

Strengthening the Theological Basis of Islamic Education at MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah Manado

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ABSTRACT: *This study aims to reinforce the theological foundation of Islamic education at the elementary level, focusing on MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah Manado, situated within a pluralistic society. Employing a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, then analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model. The findings indicate that theological values, especially the concept of Tauhid, serve as the ideological and pedagogical foundation across all educational activities, including curriculum integration, teaching methods, and teacher role-modeling. The holistic and contextual approach adopted by the school has proven effective in shaping students' religious character while maintaining values of tolerance and diversity. These findings suggest the need for national curriculum reform that substantively incorporates Islamic theological values and for enhancing teachers' competence in theology and social context. Although this study is limited to a single local context, its results offer a potential framework for developing theology-based Islamic education models applicable across diverse multicultural settings.*

Keywords: *Islamic education, theological foundation, elementary madrasah, curriculum integration, multicultural education.*

ABSTRAK: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memperkuat landasan teologis pendidikan Islam pada tingkat sekolah dasar, dengan fokus pada MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah Manado yang berada dalam masyarakat pluralistik. Menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai-nilai teologis, khususnya konsep tauhid, menjadi landasan ideologis dan pedagogis dalam seluruh aktivitas pendidikan, termasuk integrasi kurikulum, metode pembelajaran, dan keteladanan guru. Pendekatan yang holistik dan kontekstual yang diterapkan sekolah terbukti efektif dalam membentuk karakter religius siswa sekaligus mempertahankan nilai-nilai toleransi dan keberagaman. Temuan ini mengindikasikan perlunya reformasi kurikulum nasional yang secara substantif mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai teologi Islam serta peningkatan kompetensi guru dalam aspek teologi dan konteks sosial. Meskipun penelitian ini terbatas pada satu konteks lokal, hasilnya menawarkan kerangka potensial untuk pengembangan model pendidikan Islam berbasis teologi yang dapat diterapkan pada berbagai setting multikultural.

Kata kunci: pendidikan Islam, landasan teologis, madrasah ibtidaiyah, integrasi kurikulum, pendidikan multikultural.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education at the elementary level plays a crucial role in shaping students' foundational faith and spiritual character. In this context, madrasah ibtidaiyah (Islamic elementary schools) as formal institutions under the Ministry of Religious Affairs bear the

responsibility not only of delivering cognitive Islamic knowledge but also of instilling theological values that serve as the basis for religious ethics and identity. Nevertheless, current practices of Islamic education at this level often remain dominated by normative and ritualistic approaches, with insufficient emphasis on deeper theological dimensions (Muhaimin, 2011). Nasr (2006) emphasized that Islamic education lacking a metaphysical orientation and a comprehensive theological framework loses its transformative power in shaping a holistic human being who submits to divine principles (*The Heart of Islam*).

Globally, there has been increasing attention to the spiritual and theological dimensions in elementary education. Research by Shah, Barnes, and Alviar-Martin (2018) highlighted the urgency of reorienting education towards the recovery of religious values and spirituality, even within culturally plural educational settings. However, their study does not specifically address how Islamic theology could be institutionalized within the curriculum of madrasah ibtidaiyah in Indonesia a context marked by social complexity and cultural diversity. This gap reflects the need for more contextual and applicable studies on the integration of theological foundations into elementary-level Islamic learning systems.

Al-Attas (1980) asserts, Islamic education should be grounded in the Islamic worldview, which upholds the Oneness of God (**Tauhid**) as the foundation of all knowledge and human practice. In *The Concept of Education in Islam*, al-Attas stresses that education must lead humans to self-knowledge and knowledge of their Lord through a process of *ta'dib* (holistic cultivation), rather than merely *ta'lim* (instruction). However, in practice, theological values in madrasah are often fragmented and treated as standalone content, especially within subjects like 'aqidah-akhlak (Islamic creed and ethics), without being meaningfully integrated across the broader curriculum. This situation indicates the absence of a pedagogical framework that facilitates the comprehensive and transformative internalization of Islamic theology at the elementary level.

