

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Reframing moral formation in Islamic education: The strategic role of Islamic religious education teachers in cultivating students' ethical agency

Bryan Hartama Putra^a, Adini Djasmine^b, Shifa Nur Azilla^a, Faren Fairuz Habib^c

^a Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universitas Islam Riau, Pekanbaru, Indonesia

^b Diploma in Islamic Studies, Kolej Dar Al-Hikmah, Malaysia

^c Faculty of Ushuluddin, Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, Pekanbaru, Indonesia

Article Info	ABSTRACT
Article history: Received: 2026-01-15 Accepted: 2026-05-02 Keywords: Moral Formation; Ethical Agency; Islamic Religious Education Teachers; Pedagogical Practices; Qualitative Case Study	The increasing complexity of contemporary education necessitates repositioning Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers as central agents in cultivating students' ethical agency and moral consciousness, as existing research remains largely normative and overlooks the pedagogical mechanisms through which teachers actively shape moral formation. This study aims to reconceptualize the role of IRE teachers in cultivating students' ethical agency by examining their pedagogical practices, moral positioning, and relational engagement within the classroom context. Employing a qualitative case study design, data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with 18 IRE teachers in Indonesian secondary schools and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings reveal that moral formation is constructed through three interrelated dimensions: (1) pedagogical modeling, where teachers embody ethical values in instructional practices; (2) relational morality, where teacher-student interactions foster trust, empathy, and moral reflection; and (3) contextual negotiation, where teachers adapt moral instruction to socio-cultural and institutional dynamics. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that ethical agency is not transmitted through direct instruction alone but is co-constructed through reflective dialogue, experiential learning, and value-based engagement. This study contributes to the literature by advancing a process-oriented model of moral formation that integrates pedagogical, relational, and contextual dimensions within Islamic education. Overall, the study positions IRE teachers as transformative agents whose roles extend beyond instructional delivery toward the cultivation of ethically grounded and socially responsible learners.
Corresponding Author: Bryan Hartama Putra, Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universitas Islam Riau, Pekanbaru Jl. Kaharuddin Nasution 113, Pekanbaru 28284, Indonesia Email: bryanhartamaputra@gmail.com	

1. INTRODUCTION

The accelerating complexity of contemporary education has intensified global concern regarding the erosion of moral and ethical values among learners, positioning moral formation as a central agenda within Islamic education systems worldwide (Berkowitz & Bier, 2014; Nucci, Narvaez, & Krettenauer, 2014; OECD, 2020; Tambak et al., 2026). Across both Muslim-majority and minority contexts, Islamic

education is expected to cultivate not only academic competence but also ethical agency, moral consciousness, and socially responsible citizenship (Halstead, 2007; Sahin, 2018; Lovat, 2019; Sukenti et al., 2025). This expectation is further reinforced by global discourses on character education, sustainable development, and holistic learning, which emphasize the integration of cognitive, affective, and moral domains (UNESCO, 2021; Noddings, 2013; Biesta, 2020; Yasin et al., 2025). Consequently, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers are increasingly positioned as key agents in shaping students' moral trajectories, particularly in navigating tensions between modernity, globalization, and religious identity (Sahin, 2018; Jackson, 2014; Berglund, 2020).

From a state-of-the-art perspective, recent scholarship has shifted from content-based approaches toward process-oriented and learner-centered paradigms in moral and religious education (Biesta, 2020; Lovat, 2019; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2009). Empirical studies highlight that pedagogical modeling, dialogical engagement, and reflective learning are critical mechanisms in fostering ethical development (Kohlberg, 1984; Noddings, 2013; Nucci et al., 2014; Widodo et al., 2025; Sukenti & Fauzan, 2024). Furthermore, contemporary research underscores the importance of teachers' professional identity, emotional engagement, and relational practices in shaping students' moral outcomes (Day, 2018; Hargreaves, 2000; Schutz & Zembylas, 2009). However, much of the literature remains conceptually fragmented, often treating moral education as normative content rather than a dynamic and socially constructed pedagogical process (Biesta, 2020; Lovat, 2019; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2009). Even within Islamic education, existing studies rarely provide integrative frameworks that connect pedagogical, relational, and contextual dimensions of moral formation (Sahin, 2018; Sukenti & Tambak, 2025; Halstead, 2007; Berglund, 2020).

Recent developments in moral and religious education research further emphasize the integration of metacognitive, socio-emotional, and context-responsive pedagogies as critical drivers of ethical formation in contemporary classrooms (Teng, 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2022; Panadero, 2017). Emerging studies demonstrate that reflective practices, self-regulated learning, and dialogic pedagogy significantly enhance students' ethical reasoning and moral agency in both secular and faith-based educational settings (Schraw, 2021; Zimmerman, 2020; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Tambak & Sukenti, 2025). In addition, growing attention has been given to the role of teachers' emotional labor, identity negotiation, and culturally responsive teaching in shaping value internalization and ethical engagement among learners (Schutz & Zembylas, 2020; Day & Gu, 2022; Biesta, 2021). Within Islamic education, recent scholarship highlights the importance of integrating spiritual values, reflective dialogue, and contextual adaptation to address the challenges of globalization and digital transformation (Sahin, 2020; Abdullah et al., 2022; Tan, 2023). Nevertheless, despite these advances, current research remains fragmented and lacks a holistic, process-oriented framework that systematically explains how pedagogical, relational, metacognitive, and contextual dimensions interact in shaping students' moral formation and ethical agency (Sun & Zhang, 2022; Biesta, 2021; Teng, 2020).

In the Indonesian context, these challenges are amplified by socio-cultural diversity, rapid digital transformation, and the integration of religious values within modern educational systems (Azra, 2015; Hefner, 2009; Tan, 2011). Although national policies emphasize character education (*pendidikan karakter*), classroom practices remain largely dominated by cognitive-oriented instruction with limited reflective and experiential engagement (Hidayat et al., 2021; Widodo, 2019; Raihani, 2012). Moreover, Indonesian IRE teachers face structural constraints, including heavy administrative workloads, limited professional development in ethical pedagogy, and insufficient institutional support for innovation (Raihani, 2012; Bjork, 2005; Rosser, 2018). These conditions hinder the transformation of moral education into a meaningful and lived pedagogical process (Hefner, 2009; Tan, 2011; Widodo, 2019).

