



Integrative Reconstruction of Islamic Education Learning Model to Enhance Values in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

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Abstract

This study examines the reconstruction of an Islamic Education learning model based on integration–interconnection in an Islamic elementary school. Using a qualitative case study approach, the research involved school principals, Islamic Education teachers, general subject teachers, and students. Data were collected through participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation of instructional materials. Thematic analysis followed Miles and Huberman’s framework, encompassing data condensation, presentation, and conclusion drawing, with validity ensured through triangulation of sources, techniques, and time. Findings indicate that integration–interconnection functions as both a conceptual and epistemological foundation, positioning Islamic Education as the core value permeating interdisciplinary learning. The reconstructed pedagogical design emphasizes value habituation, teacher exemplification, reinforcement of religious and social practices, and integrative teaching materials linking Islamic Education with science, social studies, and health. This model contributes to holistic internalization of Islamic values across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, fostering moderate religious character among students. Nevertheless, implementation faces challenges such as dual curriculum administrative burdens, limited family support, and diverse student backgrounds. The cultural context of Nahdlatul Ulama provides strong cultural capital that sustains value-based education.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education occupies a strategic position within Indonesia’s national education system because it serves not only as a means of transmitting religious knowledge but also as a fundamental medium for shaping

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students' character, morality, and spirituality from an early age (Poerwanto, 2019). In the context of Indonesia's multicultural and religious society, Islamic Religious Education should ideally serve as the primary pedagogical space for instilling universal Islamic values, such as honesty, tolerance, responsibility, and a love for peace. However, the practice of Islamic Religious Education in formal educational institutions, particularly at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level, remains dominated by a textualist approach focused solely on cognitive achievement. An excessive emphasis on mastering subject matter and rote memorization leaves little room for contextual understanding and the internalization of values in students' daily lives, thereby creating a gap between students' theoretical understanding and their social behavior (Naharuddin, 2020). This situation indicates that the problems in Islamic Religious Education are not merely methodological in nature but are rooted in a more fundamental epistemological issue: the persistent structural separation between religious studies and general knowledge within the national education system.

This scientific dichotomy is a colonial legacy that was later reinforced by a conservative epistemological perspective within the Islamic educational tradition, which positions religion and science as two separate domains (Fawaid, 2023). In line with this, previous research findings indicate that Islamic values are not only positioned as moral norms but also function as an epistemological and ethical framework for understanding educational science and the teaching profession (Khatimah, Arifi, et al., 2025; Tadol et al., 2025; Thuwaiba & Salaeh, 2025). Muna et al., (2024) assert that this separation poses a serious obstacle to realizing holistic Islamic education, as it fosters fragmented reasoning among students and hinders their ability to connect religious teachings with social realities, the environment, science, and technology. In educational practice, Islamic Religious Education is often treated as a standalone subject detached from other disciplines, even though the complexity of modern life demands an interdisciplinary and integrated educational approach, particularly at the elementary education level, which serves as the foundation for shaping students' ways of thinking. This research gap calls for studies that are not only conceptual but also rooted in teachers' pedagogical practices at the elementary education level. Although Islamic Religious Education plays a strategic role in shaping students' character, its teaching practices at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level still tend to be partial and normative.

Preliminary observations at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Ma'arif NU 2 Sidamulih indicate that the integration of Islamic values into general subjects has not been systematically managed, resulting in the internalization of Islamic values not being fully realized in students' learning experiences. This situation demonstrates that the presence of religious values in the curriculum does not automatically guarantee the success of character development if it is not accompanied by integrative and contextual pedagogical strategies. In response to this epistemological crisis, Amin Abdullah proposes the integration-interconnection paradigm as an alternative approach in the development of Islamic scholarship and educational design. This paradigm rejects the dichotomy between religion and knowledge, and emphasizes the importance of epistemological dialogue between Islamic studies and the social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences (Abdullah, 2018). In the educational context, integration-interconnection demands Islamic Religious Education that can link religious concepts to contemporary issues, such as the environmental crisis, radicalism, the development of digital technology, and socio-cultural pluralism.

Thus, Islamic values are not merely taught normatively but internalized through meaningful interdisciplinary learning processes (Abdeldayem & Aldulaimi, 2023).

A number of studies indicate that the integration-interconnection approach has been implemented on a limited basis in some elite schools and at the secondary education level. Maulana, (2020), for example, found that integrating Islamic Religious Education content with astronomical concepts in the “Hajj and Umrah” curriculum at Abu Bakar Islamic Junior High School in Yogyakarta was able to increase students’ interest and understanding. Similar findings were reported by Besse, (2018), who demonstrated that the integration of Islamic Religious Education with Natural Sciences contributes to enhancing students’ creative thinking skills. However, such integrative practices are still rarely implemented at the elementary education level, particularly in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, where instruction remains dominated by traditional approaches and fails to explicitly link religious knowledge with general knowledge (Abishev et al., 2025; Dalimunthe, 2022; Khusna et al., 2025; Rahman et al., 2025; Wahyuni et al., 2025).

Efforts to integrate Islamic religious education with general knowledge at the elementary level are receiving increasing attention in contemporary Islamic education studies. Alharbi, (2025) research indicates that integrating Islamic education with science instruction in elementary schools can simultaneously foster students’ moral development, cultural identity, and scientific learning. These findings confirm that an integrative approach allows religious education to function not only as a normative subject but also as a foundation of values that animates interdisciplinary learning. This perspective reinforces the importance of developing models of Islamic religious education that can link Islamic values with the realities of life and the advancement of science.

