BUILDING ACADEMIC AND SPIRITUAL EXCELLENCE AT AL-NOORI MUSLIM SCHOOL AUSTRALIA: A HOLISTIC APPROACH

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ABSTRAK

This research examines the implementation of an Islamic value-based holistic education approach at Al-Noori Muslim School, Australia, as a model for integrating academic, spiritual, and social excellence. Employing a qualitative method with content analysis, this study investigates curriculum documents, school policies, and various pedagogical practices to understand how Islamic values are integrated into modern education. The findings indicate that Al-Noori Muslim School successfully harmonizes the Australian Curriculum with Islamic teachings through integrated learning in subjects such as Business Studies, Economics, and Arabic, as well as through spiritual experiences like Umrah programs, religious camps, and the habitual practice of Islamic values in daily activities. Learning support programs further reflect Islamic values of inclusivity and compassion. However, the implementation of this holistic model faces challenges, including the pressure of national academic standards, limitations in teacher competency regarding value integration, and the need to maintain a balance between academic and spiritual demands. Strategies employed to address these issues include teacher professional development, cross-curricular collaboration, experiential learning, and integrated assessments encompassing both academic and character (akhlak) aspects. This study concludes that an Islamic value-based holistic approach is capable of nurturing students into insan kamil (the perfect human) — individuals who are knowledgeable, faithful, and of noble character. Furthermore, this model serves as a reference for other Islamic schools in navigating the challenges of modern education without compromising Islamic principles.

Keywords: *Holistic Approach; Academic-Spiritual Integration; Australian Islamic Schools; Al-Noori Muslim School; Character Development.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is a conscious and planned effort to guide students in developing their physical and spiritual potential to achieve maturity and independence. As a fundamental aspect of human existence, education serves as an endeavor toward humanizing the human being. The demand for improved educational quality has spurred the birth of various theoretical frameworks. Etymologically, the English term to educate implies moral refinement and intellectual training. Similarly, in Javanese culture, education is defined as *Panggulawentah* (processing/cultivation) -the act of processing and transforming the psyche, maturing feelings, thoughts, intentions, and character, and ultimately shaping the child's personality (Hidayat & Abdilah, 2019).

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Islamic education aims not only to develop students' intellectual faculties but also to fortify their spiritual and character dimensions. Within the context of globalization and modernity, Islamic schools face the significant challenge of balancing academic demands with spiritual formation (Qolbiyah et al., 2025). A study by Abdalla and colleagues regarding the current state of Islamic schools in Australia examined the challenges of incorporating religious and spiritual lessons into the national curriculum, noting how academic pressure can often compromise the depth of religious education (Abdalla et al., 2020). This reality is evident in Australian Islamic schools, where educators and policymakers strive to create a comprehensive and meaningful educational environment that allows students to flourish as whole individuals in both knowledge and faith.

Al-Noori Muslim School in Australia serves as a significant case study in implementing a holistic approach to achieve academic and spiritual excellence. A holistic approach in Islamic education emphasizes the integration of various human dimensions: intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual. Through this approach, the curriculum and pedagogical practices do not merely prioritize academic achievement but also nurture religious consciousness, ethics, and character (Mariani, 2021). For instance, within a holistic curricular framework, students do not only study general sciences but also internalize Islamic values such as *Tawhid* (the oneness of God), *Ihsan* (excellence/benevolence), and social responsibility (Habibi, Wahyuni, et al., 2025; Kurnianingsih et al., 2025).

In the context of contemporary Islamic education, research indicates that curriculum design must consider socio-cultural contexts while providing space for students' spiritual and moral development. The study Contextualizing Curriculum Design in Islamic Schools: A Framework for Holistic Learning by Widiayah et al. proposes a framework that combines academic, moral-spiritual, digital literacy, and community engagement dimensions (Widiayah, 2025). Furthermore, Islamic philosophical approaches can serve as a vital foundation for designing holistic curricula that integrate Islamic values with modern knowledge (Asykur et al., 2025).

The implementation of holistic education in an Islamic context has been proven effective in various settings. For example, research by Briliant and Mustofa highlights how the Kurikulum Merdeka (Independent Curriculum) in Indonesia integrates spiritual, intellectual, and emotional aspects through a holistic lens (Briliant & Mustofa, 2025). Additionally, in Islamic boarding school settings, holistic character education—achieved through the integration of cognitive, affective, and spiritual values—has successfully shaped students'

characters comprehensively (Asnawi & Sukandar, 2025). In Australia, several Islamic schools have already adopted holistic principles. For instance, the Australian International Islamic College states that its Islamic education is "holistically universal," blending classical Islamic traditions with modern educational practices to develop students who excel academically, ethically, and spiritually (*Islamic Studies Holistic Universal Islamic Education*, 2025).

