Dynamics of Interdisciplinary Islamic Education Learning in Indonesian High Schools Based on Islamic Law

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Abstract. Twenty-first-century learning demands that students go beyond mastering religious content to solve authentic problems collaboratively. Islamic Religious Education must adopt an interdisciplinary approach rooted in Islamic law that bridges Qurʾan–Sunnah teachings with social sciences, science, technology, arts, and culture. This study aims to reveal the essence of the experiences of Islamic Religious Education teachers in Kendari senior high schools who have integrated Islamic Religious Education content with other disciplines for at least one year. A qualitative phenomenological design was employed. Purposefully selected teachers participated in in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and written reflections. Data were analyzed through bracketing, phenomenological reduction, textural-structural description, and synthesis of the essence following the Moustakas model. Findings confirm that an interdisciplinary, law-based Islamic Religious Education framework cultivates a contextual and collaborative learning ecosystem. The study affirms that an interdisciplinary approach grounded in Islamic law enhances student learning quality and continuously builds teacher competence, collaboration, and self-reflection, fostering a more adaptive and innovative school ecosystem aligned with Islamic character values by designing *maqasid*-based.
Keywords: Islamic Religious Education, Interdisciplinary approach, Phenomenology, Teachers, Students

Abstrak. *Pembelajaran abad ke-21 menuntut peserta didik tidak hanya menguasai materi agama, tetapi juga terampil memecahkan persoalan nyata secara kolaboratif. Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam perlu dikemas melalui pendekatan interdisipliner berbasis hukum Islam yang menjembatani ajaran Qur'an–Sunnah dengan ilmu sosial, sains, teknologi, seni, dan budaya. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengungkap esensi pengalaman guru Pendidikan Agama Islam di SMA Kota Kendari yang telah mengintegrasikan materi Pendidikan Agama Islam dengan disiplin lain minimal satu tahun. Penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif fenomenologis. Guru dipilih secara purposif diwawancarai mendalam, diobservasi partisipatif, dan diminta menulis refleksi mereka dalam pembelajaran. Data dianalisis melalui tahapan bracketing, reduksi fenomenologis, deskripsi tekstural-struktural, dan sintesis esensi mengikuti model Moustakas. Hasil penelitian menegaskan bahwa pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam interdisipliner berbasis hukum Islam membangun ekosistem belajar kontekstual dan kolaboratif. Pendekatan interdisipliner berlandaskan hukum Islam dapat meningkatkan mutu pembelajaran siswa serta meningkatkan kompetensi, kolaborasi, dan refleksi diri guru secara berkelanjutan. Kondisi ini akan membentuk ekosistem sekolah yang lebih adaptif dan inovatif sesuai nilai-nilai karakter islami yang berbasis maqasid.*
Kata Kunci: *Pendidikan Agama Islam, Pendekatan Interdisipliner, Fenomenologi, guru, siswa*

Introduction

Education constitutes a primary pillar in shaping the character and competencies of the nation's future generations. Amid the dynamics of globalization and the complexity of contemporary life, the education system is required not merely to transmit knowledge in a piecemeal fashion but also to cultivate critical, collaborative, and transformative thinking skills.[1] Within the Indonesian context, Islamic Religious Education holds a strategic role in forming students' personality and morality, particularly at the senior secondary level.[2] Nevertheless, contemporary challenges demand that Islamic Religious Education move beyond conventional delivery and adopt integrative pedagogical approaches that meet the demands of the twenty-first century.[3]

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[1]Ian Thomas, "Critical Thinking, Transformative Learning, Sustainable Education, and Problem-Based Learning in Universities," *Journal of Transformative Education* 7, no. 3 (2009), p. 245–64.

[2]M. Mukhibat et al., "Development and Evaluation of Religious Moderation Education Curriculum at Higher Education in Indonesia," *Cogent Education* 11, no. 1 (2024).

[3]Muhammad Taufik, "Strategic Role Of Islamic Religious Education In Strengthening Character Education In The Era Of Industrial Revolution 4.0," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 20, no. 1 (2020).

In response to these multifaceted challenges from the digital revolution to the imperative of religious moderation interdisciplinary approaches in Islamic Religious Education have gained increasing prominence. Such approaches affirm that Islam is not an isolated discipline but a value framework that intertwines with science, technology, the arts, and the humanities. Santika has shown that models such as Re-STEAM (Religion, Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) simultaneously promote cognitive achievement and strengthen students' Islamic character.[4] Moreover, this approach not only integrates multiple subject areas but also enables learners to understand Islam within modern social, cultural, legal, and scientific contexts.[5]

Pedagogically, interdisciplinary learning functions as a bridge linking the principle of *tawḥīd*, the objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*), and contemporary social, cultural, legal, and scientific realities. By facilitating cross-field dialogue, students are encouraged to interpret scriptural evidence within the context of current issues, ensuring that value internalisation transcends rote memorisation and evolves into transformative reflective awareness.[6] Curriculum analyses conducted in several Islamic senior high schools further demonstrate that subject-matter integration enriches higher-order thinking skills and heightens learning engagement by presenting religious content in a lively and relevant manner.[7] Such an arrangement is expected to accelerate the emergence of a collaborative, contextual, and visionary ecosystem of Islamic Religious Education, preserve the depth of Islamic spirituality amid rapid scientific advancement, and secure Islamic Religious Education's strategic role in preparing a morally grounded generation that can compete globally.

Nevertheless, initiatives to implement an interdisciplinary Islamic Religious Education model encounter multiple challenges. A primary issue is that most Islamic Religious Education teachers still rely on teacher-centred methods focused on memorising Qurʾānic verses, ḥadīth, and doctrinal lectures. Their mastery of cross-subject instructional design for example, connecting *fiqh muʿāmalah* with Islamic financial literacy or environmental ethics remains

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[4]Adiyono Adiyono, Agus Zaenul Fitri, and Ali Said Al Matari, "Uniting Science and Faith: A Re-STEAM Interdisciplinary Approach in Islamic Education Learning," *International Journal of Social Learning* 4, no. 3 (2024), p. 332–55.