In the context of local culture-based elementary education, Rustina et al., (2026) assert that the integration of local traditions into Islamic religious education contributes to strengthening students’ understanding of Islamic values as well as their cultural identity. The findings of this study indicate that synergy between schools, families, and local culture is a critical factor in the successful internalization of religious values. These findings are particularly relevant to the context of elementary madrasahs, where the role of local Islamic culture as a form of social capital in strengthening values education is inseparable. Furthermore, the integration of religious dimensions with humanistic education has proven effective in fostering the holistic development of students’ personalities. Subiyantoro et al., (2025) demonstrate that the integration of religious values into learning contributes to the strengthening of moral integrity, character development, and more meaningful learning. These results affirm that the integration of religious education impacts not only the cognitive dimension but also simultaneously encompasses the affective and moral-spiritual aspects of students.

At the level of elementary madrasah education, (Pangastuti et al., 2025) found that the internalization of the value of religious moderation among elementary madrasah students can be achieved through habituation strategies, role modeling, and the reinforcement of a religious school culture. These findings demonstrate that the role of teachers as moral role models is a key factor in the success of values education in madrasahs. In line with this, Nasron, (2025) emphasizes that the integration of Islamic values into various subjects can promote contextual learning that links religious teachings to students’ daily lives. Such cross-curricular integration strengthens the relevance

of religious education in addressing the dynamics of contemporary education. Overall, these various studies indicate that the integration of Islamic religious education with interdisciplinary learning, local culture, and teachers' pedagogical strategies constitutes an effective approach for character development and the internalization of Islamic values in elementary education. However, studies specifically analyzing the reconstruction of an Islamic Religious Education learning model based on integration–interconnection within the context of elementary madrasahs remain relatively limited. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the reconstruction of an Islamic Religious Education learning model based on integration–interconnection in the reinforcement of Islamic values at the elementary madrasah level.

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Ma'arif NU 2 Sidamulih, as a primary educational institution under the auspices of Nahdlatul Ulama, has strategic potential to develop a model of Islamic Religious Education based on integration and interconnection. This madrasah is situated within a socially and religiously rich ecosystem, rooted in the tradition of Islamic moderation, and implements a relatively flexible curriculum through the Merdeka Curriculum and the 2013 Curriculum. However, to date, there has been no in-depth empirical study examining how teachers at this madrasah reconstruct an integrative Islamic Religious Education learning model, particularly in connecting Islamic values and general knowledge in an applied manner in the classroom.

Previous studies on the integration of Islamic Religious Education indicate that existing research still tends to focus on theoretical, managerial, and thematic learning aspects, and thus has not fully addressed the dimension of contextual pedagogical practice. [Santoso, \(2022\)](#), for example, examined the reconstruction of Islamic Religious Education learning in elite schools by emphasizing innovation in learning design, but did not elaborate in depth on the epistemological dimension that connects religion and science as a unified framework of thought. Meanwhile, [Gofur, \(2023\)](#) have demonstrated efforts to integrate Islamic Religious Education through extracurricular activities and science-based learning; however, these studies remain limited to practical implementation and have not comprehensively explored teachers' pedagogical strategies in building conceptual bridges between religious knowledge and general knowledge within the classroom.

On the other hand, [Hamdi, \(2024\)](#) makes an important contribution by emphasizing the strengthening of the doctrinal aspects characteristic of *Ablussunnah wal Jama'ah (Aswaja)*, but has not yet examined in depth how the process of reconstructing the Islamic Religious Education learning model is carried out in an integrative–interconnected manner in daily teaching practice. Thus, it can be understood that previous studies remain partial, both in terms of research focus and depth of analysis, particularly in fully integrating the conceptual, pedagogical, and practical dimensions of learning. More broadly, studies on the integration of Islamic Religious Education with other disciplines generally remain at the conceptual level or involve limited implementation, and are predominantly conducted at the secondary education level. This situation indicates a significant research gap, particularly at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level, which has distinct characteristics regarding student development and pedagogical needs. Furthermore, there has been little empirical research that positions teachers as the primary agents in the process of reconstructing learning through concrete, reflective, and contextual micro-pedagogical strategies.

Given this gap, this study aims to make a more specific and in-depth

contribution by focusing on the reconstruction of an Islamic Religious Education learning model based on integration and interconnection, derived from the actual practices of teachers at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, particularly within the cultural context of Nahdlatul Ulama. Unlike previous studies that tended to stop at the conceptual level or partial implementation, this study empirically explores how the integration of religion and general knowledge is operationalized in daily teaching practices through concrete and sustainable pedagogical strategies employed by teachers. This study also places teachers' micro-pedagogical strategies at the center of analysis, assuming that teachers play a strategic role as mediators of values in bridging Islamic teachings with general knowledge. In this context, integration is not understood merely as a combination of subject matter, but as a living pedagogical process through the instillation of values, modeling, reinforcement of religious practices, and the development of integrative teaching materials. This approach enables a deeper and more contextual internalization of Islamic values in students' lives.

The novelty of this study lies in three main aspects. First, this study presents an empirical analysis of the reconstruction of an Islamic Religious Education learning model based on integration–interconnection at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level, a topic that has remained relatively under-explored. Second, this study emphasizes the importance of teachers' micro-pedagogical strategies as the core of the integration process, thereby offering a new perspective in the development of Islamic Religious Education learning models that are not only conceptual but also practical and contextual. Third, this study integrates the integration–interconnection paradigm (Abdullah, 2018) with the constructivist approach Faisal, (2005); Trianto, (2014) and holistic education (Sanjaya, 2011), thereby producing a comprehensive, coherent, and relevant analytical framework for the dynamics of contemporary Islamic education.

