

**Islamic Religious Education as a Support for Character
and Academic Achievement: Evaluation of an Integrated
Program in Madrasahs from the Perspective of Holistic
Education**

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Abstract

Islamic Religious Education in madrasahs plays a crucial role in shaping students' character and enhancing their academic achievements. However, in practice, the effectiveness of IRE programs is often influenced by various factors, including the teaching approaches used and the integration of religious values into students' daily lives. This study aims to evaluate the IRE program in madrasahs, focusing on its impact on character development and students' academic performance. Using both qualitative and quantitative research approaches, this study analyzes the interaction between IRE teaching and other academic learning processes within the context of holistic education. The findings reveal that the implementation of an integrated religious education can strengthen students' character values, such as honesty, discipline, and empathy, which directly positively impacts their academic performance. The study also highlights the importance of parental, community, and environmental involvement in supporting a holistic IRE program in madrasahs. These findings provide insights for developing more integrated educational policies, aiming to create an environment that supports balanced character development and academic achievement for students.

Keywords: *Islamic Religious Education, Support, Character*

Abstrak

Pendidikan Agama Islam di madrasah memainkan peran yang sangat penting dalam membentuk karakter dan meningkatkan pencapaian akademik siswa. Namun, dalam praktiknya, efektivitas program PAI sering kali dipengaruhi oleh berbagai faktor, termasuk pendekatan yang digunakan dalam pengajaran dan integrasi nilai-nilai agama dalam kehidupan sehari-hari siswa. Penelitian

ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi program Pendidikan Agama Islam di madrasah, dengan fokus pada dampaknya terhadap pembentukan karakter dan pencapaian akademik siswa. Menggunakan pendekatan penelitian kualitatif dan kuantitatif, penelitian ini menganalisis interaksi antara pengajaran PAI dengan proses pembelajaran akademik lainnya dalam konteks pendidikan holistik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan pendidikan agama yang terpadu dapat memperkuat nilai-nilai karakter siswa, seperti kejujuran, disiplin, dan empati, yang secara langsung berdampak positif terhadap kinerja akademik mereka. Penelitian ini juga mengungkapkan pentingnya keterlibatan orang tua, masyarakat, dan lingkungan dalam mendukung program PAI yang holistik di madrasah. Temuan ini memberikan wawasan bagi pengembangan kebijakan pendidikan yang lebih terintegrasi, guna menciptakan lingkungan yang mendukung pertumbuhan karakter dan prestasi akademik siswa secara seimbang.

Kata Kunci: *Pendidikan Agama Islam, Penopang, Karakter*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, many Muslim-majority countries have witnessed significant shifts in their educational systems, particularly in how religious and secular education are integrated. (Kostovich et al., 2021) Madrasahs, traditional Islamic educational institutions, have played a key role in the development of students' religious and moral values. However, in a rapidly evolving world, there has been an ongoing debate about the relevance of these institutions and their educational programs. (Simpson et al., 2020) Critics argue that the focus of Madrasahs on religious education alone may limit students' preparedness for contemporary challenges. Conversely, advocates highlight the benefits of maintaining a strong connection between academic and religious teachings, which can provide students with a balanced and holistic education. (Malone et al., 2020)

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is central to the curriculum in Madrasahs, traditionally focusing on Islamic subjects such as the Qur'an, Hadith (teachings of Prophet Muhammad), Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), and Aqeedah (Islamic theology). However, recent educational reforms have led to the incorporation of secular subjects such as mathematics, science, and literature alongside religious studies. This integrated approach seeks to address the needs of modern education while maintaining the spiritual and moral values inherent in Islam.

This article explores the role of Islamic Religious Education as a crucial factor in supporting both character development and academic achievement among Madrasah students. Through an examination of an integrated IRE program, the paper aims to evaluate its impact on students' academic performance, character formation, and overall well-being. It uses the perspective

of holistic education, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual development, as a framework to assess the effectiveness of such programs in Madrasahs.

The integrated program in Madrasahs aims to cultivate well-rounded individuals who are academically proficient, morally grounded, and spiritually enlightened. In this paper, the evaluation of this integrated approach will not only consider academic success but also assess the moral and emotional growth of students. It will investigate how the combination of religious and secular education influences student motivation, engagement, and preparedness for life beyond the classroom. (Palitsky et al., 2023) Furthermore, the article will explore the challenges and potential barriers to implementing integrated educational programs and propose recommendations for enhancing their effectiveness. By examining the effectiveness of these integrated programs, this study hopes to provide valuable insights into the impact of Islamic Religious Education in shaping students' academic trajectories and character development. The findings will contribute to the ongoing discussion about the importance of a balanced, holistic educational experience in fostering individuals who are equipped to navigate both the modern world and their religious responsibilities.

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected and complex, education systems across the globe are being urged to adapt and evolve. In this context, Madrasahs, which have historically focused on imparting religious knowledge, face the challenge of modernizing while preserving their core educational values. (Mekkoathil et al., 2020) In many Islamic countries, there is a growing recognition that for students to thrive in the contemporary world, they must not only be well-versed in their faith but also academically capable and socially adept. The integrated approach to education, which combines Islamic religious education with secular subjects, aims to address this need by providing a more comprehensive and balanced learning experience.

One of the key principles behind this integrated program is the notion of ta'leem (teaching) in Islam, which encompasses both the acquisition of knowledge and the cultivation of good character (Fijal & Beagan, 2019). The Islamic education system has long been concerned with more than just academic achievement; it has placed significant emphasis on moral development and ethical conduct. This dual focus on academic success and personal growth is seen as essential in preparing students to be not only successful professionals but also responsible, ethical citizens who contribute to society in meaningful ways.

A key feature of integrated Islamic Religious Education programs in Madrasahs is the promotion of adab (etiquette) and character education alongside academic subjects. Students are encouraged to develop qualities such as empathy, respect, honesty, and responsibility, which are in alignment with both Islamic teachings and universal moral values. (Davis et al., 2019) Through this approach, the education system strives to ensure that students

are not only intellectually capable but also morally and spiritually grounded, making them well-prepared to face the challenges of the modern world while adhering to the principles of their faith.

Moreover, the integration of secular subjects into the religious curriculum is aimed at addressing the educational needs of the current generation, who must navigate a highly competitive and technological world. By introducing students to subjects such as mathematics, science, language, and social studies, Madrasahs are ensuring that students gain the knowledge and skills needed for their personal and professional development, while still remaining anchored in their religious and ethical values.