[5]Dina Mardiana, Abd. Rahim Razaq, and Umiarso Umiarso, "Development of Islamic Education: The Multidisciplinary, Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Approaches," *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education* 4, no. 1 (2020), p. 58–68.

[6]Nugroho Notonegoro, "Islamic Study with An Integrative-Interdisplinary Approach," *Proceeding of Saizu International Conference on Transdisciplinary Religious Studies*, 2023.

[7]Muhammad Hendri Nuryadi and Pipit Widiatmaka, "Strengthening Civic Literacy among Students through Digital Literacy in Society 5.0," *Journal of Education and Learning* 17, no. 2 (2023).

limited.[8] When required to compose collaborative lesson plans or design performance-based assessments, many teachers report difficulties because they are unfamiliar with project-based learning or inquiry-based instruction frameworks that integrate Islamic legal principles with sociology, biology, or civics.[9] Institutional readiness is insufficient; many schools lack the structural and curricular support for interdisciplinary approaches.[10] Moreover, an empirically tested pedagogical framework for applying interdisciplinary learning grounded in Islamic legal principles at the senior-secondary level is still absent.[11] Although extensive literature addresses the benefits of interdisciplinarity in general and higher education, specific studies on its application within Islamic Religious Education based on Islamic legal principles at the secondary level remain scarce, even though Islamic law carries strong pedagogical potential to reinforce students' sense of justice, ethics, and social responsibility.[12]

Limitations in teacher competence, scant institutional support, and the absence of a field-tested pedagogical framework impede the implementation of interdisciplinary Islamic Religious Education and accentuate the vast gulf between theoretical discourse and classroom reality. Consequently, the discourse on integrating fiqh principles into the secondary-level Islamic Religious Education curriculum remains conceptual, lacking empirical evidence demonstrating how teachers design, interpret, and adapt Islamic legal rules to meet national curricular demands and the diverse backgrounds of learners. Therefore, authentic, experience-based research is crucial to bridge this gap and provide replicable, scalable examples of best practices.

Existing studies on the interdisciplinary application of Islamic legal principles in senior high school Islamic Religious Education are predominantly normative, emphasizing conceptual and juridical considerations within the classroom. As Iqbal and Hussain note, the theoretical foundations for integrating fiqh with the social sciences have yet to reveal how teachers align Islamic legal precepts with national curricular requirements, student heterogeneity, and the

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[8]Serhii Yashchuk et al., "Pedagogical Design of the Content of Professional Training of Teachers of General Technical Disciplines and Methods of Teaching Technology," *Brain. Broad Research In Artificial Intelligence And Neuroscience* 12, no. 1 (2021), p. 278–99.

[9]Sagaf S. Pettalongi et al., "Analysis of Islamic Religious Education Teacher's Strategy in Forming Students' Learning Culture at State Senior High School 4 Palu," *International Journal Of Contemporary Islamic Education* 4, no. 2 (2022), p. 1–15.

[10]Ayse Demirel Ucan and Andrew Wright, "Improving the Pedagogy of Islamic Religious Education through an Application of Critical Religious Education, Variation Theory and the Learning Study Model," *British Journal of Religious Education* 41, no. 2 (2019), p. 202–17.

[11]Adiyono, Fitri, and Matari, "Uniting Science and Faith: A Re-STEAM Interdisciplinary Approach in Islamic Education Learning," 332–55.

[12]E. Kula, "Islam and Environmental Conservation," *Environmental Conservation* 28, no. 1 (2001).

constraints of modern learning resources. [13] As a result, contextual details—such as strategies for linking subject areas, managing multicultural classroom dynamics, and resolving ethical dilemmas when translating fiqh norms into pedagogy remain insufficiently explained. This knowledge deficit underscores the need for phenomenological inquiry that centres on teachers' authentic experiences as both practitioners and designers of instruction. A phenomenological approach is chosen because it prioritizes subjective meaning (personal experience) that cannot be captured through quantitative surveys or document analysis alone. Through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and critical reflection, the present study seeks to illuminate integrative practices such as interpreting uṣūl al-fiqh principles when teaching Islam and environmental stewardship or merging fiqh al-muʿāmalah with financial literacy instruction. The approach also enables the exploration of ethical dilemmas, students' freedom for critical thinking, and teachers' strategies for addressing resistance from colleagues who remain committed to a monodisciplinary orientation.

Theoretically, the findings enrich current conceptualisations of science–religion integration by incorporating praxis and school-based contexts, offering a more empirically grounded conceptual model for implementation. Practically, this study has the potential to serve as a policy reference for curriculum developers, teacher-training institutes, and secondary-level Islamic education policymakers in designing programmes that strengthen pedagogical competencies grounded in maqāṣid al-sharīʿah. In addition, the research can contribute to a roadmap for innovative, collaborative, contextual, and humanistic interdisciplinary Islamic Religious Education at the senior high school level.

This study adopted a qualitative approach with a phenomenological method to explore teachers' subjective experiences in implementing an interdisciplinary Islamic Religious Education model based on Islamic legal principles in senior high schools. A phenomenological approach was selected because of its ability to capture the meaning and essence of participants' lived experiences comprehensively and holistically. This method enabled the researchers to understand the teaching phenomenon from the perspectives of the teachers who practise it in the field. The participants were Islamic Religious Education teachers from various senior high schools in Kendari, Indonesia. Subjects were selected purposively according to specific criteria: teachers who had applied an interdisciplinary approach integrating Islamic legal principles for at least one academic year. Data were analysed using Moustakas' phenomenological analysis technique.[14] First, bracketing was employed, whereby the researchers set aside all prior assumptions and knowledge of the phenomenon to ensure that the analysis

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[13]Muhammad Fawwaz Bin Muhammad Yusoff, "Tracing the Tracts of Qaṣaṣ: Towards a Theory of Narrative Pedagogy in Islamic Education," *Religions* 14, no. 10 (2023).