This research article aims to analyze the reconstruction of an integration–interconnection-based Islamic Religious Education learning model in strengthening Islamic values at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level. Specifically, this study examines how the concept of integration–interconnection serves as an epistemological foundation in the reconstruction of Islamic Religious Education learning, how the design of the integrative–interconnected learning model is operationalized in teachers' pedagogical practices, how it contributes to the reinforcement of students' Islamic values cognitively, affectively, and psychomotorically, as well as the various implementation challenges faced in the context of learning at elementary madrasahs. Thus, this study is expected to provide an empirical contribution to the development of an Islamic Religious Education learning model that is integrative, contextual, and relevant to the dynamics of contemporary Islamic education.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design to explore in depth the practice of reconstructing integrative learning in madrasahs (Adel et al., 2025; Akem et al., 2025; Busral et al., 2025; Eltoukhi et al., 2025; Engkizar et al., 2023, 2024, 2025; Kassymova et al., 2025; Okenova et al., 2025; Oktavia et al., 2023; Sabrina et al., 2022). The main subjects of the study include madrasah principals and Islamic Religious Education teachers as key actors in the planning and implementation of integrative learning. Specifically, the research informants consist of three Islamic Religious Education teachers (including the madrasah principal who also teaches Islamic

Religious Education) and seven general subject teachers.

Within the madrasah's educational structure, homeroom teachers for grades 1–3 also serve as Islamic Religious Education teachers, whereas in grades 4–6, there is a separation of roles among homeroom teachers, Islamic Religious Education teachers, and religious practice instructors, who are responsible for routine religious activities such as Quran recitation, Dhuha prayer, and *istighotsab*. Research informants included six students in grades 4–6 to obtain complementary perspectives regarding the implementation and impact of integrative learning. Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, participatory observation of the learning process and religious activities, as well as a documentary study of teaching materials such as lesson plans, learning modules, and evaluation documents. Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources, techniques, and time.

Data analysis was conducted thematically, drawing on the interactive analysis model proposed by (Miles M., 1994), which includes the data condensation phase comprising the selection, focusing, simplification, and transformation of field data; data presentation through the organization of findings in the form of thematic matrices and analytical narratives; and the drawing and verification of conclusions, which were conducted iteratively to ensure the consistency and validity of the findings. The entire analysis process was interpreted using Amin Abdullah's integration–interconnection paradigm as an epistemological framework to link empirical findings with theoretical constructs.

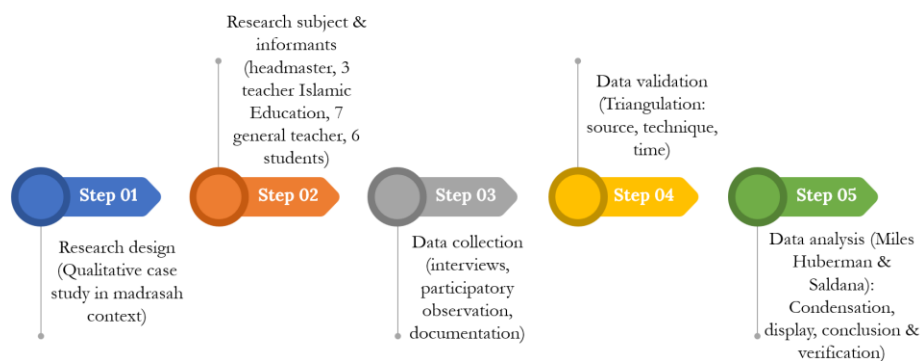


Fig 1. Stages of the research methodology

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study were obtained through a series of field observations and in-depth interviews with the madrasah principal, Islamic Religious Education teachers, general subject teachers, and students, which were subsequently triangulated with the madrasah's institutional documents. Data analysis was conducted using a thematic approach to identify patterns of integration and interconnection in Islamic Religious Education at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Ma'arif NU 2 Sidamulih, while also exploring the pedagogical implications and values resulting from these practices.

The Conceptual Foundation of Integration and Interconnection in the Reconstruction of Islamic Religious Education

Research findings indicate that the reconstruction of the Islamic Religious Education learning model at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Ma'arif NU 2 Sidamulih was carried out through an integrative-interconnective approach that consciously links Islamic teachings, general knowledge, and the local wisdom values of Nahdlatul Ulama within a cohesive pedagogical framework. Teachers interpret this approach as an effort to make Islamic Religious Education not merely a

subject but a living value within the interdisciplinary learning process. This practice of integration is emphasized by an Islamic Religious Education teacher who states that religious learning must “*be alive within other subjects, not confined to textbooks*” (informant 1).

Empirically, Islamic Religious Education teachers at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Ma’arif NU 2 Sidamulih design lessons by establishing meaningful connections between the topics of Aqidah Akhlak, natural phenomena in Natural Sciences lessons, social dynamics in Pancasila and Civic Education, and local cultural values such as mutual cooperation, *tawassuth* (moderation), and *tasamub* (tolerance). This integration is not understood as merely superimposing religious symbols onto general subject matter, but rather as a pedagogical effort to instill religious awareness in students through meaningful learning experiences. Thus, Islamic Religious Education serves as a medium for the continuous internalization of values, not merely the transmission of normative knowledge.

“Most Islamic Religious Education teachers and classroom teachers state that integrating religious values into general subjects is more effective when done through consistent practice and setting a good example rather than through verbal instruction alone” (informant 3)

This finding confirms that Islamic Religious Education at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Ma’arif NU 2 Sidamulih is not treated as a standalone subject, but rather as a core value that permeates the entire madrasah educational ecosystem. The principal emphasized that the learning orientation is not solely directed toward academic achievement but toward the continuous development of students’ religious character. Islamic values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, and respect for teachers and peers are internalized through daily routines, school regulations, and teachers’ exemplary conduct in everyday interactions. This approach demonstrates that Islamic Religious Education serves as the normative and ethical foundation guiding the entire educational process, in line with the principles of Islamic education that emphasize the unity of knowledge and values.