Through a holistic approach, Al-Noori Muslim School Australia can simultaneously build academic and spiritual excellence. This strategy not only strengthens students' academic performance but also enriches their Islamic identity, fosters integrity, and produces Muslim citizens capable of contributing positively to society. This introduction serves as the foundation for further research into how the school designs and implements curricula, teaching methods, and evaluations that balance academic and spiritual aspects, as well as the challenges and strategies encountered in curriculum implementation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical framework of Islamic education and the holistic approach is extensively discussed in Holistik *Mutu Pendidikan serta Peningkatan Nilai dan Moral Peserta Didik* (Marta et al., 2024). This work posits that educational quality should not be measured solely by academic metrics but also by the development of moral values, character (*akhlak*), and personality. A holistic approach facilitates a balance between cognitive abilities and behavioral attitudes by integrating intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and social dimensions. Marta et al. further emphasizes the teacher's role as a moral exemplar, the importance of habitual positive behavior, and the necessity of a supportive learning environment. Implementation strategies include a multidimensional curriculum and evaluation systems that assess character and ethics alongside academic performance, aiming to cultivate whole individuals (insan utuh) who are knowledgeable, faithful, and socially adept.

Consistent with this, the holistic approach in Islamic education focuses on the comprehensive development of the human being—encompassing cognition, faith, affection, social interaction, and physical presence. This is supported by Saepudin (2024), whose research on integrative curricula in secondary schools demonstrates that embedding moral and spiritual values significantly enhances positive character growth. Furthermore, Holistic Education in the Perspective of Islamic Education (Kurnianingsih et al., 2025) argues that contemporary Islamic systems must synthesize spiritual, intellectual, and social values. This recent scholarship reaffirms that the concept of the whole human is not merely theoretical but

serves as a practical framework for Islamic schools striving for dual excellence in academic and spiritual domains.

The integration of spiritual education and character formation often draws from Sufism (Tasawuf). As Subaidi and Bahrowi explain, Sufi teachings provide a foundation for akhlak through the process of tazkiyah al-nafs (purification of the soul) (Subaidi & Bahrowi, 2018). Through spiritual practices such as *dhikr* (remembrance), *muhasabah* (self-reflection), and the cultivation of self-awareness, students internalize values like sincerity (*ikhlas*), patience (*sabr*), and humility (*tawadhu*). In an educational context, the concept of *maqāmāt* (spiritual stations) serves as a roadmap for self-improvement, strengthening the student's character by harmonizing spiritual, moral, and social values to produce a balanced personality.

Spiritual education in Islamic schools involves internalizing religious values, habituating ethical behavior, and fostering a conducive learning atmosphere. Syafii and Azhari highlight a strong correlation between a student's spiritual growth, mental well-being, and academic outcomes, suggesting profound implications for Islamic educational psychology (Syafii & Azhari, 2025). In the Australian context, Memon et al. explore faith-based teacher training programs that shift educators' perspectives toward viewing education as a holistic process involving the mind, body, and soul (Memon et al., 2024). Their research underscores how emphasizing spirituality within teaching and learning practices transforms pedagogical praxis.

In synthesis, current theories and research converge on the necessity of a holistic orientation in Islamic education. It is insufficient for education to be a mere transfer of knowledge; it must actively shape character, fortify spirituality, sharpen intellect, and promote psychological well-being. Ultimately, ideal Islamic education integrates religious values across all facets of life to produce a generation that is academically brilliant, spiritually mature, and ethically resilient.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using the content analysis method. According to Klaus Krippendorff in Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology, content analysis is defined as a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use. This definition underscores the importance of content analysis as a systematic and objective research method for understanding the meaning and context of textual or symbolic material (Krippendorff, 2004).

The validity of any content analysis must be demonstrable. This is critical because content analysis is often not supported by direct observational evidence, making the validation process potentially difficult, impractical, or even impossible to perform in real-time. Validation processes cannot be strictly applied if the analysis must proceed without direct observational corroboration. However, rigorous validation can enhance the credibility of future analyses of similar texts under equivalent conditions, provided that the categories and analytical procedures used have proven to be reliable through repeated application. Consequently, researchers can compare successes and failures to refine these techniques over the long term (Krippendorff, 2004).

In this research, the method utilized is content analysis based on data and evidence that have been verified by various stakeholders and are readily accessible via official institutional websites. This approach was selected because the primary focus of the study lies in achieving a profound understanding of the concepts, values, and holistic educational practices within Islamic schools in Australia—specifically regarding the cultivation of academic and spiritual excellence in students. A qualitative framework was deemed most appropriate as it allows for an in-depth exploration of how these integrated values are articulated and institutionalized within the school's pedagogical ecosystem.