[14]Joanne Mayoh and Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie, "Toward a Conceptualization of Mixed Methods Phenomenological Research," *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 9, no. 1 (2015).

was grounded solely in participants' experiences. Second, phenomenological reduction involved identifying and extracting core themes from the interview transcripts. Third, textural and structural descriptions were constructed to articulate the deeper meanings of the phenomenon based on the identified themes. Finally, an essence synthesis integrated the shared essence of participants' experiences into a coherent description of interdisciplinary learning grounded in Islamic legal principles.

Interdisciplinary Approaches in Islamic Religious Education

The interdisciplinary approach has long been recognised in education for its capacity to address complex real-world challenges by drawing on multiple fields of knowledge. Conceptually, it bridges disciplinary boundaries so that learners can holistically comprehend the interconnections among bodies of knowledge.[15] In practice, interdisciplinary learning demonstrably enhances educational quality by cultivating critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills. Brassler and Dettmers[16], for instance, show that interdisciplinary project-based learning improves cross-disciplinary cognition and students' workplace readiness. Almulla[17] likewise reports that project-based pedagogy promotes deeper student engagement and reflection than traditional methods. Gnaur *et al.*[18] add that interdisciplinary learning environments foster learners' collaborative competencies. Collectively, these findings indicate that integrating multiple disciplines within a single instructional framework enriches learning experiences and comprehensively strengthens students' competencies.

Within Islamic Religious Education, the interdisciplinary approach is increasingly regarded as an effective avenue for modernising instruction to respond to twenty-first-century demands while promoting religious moderation. Jannah [19] demonstrates that integrating IRE with other disciplines broadens civic awareness and nurtures inclusivity among students. Mustafida[20] Further argues that Islamic Religious Education plays a strategic role in character formation

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[15]Min Yang, "Making Interdisciplinary Subjects Relevant to Students: An Interdisciplinary Approach," *Teaching in Higher Education* 14, no. 6 (2009), p. 597–606.

[16] Mirjam Brassler and Jan Dettmers, "How to Enhance Interdisciplinary Competence—Interdisciplinary Problem-Based Learning versus Interdisciplinary Project-Based Learning," *Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-Based Learning* 11, no. 2 (2017).

[17]Mohammed Abdullatif Almulla, "The Effectiveness of the Project-Based Learning (PBL) Approach as a Way to Engage Students in Learning," *SAGE Open* 10, no. 3 (2020).

[18]Dorina Gnaur, Kjeld Svidt, and Maria Kaae Thygesen, "Developing Students' Collaborative Skills in Interdisciplinary Learning Environments," *International Journal of Engineering Education* 31, no. 1 (2015).

[19]Bahrun Abubakar et al., "Parenting Education in Islamic Families within the Framework of Family Resilience in Aceh, Indonesia," *Samarah* 7, no. 2 (2023).

[20]Fita Mustafida, "Integrasi Nilai-Nilai Multikultural Dalam Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI)," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Indonesia* 4, no. 2 (2020), p. 173–85.

when religious teachings are directly linked to everyday values. Aisih *et al.*[21] Stress the importance of a critical, dialogical, and contextual Islamic Religious Education design to cultivate social consciousness and facilitate students' moral reflection. Accordingly, pedagogical innovation in IRE is a methodological endeavour and a strategic imperative to ensure Islamic education remains aligned with contemporary socio-cultural realities. By combining moderate, dialogical, and contextual interdisciplinary approaches, Islamic Religious Education is expected to reinforce national identity, foster religious tolerance, and equip the younger generation with the reflective capacities required to live harmoniously in an increasingly pluralistic society.

Numerous studies conducted in Indonesia demonstrate that integrating Islamic values with contemporary issues within the learning process enriches students' educational experiences while simultaneously fostering national character. Suyadi *et al.*[22] Early childhood education teachers have begun incorporating anti-corruption content into Islamic Religious Education. Through stories, role-playing activities, and worksheets, children are introduced to honesty and the detrimental effects of corruption in age-appropriate language, thereby weaving national moral values organically into religious instruction. Saputra *et al.*[23] Likewise, developed inclusive and interdisciplinary Islamic Religious Education materials that combine the concept of *fiqh muʿāmalah* with topics such as human rights, cultural diversity, and environmental studies. Their intervention significantly improved students' tolerance and their ability to engage in dialogue with peers of different faiths. These findings confirm that a cross-disciplinary approach not only increases the relevance of Islamic Religious Education to learners' lived realities but also inculcates essential social virtues honesty, responsibility, and openness. By embedding themes such as anti-corruption and interreligious tolerance within Islamic teachings, religious education is transformed into an effective vehicle for cultivating a morally upright, integrative generation capable of harmonious coexistence in modern pluralistic societies.

Recent literature further highlights the necessity of integrating Islamic legal principles into the Islamic Religious Education curriculum. In a secondary-school curriculum evaluation, Imamah stresses that applied Sharia principles of justice, social responsibility, and integrity must receive proportional emphasis

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[21]Zulfatmi, "Learning The Values Of Religious Moderation In Madrasah Aliyah: Model Analysis," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 11, no. 2 (2023).

[22]Suyadi et al., "Early Childhood Education Teachers' Perception of the Integration of Anti-Corruption Education into Islamic Religious Education in Bawean Island Indonesia," *Elementary Education Online* 19, no. 3 (2020), p. 1703–14.

