arrangement, with materials systematically organized and often labeled according to the learning progression. Teachers typically provided initial directions before students began working independently. This created a more predictable learning flow, while still allowing students to choose tasks within the given structure. A teacher described this balance as follows:

"The environment must be structured so students know what to do, but they still have the freedom to choose." (Teacher, Malaysia Case 2)

Alongside the physical environment, classroom practices integrated multiple learning components, including literacy, memorization, reasoning, and independent work. Although these elements are conceptually aligned with the 7M framework, their implementation was not always explicitly labeled in practice. In Indonesian settings, such components were embedded informally within daily routines. Memorization activities occurred alongside other tasks, while peer teaching emerged naturally when students assisted one another. This pattern was evident in classroom interactions where older or more advanced students explained concepts without being formally assigned to do so.

Malaysian cases showed a more deliberate structuring of similar learning components. Lesson plans included activities that required students to read, explain, and demonstrate understanding, sometimes in front of their peers. Observations indicated that students were periodically guided to articulate their learning, suggesting a more intentional incorporation of reasoning and communication practices. Despite differences in delivery, both contexts revealed a consistent presence of activities that supported multiple dimensions of development.

The interaction between the prepared environment and these learning practices produced a noticeable pattern of sustained student engagement. In both countries, students were able to focus on tasks for extended periods with limited teacher intervention. Teachers moved between individuals or small groups, offering guidance when necessary rather than directing the entire class simultaneously. In Indonesian classrooms, this engagement was maintained through flexibility and student choice, while in Malaysian classrooms it was supported by clearer activity structures and monitoring systems.

Table 3. Cross-Case Comparison of Prepared Environment and Learning Practices

Component	Indonesia Cases	Malaysia Cases
Prepared Environment	Flexible, open-access materials	Structured and systematically organized

Learning Activities	Integrated and implicit within routines	Explicitly planned and documented
Memorization Practices	Embedded in daily activities	Scheduled and structured sessions
Peer Teaching	Spontaneous and informal	Guided and occasionally structured
Student Independence	High, based on free activity selection	High, with structured guidance

Across cases, similar patterns emerge in how the prepared environment supports independent learning, although the level of structure differs. Indonesian practices tend to rely on teacher adaptability and organic classroom interaction, while Malaysian practices are more formalized through planning and documentation. Despite these differences, students in both contexts engage in a combination of activities that include reading, memorization, reasoning, and peer interaction. The data show that classroom environments and learning routines are closely interconnected in shaping how students participate in learning. These patterns are consistently reflected in interview responses, classroom observations, and institutional documents across all cases.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that integrating Qur'anic values into Montessori-based learning extends beyond curriculum content to encompass the reorganization of learning processes, classroom structures, and institutional practices. This challenges the dominant tendency in prior research that positions religious education and pedagogical innovation as separate domains. While earlier studies have emphasized either the developmental benefits of Montessori education (Demangeon et al., 2023; Sezgin & Şener, 2024) or the moral and spiritual dimensions of Islamic education (Badri & Malik, 2024; Pallathadka et al., 2023), the present findings demonstrate that both dimensions can be operationalized simultaneously through intentional curriculum management (Nasution et al., 2025; Suhertini et al., 2025). In this respect, the study not only affirms the principles of holistic education but extends them by showing how integration can be enacted at the level of practice rather than remaining conceptual.

At the same time, the findings reveal important nuances that complicate overly deterministic assumptions in the literature. Although Montessori environments are often associated with fostering learner independence, the data indicate that such outcomes are significantly mediated by teacher preparedness and institutional support. This aligns with research emphasizing the role of professional development and reflective practice in sustaining educational innovation (Masuwai et al., 2024). In contexts where teachers received structured training and ongoing supervision, integration was more consistent and sustainable. Conversely, in settings where implementation relied on individual initiative, practices tended to be adaptive but less standardized. This suggests that the effectiveness of integrative curriculum models is deeply embedded in contextual factors, including school culture, leadership orientation, and systemic support, as also highlighted in studies on challenges in Islamic curriculum development (Zulkifli et al., 2025; Rohman et al., 2024).