Halstead (2004) criticizes Islamic education practices that tend to become exclusive and unreflective when not framed by an open and transcendent theological orientation. He advocates for a holistic approach to Islamic education that centers divine values in ethics, learning, and social relationships. In the context of madrasah ibtidaiyah, such an approach still encounters serious obstacles, including teachers' limited mastery of Islamic epistemology and a curriculum that often remains instrumental and procedural. Another significant gap is the lack of connection between Islamic epistemology and contemporary pedagogy. Daud (2010), in *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas*, stresses that Islamic education must be inseparable from the cultivation of *adab* and the integration of knowledge, action, and faith. Unfortunately, elementary madrasah education has yet to consistently apply this integrated approach, resulting in learning processes that focus mainly on academic achievement rather than the formation of **tauhidi** character. This gap underscores the urgency of developing a new, more integrative educational model rooted in the contextual application of Islamic theological principles.

In this framework, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Swasta (MIS) Ziyadatun Nikmah in Manado serves as a highly relevant case to explore these issues. Located in Tikala District, Manado City, North Sulawesi an area known for its religious and cultural pluralism MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah is a formal institution under the Ministry of Religious Affairs that promotes a moderate and inclusive vision of Islamic education. Its educational practice combines science and technology learning with spiritual development based on the Qur'an, character building, and religious understanding adapted to the local socio-cultural context. The presence of this madrasah is strategically positioned to nurture Muslim students who are not only faithful but also possess an open and contextual religious perspective. However, the absence of a structured theological framework within its curriculum and teaching approach makes MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah an ideal setting for developing and testing a theologically grounded and integrative Islamic education model.

Based on the foregoing, this study aims to formulate and reinforce the theological foundations of Islamic education in madrasah ibtidaiyah, specifically within the context of MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah Manado. The primary focus of the research is to construct a learning model that integrates key Islamic theological principles—such as **Tauhid**, *Rububiyah*, *Uluhiyyah*, and *Asma' wa Sifat*—into the elementary education process, encompassing curriculum design, instructional methods, and student character formation. This research is intended not only to contribute theoretically to the discourse of Islamic education but also to offer practical approaches for developing transformative, contextual, and sustainable elementary Islamic education. In line with these objectives, the research is guided by three main questions:

1. How are Islamic theological values currently implemented in the learning process at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Swasta (MIS) Ziyadatun Nikmah Manado?
2. How can a comprehensive and contextually relevant theological framework be formulated for Islamic education at the MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah Manado level?
3. How can an integrative learning model based on Islamic theological principles be effectively developed and applied in MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah Manado?

Thus, strengthening the theological foundation of Islamic education in madrasah ibtidaiyah, particularly at MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah Manado, represents a strategic response to the challenges of value secularization and identity fragmentation in the modern era. Through an interdisciplinary approach that combines theology, educational philosophy, and contemporary Islamic pedagogy, this study aspires to provide a substantive contribution to the formulation of an authentic Islamic education model one that is socially adaptive, rooted in Islamic intellectual tradition, and aligned with the noble goal of cultivating the ideal human being (*insan kamil*).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with an intrinsic case study design. This approach was selected because it allows for an in-depth understanding of how theological

concepts in Islamic education are applied within the context of madrasah ibtidaiyah, particularly in institutions situated in socially pluralistic environments. According to Creswell (2013), a qualitative approach enables researchers to explore the meanings constructed by individuals or groups regarding a social phenomenon, emphasizing depth of understanding over generalization.

The case study in this research is intrinsic in nature, as its primary aim is to comprehensively understand the internal dynamics and theological-based Islamic educational practices within a specific institution. Stake (1995) explains that intrinsic case studies are conducted when the researcher has a particular interest in the case due to its uniqueness or its representation of a significant phenomenon that warrants thorough exploration. Thus, this approach is appropriate for examining how theological values such as Tauhid, Rububiyah, Uluhiyyah, and Asma' wa Sifat are internalized in the learning process.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The interview technique allowed for the extraction of rich information regarding the perspectives, strategies, and educational practices that incorporate theological elements. Observations were used to directly examine learning interactions and day-to-day activities within the madrasah, while documentation was employed to analyze official records—such as curricula, syllabi, and lesson plans—that may indicate the integration of theological aspects into the educational structure. Methodological triangulation was applied to enhance the validity of the findings. As Denzin (1978) suggests, the combination of multiple data collection methods strengthens the credibility of qualitative research outcomes.