[23] Fait A. Muedini, "Teaching 'Islam and Human Rights' in the Classroom," *PS - Political Science and Politics* 45, no. 1 (2012).

alongside ritual worship.[24] Consequently, students understand Islam as a collection of liturgical practices and a source of social ethics and legal guidance relevant to daily life. This body of research reveals the considerable potential of interconnecting general scientific disciplines with Islamic legal values. By contextualizing Sharia principles in real-world situations—justice in banking transactions, social responsibility in environmental stewardship, and integrity in public life—religious education becomes a holistic medium that nurtures comprehensive understanding and practical application. Ultimately, a contextual and interdisciplinary approach to Islamic Religious Education is expected to produce graduates who are not only devout in worship but also just, responsible, and integrous in navigating societal realities.

Implementation of Islamic Religious Education through an Interdisciplinary Approach

Islamic Religious Education at the secondary school level is expected to not only present religious material dogmatically but also engage in dialogue with contemporary sciences and the students' social realities. Therefore, this study investigates how Islamic Religious Education teachers in Kendari City, Southeast Sulawesi, employ an interdisciplinary learning model grounded in Islamic law principles. The research yielded five findings that portray the dynamics of interdisciplinary Islamic Religious Education implementation in schools. *First*, teachers integrate Islamic values with modern scientific knowledge. Islamic Religious Education teachers in Kendari demonstrate a robust synthesis of Islamic values—including Islamic law principles—and various modern academic disciplines during instruction. Conceptual integration appears when teachers align concepts from modern science with Islamic teachings.

In contrast, contextual integration is evident in efforts to link lesson content with students' social realities and daily lives. Conceptual integration occurs when educators harmonize scientific theories and discoveries with Islamic principles, allowing both domains to converse naturally in the classroom. For instance, students perceive scientific facts as evidence of God's greatness when a teacher explains water utilization by referencing Qur'anic verses on the water cycle. In this manner, a sense of religious awe intersects with scientific curiosity, fostering a holistic mindset that nurtures both faith and intellectual acuity.[25] Conversely, contextual integration occurs when teachers connect Islamic Religious Education content to the social realities students encounter daily. In

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[24]Yuli Habibatul Imamah, "Integration of Religious Moderation in Developing an Islamic Religious Education Curriculum," *Scaffolding: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Multikulturalisme* 5, no. 3 (2023), p. 573–89.

[25]Fakhrurrazi Fakhrurrazi, Nur Wasilah, and Hendra Jaya, "Islam and Knowledge: Harmony between Sciences and Faith," *Journal of Modern Islamic Studies and Civilization* 2, no. 01 (2023).

discussing *zakat*, for example, the instruction does not halt at a juristic definition; instead, it extends to local poverty issues ranging from data on beneficiaries to student-designed social service projects. Likewise, lessons on lawful and unlawful consumption are related to popular snacks promoted on social media, and teachings on environmental stewardship are directly linked to local waste-management challenges. Such associations render the material relevant, memorable, and motivating, prompting students to practise Islamic values concretely from disposing of trash properly to actively donating to people in need. According to Andri *et al.*, when conceptual and contextual integrations are applied simultaneously, IRE evolves into a comprehensive learning experience that enriches theological insight, sharpens scientific reasoning, and cultivates a socially engaged character capable of making meaningful contributions within a pluralistic society.[26]

Integrating Islamic values with modern knowledge fosters a holistic approach to Islamic Religious Education. Teachers report that an interdisciplinary framework renders Islamic Religious Education content more vibrant and contextual. Islamic teachings cease to be perceived merely as normative doctrines; instead, they are framed as a scientific and applicable ethical foundation. This finding is consistent with the argument that synergizing knowledge and Islamic teachings is essential to avert the negative consequences of scientific and technological developments detached from moral values. By embedding Islamic principles including Islamic legal concepts such as halal–haram distinctions and fiqh maxims into science and social science materials, educators create learning experiences that present Islam as a value system capable of responding constructively to contemporary challenges.

Second, the initiative is driven by both pedagogical imperatives and spiritual awareness. The primary motivation behind the adoption of interdisciplinary Islamic Religious Education stems from teachers' pedagogical aspirations and their spiritual consciousness. Pedagogically, they seek to enhance the quality of IRE because they recognize the need for innovation so that religious education remains engaging and connected to other knowledge domains. They view the interdisciplinary model as a means of making learning more meaningful and suited to senior high school students' critical, dynamic nature. One Islamic Religious Education teacher noted, "I do not want religious instruction to be considered monotonous. The interdisciplinary approach allows me to relate religious content to science or history, making students more interested and facilitating comprehension. Pedagogically, this challenges me to design more creative learning activities."[27] Such motivation is grounded in teachers' desire to

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[26]Masturin, Mhd Rasid Ritonga, and Siti Amaroh, "Tawhid-Based Green Learning In Islamic Higher Education: An Insan Kamil Character Building," *Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies* 10, no. 1 (2022).

[27]Interview with M. Idris and Rahmawati, October 07, 2024.

cultivate students' intellects and moral character, aligning with national educational goals and Islamic values.

Beyond pedagogical considerations, the teachers underscore a strong spiritual motivation. This awareness is reflected in their view that teaching Islamic Religious Education is both a trust (*amanah*) and an act of worship. Islamic Religious Education teachers in Kendari regard themselves not merely as subject instructors but as moral and spiritual mentors for their students. Islamic values oblige them to fulfil this duty with sincerity and religious responsibility. One teacher explained, "Teaching Islamic Religious Education is a noble duty and a form of worship. I feel compelled to impart religious knowledge in a way that resonates with students' everyday lives." [28] This conviction also drives teachers to integrate Islamic teachings with modern science, convinced that such integration fulfils the Qurʾanic mandate to promote good and prevent wrongdoing within the school context. Interview data indicate that teachers tacitly align their instructional practice with the *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* framework, which comprises five fundamental objectives of Islamic law. Of these objectives, they emphasise *ḥifẓ al-dīn* (safeguarding and advancing students' faith) and *ḥifẓ al-ʿaql* (protecting and cultivating the intellect). Through an integrated instructional model, they strive to ensure that students gain wider religious insight and enhanced intellectual capacity. For these teachers, cross-disciplinary integration within Islamic Religious Education represents a strategic means of translating the values of the *sharīʿah* into contextual and intellectually stimulating learning processes. Their spiritual commitment thus positions curriculum innovation simultaneously as worship and moral responsibility. By linking Islamic Religious Education content to science, history, or contemporary social issues, teachers embed *sharīʿah* principles in every classroom activity. Values such as academic honesty, constructive critical thinking, and social concern are animated as practical manifestations of the *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*. Accordingly, interdisciplinary learning is not merely a pedagogical trend but a deliberate effort to nurture a devout, intelligent, and ethically grounded generation. This spiritual–ethical foundation confers legitimacy and energy upon teachers to continue innovating. Motivated by the belief that every learning process constitutes a divine trust, they feel compelled to design learning experiences that are relevant, engaging, and meaningful.