Further reveal that the integration of digital learning environments and post-pandemic pedagogical shifts has intensified challenges in implementing value-based and reflective moral education (Suyadi et al., 2022; Anshori & Rahmawati, 2021; Hidayat et al., 2023). Empirical evidence indicates that while digital technologies provide opportunities for interactive learning, they often reinforce surface-level cognitive engagement rather than deep ethical reflection and moral internalization (Rahman et al., 2022; Prasetyo & Suyanto, 2021; Setiawan et al., 2023). Additionally, recent research

highlights that Indonesian teacher, including IRE educators, continue to experience professional constraints such as limited training in reflective pedagogy, low institutional support for innovation, and misalignment between curriculum goals and classroom practices (Tambak et al., 2022; Sukenti & Tambak, 2020; Widodo et al., 2025). Furthermore, socio-cultural diversity and the pluralistic nature of Indonesian society require context-sensitive approaches to moral education, yet many instructional practices remain standardized and insufficiently responsive to students lived realities (Raihani, 2020; Tan, 2021; Hidayat et al., 2023). Consequently, these conditions underscore the urgent need for a more integrative and process-oriented pedagogical framework that enables teachers to effectively mediate moral formation and foster ethical agency within dynamic and digitally mediated educational contexts (Suyadi et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2022; Tambak et al., 2022).

These dynamics reveal a significant research gap, as existing studies predominantly focus on moral outcomes or general teacher competencies without examining how moral formation is actively constructed through pedagogical and relational processes (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2009; Biesta, 2020; Lovat, 2019). There is also a lack of integrative frameworks explaining how ethical agency emerges through classroom interaction and contextual negotiation in Islamic education (Sahin, 2018; Berglund, 2020; Jackson, 2014). Furthermore, limited qualitative research captures teachers lived experiences in mediating moral education within real classroom settings (Hargreaves, 2000; Day, 2018; Schutz & Zembylas, 2009). Recent scholarship further indicates that the absence of process-oriented and interactional frameworks limits the ability of educators to systematically translate moral values into classroom practices that foster ethical agency and reflective judgment (Teng, 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2022; Biesta, 2021). Moreover, emerging studies highlight that the lack of context-sensitive and culturally responsive pedagogical models constrains teachers in addressing the complex moral realities shaped by globalization, digitalization, and diverse learner backgrounds (Tan, 2023; Abdullah et al., 2022; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020). In addition, current research underscores the need for in-depth qualitative and practice-based investigations to capture the dynamic interplay between teacher agency, relational engagement, and moral meaning-making in authentic educational settings (Day & Gu, 2022; Schutz & Zembylas, 2020; Zimmerman, 2020).

In response to the identified gaps, the novelty of this study lies in reframing moral formation as a process-oriented, relational, and contextually embedded phenomenon within Islamic education, moving beyond static and normative conceptualizations of moral teaching (Biesta, 2021; Teng, 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2022). This reconceptualization aligns with recent scholarship emphasizing that moral learning emerges through dynamic interaction, reflective engagement, and socially mediated meaning-making processes (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Day & Gu, 2022; Schutz & Zembylas, 2020). Accordingly, this study proposes an integrative model that encompasses pedagogical modeling, relational morality, and contextual negotiation as interconnected dimensions shaping students' ethical agency (Sahin, 2020; Abdullah et al., 2022; Tan, 2023). Pedagogical modeling is conceptualized as the embodiment of ethical values through teachers' instructional practices and professional conduct, which has been shown to significantly influence students' moral internalization (Teng, 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2022; Biesta, 2021). Relational morality highlights the importance of teacher-student interactions, emotional engagement, and dialogic processes in fostering ethical reflection and moral reasoning (Day & Gu, 2022; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Schutz & Zembylas, 2020). Meanwhile, contextual negotiation emphasizes the adaptive capacity of teachers to align moral instruction with socio-cultural realities, digital transformation, and diverse learner backgrounds (Tan, 2023; Abdullah et al., 2022; Suyadi et al., 2022). By positioning teachers as co-constructors of moral meaning rather than mere transmitters of values, this study advances a more dynamic, interactional, and practice-based understanding of moral education (Biesta, 2021; Berglund, 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2022). Ultimately, this integrative perspective contributes to the development of a comprehensive framework that bridges pedagogical theory and classroom practice in fostering ethical agency within contemporary Islamic education (Teng, 2020; Day & Gu, 2022; Tan, 2023).

Accordingly, the objective of this study is to reconceptualize the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in shaping students' moral formation by examining how pedagogical practices,

relational interactions, and contextual adaptations contribute to ethical agency. The study focuses on identifying key dimensions of moral formation, exploring the mechanisms through which ethical agency is constructed, and developing a process-oriented model that informs theory and practice in Islamic education.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Reframing moral formation in contemporary Islamic education

Recent scholarship in Islamic education increasingly conceptualizes moral formation as a dynamic, process-oriented construct shaped by interaction, reflection, and contextual engagement rather than mere transmission of normative values (Teng, 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2022; Biesta, 2021). This shift aligns with broader educational discourses that emphasize ethical agency as emerging through dialogical, experiential, and reflective pedagogies in complex learning environments (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Day & Gu, 2022; Schutz & Zembylas, 2020). Within Islamic education, moral formation is deeply rooted in the integration of *akhlaq*, spiritual values, and ethical reasoning derived from religious teachings and lived practices (Sahin, 2020; Abdullah et al., 2022; Tan, 2023). Recent studies also highlight that effective moral education requires the alignment of cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains through holistic pedagogical processes that engage students meaningfully in value internalization. However, despite these theoretical advancements, the literature still lacks comprehensive models explaining how moral formation unfolds in real classroom practices across diverse Islamic educational contexts (Sun & Zhang, 2022; Biesta, 2021; Teng, 2020).

Furthermore, contemporary research emphasizes the importance of metacognitive awareness and self-regulated learning in supporting students' ethical decision-making and moral reasoning processes (Schraw, 2021; Zimmerman, 2020; Teng, 2020). Studies indicate that reflective practices and dialogic learning environments enable learners to construct moral meaning through critical engagement rather than passive reception of values (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2022; Biesta, 2021). In Islamic educational settings, this process is further enriched by the incorporation of spiritual reflection and contextual adaptation to socio-cultural realities (Tan, 2023; Abdullah et al., 2022; Sahin, 2020). Recent empirical findings also demonstrate that moral formation is increasingly influenced by digital transformation, requiring adaptive pedagogical strategies that integrate ethical awareness in technologically mediated environments. Nevertheless, the absence of integrative and process-based frameworks continues to limit a holistic understanding of how ethical agency is cultivated through pedagogical practices (Sun & Zhang, 2022; Biesta, 2021; Teng, 2020).