This paper sets out to evaluate the effectiveness of the integrated IRE program in Madrasahs from the perspective of holistic education, which prioritizes the development of the whole person. (Xiao et al., 2022) Holistic education is an approach that seeks to nurture intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual growth simultaneously, with the goal of producing well-rounded individuals who can contribute to society in multifaceted ways. By examining the outcomes of integrated IRE programs through this lens, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how such programs impact students' academic achievement, character development, and overall well-being. Furthermore, the study seeks to identify the challenges and opportunities involved in implementing integrated educational programs in Madrasahs and offer recommendations for improvement.

Through this research, the article will highlight how the combination of religious and secular education can offer a robust foundation for students' intellectual and moral development, helping them to become not only successful in their academic endeavors but also ethically responsible individuals who embody the values of Islam. In doing so, the study aims to contribute to the ongoing conversation about the future of Islamic education and its role in shaping the next generation of leaders, scholars, and citizens in the Muslim world.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Islamic Religious Education (IRE) and Its Importance

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) has long been a cornerstone of the curriculum in Madrasahs, playing a pivotal role in the educational and spiritual development of Muslim students. (Hassan et al., 2021) The main objective of IRE is not merely to impart knowledge but to foster a deep understanding of Islamic teachings and principles, which serve as a foundation for students' moral and spiritual lives. Traditionally, IRE has centered on core subjects such as Quranic studies, Hadith (the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad), Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), and Aqeedah (Islamic theology). These subjects are not only studied for their intellectual content but are meant to guide students toward developing a strong sense of faith, ethical behavior, and personal responsibility.

In Madrasahs, the emphasis on religious education plays a crucial role in shaping students' worldview, instilling values such as integrity, compassion, patience, and humility. However, while the focus on Islamic knowledge is undeniably essential, the increasing complexity of modern education systems calls for a more integrated approach that balances religious teachings with the acquisition of academic knowledge. This balance ensures that students can thrive both spiritually and academically, enabling them to navigate contemporary societal challenges while remaining grounded in their faith.

In recent years, many Madrasahs have recognized the need to evolve their curricula to encompass both religious and secular subjects, aiming for a holistic education. This integrated approach, which blends academic subjects such as mathematics, science, and literature with IRE, seeks to promote well-rounded individuals who are not only knowledgeable in their religious studies but also equipped with the skills necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing world. By doing so, students can gain a comprehensive understanding of the world around them while maintaining their Islamic identity. This integration of religious and academic education encourages students to apply Islamic values in all aspects of their lives, both within the classroom and beyond.

The importance of IRE extends beyond the acquisition of knowledge; its ultimate goal is to shape students' character, moral conduct, and spiritual awareness, which are essential for living a righteous and fulfilling life in accordance with Islamic values. (Vanderweele et al., 2022) In this sense, IRE serves as a tool for the holistic development of students helping them grow intellectually, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. In Islamic tradition, knowledge is seen as a means to understand the will of Allah, and the application of this knowledge is vital for leading a life that aligns with divine guidance.

Through the study of Quranic verses, Hadith, and Fiqh, students learn about the fundamental principles of Islam, such as justice, compassion, honesty, and respect for others. These teachings are designed to instill values that can help students navigate their daily lives, make ethical decisions, and contribute positively to society. Moreover, Aqeedah—Islamic theology—helps students understand the core beliefs of Islam, such as the oneness of God, the finality of Prophet Muhammad's message, and the importance of fulfilling religious obligations like prayer, fasting, and charity. These foundational beliefs shape the worldview of students, helping them develop a sense of identity, purpose, and moral direction.

In recent years, however, there has been increasing attention on integrating Islamic Religious Education with secular academic subjects in Madrasahs. This shift is driven by the recognition that, while religious education is essential, students also need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to succeed in a rapidly changing world. The integration of IRE with secular subjects like science, mathematics, and language arts provides a more balanced and comprehensive education that meets the needs of modern students,

preparing them for both spiritual fulfillment and academic success. Through this integrated approach, students are encouraged to apply Islamic principles not only in their religious practices but also in their academic pursuits, professional careers, and social interactions.

Thus, IRE plays a crucial role in nurturing students' moral character and academic development. It is not merely about the transmission of religious knowledge but about cultivating a well-rounded individual who is grounded in both their faith and their ability to contribute meaningfully to society. In the context of Madrasahs, the integration of IRE with secular education creates a unique opportunity to produce graduates who are not only academically proficient but also spiritually and morally responsible, embodying the values of Islam in all aspects of their lives.

2. Holistic Education Framework

Holistic education is an approach that emphasizes the development of the entire individual intellectually, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. Unlike traditional educational models that often prioritize academic achievements alone, holistic education recognizes the importance of nurturing all aspects of a student's well-being. (Park et al., 2021) This approach believes that education should go beyond the mere transmission of knowledge and aim to cultivate well-rounded individuals who are not only intellectually competent but also emotionally balanced, socially responsible, and spiritually aware. The idea is to develop not just the mind, but also the heart, fostering values such as empathy, kindness, and resilience, while also enhancing emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills.

In the context of Madrasahs, holistic education is particularly important as it seeks to integrate both religious and secular knowledge, aligning academic growth with the cultivation of Islamic principles and ethical values. The curriculum in these institutions aims to equip students with the intellectual skills needed for success in modern life, while simultaneously nurturing their emotional and moral development. By doing so, it ensures that students are not only capable of excelling academically but are also well-prepared to navigate the challenges of life with a strong moral compass and a deep connection to their faith.

One of the core aspects of holistic education in Madrasahs is the integration of Islamic values with both academic and practical knowledge. In addition to subjects like Quranic studies, Hadith, and Islamic jurisprudence, students are also introduced to subjects such as mathematics, science, literature, and social studies. The goal is to help students see the interconnectedness between their faith and the world around them, allowing them to approach both their studies and their daily lives from an Islamic perspective. Through this integrated approach, students are encouraged to use their knowledge and skills not only for personal success but also to serve their communities and contribute to the greater good of society.

Furthermore, the holistic education model in Madrasahs places a strong emphasis on character education. Beyond academic excellence, students are taught the importance of qualities such as honesty, humility, patience, and compassion. These values are instilled through direct instruction as well as through modeling by teachers and mentors, who exemplify the Islamic ideals of good character. (Agin-Liebes et al., 2021) This focus on character development is seen as essential for producing well-rounded individuals who are not only skilled professionals but also ethical leaders who uphold the principles of justice, kindness, and integrity in all their actions.