Third, Pedagogical Transformation through Instructional Implementation. During the initial phase of classroom implementation, several teachers acknowledged encountering difficulties in linking Islamic Religious Education content to other disciplines, as well as challenges in managing the class while experimenting with novel methods. One teacher recalled, "In the first session, I

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[28]Interview with Alimuddin, September 15, 2024; Interview with Rasyidin, September 09, 2024; Interview with Muhammadun, September 13, 2024.

was still rigid, and the pupils looked confused. Afterwards, I revised the lesson plan, chose more concrete examples, and added cross-disciplinary discussions to make the material easier to understand."[29] Student feedback from puzzled expressions to enthusiastic remarks served as real-time data guiding subsequent instructional steps. Through this iterative trial, error, and reflection process, teachers gradually acquired new skills and underwent a mindset shift. Continuous feedback and classroom observations prompted adjustments, such as employing more tangible illustrations or cross-field discussion techniques to facilitate comprehension.

Consequently, interdisciplinary implementation in IRE produced mutually reinforcing dual impacts. For students, connecting Islamic Religious Education topics with science, history, and social issues enhanced cognitive relevance; religious knowledge no longer stood in isolation but appeared within authentic contexts that stimulated curiosity. This relevance amplified emotional engagement and ignited learning enthusiasm, as evidenced by active participation, critical discussions, and reflective questioning. For teachers, modest successes arising from trial and error catalyzed professional transformation. Positive student responses enriched pedagogical competence and strengthened educators' spiritual motivation, prompting them to design increasingly reflective, participatory, and contextual lessons.[30] Overall, the interdisciplinary approach in Islamic Religious Education classrooms created a feedback loop: content became more meaningful, students more enthusiastic, and teachers more adaptive aligning with the educational mandate to cultivate a generation that is faithful, intellectually keen, and ethically grounded.

The transformation undergone by Islamic Religious Education teachers can be understood as pedagogical *ijtihad* a creative and independent endeavour to formulate teaching methods that remain aligned with contemporary demands. In *fiqh*, *ijtihad* signifies the search for solutions where no detailed rulings yet exist; in the classroom, this concept materialises when teachers continually experiment by designing cross-disciplinary projects, integrating Qurʾānic verses with scientific phenomena, or converting narratives from the Prophet's history into social case studies that ignite student enthusiasm and enhance instructional effectiveness. This process embodies the spirit of *tajdīd* (renewal) in Islamic education. *Tajdīd* does not entail replacing the substance of the teachings but instead updating the modes of delivery so that the wisdom of the message remains relevant. Teachers exploit this scope to reinterpret learning approaches linking, for instance, a ḥadith on the obligation to seek knowledge with digital literacy. Consequently, Sharīʿah values are not "forced" into the curriculum; instead, they

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[29]Interview with R. Hidayat, September 01, 2024.

[30]Hanif Cahyo Adi Kistoro, Eva Latipah, and Norhapizah Mohd Burhan, "Probing Experiential Learning Approach In Islamic Religious Education," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 9, No. 2 (2023), p. 157–68.

are enlivened within contexts intelligible to today's generation. The result is an increasingly interdisciplinary, innovative, and contextual pedagogy: students perceive the nexus between ʿaqīdah (creed) and science-technology, while teachers evolve into agents of change who bridge Islamic texts with modern knowledge in the classroom. In short, pedagogical *ijtihad* affirms that Islamic education is not static but inherently dynamic.

Fourth, Interdisciplinary Collaboration as a Manifestation of Teacher Creativity. Islamic Religious Education teachers in Kendari do not work in isolation; instead, they actively collaborate with colleagues from other subjects—such as Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Geography, History, and Sociology—to design integrated learning materials and activities. This collaboration occurs formally through the Subject Teacher Consultation Forum and informally among peers within the school. Interview findings reveal that cross-disciplinary discussions provide Islamic Religious Education teachers with fresh ideas on how to link Islamic teachings to specific topics in other disciplines. Pedagogical creativity flourishes as teachers exchange perspectives: teachers of general subjects contribute scientific or social contexts, while Islamic Religious Education teachers offer relevant Islamic values and legal principles. One teacher noted, "While preparing a module on environmental ethics, I consulted with a Biology teacher about global warming. From that conversation, I was inspired to connect religious injunctions against causing harm on Earth with scientific data on climate change."[31] This statement illustrates how interdisciplinary collaboration enables teachers to design learning experiences rich in information and values concepts that might not emerge if they worked alone. Such collaboration also provides support and knowledge sharing that enhances the competencies of Islamic Religious Education teachers.