The reconstruction of the learning model identified in this study aligns with the integration-interconnection paradigm developed by (Abdullah, 2017). Abdullah asserts that the dichotomy between religious studies and general studies is a colonial epistemological legacy that hinders the development of holistic Islamic education. From this perspective, religious studies must engage in active dialogue with the social sciences, natural sciences, and technology so that Islamic values do not remain merely theoretical but are internalized into the lived reality of students. The findings of this study represent a concrete application of this paradigm, as the integration of knowledge does not occur solely at the level of discourse but is manifested in teachers’ micro-pedagogical practices within the madrasah classroom. The integrative strategies applied by teachers have proven effective in building both conceptual understanding and value awareness among students.

The concept of tawhid, for example, is not taught as an abstract dogma, but is contextualized through ecological awareness in science education, by framing the order of nature as a manifestation of God’s power. Similarly, the concept of *akhlak* is constructed as concrete social behaviors such as empathy, honesty, and responsibility in students’ daily lives. This approach encourages students to understand Islamic teachings in a reflective and practical way, rather than merely through conceptual memorization. These findings reinforce the results of research by (Besse, 2018; Maulana, 2020), which show that integrative learning can enhance students’ comprehensive understanding, critical thinking, and creativity when scientific and religious approaches are developed in a

balanced manner.

Overall, the reconstruction of Islamic Religious Education based on integration and interconnection at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Ma'arif NU 2 Sidamulih underscores that Islamic education need not be confined to a normative-verbalistic approach, but can evolve into a progressive, contextual, and adaptive learning system that meets the demands of the times. The use of two curricula, the Merdeka Curriculum and the 2013 Curriculum, does not pose an obstacle but is strategically utilized to build a flexible and holistic learning ecosystem. This model demonstrates that the integration of Islamic values and general knowledge can be effectively realized without losing the roots of moderate Islamic tradition oriented toward the principle of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. To clarify the pattern of reconstruction of Islamic Religious Education learning based on integration–interconnection found in the field, this study summarizes the main findings in the form of an analytical matrix as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Matrix of Findings on the Reconstruction of Islamic Religious Education Based on Integration and Interconnection

Theme of Findings	Teacher's Pedagogical Practice	Form of Knowledge Integration	Strengthened Islamic Values	Impact on Students
Integration of Aqidah with Natural and Social Sciences	Linking the concept of tawhid with the order and balance of nature	Religious-scientific knowledge	Divine awareness, ecological responsibility	Growing concern for the environment
Morality and Civics (PKn)	Habituation of cooperation, responsibility, and deliberation	Religious-social knowledge	Honesty, empathy, discipline	Positive and collaborative social attitudes
Fiqh and Health	Teaching <i>thabarab</i> (purification) in relation to personal and environmental cleanliness	Religious-health knowledge	Discipline, personal responsibility	Clean and healthy lifestyle behavior
Islamic Education as Core Value	Teacher's role modeling and cultivation of values in school	Curricular-cultural integration	Manners, respect for teachers	Formation of moderate religious character

Table 1 shows that integration and interconnection in Islamic Religious Education are not merely symbolic but are manifested in concrete pedagogical practices that link religious content with science, social studies, and health. This matrix underscores that Islamic Religious Education serves as a core value that permeates the entire learning process and has a direct impact on the development of students' moderate religious character.

Designing a Reconstructed Model of Islamic Religious Education Based on Integration and Interconnection

Islamic Education teachers play a key role in operationalizing the

integration-interconnection paradigm at the level of learning practice. In the context of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Ma'arif NU 2 Sidamulih, teachers do not merely function as conveyors of religious material, but as pedagogical actors who consciously connect Islamic values with general knowledge and the realities of students' lives. This role positions Islamic Religious Education teachers as strategic agents in the process of reconstructing learning, as well as agents of value internalization that continuously shape students' religious character.

From a pedagogical perspective, Islamic Religious Education teachers are required to design, implement, and evaluate instruction that is relevant to the developmental characteristics of elementary madrasah students. Spiritually and morally, teachers serve as role models who guide students' attitudes and behavior in daily life. [Supriyanti, \(2022\)](#) emphasizes that Islamic Religious Education teachers have a multifunctional role as educators, facilitators, role models, motivators, mentors, and evaluators in developing students' spiritual intelligence. Field findings indicate that this multifunctional role is carried out relatively consistently by teachers at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Ma'arif NU 2 Sidamulih, particularly in efforts to contextually integrate Islamic Religious Education with general subjects. As stated by one of the Islamic Religious Education teachers.

"Islamic religious education here cannot stand alone. Children must understand that religion is present in other subjects and in their daily lives" (informant 2).

Based on the results of observations and in-depth interviews, teachers' strategies for establishing connections between religious studies and general studies were identified through four main approaches. First, strategies for instilling Islamic values and ethics, carried out systematically and continuously as part of the school's daily routines. Practices such as the habit of greeting one another, praying together before and after lessons, time discipline, and the instillation of spiritual responsibility serve not merely as formal rules but as a medium for the practical and repetitive internalization of values. Through these habits, Islamic values are presented as an integral part of students' lived experiences, rather than merely cognitive instructional content. The findings of this study align with previous research indicating that the implementation of a structured, enjoyable, and participatory learning model can enhance students' motivation, emotional engagement, and memory retention. These conditions contribute to the comprehensive optimization of learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education ([Istiadatir et al., 2025](#)).