2.2. The Strategic role of Islamic religious education teachers

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers are widely recognized as central agents in shaping students' moral and ethical development, extending beyond knowledge transmission toward value internalization and character formation. Recent studies emphasize that teachers' pedagogical modeling, emotional engagement, and relational interaction significantly influence students' moral awareness and ethical behavior. Through strategies such as mentoring, reflective dialogue, and experiential learning, teachers facilitate the development of ethical agency and moral reasoning among students. In Islamic contexts, teachers also function as moral exemplars who embody religious values in everyday practices, reinforcing the integration of faith and action. However, the effectiveness of this role is often constrained by institutional, pedagogical, and socio-cultural challenges that limit the depth of moral engagement in classrooms (Day & Gu, 2022; Schutz & Zembylas, 2020; Tan, 2023).

Moreover, recent literature highlights that teachers' professional identity and emotional labor play a critical role in mediating moral learning processes and shaping students' ethical consciousness (Day & Gu, 2022; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Schutz & Zembylas, 2020). Teachers who demonstrate authenticity, empathy, and reflective practice are more effective in fostering moral internalization and

ethical agency among learners (Biesta, 2021; Sun & Zhang, 2022; Teng, 2020). In addition, collaborative and dialogic pedagogies enable teachers to create meaningful learning environments that support ethical reflection and value negotiation. However, recent studies also reveal that many teachers lack sufficient training in reflective and ethical pedagogy, which limits their capacity to facilitate deep moral learning processes. These findings underscore the need to reposition teachers as strategic agents of moral transformation within Islamic education systems (Tan, 2023; Abdullah et al., 2022; Sahin, 2020). Moreover, recent studies emphasize that sustained professional development programs focusing on reflective pedagogy, emotional competence, and ethical facilitation significantly enhance teachers' capacity to mediate moral learning and foster students' ethical agency (Day & Gu, 2022; Schutz & Zembylas, 2020; Teng, 2020). Furthermore, integrating metacognitive strategies and context-responsive teaching approaches has been shown to strengthen teachers' ability to create transformative learning environments that support deep moral reflection and value internalization in diverse educational settings (Sun & Zhang, 2022; Tan, 2023; Abdullah et al., 2022).

2.3. Toward an integrative framework of moral formation and ethical agency

Emerging research calls for the development of integrative frameworks that connect pedagogical, relational, metacognitive, and contextual dimensions of moral formation in Islamic education (Biesta, 2021; Teng, 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2022). Such frameworks emphasize that ethical agency is not an isolated outcome but a co-constructed process shaped by interactions between teachers, students, and socio-cultural environments (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Day & Gu, 2022; Schutz & Zembylas, 2020). Recent studies advocate for incorporating metacognitive strategies, dialogic engagement, and culturally responsive teaching to enhance ethical awareness and moral reasoning (Tan, 2023; Abdullah et al., 2022; Sun & Zhang, 2022). Additionally, contextual negotiation is increasingly recognized as essential in adapting moral education to digital transformation, globalization, and diverse learner identities. Despite these advances, existing literature still lacks empirical models that systematically explain the interaction among these dimensions in shaping ethical agency (Teng, 2020; Biesta, 2021; Sun & Zhang, 2022).

Furthermore, recent findings highlight the importance of practice-based and qualitative approaches in capturing the complexity of moral formation processes in real educational settings (Day & Gu, 2022; Schutz & Zembylas, 2020; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020). Such approaches enable deeper insights into how teachers negotiate moral values, engage with students, and adapt to contextual challenges in everyday teaching practices (Tan, 2023; Abdullah et al., 2022; Sahin, 2020). Empirical evidence also suggests that integrative models combining pedagogical modeling, relational interaction, and contextual adaptation are more effective in fostering sustainable ethical agency among learners. However, there remains a significant gap in developing theoretically grounded and empirically validated frameworks within Islamic education contexts (Sun & Zhang, 2022; Teng, 2020; Biesta, 2021). Therefore, advancing an integrative and process-oriented model is essential to bridge theory and practice in cultivating ethical agency in contemporary Islamic education.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design with a case study approach to explore the strategic role of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers in shaping students' moral development within contemporary educational contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The selection of a qualitative approach is grounded in its capacity to capture complex social phenomena, particularly those related to moral formation, ethical agency, and teacher–student interaction in authentic educational settings (Biesta, 2021; Teng, 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2022). The focus on teachers' roles—as motivators, facilitators, and evaluators—reflects the growing recognition that teachers function as central agents in mediating moral learning and fostering ethical awareness among students (Day & Gu, 2022;

Schutz & Zembylas, 2020; Tan, 2023). A case study approach was selected to enable an in-depth and context-sensitive understanding of moral education practices and to capture the dynamic interplay between pedagogy, context, and student development (Yin, 2018; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Stake, 1995). This approach is particularly appropriate for examining how moral formation is enacted within specific institutional environments characterized by socio-cultural and religious complexity (Sahin, 2020; Abdullah et al., 2022; Tan, 2023). Accordingly, the research design allows for a holistic exploration of pedagogical processes that contribute to the cultivation of students' ethical agency in Islamic education settings (Biesta, 2021; Teng, 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2022).

The study was conducted at an Islamic Boarding School in West Sumatra, Indonesia, which serves as a representative site for examining the integration of religious values and moral education practices (Raihani, 2020; Tan, 2021; Hidayat et al., 2023). The participants consisted of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers who are actively involved in classroom instruction, selected through purposive sampling based on their direct engagement in moral and religious teaching (Palinkas et al., 2015; Etikan et al., 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018). This sampling strategy ensures that participants possess rich experiential knowledge and relevant insights into the pedagogical processes underlying moral formation (Patton, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Miles et al., 2014). Furthermore, purposive selection enables the researcher to focus on information-rich cases that provide depth and contextual understanding of teacher roles in ethical development (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018; Palinkas et al., 2015). The chosen participants are expected to offer nuanced perspectives on how moral values are internalized and enacted within classroom interactions and institutional culture (Day & Gu, 2022; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Schutz & Zembylas, 2020). Overall, this research design ensures methodological rigor and contextual relevance in examining the strategic role of IRE teachers in shaping students' moral and ethical development (Biesta, 2021; Tan, 2023; Teng, 2020).