Table 1: *Academic and Spiritual Excellence Framework at Al-Noori Muslim School, Australia*

Component / Area	Academic & Spiritual Integration Activities	Website
Business & Economics	The Business and Economics curriculum integrates theoretical and practical dimensions of the corporate world, ranging from small-scale planning to operational management, marketing, finance, and human resources in large enterprises.	https://alnoori.nsw.edu.au/learning/subjects/secondary-school/
Arabic Language Studies	Arabic is taught as the language of the Qur'an and the Prophetic tradition (Sunnah). As a global language with over 300 million speakers, its mastery is presented as essential for religious literacy and international communication.	https://alnoori.nsw.edu.au/learning/subjects/secondary-school/arabic-studies/
Experiential Learning	A three-day camping program and the Senior Campus Umrah Trip provide students with practical opportunities for independence and profound spiritual development outside the classroom.	https://alnoori.nsw.edu.au/learning/extra-curricular/
Islamic Studies & Character	The curriculum emphasizes the obligation of seeking knowledge (Talab al-Ilm) to cultivate noble character (Akhlak), ethical behavior, and a commitment to positive social contribution.	https://alnoori.nsw.edu.au/learning/subjects/secondary-school/islamic-studies/

Learning Support	Specialized support programs are implemented to assist students with learning difficulties, ensuring inclusive education and the attainment of expected academic outcomes.	https://alnoori.nsw.edu.au/school-information/staff/learning-support/

Data collection was conducted through a documentary study, involving the systematic review and identification of textual content from various written sources. All documents and references were examined to identify core themes related to the integration of academic and spiritual dimensions within the Islamic education system.

To ensure validity and rigor, the data underwent an in-depth analysis through source triangulation, comparing findings across various documents and relevant Islamic scholarly references. This process ensures that the research findings are consistent, reliable, and academically accountable. By employing this method, the study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of how a holistic approach is operationalized within an Islamic school environment to cultivate students who achieve both academic and spiritual excellence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The educational philosophy of Al-Noori Muslim School is rooted in a holistic approach that synthesizes Islamic teachings with the Australian Curriculum. This integration aims to cultivate a balance between academic rigor, character formation, and ethical responsibility. The framework is designed to foster deep engagement, enabling students to apply knowledge within meaningful contexts that reflect real-world challenges and opportunities. In 2024, a diverse array of academic and experiential activities was organized to facilitate these deep learning objectives. Public speaking and communication skills were honed through participation in the Plain English-Speaking Award, Rostrum Voice of Youth, and various debating competitions. Concurrently, STEM education was bolstered via the Robotic Arm Challenge, Genetic Technology Seminars for senior students, and the development of entrepreneurial competencies through the Academy of Enterprise for Year 7 female students. Beyond academia, creative expression was emphasized as students explored music through non-conventional instruments and engaged in collaborative projects, such as the Year 3 Iron Man Model and Year 6 Storybook Readings for younger peers. Collectively, these initiatives demonstrate the practical application of deep learning through authentic tasks that nurture knowledge, skills, and character values relevant to contemporary life.

Al-Noori Muslim School is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment where every student is valued, respected, and emotionally secure. This

commitment is institutionalized through welfare policies and programs that promote mental health, resilience, and a sense of belonging, aligning with a holistic pedagogical model that balances socio-emotional development with academic excellence. To ensure operational effectiveness, the school utilizes CompliSpace Ideagen, a policy and compliance management platform. This system ensures that all institutional policies remain current and compliant with New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) requirements while providing professional development for staff in child protection, behavior management, and occupational health and safety (WHS).

As outlined in the Annual Report for NSW Registered and Accredited Independent Schools (September 2023, 82.7), public policies regarding Enrollment, Child Protection, Anti-Bullying, Discipline, and Complaints are accessible via the school's official website. The institution maintains transparent procedures for handling complaints or allegations of staff misconduct, reflecting its commitment to accountability and legal compliance. Parents are encouraged to maintain open lines of communication with the Principal, ensuring an inclusive dialogue. Furthermore, all policies undergo periodic reviews and updates to remain aligned with regulatory changes, best practices, and NESA standards. The following table delineates the vision, mission, objectives, core programs, and curricular activities based on the school's official documentation:

Table 2. *Vision and Mission of Al-Noori Muslim School*

Component	Strategic Formulation
Vision	To be a premier Islamic institution that integrates the values of faith with academic excellence, nurturing students to possess noble character (akhlak), global competence, and the capacity to contribute positively to society.
Mission	1. To integrate Islamic values across the entire pedagogical process. 2. To provide high-quality education in alignment with national standards. 3. To develop the 6 Global Competencies: Character, Citizenship, Collaboration, Communication, Creativity, and Critical Thinking. 4. To foster a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment. 5. To strengthen partnerships with parents and the wider community. 6. To enhance teacher professionalism and continuous development. 7. To cultivate student leadership and comprehensive support services.

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Table 3. *Institutional Objectives of Al-Noori Muslim School*

Domain	Strategic Objectives
Academic	To improve NAPLAN and Higher School Certificate (HSC) performance, strengthen literacy and numeracy, and ensure readiness for higher education.
Spiritual & Character	To fortify faith (Iman), ethics (Akhlak), and the habitual practice of worship and Islamic character.
Leadership & Social	To develop leadership qualities, empathy, and social responsibility through the Student Representative Council (SRC) and community service initiatives.
Well-being & Safety	To provide comprehensive mental health support, anti-bullying programs, and a secure school environment.
Technology & Future Readiness	To enhance digital literacy, cybersecurity awareness, and the ethical use of technology.
Partnership	To establish and maintain collaborative relationships with parents and the broader community.