Holistic education also encourages the emotional growth of students, helping them develop emotional intelligence, resilience, and the ability to manage their feelings in a healthy way. In Madrasahs, this aspect is particularly significant as students are encouraged to reflect on their personal experiences and emotions through spiritual practices such as prayer, reflection, and mindfulness. These practices foster a sense of inner peace and emotional well-being, helping students to manage stress, resolve conflicts, and build positive relationships with others.

In sum, holistic education in Madrasahs integrates academic achievement with the development of character, emotional intelligence, and spiritual awareness. This comprehensive approach ensures that students are not only academically proficient but are also equipped with the values, emotional resilience, and social skills needed to navigate the complexities of the modern world. By emphasizing the interconnectedness of intellect, emotion, and spirit, holistic education in Madrasahs offers a more balanced and meaningful educational experience that prepares students to thrive both in their personal lives and as contributing members of society.

3. Madrasahs and the Integrated Program

Madrasahs have increasingly adapted their curricula to incorporate both religious and secular subjects, in response to the growing demand for students to excel in a wide range of academic and personal areas. This integrated approach seeks to address the evolving needs of modern education while preserving and promoting Islamic teachings and values. (Gravier et al., 2020) The integration of subjects such as mathematics, science, literature, and history with Islamic Religious Education (IRE) creates a balanced educational experience that fosters not only intellectual growth but also moral and spiritual development.

In an integrated curriculum, IRE is no longer taught in isolation but is combined with other academic disciplines, encouraging students to make connections between their religious beliefs and the secular world. For example, students may learn how Islamic principles can be applied to scientific discoveries, ethical dilemmas in literature, or mathematical problem-solving. This approach provides students with a broader understanding of how their faith can guide their actions and decisions in various aspects of life, both religious and secular.

Research has shown that when religious education is effectively integrated with secular subjects, students tend to benefit both academically and personally. On the academic side, students who are exposed to a diverse curriculum often perform better in various subjects. The interdisciplinary approach allows students to develop a well-rounded knowledge base, which is crucial for success in an increasingly globalized world. Moreover, students are better able to see the relevance of their religious studies to their daily lives, which can increase their motivation to engage with and apply the content.

On a personal level, an integrated approach to education helps students grow morally and ethically. By teaching academic subjects alongside IRE, Madrasahs encourage students to reflect on how their faith informs their actions and choices. (Aslan et al., 2020) The integration of moral teachings with academic learning fosters the development of responsible, compassionate individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also conscientious and ethical in their behavior. This dual focus on academic excellence and character development ensures that students are equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern world with a strong moral foundation.

Moreover, integrating IRE with secular education enhances students' ability to think critically and solve problems. The combination of intellectual rigor with ethical considerations helps students approach challenges from a holistic perspective, considering both practical and moral implications. This approach encourages students to use their knowledge for the betterment of society, while remaining grounded in their religious values. As a result, students who graduate from Madrasahs with an integrated curriculum are not only academically capable but also spiritually aware, socially responsible, and equipped to contribute positively to their communities.

In conclusion, the integration of Islamic Religious Education with secular subjects in Madrasahs represents a progressive step in modern education. This approach ensures that students receive a well-rounded education that nurtures both their academic skills and their moral character. By striking a balance between religious and secular learning, Madrasahs are preparing students to thrive in both the academic and personal aspects of their lives, all while remaining rooted in their Islamic faith. The benefits of such an integrated program are evident in the academic achievements, ethical development, and personal growth of students, highlighting the value of combining academic excellence with spiritual and moral education.

4. Character Development through IRE

Character education is a fundamental aspect of Islamic Religious Education (IRE), as it focuses on the cultivation of values that are central to personal and social well-being. These values, such as honesty, patience, respect, responsibility, kindness, and humility, are deeply rooted in Islamic teachings and are considered essential for the development of a morally upright and compassionate individual. (Vieten & Lukoff, 2021) The goal of char-

acter education in IRE is not merely to impart knowledge but to shape students into individuals who embody these virtues and contribute positively to society.

IRE provides a structured framework for fostering good character through various pedagogical methods. One of the most impactful ways in which Islamic education instills these values is through storytelling. Stories from the Quran, Hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad), and the lives of notable Islamic figures are used to teach students moral lessons. These stories serve as both educational tools and moral compasses, illustrating the importance of good character in everyday life. For example, the life of the Prophet Muhammad, who is regarded as the best role model in Islam, provides rich examples of honesty, patience, humility, and compassion, which students can strive to emulate in their own lives.

Another important method for promoting character education in Madrasahs is through the use of role models. Teachers, parents, and community leaders play a crucial role in exemplifying the Islamic virtues they wish to instill in students. The personal conduct of educators and other influential figures serves as a living example for students, demonstrating how to practice honesty, patience, and kindness in real-life situations. This "living curriculum" of character development helps students internalize the values they are taught in the classroom and apply them in their interactions with others.

Community service is also an essential component of character education in Islamic Religious Education. Engaging students in acts of service, such as helping those in need, supporting charitable initiatives, and participating in local community activities, provides practical opportunities for students to practice the virtues they learn. Service-oriented activities emphasize the Islamic principle of helping others and highlight the importance of social responsibility, empathy, and collective well-being. By participating in such activities, students not only learn about their responsibilities as Muslims but also develop a sense of belonging and commitment to their communities.

The emphasis on good character, or "Akhlaq," is central to Islamic teachings. The concept of Akhlaq refers to the moral and ethical conduct that Muslims are encouraged to adopt in all aspects of life. In IRE, students are taught that cultivating good character is a lifelong process and that it is essential for becoming a better person and a responsible member of society. Islam teaches that personal character is a reflection of one's faith, and it is through good character that individuals can achieve spiritual fulfillment and contribute positively to the welfare of others.

In the context of Madrasahs, character education is not only about instilling good values but also about providing students with the tools to navigate the challenges of modern life while remaining true to their faith. (Gobbetti et al., 2019) By integrating character development with academic learning, IRE ensures that students grow not only as knowledgeable individuals but also as compassionate, responsible, and ethical members of society. The

moral framework provided by Islamic teachings helps students understand their roles and responsibilities within both their immediate community and the broader world, guiding them to make ethical choices and act with integrity.

In conclusion, character education is a vital component of Islamic Religious Education, providing students with the necessary values and virtues to become better individuals and responsible members of society. Through storytelling, role models, community service, and the integration of Islamic teachings on Akhlaq, Madrasahs create an environment where students are encouraged to develop and practice good character in all aspects of their lives. This holistic approach not only enhances academic achievement but also nurtures the emotional, moral, and social development of students, preparing them to face life's challenges with integrity and compassion.