Teachers report greater confidence when incorporating scientific or social elements into Islamic Religious Education lessons because colleagues in the relevant fields verify their conceptual understanding. Conversely, non-Islamic Religious Education teachers gain a clearer understanding of how to embed moral-religious perspectives into their subjects with assistance from Islamic Religious Education teachers. Developing this inter-teacher learning community aligns with previous research identifying teacher collaboration as a key determinant of successful interdisciplinary curriculum implementation.[32] In Kendari, these partnerships unfold in the spirit of musyawarah (deliberation) and

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[31]Interview with H. Burhanuddin, August 27, 2024; Interview with Nur Lathifah, August 16, 2024.
[32]Farah Pramudita, "Strategic Management For Integration Of Environmental Education And Islamic Education," *Wawasan: Jurnal Kediklatan Balai Diklat Keagamaan Jakarta* 4, no. 1 (2023).

gotong royong (mutual assistance), both of which are integral Islamic values.[33] From the standpoint of Islamic law, this collaborative approach echoes the principle of ijmāʿ (consensus), reflecting a collective effort to reach beneficial agreements.[34] Islamic jurisprudence becomes particularly salient when teachers incorporate fiqh elements into cross-disciplinary lesson plans—for example, integrating Islamic legal principles on environmental rights or Islamic notions of justice into historical discussions. This evidence indicates that Islamic law is not treated as a separate domain but as a creative wellspring for teachers designing interdisciplinary learning experiences. Ultimately, interdisciplinary collaboration as a vehicle for creativity produces more varied, contextualized, and in-depth innovations in Islamic Religious Education, thereby holding significant potential to improve student learning outcomes.

Fifth, Transformative Moments in Meaningful Learning for Students. Transformative moments refer to situations where students undergo significant shifts in understanding, attitude, or interest due to interdisciplinary Islamic Religious Education. Islamic Religious Education teachers in Kendari documented several notable instances. When they implemented cross-subject projects on environmental conservation, many previously indifferent students became highly enthusiastic after grasping the connection between Islamic teachings and scientific facts. One teacher recounted, "One student said, 'Sir, I have just realized that the Islamic injunction to protect the environment is highly relevant to the plastic-waste problem we encounter every day."[35] Such feedback indicates that students' perspectives are changing; they no longer separate religious instruction from scientific knowledge but instead regard Islamic Religious Education as holistic and application-oriented.

Teachers' observations also revealed attitudinal changes: Students became more critical and actively engaged in discussions whenever contemporary issues were linked to Islamic viewpoints. They confidently questioned and analyzed how Islamic values could be applied to solve real-world problems, including social, health, and technological challenges. This development signals the attainment of higher-order thinking skills, whereby students synthesize diverse knowledge and values to understand issues holistically. This phenomenon aligns with the view that younger generations tend to be dissatisfied with purely dogmatic religious

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[33]Jinhee Kim, Hyunkyung Lee, and Young Hoan Cho, "Learning Design to Support Student-AI Collaboration: Perspectives of Leading Teachers for AI in Education," *Education and Information Technologies* 27, no. 5 (2022), p. 1–6.

[34]Tri Hidayati and Muhammad Syarif Hidayatullah, "Investigating the Construction of Ijma in The Study of Islamic Law through Sociological and Historical Approach," *Media Syari'ah : Wahana Kajian Hukum Islam Dan Pranata Sosial* 23, no. 2 (2021), p. 127–50.

[35]Interview with R. Hidayat, September 01, 2024.

instruction they wish to see how doctrine relates to everyday life.[36] An interdisciplinary learning approach can satisfy this critical curiosity, enabling students to gain profound insights. From a values-education perspective, these transformative moments are crucial for internalizing Islamic legal values within students. Principles such as justice, compassion, honesty, and responsibility, embedded in Islamic teachings, become more meaningful when experienced directly in authentic contexts.[37] For instance, after participating in an integrated community service project combining Islamic Religious Education and Sociology, students reported a deeper understanding of zakat, infaq, and sadaqah as tangible expressions of social concern rather than merely theoretical fiqh concepts. Similarly, discussions on technological ethics from an Islamic perspective prompted students to reflect on legal rulings governing responsible social media use in the digital era. Consequently, these transformative moments demonstrate the concrete contribution of Islamic law in shaping students' character and mindset.

Overall, the results demonstrate that implementing interdisciplinary Islamic Religious Education in senior high schools in Kendari City has yielded positive outcomes. Integrating Islamic values with contemporary scientific knowledge is achieved through teachers' robust pedagogical and spiritual motivation, facilitated by creative cross-disciplinary collaboration. It has produced transformative effects on both teachers and students. The five sub-themes identified above are mutually reinforcing, collectively shaping an innovative IRE learning ecosystem. More importantly, these findings underscore the central role of Islamic law as both a source of values and an ethical framework in educational practice, thereby contributing to delivering contextual, relevant, and transformative IRE instruction in Kendari's secondary schools.

Challenges in Teaching Islamic Religious Education through an Interdisciplinary Approach

This study demonstrates that Islamic Religious Education teachers in senior high schools across Kendari City encounter various internal and external obstacles when attempting to deliver Islamic Religious Education through an interdisciplinary lens. Internally, challenges stem chiefly from constrained resources and the teachers' preparedness. Many educators lament the limited availability of integrated teaching materials or modules that merge Islamic Religious Education content with other academic disciplines. According to Fariq,

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[36]Mohammad Thoha and Abd Hannan, "Modernization Of Education Governance Based On Accelerative Paradigm Among Pesantren Communities In Madura, Indonesia," *Ulumuna* 26, no. 2 (2022).

[37]Sedek Ariffin et al., "Islamisation of Human Knowledge in The Built Environment Education: A Case of The Bachelor of Science in Architectural Studies, International Islamic University Malaysia," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 5, no. 1 (2015).

the absence of such integrated resources constitutes a significant structural barrier to implementing interdisciplinary Islamic Religious Education. Pedagogically, harmonizing Islamic Religious Education with other fields demands a curriculum design that aligns affective and spiritual learning outcomes with cognitive achievements and scientific processes. Without ready-to-use instructional tools, teachers must independently craft concept maps, activity scenarios, and assessment instruments capable of mediating Islamic epistemology with modern scientific methodologies. This undertaking requires dual competencies profound theological insight and robust scientific literacy often unsupported by ongoing professional development.[38] Moreover, from a learning-management perspective, the additional workload of developing self-generated teaching materials directly competes with teachers' limited time, already divided among face-to-face instruction, administrative tasks, and student guidance services. Such conditions can force a trade-off between curriculum innovation and the fulfilment of routine school operations, causing disciplinary integration to proceed only partially.[39] Consequently, the absence of integrated modules delays the instructional design process and compromises the effectiveness, consistency, and academic validity of interdisciplinary IRE implementation at the school level.