3.2. Research participant

This study involved 18 informants consisting of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers who are actively engaged in teaching and moral instruction within the selected Islamic boarding school (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The participants were selected based on their direct involvement in classroom teaching and their responsibility in facilitating students' moral and ethical development (Biesta, 2021; Teng, 2020; Tan, 2023). All informants were teachers who had substantial experience in delivering Islamic education and were actively involved in shaping students' character and behavior (Day & Gu, 2022; Schutz & Zembylas, 2020; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020). The inclusion of these participants ensured that the data collected reflected authentic pedagogical practices and real-life experiences related to moral formation in Islamic educational settings (Sahin, 2020; Abdullah et al., 2022; Tan, 2023). Furthermore, selecting teachers as key informants aligns with previous research emphasizing the central role of educators as agents of moral and ethical transformation (Biesta, 2021; Sun & Zhang, 2022; Teng, 2020). Thus, the participation of 18 IRE teachers provided sufficient depth and diversity of perspectives to support a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018).

The participants were selected using a *purposive sampling technique*, which is widely recognized in qualitative research for identifying information-rich cases relevant to the research objectives (Palinkas et al., 2015; Etikan et al., 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018). This technique allowed the researcher to deliberately choose participants who possess specific knowledge, experience, and roles related to moral education practices (Patton, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Miles et al., 2014). Purposive sampling is particularly appropriate in case study research, as it enables an in-depth exploration of context-bound phenomena and enhances the relevance of the collected data (Yin, 2018; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Stake, 1995). The selection criteria included teaching experience, involvement in Islamic Religious Education instruction, and active engagement in students' moral development processes (Biesta, 2021; Teng, 2020; Tan, 2023). In addition, this approach ensured that participants were capable of providing reflective and meaningful insights into the pedagogical mechanisms

underlying ethical agency formation (Day & Gu, 2022; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Schutz & Zembylas, 2020). Overall, the use of purposive sampling strengthened the credibility and contextual validity of the study by focusing on participants who are directly relevant to the research focus (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Palinkas et al., 2015; Yin, 2018).

3.3. Data collection techniques

Data in this study were collected through structured interviews designed to capture in-depth information regarding teachers' roles in shaping students' moral and ethical development (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The interview protocol was developed based on the research objectives and aligned with key constructs such as pedagogical practices, relational engagement, and moral formation processes (Biesta, 2021; Teng, 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2022). Structured interviews were chosen to ensure consistency across participants while maintaining a systematic approach to data gathering (Yin, 2018; Cohen et al., 2018; Bryman, 2016). This method enabled the researcher to obtain comparable responses while still capturing participants' experiences and perspectives in detail (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015; Miles et al., 2014). The interviews were conducted in a controlled setting within the school environment to ensure participants' comfort and openness in sharing their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015; Yin, 2018). All interview sessions were recorded and transcribed verbatim to preserve data accuracy and support rigorous qualitative analysis (Miles et al., 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In addition to interviews, supporting documents and field notes were utilized to enrich the data and provide contextual insights into teaching practices and institutional culture (Bowen, 2009; Yin, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Field notes were used to capture non-verbal cues, classroom atmosphere, and contextual interactions that may not be fully reflected in interview data (Patton, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Miles et al., 2014). The use of multiple data sources allowed for data triangulation, enhancing the credibility and validity of the findings (Denzin, 2017; Carter et al., 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, triangulation enabled the researcher to cross-verify information obtained from different sources and ensure the consistency of interpretations (Yin, 2018; Flick, 2018; Miles et al., 2014). All data collection procedures were conducted ethically, ensuring participants' informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation (Orb et al., 2001; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Tracy, 2020). Overall, the data collection strategy was designed to generate rich, reliable, and contextually grounded data relevant to the research objectives (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.4. Data analysis procedure

The data were analyzed using the interactive model of qualitative data analysis proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing as interconnected and iterative processes (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data condensation involved selecting, simplifying, and transforming raw interview transcripts into meaningful analytical units relevant to the research objectives (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2016; Patton, 2015). This stage enabled the researcher to focus on essential aspects of the data while reducing complexity without losing contextual meaning (Flick, 2018; Tracy, 2020; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Through this process, key themes related to teachers' roles, moral formation, and ethical agency development were identified and categorized (Biesta, 2021; Teng, 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2022). Subsequently, the data were systematically organized using data display techniques such as thematic matrices and narrative descriptions to facilitate interpretation (Miles et al., 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldaña, 2016). These displays enabled the researcher to identify patterns, relationships, and variations across participants' responses in a structured and coherent manner (Yin, 2018; Flick, 2018; Patton, 2015).

The next stage involved drawing conclusions and verifying findings through iterative reflection and continuous comparison across multiple data sources (Miles et al., 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldaña, 2016). This process ensured that interpretations were grounded in empirical evidence and aligned with the research context and objectives (Yin, 2018; Tracy, 2020; Flick, 2018). To enhance analytical rigor, the study employed thematic analysis techniques to identify recurring patterns and construct meaningful interpretations of participants' experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Terry et al., 2017; Nowell et al., 2017). Coding was conducted systematically, beginning with open coding to identify initial concepts, followed by axial coding to establish relationships, and selective coding to refine core themes (Saldaña, 2016; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Miles et al., 2014). This structured coding process facilitated the development of coherent thematic categories that accurately represent the complexity of moral education practices (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). Furthermore, iterative coding ensured that emerging themes were continuously refined and validated against the data (Nowell et al., 2017; Flick, 2018; Tracy, 2020).

To further strengthen the validity of the findings, the analysis incorporated constant comparison and reflexive practices, allowing the researcher to critically evaluate interpretations and minimize potential bias (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Tracy, 2020; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher also engaged in reflective memo-writing to document analytical decisions and enhance transparency throughout the research process (Saldaña, 2016; Miles et al., 2014; Flick, 2018). Additionally, triangulation across interview data, field notes, and supporting documents was employed to ensure consistency and credibility of the findings (Denzin, 2017; Carter et al., 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Peer debriefing and iterative validation further contributed to strengthening the trustworthiness and dependability of the analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Sukenti & Tambak, 2022; Tracy, 2020; Nowell et al., 2017). These rigorous analytical procedures enabled the researcher to capture the complexity and depth of teachers' roles in moral formation within Islamic educational settings (Biesta, 2021; Teng, 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2022). Overall, the data analysis process provided a comprehensive and contextually grounded understanding of how IRE teachers enact their roles in fostering students' ethical agency and moral development (Tan, 2023; Abdullah et al., 2022; Sahin, 2020).