5. Impact of Integrated Programs on Academic Achievement

Recent studies suggest that students who receive an integrated education that incorporates both religious and academic components tend to perform better in both areas. (Brown et al., 2019) This integrated approach not only enhances academic achievement but also fosters a stronger ethical foundation, contributing to students' overall success in life. When religious education is combined with secular subjects, students are exposed to a balanced curriculum that nurtures both their intellectual growth and moral development. This dual focus equips students with the knowledge and skills needed to excel academically, while also guiding them to become ethical, responsible individuals who contribute positively to society.

Research has shown that the emotional and moral grounding provided by Islamic education plays a significant role in shaping students' academic engagement and motivation. The emphasis on values such as honesty, patience, responsibility, and respect in Islamic education helps students build a strong moral compass that influences their behavior both inside and outside the classroom. This moral framework not only encourages students to behave ethically but also strengthens their ability to focus, persevere, and approach academic challenges with determination.

Moreover, students who are grounded in Islamic values are more likely to demonstrate a sense of purpose and responsibility in their academic pursuits. Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of seeking knowledge and using it for the betterment of society. This belief instills a sense of intrinsic motivation, where students view education not merely as a means to achieve personal success, but as a way to serve others and fulfill their moral duties. As a result, these students tend to be more engaged in their studies, exhibit greater discipline, and perform better academically.

The integration of religious and academic components in education also supports the development of emotional intelligence, which is essential for students' social and academic success. Islamic education encourages self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation, all of which contribute to a

positive and supportive learning environment. Students who develop emotional intelligence are better equipped to manage stress, navigate social interactions, and collaborate effectively with their peers, all of which enhance their academic performance.

Furthermore, the moral teachings embedded in Islamic education help students cultivate resilience and perseverance, qualities that are crucial for overcoming academic challenges. By internalizing the values of patience and persistence, students are better able to handle setbacks and remain focused on their long-term goals. This ability to persevere through difficulties is not only important for academic success but also for personal growth and future achievements. In conclusion, the integration of religious education with academic subjects creates a well-rounded educational experience that supports both the intellectual and moral development of students. The emotional and ethical grounding provided by Islamic education enhances students' academic engagement and motivation, leading to higher academic achievement and a greater sense of responsibility in their personal and professional lives. By fostering a balance between intellectual, emotional, and moral growth, this integrated approach ensures that students are well-equipped to succeed academically and contribute positively to society.

METHOD

1. Research Design

This study utilizes a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative research to evaluate the effectiveness of an integrated Islamic Religious Education (IRE) program in Madrasahs. The combination of these methods allows for a deeper understanding of the impact of the program on both character development and academic achievement, providing a more comprehensive view of how the integrated curriculum influences students' overall development.

The qualitative component of the study involves interviews with teachers, students, and parents, as well as classroom observations. These qualitative data offer insights into how the IRE program is implemented, the experiences of the participants, and the perceived benefits of integrating religious and academic education. Interviews with teachers provide valuable information about the strategies used to incorporate Islamic values into academic subjects, while students share their perspectives on how the integration of religious education influences their learning and character development. Classroom observations allow for a closer look at the teaching methods employed and the interactions between students and teachers, further enriching the understanding of the program's impact.

The quantitative aspect of the study involves the collection of data through surveys and academic assessments. Surveys are administered to students and teachers to measure their levels of engagement, satisfaction, and perceptions of the program. Academic assessments, including pre- and post-

test evaluations, are used to track students' academic progress and performance in subjects such as mathematics, science, and literature. The data collected through these assessments provide measurable evidence of the academic impact of the integrated IRE program, allowing for a comparison of students' performance before and after the implementation of the program.

By combining both qualitative and quantitative data, the study offers a well-rounded evaluation of the integrated IRE program. The qualitative data provide context and depth to the findings, shedding light on the subjective experiences of those involved in the program, while the quantitative data offer objective, measurable outcomes. This mixed-methods approach ensures a more nuanced understanding of the program's effectiveness in promoting both academic success and character development.

Overall, the integration of religious and academic education in Madrasahs is explored from multiple angles, providing a comprehensive assessment of how this approach influences students' growth and achievement. The results of this study will contribute to the ongoing discussion about the role of Islamic Religious Education in shaping well-rounded individuals who excel both academically and morally, preparing them for success in both their personal and professional lives.

2. Sample Population

The research was conducted in three Madrasahs located in both urban and rural settings to examine the effectiveness of the integrated Islamic Religious Education (IRE) program in diverse educational contexts. This approach ensures that the findings are representative of different environments and allows for a more comprehensive analysis of the program's impact across varied settings. The sample population consisted of 500 students from grades 7 to 12, representing a broad range of academic levels and experiences. These students were enrolled in Madrasahs that implemented an integrated IRE curriculum, blending religious education with academic subjects such as mathematics, science, and social studies.

In addition to the students, 30 teachers were involved in the study. These teachers were selected based on their direct involvement in teaching both religious and secular subjects. Their insights and experiences were crucial in understanding how the integrated IRE program was implemented in the classroom, the challenges they faced, and the strategies they used to effectively integrate Islamic values with academic content. The teachers' perspectives on student engagement, character development, and academic performance provided valuable qualitative data for the study.

The selection of students and teachers from both urban and rural Madrasahs allowed for a comparison of how the integrated IRE program is received and its effectiveness in different geographical and socio-economic contexts. Urban Madrasahs often have access to more resources, including technology and educational materials, while rural Madrasahs may face chal-

lenges such as limited infrastructure and fewer learning materials. By including both settings in the study, the research provides a broader understanding of the factors that influence the success of the integrated program and the adaptability of the approach in diverse educational environments.

Data collection was carried out over the course of one academic year, ensuring sufficient time for both qualitative and quantitative assessments. Through this research design, the study sought to capture a comprehensive view of how the integrated IRE program influences students' academic achievement, character development, and overall educational experience. The findings from this research will offer important insights into the effectiveness of integrated education in Madrasahs and contribute to the development of more effective educational models that combine religious and academic learning.

3. Data Collection

Data for this study were collected through a combination of methods designed to provide both qualitative and quantitative insights into the impact of the integrated Islamic Religious Education (IRE) program on student academic achievement and character development. These methods ensured a comprehensive evaluation of the program from multiple perspectives.

Surveys and questionnaires were distributed to students, parents, and teachers to gather perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the integrated program. The surveys included questions about the perceived impact of the program on students' academic performance in both religious and secular subjects, as well as its role in fostering character development. This data collection method allowed for a broad understanding of how different stakeholders viewed the program's implementation and its influence on students' overall educational experience.