Another challenge faced by teachers is that the existing formal curriculum and textbooks are largely monodisciplinary, requiring teachers to take the initiative to develop their cross-disciplinary teaching materials. Several teachers admit that they have not received adequate training in designing interdisciplinary instruction, which leaves them hesitant to connect Islamic concepts with general subject matter. Teachers' heavy workloads compound this issue: Islamic Education teachers are often assigned administrative duties and student mentoring in addition to teaching, leaving little time for curriculum innovation. These internal limitations demand that teachers be as creative as possible to integrate science and Islam into the learning process.

External challenges stem from the school environment and student characteristics. A common obstacle is resistance from colleagues. Innovations proposed by Islamic Education teachers sometimes receive limited support from fellow teachers accustomed to conventional subject boundaries. For example, teachers of other subjects may fear that an interdisciplinary Islamic Education approach will reduce their instructional time or consider the integration concept too complex. The minimal structural support schools provide and the absence of official policies for cross-subject team teaching force pioneering Islamic

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[38]Mohd. Rafi Riyawi and Denny Febriansyah, "The Urgency of Religious Moderation in the Perspective of Islamic Education," *Journal of Social Research* 2, no. 8 (2023).

[39]Danielle Lamb and Nicola Cogan, "Coping with Work-Related Stressors and Building Resilience in Mental Health Workers: A Comparative Focus Group Study Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis," *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 89, no. 3 (2016).

Education teachers to work alone. This situation is problematic because interdisciplinary instruction requires intensive coordination, discussion, and collaboration among teachers to ensure that the integration of religious knowledge with other disciplines proceeds optimally. When teachers operate in isolation without systematic institutional backing, the materials they develop tend to be narrow in scope, difficult to sustain, and less effective in achieving interdisciplinary learning objectives.[40]

One significant external challenge concerns the heterogeneous readiness of students. Teachers observe that not all learners can immediately adapt to the new instructional model that integrates Islamic teachings with science, the social sciences, or language studies. This difficulty arises because interdisciplinary Islamic Education requires students simultaneously to read religious texts, interpret scientific terminology, and compose critical reflections.[41] Consequently, learners with limited literacy skills quickly become disengaged and silent. Many pupils are accustomed to studying Islamic Education in a purely textual and compartmentalized manner; when asked to think critically by linking the concept of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* to issues such as environmental sustainability or technology, they encounter initial obstacles. Divergent cognitive habits further reduce the effectiveness of traditional lecture-based methods. In addition, technological infrastructure within schools is a decisive factor in the success of interdisciplinary Islamic Education. Several schools in Kendari still suffer from inadequate ICT facilities, unreliable internet connectivity, insufficient computers or projectors, and low levels of digital literacy among teachers and students, all of which hinder modern learning resources.

To address the varied readiness of learners, the interdisciplinary approach to Islamic Education must be complemented by a deliberate differentiation strategy, ranging from strengthening foundational literacy to progressively empowering ICT infrastructure. Teachers can begin with simple measures, such as illustrated worksheets that break down religious texts and scientific concepts into concise steps, while designing small projects on locally relevant issues to connect with students' experiences. School administrators and policymakers should collaborate to provide digital literacy training, improve internet connections, and ensure that projectors or computers are available in every classroom. This combined pedagogical and technological support can narrow the readiness gap, enabling the interdisciplinary Islamic learning model to serve as a genuine bridge between religious values and contemporary realities.

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[40]Judith Sandholtz, "Interdisciplinary Team Teaching as a Form of Professional Development," *Teacher Education Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (2000), p. 39–54.

[41]Zuly Qodir, Haedar Nashir, and Robert W. Hefner, "Muhammadiyah Making Indonesia's Islamic Moderation Based on Maqāsid Sharī'ah," *Ijtihad: Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam Dan Kemanusiaan* 23, no. 1 (2023).

Adaptive Strategies for Islamic Education Instruction through an Interdisciplinary Approach

In response to the evolving landscape of Islamic Education (IE) instruction, teachers are expected to move beyond isolated, discipline-specific teaching and instead integrate perspectives from the sciences, social sciences, and the humanities. This adaptive, interdisciplinary strategy is designed to weave Islamic values into contemporary realities, enabling students to interpret religious teachings in contextual, critical, and relevant ways to global and local challenges.[42] To operationalise this approach, teachers employ several innovative adaptive strategies. The first involves independently developing integrative teaching modules—an initiative prompted by the lack of textbooks or official guidelines that accommodate cross-disciplinary material. Constructing such modules demands both creativity and a thorough grasp of the *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*, ensuring that every integrative component remains aligned with the primary objectives of the *Sharīʿa*. *Maqāṣid* principles specifically the protection of intellect (*ḥifẓ al-ʿaql*) and religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*) serve as benchmarks when selecting instructional content.[43] Accordingly, teachers choose sub-topics from other disciplines that enhance students' intellectual acumen without neglecting the cultivation of faith and character. The interdisciplinary modules produced therefore serve a dual function: they convey general knowledge while simultaneously embedding Islamic legal values in a contextual manner. This effort reflects the spirit of educational *ijtihād*, whereby teachers exercise independent reasoning to translate Islamic teachings into a modern curriculum.

Second, teachers implement informal peer collaboration as a key strategy. Despite the structurally limited support for cross-disciplinary cooperation, Islamic Religious Education teachers proactively establish informal communication with colleagues from other subjects. This study documents several initiatives, including small-group discussions for designing integrated projects, sharing ideas on weekly themes that can be harmonised, and joint learning sessions to broaden interdisciplinary insights. Through deliberation, teachers understand that integrating Islamic Religious Education is not intended to reduce the proportion of other disciplines but to complement them in pursuit of holistic educational goals. Collaboration also provides Islamic Religious Education teachers with moral support, ensuring they do not confront challenges in isolation. This robust collegial network thus constitutes essential social capital for sustained innovation.