Second, teachers' exemplary behavior serves as a central strategy in values education. Teachers recognize that the effectiveness of values internalization depends heavily on consistency between educators' words and actions. Values such as honesty, courtesy, responsibility, and discipline are not merely taught through verbal explanations but are tangibly demonstrated in daily interactions between teachers and students. This finding aligns with [Munif, \(2017\)](#) perspective, which emphasizes that character education from an Islamic perspective requires the integration of cognitive, affective, and behavioral exemplary dimensions. The results of [Adolph, \(2023\)](#) research also reinforce these findings by demonstrating that teachers, as role models, have a significant influence on the formation of students' religious and social character in elementary madrasahs. General subject teachers also play a role in strengthening the integration of Islamic values by linking teaching materials to a contextual religious perspective. This integration is not carried out symbolically, but through the instillation of the meaning of values in daily learning.

"In science class, the teacher often reminds us that nature is God's creation and must be protected," (informant 3).

Third, strengthening religious and social activities is a key strategy for bridging classroom learning with real-life practice. Activities such as morning Madrasah Diniyah classes, congregational prayer, recitation of memorized Quranic verses, and student involvement in social and religious activities within the madrasah and the surrounding community create continuity between formal learning and students' religious experiences outside the classroom. This strategy reflects a holistic educational approach that integrates the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains in a balanced manner, as emphasized by (Sanjaya, 2011). Thus, Islamic values do not remain merely normative discourse but are internalized through meaningful social practices. The findings of this study align with previous research indicating that the integration of Islamic education with academic knowledge is realized through thematic learning based on tawhid, linking subject matter to Quranic verses, fostering religious practices, and cultivating religious character. In this context, teachers do not merely act as instructors but as *murabbi* who instill spiritual values in every learning process, thereby fostering a balance between the students' faith, knowledge, and moral character (Sulastrri & Anwar, 2026).

Fourth, the development of integrative teaching materials has become a key strategy in operationalizing the integration and interconnection between Islamic Religious Education and general knowledge. Teachers develop lesson plans and learning modules that explicitly link religious content to scientific, social, and health contexts, ensuring that the integration of knowledge does not remain merely conceptual but is realized in actual teaching practices. For example, the concept of tawhid is linked to ecological awareness in the study of Natural and Social Sciences by framing the order of nature as a manifestation of the Oneness of Allah SWT. Similarly, *fiqh* material on taharah is explained in relation to physical health and environmental hygiene, particularly in the post-pandemic context. This approach demonstrates that integration interconnection does not eliminate disciplinary boundaries but rather connects them through dialogue and mutual enrichment in students' learning experiences. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that the success of an Islam-based model is supported by modular strategies, the application of Sharia principles, and relationship management grounded in *akblaqul karimah* (Khatimah, Subiyantoro, et al., 2025).

These findings are consistent with the views of (Nucci et al., 2014), who assert that the internalization of moral values in education will only be effective if educators serve as consistent moral role models in their daily teaching practices. Furthermore, the strategies implemented by teachers at Madrasah Ibtidiyah Ma'arif NU 2 Sidamulih also reflect the successful application of a constructivist approach in Islamic Religious Education, where students build understanding through active engagement, concrete experiences, and reflection on the social realities around them (Faisal, 2005; Trianto, 2014).

Thus, the teachers' strategy for establishing connections between religious studies and general studies at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Ma'arif NU 2 Sidamulih serves not only as a pedagogical technique but also as a practice of value transformation that positions Islamic Religious Education as a moral and ethical foundation throughout the entire learning process. The relationship between the theoretical framework, empirical findings, and pedagogical implications of this practice is systematically summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Matrix of Relationships Between Theory, Field Findings, and Implications

Theoretical Framework	Field Findings	Theoretical Implications	Practical Implications
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Integration– Interconnection	Islamic Education permeates the entire learning process	Affirms Islamic Education as the epicenter of educational values	Holistic learning model in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah
Holistic Education	Integration of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains	Strengthening the paradigm of holistic Islamic education	Contextual and meaningful learning strategies
Character Education	Teacher role modeling effectively shapes values	Teachers as agents of value internalization	Strengthening the strategic role of Islamic Education teachers
Constructivism	Students actively connect values with experiences	Values are built through reflective experiences	Reflective- contextual learning methods

Based on table 2, it is evident that each theoretical framework underpinning the research finds its relevance in actual teaching practices. The integration-interconnection paradigm is reflected in the position of Islamic Religious Education as a core value that permeates the entire learning process, while the holistic educational approach is realized through the simultaneous integration of the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Findings regarding the teacher's role as a moral exemplar reinforce character education theory, which positions educators as the primary agents of value internalization. Furthermore, the application of the constructivist approach demonstrates that students construct their understanding of Islamic values through reflective and contextual learning experiences. Thus, this matrix confirms that the reconstructed Islamic Religious Education learning model not only possesses empirical validity but is also theoretically coherent and applicable in the educational practice of elementary madrasahs.

The Model's Contribution to Strengthening Students' Islamic Values

The reconstruction of an Islamic Religious Education learning model based on integration and interconnection at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Ma'arif NU 2 Sidamulih demonstrates that teachers play a key role in transforming religious education from a normative approach toward a contextual and practical approach. Teachers do not merely convey religious material but operationalize Islamic values by linking them to the dynamics of students' lives, the advancement of knowledge, and contemporary educational challenges. Thus, integration-interconnection does not remain a conceptual discourse but is realized in micro-pedagogical practices that shape relevant and meaningful religious learning experiences at the elementary madrasah level.