In-depth interviews were conducted with teachers and administrators to gain a deeper understanding of the practical implementation of the integrated IRE program. These interviews provided valuable insights into how the program was structured, the teaching strategies employed, and the challenges faced by educators in balancing religious and secular instruction. Teachers shared their experiences regarding the integration of Islamic values into academic subjects, as well as the methods they used to foster both academic achievement and character development in their students. Administrators contributed to the discussion by outlining the strategic goals behind the integration and the support mechanisms in place for both teachers and students.

Classroom observations were conducted to assess how IRE was being incorporated alongside academic subjects in real-time. Observers focused on the interaction between religious and secular content during lessons, looking for instances where Islamic values were integrated into academic teaching. The observations also captured student engagement levels, highlighting how

students responded to the dual focus on academic content and religious teachings. These observations provided a practical view of how the integrated curriculum was being enacted and how students navigated the combined educational approach. Finally, academic performance data were collected through an analysis of students' grades in both religious and secular subjects before and after the implementation of the integrated program. This allowed for a quantitative assessment of whether the integrated approach led to improvements in students' academic achievements. By comparing performance in religious subjects such as Quranic studies and Islamic jurisprudence with that in secular subjects like mathematics and science, the study was able to evaluate the overall impact of the integrated curriculum on students' learning outcomes. This combination of methods provided a well-rounded evaluation of the program's effectiveness in achieving its goals of enhancing academic achievement and supporting character development.

4. Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study was carried out using both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the integrated Islamic Religious Education (IRE) program's effectiveness.

For the quantitative analysis, statistical tests were conducted to compare students' academic performance before and after the implementation of the integrated program. Descriptive statistics, including measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode) and measures of variability (standard deviation), were first employed to summarize the performance data in both religious and secular subjects. These descriptive statistics helped to provide a clear picture of the overall academic achievement of students in the sample. Inferential statistical tests, such as paired sample t-tests, were then used to determine whether any significant differences existed in students' performance before and after the program. The t-tests were used to assess whether changes in academic achievement were statistically significant, helping to draw conclusions about the impact of the integrated approach on students' academic outcomes.

In addition to the quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis was conducted on the interview transcripts and observational data. Thematic analysis was applied to identify and interpret key themes related to character development, program implementation, and student engagement. Thematic analysis involves coding the data and identifying recurring patterns and themes within the responses of teachers, administrators, and students. This approach helped to uncover the underlying factors that contributed to the success or challenges of the integrated IRE program. The analysis highlighted important aspects such as how Islamic values were incorporated into both academic and non-academic activities, the role of teachers in guiding students' character development, and how students responded to the integration of religious teachings

with their academic curriculum. By examining these themes, the study provided a deeper understanding of how the program influenced students' character, engagement, and overall educational experience.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses allowed for a well-rounded evaluation of the program, capturing both the measurable academic outcomes and the nuanced, subjective experiences of the students and teachers involved. This approach provided a more holistic view of the program's impact, shedding light on both its strengths and areas for improvement.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Impact on Academic Achievement

The results of the study clearly indicate a significant improvement in students' academic performance, especially in traditionally challenging subjects like mathematics and science. These subjects are often more difficult for students in Madrasahs, where the focus has traditionally been on religious education rather than the sciences. The integrated Islamic Religious Education (IRE) program, which combines both religious teachings and academic subjects, appears to have played a crucial role in helping students overcome these challenges. The noticeable improvement in students' post-assessment exam scores highlights the effectiveness of integrating religious education with secular subjects in enhancing academic achievement.

One of the key findings of the study is that students who participated in the integrated IRE program showed clear progress in their academic performance, particularly in subjects that many students typically struggle with. Mathematics and science, as foundational subjects, often pose challenges to students who are not used to the analytical and conceptual thinking required in these fields. However, the results of the study suggest that when these subjects were taught alongside religious education, students were better able to engage with the content and achieve higher scores in their assessments. This demonstrates that integrating IRE with academic subjects may enhance students' overall academic capabilities.

The improvements were especially pronounced among students who had previously struggled with secular subjects, including mathematics and science. Many of these students faced difficulties in comprehending complex concepts or applying logical reasoning in their studies. However, after participating in the integrated program, these students demonstrated a marked improvement in their understanding and performance. The positive impact on students who had once found these subjects challenging suggests that the integration of religious education had a motivating effect that boosted their academic confidence and engagement.

One possible explanation for this improvement is the motivational support that students received from the IRE program. Islamic Religious Education emphasizes values such as discipline, focus, and perseverance, all of

which can contribute to a more effective approach to learning. Students who engaged with IRE were taught not only the knowledge associated with religious teachings but also key life skills that foster success in academic contexts. For example, ethical principles such as responsibility and time management, which were emphasized in IRE, helped students to approach their studies in a more organized and disciplined manner, thus improving their performance in challenging subjects.

Another contributing factor to the improvement in academic performance is the holistic approach to education promoted by the integrated program. Holistic education focuses on the development of the whole child—intellectually, emotionally, and socially. By combining religious education with secular subjects, the IRE program provided students with a well-rounded education that nurtured their academic abilities while reinforcing moral and ethical values. This combination not only helped students perform better in subjects like mathematics and science but also ensured that they developed a deeper sense of responsibility and purpose in their studies.

Additionally, the study found that the integration of IRE with academic subjects created a more meaningful learning experience for students. When students saw the practical relevance of their religious teachings in academic contexts, they were more motivated to engage with both areas of their education. For example, the application of ethical principles such as honesty and integrity in the study of science or mathematics helped students see the interconnectedness of their learning. This made their academic work feel more purposeful, as they understood that their academic achievements were not isolated from their personal development but were part of a larger moral and spiritual framework.

The improvement in academic performance also seemed to foster a sense of academic self-efficacy among students. As students in the integrated IRE program were able to excel in subjects they had previously struggled with, they gained confidence in their abilities. This increased confidence was reflected in their approach to learning, as they became more willing to tackle difficult subjects and persist in the face of academic challenges. Students reported feeling more capable and motivated to succeed, and this sense of empowerment likely contributed to their improved academic results.

Furthermore, teachers noted that the integrated IRE program provided a more supportive learning environment for students. Teachers observed that students were more engaged and actively participated in class discussions, particularly in subjects where they had previously shown disinterest or struggled to keep up. This increased engagement was linked to the values and attitudes cultivated through IRE, which helped students develop a more positive attitude toward learning. As students learned to view their academic work as part of their broader religious and personal development, they became more invested in their education, which led to improved performance in their assessments.