4. RESULTS

4.1. Teachers as pedagogical models in moral formation

The findings indicate that Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers play a central role as pedagogical models in shaping students' moral and ethical development through their daily instructional practices. Teachers' behavior, attitudes, and consistency in demonstrating ethical values were perceived by students as powerful influences in internalizing moral principles. Participants emphasized that modeling honesty, discipline, and responsibility within classroom interactions significantly contributed to students' moral awareness. This aligns with the notion that moral formation is not merely transmitted through instruction but is embodied through teachers' lived practices and professional conduct. Teachers also reported that students are more likely to emulate values that are consistently demonstrated rather than explicitly taught. Thus, pedagogical modeling emerged as a fundamental mechanism in fostering students' ethical agency within Islamic educational contexts. This is in accordance with a teacher who said that:

"Students tend to learn more from what I do than from what I explicitly say during instruction, which is why I consistently strive to demonstrate honesty, discipline, and responsibility in my daily conduct" (Informant 1).

This statement underscores the primacy of embodied ethics, where moral values are transmitted through observable behavior rather than declarative instruction. The informant highlights that ethical consistency functions as a powerful pedagogical tool, reinforcing the notion that moral formation is grounded in lived experience. This aligns with the concept of teachers as moral exemplars, whose actions shape students' ethical consciousness through implicit learning mechanisms. The emphasis on

consistency suggests that credibility is central to moral influence, indicating that dissonance between speech and action may undermine value internalization. Thus, pedagogical modeling emerges as a performative and relational process rather than a purely instructional one.

“I ensure that the moral principles I teach are reflected in my everyday actions, because students are more likely to internalize values when they observe their practical implementation” (Informant 3).

This quote reveals the critical importance of congruence between discourse and practice in moral education. The teacher recognizes that ethical learning is strengthened when abstract principles are translated into observable behaviors. This reflects a shift from cognitive transmission to experiential validation, where students assess the authenticity of moral claims through lived examples. The statement also implies that moral credibility is constructed relationally, as students interpret and evaluate teacher integrity. Consequently, ethical agency is fostered through the alignment of pedagogical intention and behavioral enactment.

“Students naturally imitate what they observe in their teachers, and even small actions can become significant lessons in moral behavior” (Informant 2).

This perspective highlights the role of implicit pedagogy, where moral learning occurs through observation and imitation rather than formal instruction. The informant acknowledges that seemingly minor behaviors carry pedagogical weight, indicating that moral formation operates at both explicit and tacit levels. This aligns with social learning theory, emphasizing observational learning as a key mechanism in ethical development. The statement also suggests that moral influence is continuous and embedded within everyday interactions. Therefore, teachers function as constant moral references within the learning environment. Another informant stated that the Integration of Moral Values in Instructional Practice is very important in learning.

“I frequently connect moral lessons with real-life situations so that students can understand how these values operate in their daily experiences.” (Informant 16).

This quote reflects the importance of contextualized learning, where moral concepts are anchored in students lived realities. The teacher emphasizes the need to bridge theoretical knowledge with practical application, thereby enhancing relevance and comprehension. This approach supports deeper cognitive and affective engagement, enabling students to internalize values meaningfully. It also suggests that moral education must be adaptive and responsive to students' socio-cultural contexts. Hence, contextualization serves as a critical strategy for transforming abstract values into actionable ethical understanding. On the other hand, teachers revealed that Holistic Integration in Teaching Practice is the main key in moral development.

“I integrate moral values into all aspects of teaching so that students not only understand the content but also the ethical dimensions behind it.” (Informant 14).

This statement illustrates a holistic pedagogical approach, where moral education is embedded across instructional processes rather than treated as a separate component. The teacher positions ethics as an integral dimension of knowledge, reinforcing the interconnectedness of cognition and morality. This approach aligns with process-oriented education, emphasizing the integration of values within learning experiences. It also reflects a transformative perspective, where education aims to shape both intellectual and moral capacities. Consequently, moral formation becomes an intrinsic outcome of the teaching process.

“My role in shaping students' character extends beyond formal teaching, as informal interactions often provide meaningful opportunities for moral guidance.” (Informant 8).

This quote highlights the significance of informal pedagogical spaces in moral formation. The teacher recognizes that ethical learning is not confined to structured lessons but occurs through everyday interactions and relational engagement. This expands the scope of moral education to include mentoring, counseling, and spontaneous communication. It also underscores the relational dimension of ethical development, where trust and proximity facilitate deeper influence. Thus, moral formation is constructed through continuous and contextually embedded interactions.

“Maintaining consistency between what I teach and what I do is essential for building students’ trust and ensuring the effectiveness of moral education.” (Informant 13).

This statement reinforces the centrality of trust and authenticity in moral pedagogy. The teacher acknowledges that credibility is a prerequisite for effective moral influence, as students evaluate the integrity of their educators. Consistency functions as a stabilizing factor that strengthens the teacher-student relationship and enhances value internalization. The quote also implies that moral authority is constructed through practice rather than position. Therefore, ethical teaching is fundamentally relational and trust-dependent.

“I continuously reflect on my own behavior to ensure that I remain a positive moral example for my students.” (Informant 17).

This quote emphasizes the role of reflexivity in sustaining ethical pedagogy. The teacher demonstrates awareness that moral influence requires ongoing self-evaluation and professional growth. Reflection serves as a mechanism for aligning personal values with pedagogical practice. It also indicates that moral teaching is not static but evolves through critical self-assessment. Thus, ethical agency in teaching is both intentional and continuously negotiated.

“Moral education must be practiced consistently over time, as students develop ethical awareness gradually through repeated exposure to positive examples.” (Informant 18).

This statement conceptualizes moral formation as a longitudinal and developmental process. The teacher highlights that ethical awareness emerges gradually through sustained exposure and reinforcement. This perspective challenges outcome-based models by emphasizing continuity and progression. It also suggests that moral education requires persistence and consistency across time. Therefore, ethical agency is constructed through cumulative experiences rather than isolated interventions.

4.2. Relational engagement and dialogical pedagogy in ethical agency development

The findings further highlight the importance of relational engagement in facilitating moral formation and ethical agency among students. Teachers emphasized that building trust, empathy, and open communication with students creates a supportive environment for moral reflection. Participants reported that dialogical interactions enable students to express their thoughts, question moral dilemmas, and develop ethical reasoning skills. This approach reflects the shift toward learner-centered and interactional pedagogies in contemporary moral education. Teachers also noted that relational closeness enhances students’ willingness to internalize values and engage in self-reflection. Thus, relational engagement plays a crucial role in mediating the process of ethical agency development. This excerpt illustrates how teachers construct trust as a foundational condition for meaningful moral engagement in the classroom.