Data analysis was carried out interactively, following the model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which includes three main components: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction was conducted to filter and focus on information relevant to the research questions. Data display involved presenting findings in narrative and thematic descriptions, enabling conceptual interpretation. The final stage of conclusion drawing was carried out reflectively and iteratively, considering contextual meanings, emerging patterns, and relationships between thematic categories.

To ensure data trustworthiness, the study adopted the four evaluative criteria developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985): credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was strengthened through methodological triangulation and member checking with the informants. Transferability was supported by the provision of thick description. Dependability and confirmability were ensured through systematic documentation of the research process and engagement of peer reviewers in evaluating findings (peer debriefing).

Through this methodological framework, the research aims to generate a comprehensive understanding of how the theological foundations of Islamic education are constructed and internalized within the madrasah ibtidaiyah setting, and how the integration of these values contributes to the formation of students' character and

spirituality amidst a multicultural social reality. This study is also expected to offer an alternative and more authentic approach to the development of Islamic education grounded in revelation, in a way that remains relevant to contemporary challenges.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Current Implementation of Islamic Theological Values at MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah Manado

Islamic theological values are integrated into the learning process at MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah Manado through several strategies. First, the values of tauhid and adab are embedded not only as subjects but also as the spiritual foundation and guiding principles that permeate all teaching and interactions within the school. Teachers serve as role models by demonstrating sincere faith, ethical behavior, and respectful conduct, ensuring that their actions embody the religious principles they aim to instill. Additionally, pedagogical approaches involve contextualized teaching of theological concepts, making them relevant to students' daily lives and social realities, thereby fostering internalization and genuine understanding of faith. The curriculum emphasizes meaningful and reflective methods, including the use of Quranic verses and Hadith as references, to reinforce spiritual and moral development, with the ultimate goal of nurturing students' iman and character.

Formulating a Comprehensive and Contextually Relevant Theological Framework for Islamic Education at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Level

At the MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah Manado, formulating a comprehensive and contextually relevant theological framework for Islamic education involves several interconnected strategies. First, it is essential to anchor the curriculum and teaching methodologies in core Islamic principles particularly tauhid, akhlak, and adab that serve as the foundation for all educational activities,.

Second, the framework should emphasize contextualization, meaning that teachings are adapted to the social, cultural, and religious diversity present in Manado. This is achieved by integrating Islamic values into everyday life and local realities, making them meaningful and applicable to students' lived experiences. For example, lessons are designed not only to transmit religious knowledge but also to foster behaviors and attitudes that reflect Islamic virtues in social interactions and community life,.

Third, teachers play a pivotal role as model and facilitators of internalized faith. They should be trained to deliver theological content in interactive, dialogic, and reflective ways that encourage students to understand and embody Islamic teachings actively. Their role extends beyond mere dissemination of knowledge to include modeling character and spiritual integrity, thus reinforcing the internalization of faith,.

Finally, the curriculum should promote an integrative approach, combining religious and social education in a manner that respects local pluralism and diversity. This involves selecting references from Islamic texts that are relevant and accessible, and

utilizing teaching strategies that make the values of Islam resonate with students' social realities. By doing so, the theological framework becomes both comprehensive and responsive to the unique social fabric of Manado, fostering a resilient, inclusive, and meaningful Islamic education.