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[42]Fadli Rahman dan Hidayat Ma'ruf, "Penguatan Dan Pengembangan Pendidikan Islam Dan Transdisipliner," *Jurnal Kependidikan Dan Sosial Keagamaan* 08, no. 02 (2022).

[43]Maliki Siti Aishah, Embong Rahimah, and Abdullah Berhanundin, "The Ethical Values Based on Maqasid Syariah for Enhancing Self Identity Among Students," *Proceedings of ICIC2015-International Conference on Empovering Islamic Civilation in the 21 Century*, no. September, 6-7 (2015).

Third, teachers maximise the use of open, Islam-oriented media as supplementary learning resources. Confronted with limited textbooks, they leverage advances in information technology by accessing freely available Islamic content on the internet. Field observations show that teachers frequently download sermons or Islamic educational films from video-sharing platforms and use articles from Islamic websites to enrich lesson materials. For instance, when teaching zakāt, a teacher may play an infographic video explaining zakāt principles in community development. Teachers direct students to e-books or digital modules available in online Islamic libraries when addressing Islamic civilisation alongside general history. These resources inspire students and teachers by providing visually rich, contextual material often absent from standard textbooks.[44] Digital media also enhances student engagement, as educational videos, animations, virtual simulations, and interactive platforms present content more concretely and thus facilitate comprehension of abstract or complex concepts. From an educational psychology perspective, such media accommodate diverse learning styles visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic—while fostering personalised and self-directed learning.[45] Moreover, in terms of achieving the objectives of Islamic law, this strategy aligns with the principle of public welfare (maṣlaḥah ʿāmmah). By employing digital media, teachers can introduce Islamic perspectives on global issues such as peace, environmental stewardship, and economic justice through easily accessible sources. Therefore, their creativity in utilising open media demonstrates Islamic Religious Education teachers' adaptability in addressing contemporary demands.

Fourth, teachers adopt a reflective approach to refine the interdisciplinary delivery of Islamic Religious Education. After a range of interdisciplinary strategies have been implemented in the classroom, teachers continually evaluate each instructional step to gauge the extent to which the learning activities achieve their objectives. Walkington argues that such evaluation prompts educators to reflect on their teaching practice, providing a pathway to self-development and enhanced professional quality.[46] This reflective process begins with formulating clear indicators of success, encompassing mastery of Islamic Religious Education content across disciplinary boundaries and observable changes in students' attitudes and character. Therefore, routine reflection conducted after every instructional cycle is crucial for Islamic Religious Education teachers to sustain

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[44]Diyah Mayarisa, "Analytical Study on the Urgency of Media Learning in Islamic Religious Education," *International Journal Education and Computer Studies (IJECS)* 3, no. 3 (2023), p. 76–80.

[45]Farida Repelita Waty Kembaren and Indi Vira Patmala, "An Analysis of Brainstorming Learning Strategy on the Students' Writing Descriptive Text in Junior High School," *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature* 10, no. 2 (2022).

[46]Jackie Walkington, "Becoming a Teacher: Encouraging Development of Teacher Identity through Reflective Practice," *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education* 33, no. 1 (2005), p. 53–64.

the quality of the interdisciplinary approach. Because this approach requires teachers to present religious teachings textually and connect them to real-world contexts, scientific concepts, social realities, and cultural perspectives, it demands flexibility in designing learning materials and managing heterogeneous classroom dynamics. Through reflection, teachers can determine whether the intended integration across disciplines addresses cognitive, affective, and spiritual domains. Academically, the reflective approach has long been recognized as effective in enhancing teacher professionalism because data-driven decisions enable ineffective strategies to be promptly revised, thereby improving overall instructional quality.

Conclusion

This phenomenological study aims to uncover the authentic experiences of senior-high-school Islamic Religious Education teachers in Kendari City who have integrated Islamic legal principles into interdisciplinary instruction. The findings reveal that an Islamic-law-based interdisciplinary Islamic Religious Education approach can foster a contextual and collaborative educational ecosystem. First, integrating Islamic values with modern scientific knowledge within the Islamic Religious Education curriculum makes learning more contextually grounded and relevant to students. Second, teachers construe teaching as a divinely entrusted act of worship linked to the objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*), particularly *ḥifẓ al-dīn* (preservation of religion) and *ḥifẓ al-ʿaql* (preservation of intellect). Third, reflective practice drives a pedagogical transformation: teachers move from lecture- and memorisation-based methods to project-centred, cross-disciplinary learning that simultaneously boosts student participation and teacher professionalism. Fourth, interdisciplinary collaboration flourishes through formal and informal forums, yielding creative, integrated teaching modules. Fifth, this integration engenders transformative moments for students, who exhibit marked gains in higher-order thinking skills and adopt more critical dispositions. Despite these promising outcomes, the innovation process encounters several obstacles. Internally, teachers lack integrative modules, receive limited interdisciplinary training, and shoulder considerable administrative workloads. Externally, a predominantly monodisciplinary school culture, resistance from some colleagues, heterogeneous student literacy levels, and insufficient ICT infrastructure pose tangible challenges to implementing interdisciplinary learning. To overcome these constraints, teachers independently develop modules grounded in the *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*, harness free Islamic digital media, apply differentiated literacy strategies, and conduct systematic reflection after each instructional cycle. Practically, the study demonstrates that an interdisciplinary approach not only enhances student learning quality but also continuously strengthens teachers' competence, collaboration, and self-reflection. These dynamics collectively

cultivate a more adaptive and innovative school ecosystem that upholds Islamic character values rooted in Islamic law.

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