The benefits of the integrated IRE program were not limited to academic performance alone. Teachers also observed that students who participated in the program displayed improvements in their behavior and personal attitudes. Students who previously exhibited a lack of focus or discipline in academic subjects began to demonstrate greater responsibility, respect for others, and self-discipline in their approach to learning. These behavioral changes further contributed to their academic success, as students who are more disciplined and focused are better able to concentrate on their studies and perform at a higher level. In conclusion, the study's findings underscore the positive impact of integrating Islamic Religious Education with academic subjects, particularly in enhancing students' academic performance in subjects like mathematics and science. By promoting values such as discipline, perseverance, and responsibility, IRE helped students develop a stronger work ethic and a more focused approach to learning. Additionally, the integrated program fostered a sense of purpose and motivation, making students more engaged in their academic work. Overall, the study suggests that integrating religious education with secular subjects provides a powerful model for improving academic achievement, particularly for students who have previously struggled with academic challenges.

Teachers noted that the integration of IRE with academic subjects helped to foster a more disciplined and focused approach to learning. The moral and ethical values instilled through IRE, such as responsibility, time management, and perseverance, were reported to have a direct impact on students' attitudes toward academic tasks. These values, which are central to Islamic teachings, encouraged students to take a more proactive and organized approach to their studies, thereby improving their academic outcomes. Furthermore, students who demonstrated a stronger connection to their religious education exhibited greater motivation in their academic pursuits, as they saw the relevance of their faith in everyday learning contexts.

This improvement in academic performance, particularly in traditionally challenging subjects, suggests that the integration of religious and secular education can create a more holistic learning environment. By aligning the teachings of IRE with academic learning, students are not only gaining knowledge but also developing the skills and character needed to apply that knowledge in practical and meaningful ways. The positive outcomes observed in this study reinforce the importance of integrated education programs that promote both academic achievement and character development, providing a well-rounded foundation for students' future success.

Teachers attributed these improvements to the motivation, discipline, and time management skills that were instilled in students through the IRE curriculum. They observed that the ethical teachings and emphasis on perseverance, responsibility, and focus within the IRE program helped students approach their academic work with greater determination and a stronger sense of purpose. The students learned to value the importance of consistent effort,

setting goals, and managing their time effectively—skills that were directly applied to their academic tasks. Additionally, the integration of Islamic values into their learning encouraged students to view academic achievement not just as a means of personal success, but as a way of fulfilling their duties as responsible members of society. This perspective reinforced the idea that academic performance was not an isolated endeavor but was interconnected with broader ethical and social responsibilities.

The holistic approach provided students with a framework for resilience, both mentally and emotionally. They were able to develop the skills to manage stress, stay focused under pressure, and maintain a positive attitude even when faced with challenges. Teachers noted that students exhibited improved perseverance, especially in subjects like mathematics and science, where the abstract and rigorous content often posed difficulties. By drawing connections between the values taught in IRE and their academic work, students were able to make meaningful progress in areas they had previously struggled with.

In sum, the integration of Islamic values within the academic curriculum did not only enhance students' academic abilities, but it also equipped them with essential life skills, including resilience, responsibility, and a sense of purpose. These qualities ultimately enabled students to approach their studies with greater confidence and determination, leading to improved academic outcomes.

Moreover, the character education component of the program was instrumental in shaping students' attitudes toward learning. The discipline fostered by Islamic teachings encouraged students to adopt a more focused and systematic approach to their academic studies, which translated into improved performance in subjects that require analytical thinking and problem-solving skills. These findings suggest that the integrated IRE program, by aligning academic and moral education, successfully supported students in achieving better academic outcomes while simultaneously fostering their character development.

2. Character Development

Students involved in the integrated program demonstrated notable growth in their personal values, such as responsibility, respect, and empathy, which are fundamental aspects of Islamic teachings.

Many students reported a stronger sense of moral awareness and a deeper commitment to living according to Islamic ethical principles. They expressed a desire to uphold values such as honesty, kindness, and fairness, both in their academic work and interactions with others. This alignment between academic pursuits and personal conduct reflected the students' growing understanding of how their faith is intricately linked to their everyday actions and decisions.

Teachers also observed a marked improvement in students' behavior, noting that students were more disciplined, respectful, and considerate in their

interactions with peers, teachers, and the wider school community. These positive changes were not confined to the classroom environment alone. Outside of class, students exhibited more cooperative attitudes, contributed meaningfully to group projects, and demonstrated leadership in extracurricular activities. Their involvement in community service was particularly striking, as many students expressed a newfound commitment to helping others and making a positive impact in their communities, thus reinforcing the Islamic principle of serving others as an integral part of their moral duty.

This shift in behavior extended beyond individual actions to enhance the overall classroom atmosphere and school culture. Teachers reported that the integrated program fostered a sense of collective responsibility among students, motivating them to work together for common goals and encourage one another in their academic and personal endeavors. The holistic nature of the program, which combined both religious and academic teachings, created an environment where students could thrive intellectually while simultaneously growing as individuals who embody the values of their faith.

The integrated program, therefore, played a pivotal role in cultivating well-rounded individuals who not only excelled academically but also embodied the virtues of Islam in their daily lives. The students' enhanced character development reflected the successful fusion of academic learning with spiritual and ethical growth, ultimately contributing to their overall success as responsible, compassionate, and committed members of society..

This improvement in personal values supports the notion that the integration of religious education with academic subjects does more than enhance academic performance. It also plays a crucial role in shaping students' character, helping them internalize and embody the virtues of Islam in their daily lives. The program provided a framework for students to not only excel academically but also to develop into well-rounded individuals who prioritize ethical conduct and social responsibility.

Teachers reported that students who participated in the integrated program exhibited greater empathy toward others and demonstrated more cooperative behaviors, especially during group work and collaborative learning activities. The ethical principles learned in IRE encouraged students to value teamwork, show respect for diverse perspectives, and take responsibility for their actions. This positive shift in behavior and attitude suggests that the integrated program successfully bridged the gap between academic learning and moral education, highlighting the potential of religious education to foster character development while also improving academic outcomes.

The results suggest that a holistic approach, which combines both academic rigor and character education, can lead to more balanced and successful students. By learning to apply Islamic ethical principles in both academic and personal contexts, students developed a stronger sense of self and a commitment to living up to the moral standards set forth by their faith. Ultimately, this integrated approach to education nurtures the intellectual, emotional, and

spiritual growth of students, equipping them with the skills and values needed to succeed in a complex and rapidly changing world.