“Building trust with students is essential because when they feel respected and understood, they become more open to reflecting on moral values and expressing their thoughts honestly.” (Informant 7).

This statement foregrounds trust as a relational infrastructure that enables moral reflection and ethical dialogue. The teacher conceptualizes trust not merely as an interpersonal quality but as a pedagogical condition that facilitates openness and authenticity in learning. This aligns with relational pedagogy, where ethical development emerges through emotionally secure environments. The emphasis on respect and understanding indicates that moral formation is mediated by affective dimensions of teaching. Furthermore, trust functions as a catalyst for self-expression, allowing students to articulate moral positions and engage in reflective reasoning. Thus, ethical agency is co-constructed through relational safety and dialogic openness. The following account emphasizes the role of empathy in strengthening students' engagement with moral learning processes.

"I always try to approach students with empathy because when they feel emotionally supported, they are more willing to engage in discussions about ethical issues and personal values." (Informant 8).

This quote highlights empathy as a pedagogical mediator that bridges emotional connection and cognitive engagement. The teacher recognizes that ethical discourse requires not only intellectual participation but also emotional investment. Empathy fosters a sense of belonging, which in turn enhances students' willingness to engage in morally complex discussions. This suggests that moral learning is deeply intertwined with emotional resonance and interpersonal sensitivity. The statement also reflects the integration of affective pedagogy into moral education. Consequently, ethical agency is facilitated through emotionally responsive teaching practices. This quotation demonstrates how dialogical practices enable students to actively construct moral understanding through interaction.

"I encourage students to discuss moral dilemmas openly, as this allows them to question assumptions and develop their own ethical reasoning through dialogue." (Informant 9).

This perspective positions dialogue as a cognitive and ethical tool for developing moral reasoning. The teacher emphasizes the importance of questioning and critical engagement, indicating a shift from passive reception to active knowledge construction. Dialogical interaction enables students to negotiate meaning and refine their ethical perspectives. This aligns with constructivist and socio-cultural theories of learning, where knowledge emerges through interaction. The emphasis on moral dilemmas further suggests that ethical agency is developed through engagement with complexity and ambiguity. Therefore, dialogue becomes a central mechanism in cultivating reflective and autonomous moral thinkers. The following statement reflects the transition toward student-centered approaches in moral education.

"I try to create a learning environment where students feel comfortable sharing their perspectives, because moral understanding grows when students actively participate rather than passively listen." (Informant 10).

This quote underscores the significance of learner-centered pedagogy in moral formation. The teacher repositions students as active participants in ethical discourse, rather than passive recipients of moral instruction. This approach enhances agency by allowing students to contribute their perspectives and engage in collective meaning-making. The emphasis on comfort and participation highlights the importance of psychological safety in facilitating engagement. It also reflects a shift toward participatory and dialogic learning environments. Consequently, ethical agency is fostered through active involvement and shared inquiry. This excerpt highlights how relational proximity enhances the internalization of moral values.

"When students feel close to their teachers, they are more likely to accept and internalize the values being taught, because the relationship itself becomes a source of influence." (Informant 5).

This statement reveals the role of relational closeness as a conduit for moral influence. The teacher suggests that emotional proximity enhances receptivity to moral values. This indicates that internalization is not purely cognitive but relationally mediated. The relationship itself becomes pedagogical, functioning as a medium through which values are transmitted. This aligns with theories of relational ethics, where moral development is embedded in interpersonal connections. Thus, ethical agency is shaped through sustained relational engagement. The following quote illustrates how dialogue fosters reflective engagement with moral concepts.

“Through discussion, students are able to reflect on their own beliefs and consider alternative perspectives, which strengthens their understanding of moral values.” (Informant 1).

This quote emphasizes reflection as a core outcome of dialogical engagement. The teacher highlights that dialogue enables students to critically examine their own beliefs. This process fosters cognitive flexibility and ethical awareness. Exposure to alternative perspectives expands students’ moral horizons and deepens understanding. Reflection thus becomes a mechanism for internal transformation. Consequently, moral dialogue serves as a pathway to developing critical and reflective ethical agency. This statement demonstrates how teachers link moral dialogue to students’ lived experiences.

“I often relate moral discussions to real-life situations so that students can see how ethical principles apply in their everyday lives.” (Informant 3).

This quote highlights the importance of contextual relevance in moral dialogue. The teacher bridges abstract ethical concepts with concrete experiences. This enhances comprehension and applicability of moral values. It also reinforces the idea that ethics is not detached from lived reality. By situating moral learning within everyday contexts, students develop practical ethical awareness. Thus, contextualization strengthens the authenticity and impact of moral education. The following excerpt reveals how dialogical pedagogy promotes critical thinking in ethical decision-making.

“Discussion-based learning encourages students to analyze different viewpoints and justify their opinions, which helps them develop critical moral reasoning.” (informant 9).

This statement positions dialogue as a catalyst for critical thinking in moral education. The teacher emphasizes analysis and justification as key components of ethical reasoning. This reflects a higher-order cognitive engagement with moral issues. Students are encouraged to evaluate perspectives and construct reasoned arguments. Such practices cultivate intellectual autonomy and ethical discernment. Therefore, dialogical pedagogy enhances both cognitive and moral dimensions of learning. This quote highlights the broader social implications of moral dialogue in shaping ethical awareness.

“Moral discussions help students become more aware of their responsibilities toward others and develop a stronger sense of social ethics.” (Informant 15).

This perspective underscores the role of moral dialogue in fostering social consciousness. The teacher links ethical learning with responsibility toward others. This reflects a shift from individual morality to collective ethics. Moral dialogue thus becomes a tool for cultivating social awareness and civic responsibility. It also reinforces the relational nature of ethical agency. Consequently, students develop a more holistic understanding of their role within society. The following statement captures the transformative potential of dialogical approaches in moral education.

“I believe that dialogue transforms the way students think about morality, because it allows them to actively engage with ideas rather than simply receive them.” (Informant 4).

This quote frames dialogue as a transformative pedagogical practice. The teacher emphasizes active engagement as a driver of cognitive and moral change. Dialogue shifts students from passive learners to active participants in meaning-making. This transformation enhances both understanding and ownership of ethical values. It also aligns with transformative learning theory. Thus, dialogical pedagogy facilitates deep and sustained moral development.