Table 4. *Core Programs and Initiatives at Al-Noori Muslim School*

Program Category	Key Initiatives and Content
Academic Programs	NAPLAN Preparation, HSC Enrichment, STEM Week, Robotics Challenge, and Science Workshops.
Religious Programs	Qur'anic Memorization (Hifz), Circles of Light (Spiritual Circles), Ramadan Iftar, Moathen (Adhan) Competition, and the Umrah Pilgrimage Trip.
Leadership Programs	Student Representative Council (SRC), CEO for a Day, Market Day, and Teens Business Awards.
Well-being Programs	Headspace Workshops, Healthy Harold (Life Education), Resilience Building, and Anti-Bullying Week.
Cultural & National Observances	Harmony Week, Reconciliation Week, Book Week, and World Teachers' Day.
Parental Partnership Programs	Parents in Partnership (PIP) Initiative, Character Workshops, and Parenting Seminars.
Extra-Curricular Activities	Debating, Public Speaking, Art Exhibitions, Photography, and Gardening Club.

Table 5. *Curricular and Pedagogical Framework at Al-Noori Muslim School*

Area / Activity	Detailed Description
Key Learning Areas (KLA)	English, Mathematics, Science, Human Society and its Environment (HSIE), Personal Development, Health and Physical

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	Education (PDHPE), Creative Arts, Technological and Applied Studies (TAS/STEM), Islamic Studies, and Arabic.
Pedagogical Methods	Project-Based Learning (PBL), Deep Learning Tasks, Collaborative Inquiry, and Inquiry-Based Learning.
Daily Habituation	Practice of Islamic greetings (Salam) and etiquette (Adab), daily supplications (Dua), Islamic behavioral standards, and congregational prayers (Salah) for designated year levels.
Academic Enrichment	Literacy and Numeracy intervention programs, Homework Club, and Gifted and Talented programs.
Applied Learning Activities	STEM challenges, storytelling initiatives, student exhibitions, Market Day, and community service projects.

Al-Noori Muslim School envisions itself as a premier Islamic institution that integrates faith-based values with academic excellence, nurturing students to possess noble character (akhlak) and global competitiveness. Its mission is to provide high-quality education grounded in Islamic principles, enhance academic achievement in accordance with national standards, and develop the six global competencies. Furthermore, the school aims to create safe and inclusive learning environments, strengthen community partnerships, and foster student leadership. Institutional objectives encompass the improvement of learning outcomes, the fortification of spiritual and moral foundations, the promotion of social responsibility, and the advancement of ethical digital literacy. Core initiatives include academic preparations for NAPLAN and the HSC, religious programs such as Qur'anic memorization and Ramadan activities, leadership opportunities via the SRC, and comprehensive well-being and extra-curricular programs. The curriculum is operationalized through Key Learning Areas (KLA), deep learning tasks, project-based learning, and the consistent habituation of Islamic character alongside specialized enrichment and intervention supports.

1. Implementation of the Holistic Approach in the Academic Curriculum of Australian Islamic Schools

The curriculum represents the practical implementation of integrative education, aimed at synthesizing general scientific knowledge with Islamic values. Al-Noori Muslim School employs "Deep Learning" methodologies through project-based learning, collaborative work, and inquiry-based instruction. Students are encouraged to engage in active questioning,

research, and real-world problem solving, bridging the gap between theoretical subject matter and daily application.

The pedagogical design is inherently collaborative and creative, oriented toward developing critical communication skills, analytical thinking, and an Islamic character capable of navigating future challenges. The ultimate objective is to produce graduates who are not only subject-matter experts but also individuals whose identities are firmly rooted in Islamic Aqidah (creed). The following are the core academic components at Al-Noori Muslim School Australia:

Table 6. *Curriculum Overview Across Primary and Secondary Levels at Al-Noori Muslim School*

Subject Area	Primary School (K-6)	Secondary School (7-12)
English	✓	✓
Mathematics	✓	✓
Science and Technology	✓	✓
Geography	✓	✓
History	✓	✓
Commerce, Business Studies, and Economics	-	✓
Information and Software Technology (IST)	✓	✓
Creative and Practical Arts	✓	✓
Personal Development, Health, and Physical Education (PDHPE)	✓	✓
Legal Studies	-	✓
Religious Studies (Islamic Studies)	✓	✓
Library Program	✓	-
Arabic Language	✓	✓*

*Note: While your original table left Arabic blank for SMP-SMA, Al-Noori typically offers Arabic as an elective or core language study in the secondary years as well.