3. Student Engagement and Motivation

The study revealed a profound shift in student engagement when both religious and secular subjects were taught in an integrated manner. Students who participated in the integrated program demonstrated a heightened sense of involvement in their learning process. This was particularly noticeable in how they approached their academic subjects, such as mathematics, science, and literature. By merging Islamic Religious Education (IRE) with these subjects, the students were able to make connections between their spiritual teachings and academic content, which enhanced their overall interest in both domains.

One of the key findings of the study was the realization by students that the values taught in IRE were not merely abstract principles but practical guidelines that could be applied across various subjects. Islamic teachings emphasize a strong moral foundation that includes virtues such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility. These values were not confined to religious studies alone but were effectively integrated into the teaching of secular subjects, which gave students a sense of purpose and meaning in their learning. For instance, the ethical importance of honesty, as taught in IRE, helped students understand the significance of academic integrity in subjects like mathematics and science.

The integration of religious values into the academic curriculum created an environment where students felt that their learning was holistic. They no longer saw their religious education as a separate or isolated component but as something intertwined with their intellectual development. Students appreciated the connection between their religious beliefs and academic pursuits, which gave them a more comprehensive view of education. This interconnectedness enabled them to see the relevance of their studies in everyday life, which further motivated them to engage in their learning with greater enthusiasm and dedication.

The moral lessons emphasized in IRE, such as the importance of discipline, not only resonated with students but also translated into improved academic behavior. Students became more focused, organized, and punctual in their studies, as they recognized the broader implications of these values in their academic and personal lives. The discipline that was encouraged in IRE helped students to stay on track with their assignments and manage their time effectively, leading to better academic performance. As a result, students developed a greater sense of responsibility for their own learning.

The integration of IRE with secular subjects also encouraged students to take a more reflective approach to their studies. Ethical values such as responsibility and respect, which were instilled through IRE, prompted students to think critically about the consequences of their actions in various contexts. This reflective process helped them to develop a deeper understanding of the

material they were learning and appreciate the importance of applying these values in all aspects of their lives. For example, when studying science or literature, students could approach the subjects with a sense of integrity and respect for the knowledge they were gaining.

Moreover, the integrated approach fostered an atmosphere of collaborative learning. The values of cooperation, respect, and empathy that were emphasized in IRE became an essential part of group interactions in academic settings. Students learned to work together harmoniously, share ideas, and solve problems collectively. These interpersonal skills, which are central to Islamic teachings, greatly enhanced the students' ability to work in teams, leading to better outcomes in group projects and academic discussions. This not only enriched their academic experience but also contributed to their personal growth and development.

Another key aspect of the integrated program was the increased motivation students experienced when they saw how their religious beliefs influenced their academic performance. The IRE curriculum encouraged students to view their academic achievements not only as personal successes but also as a way to fulfill their responsibilities as members of the Muslim community. By integrating Islamic values into academic pursuits, students were motivated to excel not just for individual gain but also to contribute to the greater good. This sense of purpose added a deeper layer of meaning to their studies, further reinforcing their commitment to both religious and academic excellence.

The integration of IRE also had a significant impact on students' emotional engagement with their studies. The ethical values taught in IRE helped students to navigate the challenges they encountered in academic subjects with resilience and perseverance. For instance, the concept of patience, which is a central tenet of Islamic teaching, encouraged students to persist through difficult academic tasks. They learned to approach challenges with a mindset focused on growth and improvement, which fostered emotional intelligence and self-regulation. As a result, students developed a healthier attitude towards setbacks and were more willing to persevere in their academic pursuits.

The study also highlighted that students found the integrated program to be more enjoyable and fulfilling. By linking religious education to academic subjects, students were able to see a more holistic view of their learning experience. This sense of fulfillment came from the understanding that their education was not just about acquiring knowledge but also about personal and spiritual growth. The integration of religious values into subjects like literature, where themes of morality and ethics are explored, enriched the students' engagement with the material. They found that the values of justice, compassion, and empathy, which they learned in IRE, were relevant and applicable to the content they studied in literature and other subjects. Overall, the integration of Islamic Religious Education with secular subjects provided students with a richer and more meaningful learning experience. The values

taught in IRE were not only relevant but also complementary to their academic work, making their educational journey more comprehensive and interconnected. This approach contributed to an increase in student motivation, engagement, and academic performance. By applying Islamic values such as honesty, responsibility, and discipline to their academic work, students were able to enhance both their intellectual and moral development, creating a more holistic and fulfilling education.

Teachers noted that students appeared more focused and committed to their studies, as the integration of IRE with academic subjects helped them see the bigger picture. Rather than viewing academic and religious education as separate entities, students began to understand how the two were interconnected. The religious teachings provided a moral and ethical framework that guided their approach to academic challenges and personal development. Teachers observed that students were not only more disciplined in completing assignments but also demonstrated a stronger work ethic, driven by the sense of purpose instilled by the integrated approach.

Moreover, students exhibited increased enthusiasm for subjects they previously found difficult or uninteresting. This shift in attitude was attributed to the belief that their academic success was not just about achieving good grades but about fulfilling a larger purpose in life, grounded in their Islamic values. Teachers noted that students took greater pride in their work, seeing it as a way of fulfilling their responsibilities both as students and as members of the Muslim community. This reinforced the idea that the integration of religious education with secular subjects not only enhanced academic achievement but also contributed to a deeper, more holistic learning experience.

Ultimately, the study found that the integration of IRE with academic subjects created a more engaging and motivating learning environment. Students were better able to connect their religious values with their academic pursuits, which in turn increased their engagement and fostered a stronger sense of purpose in their learning. Teachers' observations suggest that this integrated approach may play a key role in helping students navigate the challenges of modern education while remaining grounded in their faith.

4. Challenges in Program Implementation

Despite the positive outcomes, the study identified several challenges faced by teachers during the implementation of the integrated program. One of the primary difficulties reported was the need to balance the teaching of religious and secular subjects within the same class. Teachers often found it challenging to allocate sufficient time and attention to both domains without compromising the depth or quality of either. The integrated curriculum, while beneficial, required careful planning and time management to ensure that students received a well-rounded education without neglecting either the academic or religious components.

This balancing act often resulted in time constraints, especially when teachers had to cover a wide range of topics in both the religious and secular subjects. In a typical class, the teacher needed to teach mathematics, science, and language arts alongside Quranic studies, Islamic history, and ethics. The pressure to fit both subjects into a limited class period forced teachers to work efficiently, but it also posed the risk of oversimplifying complex topics or rushing through critical concepts. This time pressure created an additional layer of stress for teachers, who were tasked with delivering a comprehensive curriculum across both areas.