These findings align with the integration-interconnection paradigm developed by Amin Abdullah, which emphasizes epistemological dialogue among Islamic studies, the social sciences and humanities, and the natural sciences as the foundation for the development of holistic Islamic education. This paradigm rejects the dichotomy between religious studies and general studies and affirms the importance of interdisciplinary learning that positions Islamic Religious Education not merely as a normative subject but as a core value that animates the entire learning process. Therefore, the pedagogical practices of

teachers identified in this study can be understood as a concrete operationalization of the integration–interconnection paradigm at the elementary madrasah level.

The findings of this study indicate that the integration of Islamic values into the learning process not only impacts cognitive aspects but also tangibly shapes students' behavior and character. This aligns with previous research showing that the integration of Islamic religious education with local cultural values contributes to changes in students' attitudes and behaviors, such as improved communication skills, a growing appreciation for cultural values, and the development of habits characterized by more polite and civilized behavior (Maideja et al., 2023). Thus, integration and interconnection in Islamic Religious Education serve not only as a pedagogical approach but also as an effective mechanism in the process of contextual and sustainable internalization of Islamic values.

Teachers' strategies for establishing connections between religious studies and general studies at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Ma'arif NU 2 Sidamulih serve not only as pedagogical techniques but have evolved into a practice of value transformation that positions Islamic Religious Education as a moral and ethical anchor throughout the entire learning process. The relationship between the theoretical framework, empirical findings, and pedagogical implications of this practice demonstrates that integration interconnection does not stop at the level of lesson planning but directly contributes to the continuous process of internalizing Islamic values among students. This contribution is evident through the increasingly close connection between Islamic studies, general knowledge, and daily life practices, which simultaneously shape meaningful, contextual, and relevant learning experiences for students in real life. The teacher's role in Islamic Religious Education has proven to be a key factor in enhancing students' understanding, as the effectiveness of learning is largely determined by the strategies, encouragement, and pedagogical approaches employed by the teacher. When teachers are able to deliver varied and motivating instruction, students tend to be more active, understand learning objectives, and develop their potential to the fullest. These findings confirm that appropriate learning strategies impact not only cognitive aspects but also student motivation and engagement in learning (Nasril et al., 2023).

Based on the matrix linking theory, field findings, and learning implications, it is evident that each theoretical framework underpinning the research finds its relevance in teaching practices at madrasahs. The integration–interconnection paradigm is reflected in the position of Islamic Religious Education as a core value that animates the entire learning process, while the holistic educational approach is realized through the simultaneous and continuous integration of the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Findings regarding the teacher's role as a moral exemplar further reinforce character education theory, which positions educators as the primary agents of value internalization. Additionally, the application of the constructivist approach demonstrates that students construct their understanding of Islamic values through reflective, contextual, and real-life experience-based learning. These findings align with various previous studies affirming that the integration of religious education with contextual and interdisciplinary learning significantly contributes to the strengthening of religious character and the holistic formation of students' values. Thus, the reconstruction of the Islamic Religious Education learning model not only possesses empirical validity but also demonstrates strong theoretical coherence and practical relevance in elementary madrasah educational practice.

The implementation of an integration-interconnection-based Islamic Religious Education learning model demonstrates a tangible contribution to the comprehensive and sustainable strengthening of students' Islamic values. The integration of Islamic teachings, general knowledge, and daily life practices fosters a process of value internalization that occurs not only during classroom learning activities but is also more broadly integrated into the madrasah's culture. These impacts are reflected in the development of moderate religious attitudes, worship habits, social awareness, and students' ability to relate Islamic values to the real-life contexts they face. This finding further reinforces the view that consistently engaging in religious activities can enhance discipline and foster religious habits in students' daily lives (Khatimah & Ikhlās, 2023). The results of this study also indicate that the teacher's role in the learning process is not merely that of a content presenter but rather that of a facilitator who encourages, guides, and motivates students in achieving the learning objectives of Islamic Religious Education. Teachers bear the responsibility of managing classroom dynamics and ensuring students' development proceeds optimally, thereby significantly enhancing student engagement and learning motivation (Nopriza et al., 2021).

Thus, integrated learning not only enriches students' cognitive understanding but also simultaneously strengthens the affective and psychomotor dimensions in their daily lives. Furthermore, these findings align with previous research indicating that an integrative approach grounded in Islamic values has proven effective in enhancing learning activities, fostering critical reflection, and shaping a holistic paradigm of professionalism through the integration of cognitive, affective, and moral-spiritual dimensions. These findings also reinforce the view that the internalization of Islamic values does not stop at the symbolic level but is manifested in daily decision-making and social interactions.

The novelty of this study lies in the formulation of a model for reconstructing Islamic Religious Education based on integration and interconnection, derived from the micro-pedagogical practices of elementary madrasah teachers within the cultural context of Nahdlatul Ulama. Unlike previous studies, which tended to be conceptual or focused on secondary education, this study presents empirical evidence on how the integration of religion and general knowledge is operationalized in elementary education through exemplary behavior, habit formation, and the development of integrative teaching tools. Thus, this study offers a new perspective on the reconstruction of Islamic Religious Education that is contextual, applicable, and deeply rooted in the tradition of moderate Islam as practiced in madrasah education.