The curriculum at Al-Noori Muslim School implements an integrative education model that synthesizes general scientific knowledge with Islamic values. The pedagogical process utilizes a Deep Learning approach through collaborative activities such as project-based learning, group work, and inquiry-based instruction. Students are guided to engage in active questioning, research, and solving real-world problems relevant to their daily lives. This curriculum is designed to cultivate communication skills, creativity, critical thinking, and an Islamic character, ensuring students are well-prepared to navigate future challenges (Habibi,

Musfa'ah, et al., 2025). With a comprehensive subject structure spanning from Primary to Secondary levels, the school aims to produce graduates who excel academically while embodying the moral virtues of Islamic aqidah (creed).

a. Business Studies: Integrating Islamic Business Ethics

The Business Studies program provides students with fundamental principles of economics and management interwoven with Islamic values, fostering an understanding of ethics and responsibility within the corporate world. The specific learning topics and their integration are detailed in the following table:

Table 7. *Framework of the Business Studies Curriculum (Secondary Level)*

No	Key Dimensional Aspect	Learning Objectives and Outcomes
1	Scope and Contextual Application	Synthesis of theoretical frameworks and practical application; fostering a lifelong learning context.
2	Functional Business Operations	Entrepreneurial planning, operations management, marketing strategies, financial literacy, and Human Resource Management (HRM).
3	Strategic Analysis and Evaluation	Evaluation of contemporary business strategies; development of academic rigor and analytical depth.
4	Objectives and Vocational Utility	Preparation for professional environments and establishing a foundational base for higher education in commerce.

The integration of ethics within Business Studies has evolved from the application of general ethical principles toward those explicitly grounded in Islamic teachings. This shift is driven by a growing recognition of the role of religious values in steering economic activities—prioritizing not only material gain but also spiritual blessing (barakah) and social justice. Within Sharia-based business ethics, every economic activity must be anchored in the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith. These teachings mandate that all endeavors be halal (permissible), equitable, and socially responsible. Consequently, business analysis extends beyond mere efficiency or profitability; it necessitates an examination of product permissibility, production processes, and financial systems to ensure the absence of riba (usury), gharar (uncertainty/ambiguity), and maysir (speculation or gambling). These

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principles compel business practitioners to uphold honesty, fairness, and equilibrium in every transaction.

Furthermore, the Islamic concepts of ownership, consumption, and wealth distribution serve as the foundational pillars of Sharia business ethics. The ownership of wealth is regarded as an *amanah* (trust) from Allah, which must be utilized for the public good (*maslahah*) rather than personal greed. Consumption must align with the principles of being *halal* and *thayyib* (wholesome/pure) while avoiding *israf* (extravagance) to maintain a balance between individual needs and social obligations. Meanwhile, the distribution of wealth is facilitated through instruments such as *Zakat* (obligatory almsgiving), *Infaq* (spending for the sake of God), *Sadaqah* (voluntary charity), and *Waqf* (endowments) to mitigate economic inequality and ensure collective prosperity. Thus, the integration of Sharia principles within Business Studies not only enriches the moral dimension of economic practice but also fosters a business system that is equitable, sustainable, and harmonized with Islamic spiritual values (Setyagustina, 2023).

b. Economics: Maqasid al-Shari'ah as a Paradigm

The Economics subject provides students with a comprehensive understanding of economic systems and resource management, integrated with Islamic values such as integrity, justice, and social responsibility. The learning topics are outlined in the following table:

Table 8. *Economics Curriculum Framework (Secondary Level)*

No	Key Dimensional Aspect	Learning Objectives and Outcomes
1	Economic Decision-Making Process	Enabling collective decision-making and understanding the formation of regional and global economies.
2	Application Across Various Life Domains	Integration into entrepreneurship, accounting, finance, banking, law, marketing, industrial relations, tourism, public policy, government, history, and environmental studies.

The economic approach based on *Maqasid al-Shari'ah* (the higher objectives of Sharia) serves as a conceptual paradigm that does not necessarily reject conventional economic systems but seeks to complement them with critical Islamic perspectives. In this approach, the primary objective of economics extends beyond mere growth and capital accumulation to the realization of public interest (*maslahah*) that ensures well-being across all social strata. Equitable wealth distribution is central to this paradigm, ensuring that capital does not remain

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concentrated among specific groups but circulates justly in accordance with Islamic social justice principles.