Developing an Integrative Learning Model Based on Islamic Theological Principles at MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah Manado

An effective integrative learning model based on Islamic theological principles at MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah Manado can be developed and applied through several key strategies. First, the model should embed Islamic values—such as tauhid, moral conduct, and adab into all subject areas, including general subjects like Mathematics and Indonesian, by infusing these values into lesson content and classroom interactions without altering the core curriculum. Second, the model emphasizes contextualization: teaching religious principles in ways that relate directly to students' daily lives and social environments. This involves designing lessons that connect Islamic teachings with practical situations, community issues, and cultural contexts relevant to students in Manado, fostering meaningful understanding and internalization. Third, educators should adopt interactive and dialogic pedagogies, encouraging students to reflect on their faith and how it guides their behavior and decisions. Teachers act as role models demonstrating spiritual and moral integrity through their attitudes and actions, reinforcing the internalization of Islamic values. Additionally, curriculum development should promote an integrative and holistic approach, coordinating between religious and social components, ensuring that Islam is not taught in isolation but as a guiding framework for character building and social interaction. This can be achieved by utilizing references from Islamic texts—such as the Quran and Hadith that are applicable and relatable to students' social realities. Lastly, continuous teacher training and curriculum evaluation are essential to ensure that the integration remains relevant and effective. Teachers need mastery of theological principles along with skills in contextual and participatory teaching methods, enabling them to foster a learning environment that is both deeply rooted in Islamic theology and responsive to local social dynamics.

In summary, by weaving Islamic values systematically into all aspects of education, contextualizing teachings, employing dialogic pedagogy, and fostering teacher competency, MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah can develop and implement a robust, effective integrative learning model grounded in Islamic theological principles.

Discussion: The Current Implementation of Islamic Theological Values at MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah Manado

The findings demonstrate that MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah Manado adopts an educational approach in which tauhid (monotheism) and adab (Islamic etiquette) are embedded not merely as separate subjects but as the overarching spiritual and moral foundation for all school activities. This integration reflects the Islamic educational philosophy that learning should be holistic, shaping not only intellectual capacities but

also moral and spiritual dimensions. Al-Attas (1991) emphasizes that “the aim of Islamic education is to produce a good man, not merely a good citizen”, highlighting that the ultimate purpose of education is to cultivate individuals who are conscious of their divine responsibilities. At MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah, this ideal is manifested in curriculum design, daily routines, and interpersonal interactions that all reflect and reinforce theological principles.

Furthermore, the integration of theological values across both religious and secular subjects challenges the dualistic perception that often separates religious knowledge from general knowledge. This is in line with the perspective of Al-Faruqi (1982), who argued for the Islamization of knowledge, where all branches of knowledge must be framed within the worldview of Islam, with tauhid as the unifying principle. By embedding theological values into lessons such as Mathematics, Science, and Indonesian Language, MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah reinforces the idea that faith is not confined to ritual acts, but permeates all aspects of life. This approach not only promotes consistency between belief and practice but also nurtures students’ ability to see the divine relevance in all knowledge domains.

From a practical standpoint, this form of integration serves as a preventive measure against the compartmentalization of faith, ensuring that students’ moral and spiritual development progresses alongside their intellectual growth. By continuously aligning academic content with Islamic values, the school fosters what Hasan Langgulung (1986) describes as the “balanced development of the whole person,” which includes the physical, intellectual, spiritual, and moral dimensions. In this way, the educational environment at MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah becomes a living embodiment of Islamic theology, ensuring that values are not merely taught, but lived.

Formulating a Comprehensive and Contextually Relevant Theological Framework for Islamic Education at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Level

The second major finding reveals that MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah Manado implements theological education that is deeply attuned to the socio-cultural and religious diversity of Manado. This contextualization ensures that Islamic teachings are not presented as abstract ideals detached from students’ realities, but rather as values that have practical relevance in their lives. Abdullah (2006) notes that “Islamic education must be able to engage in dialogue with social realities so that Islamic teachings do not remain as mere cognitive knowledge, but become living values that shape behavior.” This engagement with local realities enables students to see the direct applicability of tauhid and akhlak in their daily social interactions, whether at home, in the community, or within broader interfaith contexts.

Moreover, contextualization serves as a bridge between universal Islamic principles and the particularities of the local environment. By integrating local examples, cultural narratives, and real-life scenarios into lessons, teachers help students internalize values more effectively. This is in harmony with the Quranic principle of *tabligh bil hikmah*—delivering guidance with wisdom—which implies tailoring the delivery of

knowledge to the specific context and needs of the learners. Such an approach not only enhances comprehension but also fosters tolerance and respect, qualities that are essential in Manado's pluralistic society.