Furthermore, the contribution of the integrative–interconnected learning model is also evident in the creation of a more meaningful and contextual learning ecosystem for students. The integration of Islamic values into various subjects fosters continuity between classroom learning experiences and students' daily lives. Learning is no longer understood as a process of knowledge transfer detached from the realities of life, but rather as a process of meaning-making that links religious values with students' social experiences. In this context, the madrasah functions as a space for learning living values, where students not only understand Islamic concepts cognitively but also experience, practice, and reflect on these values in their social interactions. This demonstrates that integration and interconnection contribute to strengthening the dimension of meaningful learning, which is a crucial prerequisite in values-based character education.

Another equally important contribution is the enhancement of students'

reflective capacity in understanding the relationship between science and Islamic teachings. Through learning that connects religious concepts with natural phenomena, social dynamics, and everyday experiences, students learn to view Islam as a source of values relevant to modern life. This process fosters the development of an integrative mindset that encourages students to understand science as part of the effort to recognize God's greatness and to apply Islamic values in real life. Thus, this learning model not only contributes to the formation of religious character but also strengthens students' perspective on the integration of knowledge, faith, and life practices in a holistic and sustainable manner.

Challenges in Implementing the Integrative-Interconnected Learning Model

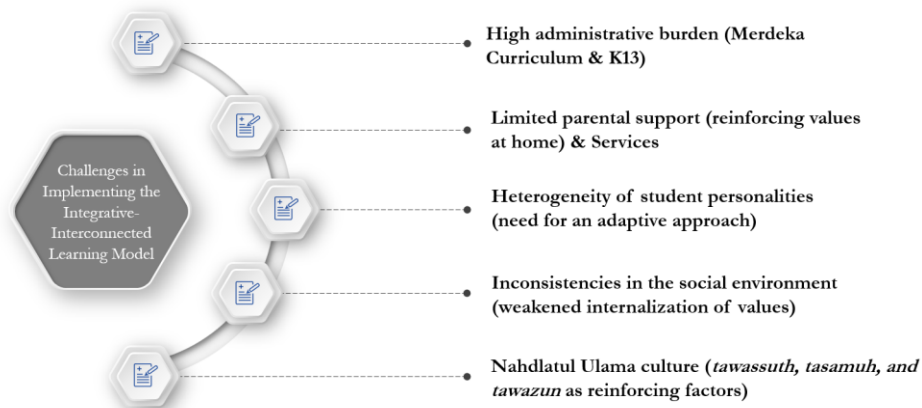


Fig 2. Challenges in Implementing the Integrative-Interconnected Learning Model

The findings regarding these various implementation challenges indicate that the success of integration and interconnection cannot be separated from sustained structural and cultural support. In other words, the restructuring of Islamic Religious Education is not merely a methodological issue at the classroom level, but rather an institutional agenda that requires madrasah policies, family collaboration, and the simultaneous strengthening of teacher professionalism. Although the reconstruction of an integration-interconnection-based Islamic Education learning model at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Ma'arif NU 2 Sidamulih has shown significant achievements in reinforcing Islamic values, the results of this study also reveal a number of structural and pedagogical challenges faced by teachers in the implementation process. These challenges are not merely technical in nature but are closely related to institutional dynamics, student characteristics, and the relationship between the school and the family in values education.

One of the main challenges faced by teachers is the heavy administrative burden they must bear due to the parallel implementation of two curricula: the Merdeka Curriculum and the 2013 Curriculum. Teachers are required to prepare teaching materials, assessment reports, and learning documentation that differ in format and standards, which consumes time and energy that could otherwise be allocated to strengthening pedagogical aspects and reflecting on the teaching of Islamic values. This situation demands flexibility and adaptability from teachers in managing integrative learning without compromising the quality of the process of internalizing Islamic values. This finding aligns with Dalimunthe, (2022), who highlights the complexity of curriculum implementation in the context of character education based on Islamic values. This situation demands a high level of pedagogical and managerial readiness from teachers, as expressed

by one of the informants:

“In theory, integrated learning is entirely feasible, but in practice, teachers are often faced with a significant administrative burden, especially when they have to adapt teaching materials from two curricula that run in parallel,” (informant 3).

The next challenge relates to the limited support parents can provide in guiding their children’s religious education at home. Field data indicates that not all parents have the time, understanding, or pedagogical readiness to consistently guide their children’s religious practices. Consequently, the internalization of Islamic values fostered in the school environment does not always receive adequate reinforcement within the family setting. This situation underscores the importance of the family’s role as the primary ecosystem for values education, as parents are key actors in creating a religious environment that is lived out by all family members (Khatimah & Ikhlas, 2023). Therefore, collaboration between schools and families is an indispensable necessity as complementary ecosystems for values education. This finding aligns with the research results of (Fajri, 2023), who emphasize that the success of Islamic-based character education is largely determined by the synergy between formal educational institutions and the family environment. In practice, the reinforcement of Islamic values often stops at the institutional level of the school and has not yet been fully sustained within the family environment, as expressed by one of the informants:

“Not all parents are able to support their children’s religious education at home, whether due to time constraints or a lack of understanding, so the reinforcement of values often stops at the school environment,” (informant 4).

Furthermore, the heterogeneity of students’ personalities and psychosocial backgrounds presents a unique challenge in the implementation of integrative-interconnected learning. Teachers face differences in students’ levels of emotional maturity, discipline, and readiness to learn, which require a more personalized and adaptive pedagogical approach. In this context, teachers do not merely act as instructors but also as mentors and mediators of values who must be able to adapt learning strategies to the individual needs of students. This challenge underscores that the integration of Islamic values into learning cannot be implemented uniformly but requires pedagogical sensitivity and careful observation of classroom dynamics.

“Children’s personalities vary greatly; some quickly grasp the values being taught, while others require repeated guidance due to their different family backgrounds and environments,” (informant 5).