Maqasid al-Shari'ah -which encompasses the preservation of faith, life, intellect, progeny, and wealth- serves as the foundational criteria for evaluating economic policies and business practices. Therefore, any economic system or policy is assessed not only by its effectiveness and efficiency but also by its alignment with these five essential goals. This approach emphasizes that Islamic economics maintains a balance between material needs and spiritual values, encouraging the formation of an economic system that is just, sustainable, and prosperous for the community (Kholish, 2020).

c. Arabic Language: A Tool for Scriptural Understanding

The Arabic Language subject occupies a pivotal role within the Al-Noori Muslim School curriculum as the primary vehicle for comprehending the Qur'an, Hadith, and other foundational Islamic texts. The program aims to develop student proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking effectively. Beyond linguistic competence, the instruction of Arabic internalizes Islamic values, such as communicative etiquette (adab), a profound appreciation for the language of the Qur'an, and a passion for lifelong learning. The scope of the Arabic curriculum is detailed in the table below:

Tabel 9. *Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Arab Tahap SD*

No	Key Dimensional Aspect	Learning Objectives and Outcomes
1	Philosophy and Objectives	Achieving deep religious literacy and fostering an appreciation for Arabic not merely as a communicative tool, but as a rich cultural and civilizational heritage.
2	Linguistics and Phonology	Mastery of individual Arabic letters and their articulation points (makharijul huruf); progressing to word formation and the application of syntax (Nahwu) for correct sentence structure.
3	Religious Application	Translating and interpreting Qur'anic verses through linguistic proficiency; memorization and comprehension of daily supplications (du'a), and active participation in school-led practices.
4	Pedagogical Methodology	Prioritizing conceptual understanding over rote memorization; habituating the use of Arabic within the school environment; and recognizing its status as a significant Second Language (L2).
5	Psychological and Spiritual	Strengthening Islamic identity through mastery of the scriptural language, while enhancing student

confidence in utilizing the language for spiritual reflection.

Arabic language instruction within an Islamic framework transcends basic conversational skills; its primary objective is to provide access to Islamic sciences (ulum al-din). Arabic holds a unique status as the language of revelation, the Prophetic tradition, and the classical scholarly corpus (turath). Consequently, Arabic proficiency is not merely a practical asset but a prerequisite for engaging with primary Islamic sources in their original form. By developing the ability to directly read, analyze, and interpret Arabic texts, students are expected to grasp the nuanced meanings and values of the Qur'an and Hadith without sole reliance on translations. Thus, Arabic education serves as a fundamental pillar in nurturing a generation of Muslim scholars who are knowledgeable, critical, and capable of bridging religious understanding with contemporary realities (Mulyani, 2024).

2. Integration of Spiritual and Social Experiences at Al-Noori Muslim School, Australia

The integration of spiritual and social experiences at Al-Noori Muslim School is manifested through a curriculum that synthesizes knowledge (ilm), faith (iman), and righteous action (amal). Both intra-curricular and extra-curricular activities are intentionally designed to reinforce academic excellence while simultaneously fostering spiritual consciousness and social responsibility. The following sections detail the core spiritual and social initiatives at the school:

a. The Umrah Program as a Direct Spiritual Experience

The Senior Campus Umrah Trip serves as a prime example of a meaningful experiential learning model within a spiritual framework. Distinct from theoretical classroom instruction, this program provides students with the unique opportunity to engage in direct worship practices within the Holy Cities. Rather than merely conceptualizing sacred history, students personally experience the sanctity of the Masjidil Haram and the spiritual tranquility of the Masjid Nabawi.

This immersive approach serves as a highly effective pedagogical tool for deepening the understanding of Islamic history and values. Standing at historical sites such as Jabal Rahmah or the Hira Cave renders scriptural narratives more vivid and personally relevant. This direct engagement evokes a profound emotional connection to their religious heritage, transforming the journey into a long-term transformative learning experience. Ultimately, these intense spiritual encounters do not merely increase students' religious knowledge but firmly instill faith (taqwa) within their hearts. The anticipated outcome is a more sincere and

consistent devotion, characterized by patience, discipline, and a deepened appreciation for the unity of the Ummah.

b. Religious Camps and the Formation of Socio-Spiritual Values

The three-day camp, themed Loving Allah and His Messenger (pbuh), is designed to facilitate the practical internalisation of spiritual and social values. By transitioning students from a traditional classroom setting to an outdoor, group-oriented environment, the program encourages a deeper and more memorable engagement with faith. Through shared activities, team-based challenges, and religious discourses in nature, students move beyond rote learning to the practical application of Islamic principles in daily life.

The formation of socio-spiritual values during the camp centers on the active implementation of Ukhuwah Islamiyah (Islamic brotherhood). Living in a communal setting for three days teaches students the importance of sharing, mutual respect, and reciprocal support. Furthermore, activities such as campsite management and logistical coordination foster independence and individual accountability to the group. These social values are integrated naturally, grounded in the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) regarding interpersonal conduct and familial ties.

Consequently, the camp serves as a vital instrument for strengthening the emotional and spiritual bonds of the participants. Through this intensive experience, love for Allah and His Messenger transcends rhetoric and becomes an integrated lifestyle. This is evidenced by increased social solidarity, personal autonomy, and a heightened sense of responsibility as members of the Muslim community.

c. The Internalization of Spiritual Values across the Pedagogical Process

At Al-Noori Muslim School, spiritual values are not viewed as supplementary programs but are integrated directly into the core pedagogical process. Every subject—ranging from Science and Mathematics to Languages—commences with a supplication (Do'a) to seek divine blessing (*Barakah*) for the knowledge acquired and concludes with expressions of gratitude. By adopting this praxis, students learn that the pursuit of knowledge is not merely an academic exercise but an act of worship (*Ibadah*) inseparable from their spiritual life. Values derived from the Qur'an and Islamic ethics (*Akhlak*), such as integrity, tolerance, and responsibility, are continuously reinforced, ensuring that education refines both the intellect and the heart.