4.3. Contextual negotiation in moral education practices

The findings also reveal that teachers engage in contextual negotiation to adapt moral instruction to diverse socio-cultural and institutional contexts. Teachers reported that students' backgrounds, experiences, and social environments influence how moral values are understood and internalized. As a result, teachers adjust their pedagogical approaches to ensure that moral teachings remain relevant and meaningful. This includes integrating contemporary issues, digital influences, and real-life challenges into moral discussions. Such contextual adaptation reflects the need for flexible and responsive teaching strategies in modern Islamic education. Therefore, contextual negotiation emerges as a critical dimension in supporting ethical agency development. This excerpt illustrates how teachers recognize the influence of students' socio-cultural backgrounds in shaping moral understanding.

"I always consider the diverse backgrounds of my students, because their experiences and social environments significantly influence how they interpret and internalize moral values." (Informant 13).

This statement foregrounds contextual sensitivity as a pedagogical imperative in moral education. The teacher acknowledges that moral meaning is not universally fixed but is interpreted through socio-cultural lenses. This reflects a constructivist orientation, where values are negotiated within lived experiences rather than imposed as static norms. The emphasis on diversity indicates the need for adaptive teaching strategies that accommodate multiple perspectives. It also suggests that ethical agency emerges through the interaction between individual experience and normative frameworks. Thus, contextual awareness becomes foundational in fostering meaningful moral engagement. The following quotation demonstrates how teachers adjust their instructional approaches to maintain relevance in moral education.

"I adapt my teaching methods to ensure that moral lessons remain relevant to students' realities, especially by connecting them to contemporary issues and everyday challenges." (Informant 2).

This quote highlights the importance of pedagogical adaptability in sustaining the relevance of moral instruction. The teacher positions adaptability as a response to changing social realities, indicating that moral education must evolve alongside contextual shifts. By integrating contemporary issues, the teacher bridges the gap between abstract values and lived experiences. This approach enhances student engagement and facilitates deeper understanding. It also reflects a responsive pedagogy that aligns with the dynamic nature of modern education. Consequently, ethical agency is strengthened through contextually meaningful learning experiences. This excerpt emphasizes the incorporation of real-life and digital influences into moral discussions.

"I often include discussions about digital behavior and real-life situations so that students can understand how moral values apply in both online and offline contexts." (informant 15).

This statement underscores the expanding scope of moral education in the digital era, where ethical considerations extend beyond traditional settings. The teacher recognizes that students navigate hybrid environments, requiring moral guidance that addresses both physical and virtual interactions. This integration reflects a forward-looking pedagogical approach that acknowledges contemporary challenges. It also suggests that ethical agency must be adaptable to multiple contexts. By addressing digital ethics, the teacher prepares students for responsible participation in modern society. Thus,

contextual negotiation extends into technologically mediated domains. The following statement reflects the necessity of flexibility in addressing diverse learning needs and contexts.

"I understand that each student is different, so I adjust my approach to ensure that moral lessons are meaningful and accessible to everyone." (Informant 16).

This quote highlights flexibility as a core component of effective moral pedagogy. The teacher acknowledges individual differences as a determinant of learning engagement and comprehension. This perspective aligns with differentiated instruction, where teaching strategies are tailored to diverse needs. Flexibility ensures inclusivity and enhances the accessibility of moral education. It also reflects a student-centered approach that values individual experiences. Consequently, ethical agency is fostered through personalized and adaptive learning processes. This excerpt reveals the challenges teachers encounter in implementing context-sensitive moral education.

"There are challenges such as institutional limitations and diverse student needs, but I try to overcome them by being creative and reflective in my teaching practices." (Informant 17).

This statement illuminates the tension between structural constraints and pedagogical agency. The teacher acknowledges institutional limitations while simultaneously asserting professional adaptability. This reflects the dynamic negotiation between external conditions and internal agency. Creativity and reflection emerge as strategies for navigating these constraints. The quote also suggests that effective moral education requires resilience and innovation. Therefore, contextual negotiation involves both adaptation to and transformation of existing conditions. The following quote highlights the importance of continuous reflection and professional growth in contextual teaching.

"I continuously reflect on my teaching practices and seek to improve them so that I can better respond to the changing needs of my students." (informant 18).

This quote emphasizes reflexivity as a sustaining force in contextual negotiation. The teacher demonstrates an ongoing commitment to professional development and self-improvement. Reflection serves as a mechanism for aligning teaching practices with evolving student needs. This indicates that moral pedagogy is not static but continuously refined. It also highlights the role of teacher learning in enhancing educational effectiveness. Thus, ethical agency is supported by reflective and adaptive professional practice. This statement illustrates how teachers connect moral education to students' everyday realities.

"I try to relate moral lessons to students' daily experiences so that they can see the relevance and apply these values in their own lives." (Informant 12).

This quote underscores the importance of experiential relevance in moral learning. The teacher bridges theoretical instruction with practical application, enhancing student engagement. This approach fosters meaningful understanding by situating values within familiar contexts. It also supports the internalization of ethics through lived experience. The emphasis on applicability indicates that moral education must be actionable. Consequently, ethical agency develops through the integration of knowledge and practice. The following excerpt conceptualizes moral education as an evolving and context-dependent process.

"Moral education is not fixed, but changes depending on the situation, so teachers must always adjust their approach to remain effective." (Informant 11).

This statement frames moral formation as a fluid and adaptive process, shaped by contextual variables. The teacher rejects static models of moral education in favor of dynamic responsiveness. This aligns with contemporary theories that emphasize the evolving nature of ethical understanding. It also highlights the necessity of continuous pedagogical adjustment. The recognition of change underscores

the complexity of moral development. Therefore, contextual negotiation is essential for sustaining relevance and effectiveness. In general, the findings of this research can be seen in the visualization of Figure 1 which illustrates the relationship between the efforts of Islamic religious education teachers in cultivating students below.