From the students’ perspective, the continuity of value-based habits is also greatly influenced by the environment outside of school. When the values learned at the madrasah are not consistently reinforced at home, the process of internalizing those values risks weakening. This indicates that the continuity of value internalization is highly dependent on the consistency of the students’ social environment.

“Sometimes at home, we aren’t always reminded like we are at school, so if we don’t practice them again, we tend to forget,” (informant 6).

However, the findings of this study also indicate that the cultural context of Nahdlatul Ulama actually serves as social and cultural capital that strengthens the implementation of the integrative learning model. The values of *tawassuth* (moderation), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *tawazun* (balance), which are deeply rooted in the Nahdlatul Ulama tradition, provide a cultural foundation conducive to the development of Islamic Religious Education that is inclusive, dialogical, and contextual. These values enable teachers to integrate Islamic teachings with social realities in a moderate and adaptive manner, without getting trapped in

exclusive or rigid approaches. This finding reinforces Hamdi, (2024) view, which asserts that Aswaja-based education holds strategic potential in supporting an integrated approach to knowledge and the strengthening of socio-religious values in Islamic educational institutions.

Thus, the challenges of implementing the integrative-interconnective learning model at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Ma'arif Nahdlatul Ulama 2 Sidamulih do not negate the success of the reconstruction that has been carried out, but rather serve as a critical reflection on the complexity of values education practices at the elementary madrasah level. These challenges, in fact, underscore that the success of integration and interconnection requires systemic support involving institutional policies, parental collaboration, and the strengthening of teachers' professional capacities. In this context, the reconstruction of Islamic Religious Education based on integration and interconnection serves not only as a pedagogical innovation but also as a strategic agenda for the development of Islamic education that is adaptive, contextual, and sustainable.

Based on the overall field findings, this study formulates a conceptual model for the reconstruction of Islamic Religious Education learning based on integration and interconnection, grounded in the micro-pedagogical practices of elementary madrasah teachers. This model is formed through a dynamic interaction between teachers' pedagogical strategies, interdisciplinary integration of knowledge, and the cultural context of Nahdlatul Ulama as the socio-cultural environment of learning. Teachers act as mediators of values, connecting Islamic teachings with general knowledge in a dialogical and contextual manner, so that the process of internalizing values takes place holistically and sustainably in the lives of students. This conceptual model is presented in the following figure.

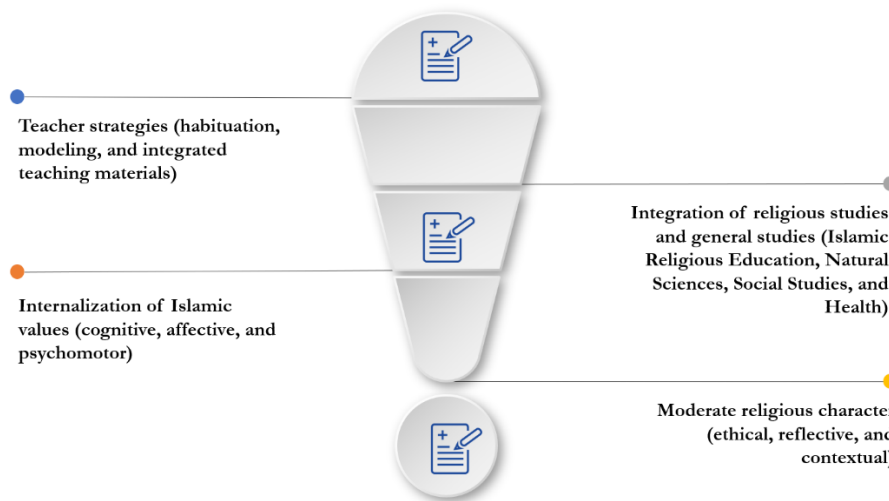


Fig 3. A reconstruction model of Islamic Religious Education based on integration and interconnection

Figure 3 illustrates that the reconstruction of Islamic Religious Education based on integration and interconnection is built through dynamic interactions between the cultural context of Nahdlatul Ulama, teachers' pedagogical strategies, and the contextual integration of religious and general knowledge. In this model, teachers act as mediators of values who connect Islamic teachings with the realities of life through dialogue, so that the process of internalizing values takes place holistically in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. This model emphasizes that the formation of students' religious character is the result of a pedagogical process that is continuous, contextual, and rooted in moderate Islamic traditions.

CONCLUSION

This study yielded four main conclusions that align with the research focus and findings. First, integration–interconnection serves as the conceptual foundation for the reconstruction of Islamic Religious Education in elementary madrasahs. This paradigm positions Islamic Religious Education as a core value that animates the entire learning ecosystem, thereby fostering a dialogical and contextual relationship between religious knowledge, general knowledge, and the cultural context of Nahdlatul Ulama. Second, the design of the learning model reconstruction is realized through the synergy of teachers' pedagogical strategies, which include instilling values, modeling exemplary behavior, strengthening religious and social practices, and developing integrative teaching materials. This design demonstrates that the integration of religious and general knowledge can be systematically operationalized in learning practices at the elementary education level. Third, the implementation of the integrative–interconnected learning model contributes significantly to strengthening students' Islamic values. The internalization of these values occurs holistically across the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, as reflected in the development of a moderate, reflective, and contextual religious character among students. Fourth, the application of the integrative learning model faces a number of structural and pedagogical challenges, including the administrative burden resulting from a dual curriculum, limited family support in reinforcing values at home, and the heterogeneity of students' characters. Nevertheless, the cultural context of Nahdlatul Ulama serves as a socio-cultural asset that strengthens the sustainability of the model's holistic implementation.

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