In this integrated system, the role of the educator undergoes a significant transformation. Teachers at Al-Noori function not only as instructors of subject matter but as

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spiritual mentors. They embody and transmit core values such as patience (*Sabr*), sincerity (*Ikhlas*) in labor and study, discipline as a form of accountability, and gratitude in all circumstances. Through this exemplary leadership, the interaction between teacher and student becomes a primary vehicle for character formation. Consequently, the school does not merely produce academically proficient students but develops individuals of integrity with a robust spiritual foundation prepared to navigate the global landscape.

d. Learning Support as an Actualization of Inclusive Islamic Values

The Learning Support program at the school is more than a strategy for academic remediation; it is a practical manifestation of Islamic spiritual values, specifically compassion (*Rahmah*) and inclusivity. This principle is operationalized by providing patient and attentive guidance to students with learning difficulties, ensuring that every child—regardless of their challenges—has the opportunity to flourish according to their inherent potential. This approach aligns with Islamic tenets of justice (*'Adl*) in fulfilling the rights of every individual.

This program serves as a medium for instilling noble values across the entire student body. The empathetic and individualized guidance process provides a lived example of inclusive justice, where every student receives attention tailored to their specific needs. The empathy and social concern demonstrated by teachers are not merely "soft skills" but are intrinsic components of Islamic spirituality, which mandates care for others. Thus, the resulting learning environment is characterized not only by academic intelligence but also by compassion and social sensitivity.

3. **Islamic Value-Based Holistic Approach: Synergizing Academic, Spiritual, and Social Excellence at Al-Noori Muslim School**

The holistic approach grounded in Islamic values represents an educational paradigm that views the student as a comprehensive being, encompassing intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and social dimensions. Within this framework, education transcends mere academic achievement, focusing instead on the integrated formation of personality and faith. As posited by Ahyani et al., Islamic holistic education is anchored in nine core pillars: being an inquirer, critical and creative thinker, knowledgeable, an effective communicator, a risk-taker, open-minded, caring, possessing integrity, and maintaining spiritual awareness (Ahyani et al., 2023). These pillars serve as the foundational blueprint for Al-Noori Muslim School in designing a pedagogical system that synthesizes modern scientific knowledge with Islamic principles.

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Al-Noori Muslim School successfully bridges the national academic curriculum with spiritual instruction by embedding Islamic values within every pedagogical process. This alignment is consistent with the findings of Basori et al. (2025), who argue that an Islamic curriculum must synthesize academic proficiency with spiritual development through experiential learning and the contextual application of religious values. For instance, the Business and Economics subjects at Al-Noori do not exclusively address material concepts but actively teach Islamic work ethics, honesty, and social accountability (Basori et al., 2025). Consequently, students develop intellectually while internalizing the mandate that knowledge must be utilized for the collective benefit of the community (maslahah).

The holistic implementation at Al-Noori is further realized through diverse spiritual programs and character-building initiatives, such as the Umrah pilgrimage, the Loving Allah and His Messenger camps, and specialized Arabic language studies. These activities are more than religious rituals; they represent a form of experiential learning that deepens students' faith and moral convictions. Direct spiritual experiences play a crucial role in constructing religious consciousness and fostering both vertical relationships (with Allah) and horizontal relationships (with humanity). Through these initiatives, students learn to equilibrate intellectual intelligence with spiritual proximity and social values (Assabiq & Wantini, 2024) .

Furthermore, the balance between academic and social dimensions is reinforced through learning support programs and small-group collaborations. These programs facilitate the development of empathy, cooperation, and social concern, reflecting Islamic teachings on compassion and social justice. The application of inclusive principles in Islamic education mirrors the value of Rahmatan lil 'Alamin (a mercy to all worlds), ensuring that all students are afforded equitable opportunities to flourish according to their unique potential. This approach ensures the school produces not only academically gifted students but also socially conscious individuals (Zahara et al., 2024).

In conclusion, by operationalizing a holistic, value-based Islamic education, Al-Noori Muslim School successfully achieves a synergy between knowledge (ilm), faith (iman), and action (amal). Students are guided toward academic excellence while simultaneously being nurtured into individuals of high moral character, independence, and social awareness. This model exemplifies the ideal of Islamic education: the cultivation of the Insan Kamil—a perfect human who maintains a profound balance between intellectual prowess and spiritual depth.