One significant challenge that emerged was the difficulty of maintaining a cohesive flow in lessons. Integrating religious teachings with academic subjects requires a seamless transition between topics, but this was not always easy to achieve. Teachers reported that switching from teaching a scientific concept to a religious principle could disrupt the rhythm of the class. In some cases, this disrupted the students' focus and made it harder for them to absorb the material in both fields. The lack of smooth transitions between religious and secular content made it harder for students to see the connections between the two domains, which was a core aim of the integrated program.

Another challenge was the pressure to deliver a comprehensive curriculum that adequately addressed both religious and academic requirements. Teachers were concerned that the need to cover all necessary content in both areas sometimes led to a superficial treatment of the subjects. In the case of religious education, this meant that teachers might not have been able to delve as deeply into Islamic principles as they would have in a traditional, separate religious class. Similarly, the academic subjects, such as math or science, sometimes lacked the in-depth exploration that students might have received in a specialized subject-focused course. This created concerns about whether the integration was compromising the quality of instruction in either domain.

Additionally, some teachers reported that the integrated approach created confusion among students, especially when it came to the application of Islamic values to academic subjects. While the students were generally receptive to the idea of connecting their religious teachings to their academic work, they sometimes struggled to understand how the two areas related to each other. For instance, students might find it difficult to connect ethical teachings from IRE with abstract concepts in subjects like mathematics. This made it harder for them to fully internalize the integrated nature of the program, as they could not always see the practical benefits of applying religious principles in academic contexts.

Teachers also expressed concerns about their own preparation for teaching both secular and religious subjects simultaneously. Many teachers felt that while they were well-trained in one area, they lacked sufficient expertise or confidence in the other. For example, a teacher specializing in Islamic studies might feel less comfortable teaching subjects like science or mathematics, which required different pedagogical approaches. Conversely,

teachers with a background in secular education might struggle to integrate Islamic values effectively into their lessons. This lack of confidence and expertise in both areas sometimes hindered the smooth implementation of the integrated program.

The challenge of managing multiple instructional strategies also emerged as a concern. Teaching both religious and academic subjects within the same class required teachers to employ a variety of instructional strategies, each suited to the nature of the subject being taught. For example, teaching science may require hands-on experiments and group activities, while teaching IRE may involve storytelling, discussions, or reflection exercises. This diversity in teaching methods meant that teachers had to be highly adaptable and prepared to switch between different modes of instruction, which could be mentally taxing and time-consuming.

Furthermore, the integrated approach often required teachers to develop new teaching materials that could address both religious and academic objectives simultaneously. In many cases, teachers had to create or adapt lesson plans and activities that incorporated both domains, which added to their workload. The lack of pre-designed, ready-made resources for integrated teaching posed another obstacle, especially in schools that lacked sufficient administrative support. Teachers reported that without proper resources or planning time, they often struggled to create meaningful and engaging lessons that effectively merged both religious and academic content.

Another issue identified in the study was the resistance to change from some students and parents. While many students embraced the integrated approach, others struggled with the dual focus of the curriculum. Some students were accustomed to traditional models of education, where religious and secular subjects were taught separately. These students found it challenging to adjust to the new approach, which required them to apply Islamic teachings to academic subjects in ways they were not used to. Additionally, some parents expressed concerns about the adequacy of the integrated program, questioning whether students were receiving enough attention in either the religious or academic areas. Finally, the study revealed that despite the challenges, there were also areas of opportunity for growth and improvement. Teachers recognized that with more experience and better planning, they could overcome the difficulties of balancing both areas of study. Many teachers reported that with time, they became more adept at managing the integration and saw improvements in both their teaching methods and students' learning outcomes. The study also suggested that providing teachers with professional development opportunities and more collaborative planning time could help address some of these challenges. In conclusion, while the integration of religious and secular subjects in Madrasahs showed promising results, the study highlighted several challenges that need to be addressed for the program to be more effective. These challenges include time constraints,

the difficulty of balancing dual subjects, the pressure to deliver a comprehensive curriculum, and the need for better teacher training and resources. Addressing these challenges will be key to ensuring the continued success and growth of the integrated program in Madrasahs.

Moreover, some students struggled with the dual nature of the curriculum. The integrated approach required students to switch between religious and academic topics, which, for some, posed a challenge in terms of maintaining focus and engagement. While religious education provides a moral and spiritual framework, the academic subjects demanded a different mode of thinking, often analytical and problem-solving. Students found it difficult at times to shift gears from one mode of learning to another, especially when transitioning from subjects like mathematics or science to IRE, and vice versa. This duality created a cognitive load, and some students felt overwhelmed by the need to adapt to different ways of thinking and approaching their studies.

Additionally, concerns about resource availability were particularly prominent in rural Madrasahs, where access to modern educational tools and materials was limited. In some schools, the lack of up-to-date textbooks, digital resources, and technology hindered the effective implementation of the integrated program. While urban Madrasahs might have more access to educational technologies, rural schools faced significant challenges in terms of infrastructure and resources. The lack of access to interactive tools, digital learning platforms, and modern teaching aids made it more difficult for teachers to incorporate innovative teaching methods alongside the religious curriculum. This limitation also impacted the engagement levels of students, as they were unable to fully benefit from the interactive and multimedia-based approaches that could enhance their learning experience.

These challenges highlight the need for ongoing support and professional development for teachers, as well as the provision of adequate resources and infrastructure, especially in rural areas. For the integrated program to reach its full potential, there needs to be greater investment in training teachers to effectively navigate the complexities of teaching both religious and secular subjects. Additionally, efforts should be made to bridge the resource gap between urban and rural Madrasahs, ensuring that all students, regardless of their location, have access to the tools and materials needed to thrive in an integrated learning environment.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms the effectiveness of an integrated IRE program in fostering both academic achievement and character development among Madrasah students. By blending Islamic teachings with academic subjects, the program has helped students develop a more holistic understanding of the world, aligning their spiritual values with their intellectual growth. The results suggest that when IRE is integrated effectively with secular education, it can enhance both cognitive and moral development, preparing students for success in all areas of life. However, for the program to reach its full potential, it is essential to address the challenges faced by educators, including the need for better training, adequate resources, and a more structured approach to balancing religious and academic content. Future research could further explore the long-term effects of such integrated programs, including their impact on students' post-graduation success and their contributions to society. In conclusion, Islamic Religious Education, when implemented through an integrated program in Madrasahs, offers a promising approach to developing well-rounded individuals who are academically proficient, morally grounded, and equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern world.

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