The comparative findings between Indonesia and Malaysia further illustrate how policy environments and institutional capacity shape integration. Malaysian cases demonstrate stronger institutionalization, characterized by structured curriculum design, systematic monitoring, and alignment with national quality assurance frameworks, reflecting broader policy dynamics in Islamic education systems (Kosim et al., 2023). In contrast, Indonesian contexts exhibit greater flexibility, where integration is often driven by teacher creativity and localized interpretation. While this enables contextual responsiveness, it also introduces implementation variability, a challenge noted in comparative curriculum studies (Rohman et al., 2024). These findings suggest that integrative models are not universally transferable but are mediated by socio-educational structures, reinforcing the importance of contextual adaptation rather than standardization.

The role of mixed-age classrooms provides further theoretical insight. Consistent with socio-cultural learning theories, prior research has highlighted peer interaction as a mechanism for cognitive development. The present findings support this view while extending it to include the internalization of moral and social values such as responsibility, empathy, and cooperation. This aligns with broader discussions on Islamic character education that emphasize the internalization of values through social interaction (Alhamuddin et al., 2025; Fahmi et al., 2025). Thus, mixed-age settings function not only as cognitive scaffolding environments but also as spaces for ethical formation, an aspect that remains underexplored in mainstream Montessori literature.

A similar refinement arises regarding the concept of the prepared environment. While previous studies underscore its role in fostering autonomy (Demangeon et al., 2023), the current findings suggest that autonomy is not an automatic outcome of environmental design. Rather, it is constructed through the interaction between structured routines, guided activities, and intentional value integration. The presence of practices such as Qur'anic literacy, memorization, and peer explanation indicates that independence develops

within a structured pedagogical framework. This challenges simplified interpretations of student-centered learning that equate autonomy with minimal guidance, suggesting a balanced model of guided autonomy. Such findings resonate with emerging work on integrating Qur'anic curriculum design with structured learning systems (Afwadzi et al., 2023; Hasibuan et al., 2025).

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes by proposing an integrative Qur'anic–Montessori model as a hybrid pedagogical framework. This model conceptualizes integration as a dynamic interplay between value internalization (Qur'anic principles), learner-centered pedagogy (Montessori approach), and curriculum management (institutional and instructional processes). Unlike prior models that treat these elements in isolation, this framework emphasizes their interdependence and alignment, thereby responding to calls for more holistic and integrative approaches in Islamic education (Setiady & Nugraha, 2026; Razak, 2025). It also aligns with contemporary discourse on innovative and technology-supported Islamic learning environments (Firdaus et al., 2026; Mustafa et al., 2025).

Despite these contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged. The study is based on a limited number of cases within two national contexts, which may not fully capture the diversity of Islamic educational practices. The qualitative design, while enabling in-depth analysis, does not provide measurable evidence of student outcomes. Additionally, variations in institutional access and documentation may have influenced the depth of data across cases. These limitations indicate the need for future research employing broader samples, mixed-method approaches, and longitudinal designs to examine long-term impacts and generalizability.

The findings also carry important implications. Theoretically, they support the development of integrative frameworks that bridge spiritual and pedagogical dimensions within a unified model of education. Practically, the study underscores the importance of teacher training, collaborative curriculum planning, and institutional support systems in sustaining integrative practices. At the policy level, the findings suggest that educational reform in Islamic contexts should extend beyond curriculum content to include structural, professional, and systemic dimensions (Kosim et al., 2023). More broadly, this study contributes to global discussions on how faith-based education can adapt to the demands of holistic and future-oriented learning while maintaining its foundational values.

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that integrating Qur'anic values into Montessori-based learning constitutes a viable, context-sensitive model of curriculum management that holistically aligns the cognitive, social, and spiritual dimensions in Islamic primary education. The findings demonstrate that such integration is not inherently embedded in pedagogical design but is actively constructed through the alignment of curriculum structures, teacher capacity, and institutional support systems. The proposed integrative Qur'anic–Montessori framework, therefore, contributes both conceptually, by bridging faith-based values with learner-centered pedagogy, and empirically, by illustrating its implementation across diverse socio-educational contexts. Importantly, the effectiveness of this model depends on the context, where structured systems enhance consistency and scalability, while more flexible environments enable adaptation but introduce variability. Despite these contributions, the study is limited by its qualitative scope and a restricted sample, which constrain generalizability and preclude causal inference about learning outcomes. Future research should employ longitudinal and mixed-method designs to examine the model's impact on cognitive achievement, character development, and spiritual growth across broader contexts. Nevertheless, the study offers significant theoretical, practical, and policy implications by advancing integrative approaches to holistic education, emphasizing the central role of teacher professional development and institutional readiness, and highlighting the need for systemic alignment in curriculum reform.

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