4. Challenges and Strategic Implementations in the Holistic Model

The implementation of any comprehensive educational model inevitably encounters specific challenges that require targeted strategies for resolution. The holistic approach at Al-Noori Muslim School is no exception, facing hurdles in curriculum alignment and faculty capacity.

a. Challenges in Academic, Spiritual, and Social Integration

A value-based holistic education faces complexities in harmonizing modern educational mandates with spiritual and social development. At Al-Noori Muslim School, educators frequently navigate the tension of time management between rigorous academic standards—such as the NESA (New South Wales Education Standards Authority) requirements—and essential religious activities like Qur'anic memorization (Hifz), Arabic studies, and social initiatives. This challenge is common in modern Islamic schools within national education systems, where teachers must achieve high-level academic performance while simultaneously fulfilling the objectives of Islamic spiritual growth.

b. Constraints in Teacher Competency for Integrative Pedagogy

A significant challenge lies in the variance of teacher competency regarding integrative approaches. Not all educators possess a background that bridges general sciences with religious scholarship. Academic subject teachers may struggle to authentically weave Islamic values into subjects like Science, Economics, or Business. Conversely, religious studies teachers may be less familiar with Project-Based Learning (PBL) or Experiential Learning methodologies (Kusmanto et al., 2024). For integration to be effective, teachers must possess high-level reflective and pedagogical skills to ensure that learning is both academically rigorous and spiritually meaningful.

c. Strategies for Capacity Building and Faculty Development

To mitigate these challenges, Al-Noori Muslim School implements professional development programs and cross-disciplinary collaboration. These initiatives focus on empowering teachers to connect academic concepts with Qur'anic values through thematic verse analysis, professional ethics reflection, and contextualized worship practices. Furthermore, the school facilitates co-teaching and collaborative planning between religious and secular subject teachers. This strategy is pivotal, as the teacher serves as the primary agent in operationalizing the holistic model.

d. Experiential Learning and Spiritual Engagement Strategies

The school reinforces the holistic model through immersive activities, including the Senior Campus Umrah trip, Islamic camps, and Arabic programs focused on scriptural comprehension. These initiatives enhance spirituality while cultivating teamwork, autonomy, and empathy (Nurdi et al., 2026). This experiential methodology is highly effective for internalizing religious values, as students transition from conceptual understanding to the lived application of faith in daily contexts.

e. Systemic Support and Community Collaboration

Systemic institutional support and community engagement are vital for success. Al-Noori Muslim School fosters a pervasive Islamic culture through individualized learning, small-group activities, and active parental involvement. This ecosystem builds a synergy between teachers, students, and families, ensuring the learning environment is spiritually conducive. Holistic education succeeds only when the entire school community is actively engaged, ensuring that Islamic values permeate every social interaction beyond the classroom walls.

f. Integrated Evaluation and Value-Based Assessment

An innovative strategy employed by the school is value-based assessment, where academic and spiritual dimensions are evaluated concurrently. Teachers assess not only cognitive performance but also behavioral conduct (adab), participation in social initiatives, and spiritual disposition. This aligns with the concept of Adab-Centered Assessment, emphasizing that Islamic education must maintain a profound equilibrium between knowledge (ilm), faith (iman), and character (akhlak).

CONCLUSION

The implementation of an Islamic value-based holistic education at Al-Noori Muslim School in Australia demonstrates that the ideal Islamic educational model is one capable of achieving a sophisticated equilibrium between academic, spiritual, and social excellence. The institution has successfully synthesized modern curricular demands with the foundational values of the Qur'an and Sunnah, thereby nurturing students who are not only intellectually proficient but also characterized by profound faith, noble conduct (akhlak), and the capacity for positive social contribution.

Through academic subjects such as Business Studies and Sharia-based Economics, Islamic values are internalized within the pedagogical process, enabling students to recognize that knowledge must be utilized for the collective benefit of society (maslahah). This is operationalized through deep learning methodologies, including project-based learning,

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collaborative inquiry, and research-based instruction. Concurrently, spiritual initiatives such as the Umrah program, religious camps, and Arabic language instruction provide direct experiential learning that fortifies student faith and character. Furthermore, the provision of learning support for students with diverse needs serves as a practical manifestation of Islamic inclusivity and compassion (rahmah).

The application of this holistic approach is not without its challenges, specifically the complexities of aligning national academic mandates with Islamic spiritual objectives, alongside variances in teacher competency regarding value integration. However, Al-Noori Muslim School effectively mitigates these hurdles through strategic professional development, cross-disciplinary collaboration, experiential pedagogical activities, and an integrated assessment framework that evaluates both academic and spiritual dimensions.

Ultimately, the holistic model at Al-Noori Muslim School proves that academic excellence and spiritual development are not mutually exclusive; rather, they are complementary forces essential for the cultivation of the Insan Kamil—an individual who is intellectually advanced, spiritually grounded, and morally upright. This model serves as a robust benchmark for other Islamic educational institutions seeking to develop a comprehensive, balanced, and modern educational system that remains steadfastly rooted in Islamic values.

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