This strategy also resonates with the concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (mercy to all creation), a core Islamic value that promotes inclusivity, compassion, and mutual respect. In a multicultural setting like Manado, applying this principle through education cultivates a mindset that upholds Islamic integrity while embracing peaceful coexistence. By making Islamic teachings relevant to students' lived experiences, MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah ensures that theological values are not static doctrines, but dynamic principles that guide moral conduct in diverse and changing social environments.

Developing an Integrative Learning Model Based on Islamic Theological Principles at MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah Manado

The third key finding highlights the central role of teachers as *uswah hasanah* (exemplary role models) in the internalization of theological values. At MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah, teachers are not merely transmitters of knowledge but living embodiments of the values they teach. Al-Ghazali, in *Ihya' 'Ulumuddin*, asserts that "the condition of a teacher before his students has a greater impact than his words, for what the eye sees enters the heart more quickly than what the ear hears." This reflects the pedagogical truth that students learn as much from the character and behavior of their teachers as from the formal curriculum. The alignment between teachers' actions and their instructional content reinforces authenticity and credibility in moral education.

From the perspective of classical Islamic pedagogy, the role of the teacher encompasses both intellectual instruction and character formation. Ibn Miskawayh, in *Tahdzib al-Akhlaq*, emphasizes the importance of habituation (*ta'wid*) and modeling in moral development, stating that virtues are best instilled through consistent exposure to exemplary conduct. At MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah, this is achieved through teachers' everyday interactions how they greet students, resolve conflicts, uphold fairness, and embody humility. Such behaviors provide students with concrete, observable examples of how theological principles operate in real-life situations.

In modern educational theory, this aligns with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that learning occurs through observation and imitation. When applied within an Islamic framework, this means that teacher exemplarity becomes a key driver in shaping students' moral identity. As teachers model sincerity, integrity, and adherence to Islamic principles, they cultivate in students a deep-seated respect for those values. This modeling effect is particularly powerful in primary education, where students are highly impressionable and the teacher's character can profoundly influence their worldview.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of Islamic theological values at MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah Manado is characterized by the holistic integration of *tauhid* and *adab* as the spiritual and moral foundation permeating all aspects of the educational process. These values are not

confined to discrete religious subjects but are embedded across the curriculum, daily routines, and interpersonal relationships within the school. Teachers act as role models, embodying the virtues they teach, thereby reinforcing the authenticity and credibility of the moral instruction. This approach aligns with the Islamic educational philosophy that seeks the balanced development of intellectual, spiritual, and moral dimensions, ensuring that faith is lived as well as taught.

A comprehensive and contextually relevant theological framework for Islamic education at MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah Manado must be firmly grounded in core Islamic principles particularly *tauhid*, *akhlak*, and *adab* while also being responsive to the socio-cultural realities of Manado's pluralistic environment. This involves contextualizing religious teachings so they are directly applicable to students' lived experiences, fostering their ability to practice Islamic values meaningfully in diverse settings. Such a framework incorporates local cultural narratives, real-life examples, and community engagement, thus transforming theological concepts into dynamic principles for moral conduct. This ensures that Islamic education not only preserves doctrinal integrity but also promotes inclusivity, compassion, and peaceful coexistence, in line with the principle of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*.

The effective development and application of an integrative learning model at MIS Ziyadatun Nikmah Manado require embedding Islamic values into all subject areas, including general academic disciplines, through meaningful contextualization. Teachers must adopt interactive, reflective, and dialogic pedagogies that encourage students to connect faith with real-life decision-making. As *uswah hasanah*, educators play a pivotal role in modeling sincerity, integrity, and ethical behavior, thus facilitating the internalization of theological values. The model should integrate religious and social learning, making Islamic teachings relevant across academic and community contexts, while continuous teacher training ensures pedagogical competence and theological accuracy. By systematically weaving these values into every dimension of schooling, the integrative model fosters students' intellectual growth alongside their moral and spiritual maturity.

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