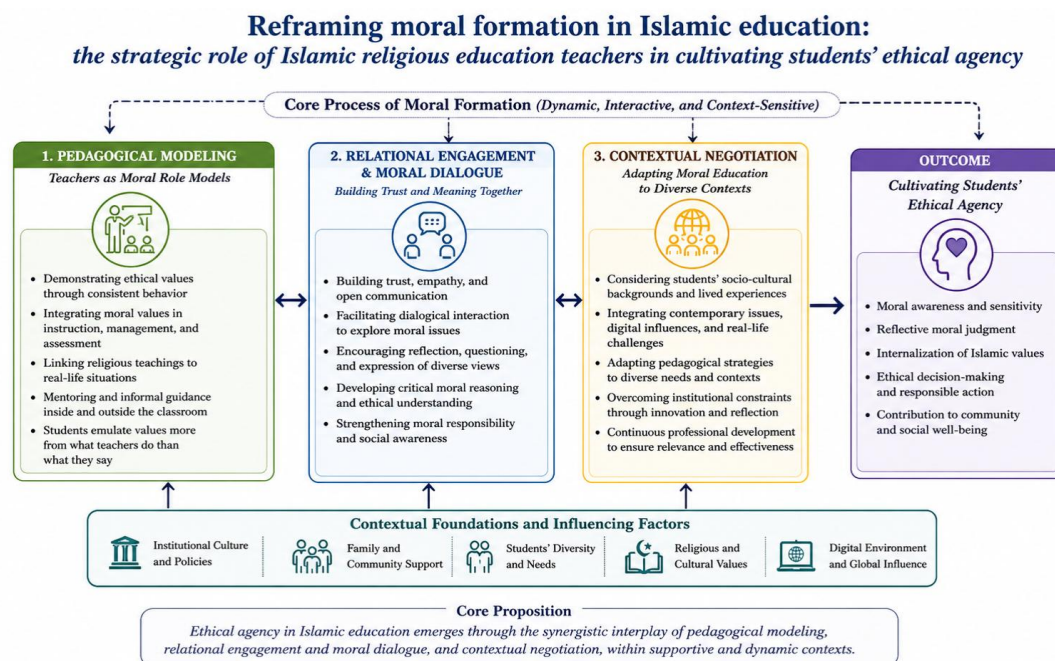


Figure 1. Model of reframing moral formation in Islamic education

5. DISCUSSION

The findings confirm that pedagogical modeling constitutes a central mechanism in moral formation, reinforcing the argument that teachers lived practices are more influential than explicit moral instruction (Biesta, 2021; Teng, 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2022). This aligns with contemporary perspectives that view moral education as a process of embodied practice rather than a transmission of abstract values (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Day & Gu, 2022; Schutz & Zembylas, 2020). The consistent demonstration of ethical values by teachers strengthens students' internalization of moral principles through observational learning and social interaction (Bandura, 1986; Biesta, 2021; Teng, 2020). Moreover, the integration of moral values into everyday teaching practices reflects the shift toward holistic and contextually grounded approaches in Islamic education (Sahin, 2020; Tan, 2023; Abdullah et al., 2022; Tambak et al., 2021). This finding also supports recent research emphasizing that effective moral formation requires alignment between teachers' beliefs, actions, and pedagogical strategies (Day & Gu, 2022; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Schutz & Zembylas, 2020). Therefore, pedagogical modeling can be understood as a foundational dimension in cultivating students' ethical agency within contemporary Islamic educational settings (Biesta, 2021; Sun & Zhang, 2022; Teng, 2020).

Furthermore, the findings extend existing literature by demonstrating how pedagogical modeling operates within a specific socio-religious context, highlighting the role of Islamic values in shaping ethical behavior (Sahin, 2020; Tan, 2023; Abdullah et al., 2022). This contextual dimension reinforces the argument that moral formation is not universal but shaped by cultural, religious, and institutional factors (Biesta, 2021; Teng, 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2022; Tambak, Amril & Sukenti, 2021). The study also contributes to the understanding of teachers as moral agents who actively construct ethical meaning through their interactions with students (Day & Gu, 2022; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Schutz & Zembylas, 2020). These findings challenge traditional views of teachers as passive transmitters of knowledge and highlight their role as active facilitators of moral development (Biesta, 2021; Teng, 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2022). In this regard, pedagogical modeling emerges as both a theoretical and practical

framework for enhancing moral education in Islamic contexts (Tan, 2023; Abdullah et al., 2022; Sahin, 2020). Thus, this study provides empirical support for process-oriented approaches to moral formation that emphasize practice, interaction, and contextual relevance (Biesta, 2021; Tambak, Sukenti & Firdaus, 2023; Teng, 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2022).

The findings highlight that relational engagement and dialogical pedagogy play a crucial role in fostering ethical agency, supporting the view that moral learning is inherently social and interactional (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Day & Gu, 2022; Schutz & Zembylas, 2020; Tambak et al., 2022). This aligns with recent theoretical developments emphasizing the importance of dialogue, empathy, and trust in shaping students' moral reasoning and ethical awareness (Biesta, 2021; Teng, 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2022). The use of dialogical approaches allows students to actively engage with moral dilemmas and develop critical thinking skills necessary for ethical decision-making (Sahin, 2020; Tan, 2023; Abdullah et al., 2022). These findings also resonate with constructivist perspectives that view learning as a co-constructed process involving interaction between teachers and students (Vygotsky, 1978; Biesta, 2021; Teng, 2020). Furthermore, relational closeness enhances students' willingness to participate in moral discourse and internalize ethical values (Day & Gu, 2022; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Schutz & Zembylas, 2020; Tambak et al., 2024). Thus, relational engagement serves as a critical mediating factor in the development of ethical agency within Islamic education (Tan, 2023; Abdullah et al., 2022; Namora et al., 2025; Sahin, 2020).

In addition, the findings demonstrate that dialogical pedagogy enables students to connect moral concepts with real-life experiences, thereby enhancing the relevance and applicability of ethical learning (Biesta, 2021; Teng, 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2022). This supports the argument that moral education should move beyond rote learning toward reflective and experiential approaches (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Day & Gu, 2022; Schutz & Zembylas, 2020; Chapakiya et al., 2025). The integration of dialogue and reflection also fosters students' autonomy and responsibility in making ethical decisions (Sahin, 2020; Tan, 2023; Abdullah et al., 2022; Firdaus et al., 2025). These findings contribute to the growing body of literature emphasizing the importance of interactional pedagogy in moral education (Biesta, 2021; Teng, 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2022; Rasyidi et al., 2025). Moreover, the study highlights the need for teacher training programs that emphasize relational and dialogical competencies (Day & Gu, 2022; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Schutz & Zembylas, 2020). Overall, relational engagement and dialogical pedagogy are essential components in fostering sustainable ethical agency among students (Tan, 2023; Tambak et al., 2025; Abdullah et al., 2022; Sahin, 2020).

The findings reveal that contextual negotiation is a critical dimension in adapting moral education to diverse socio-cultural and institutional contexts (Tan, 2023; Tambak et al., 2018; Abdullah et al., 2022; Sahin, 2020). This supports recent scholarship emphasizing the need for flexible and context-responsive pedagogical approaches in contemporary education (Biesta, 2021; Teng, 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2022). Teachers' ability to adapt moral instruction to students' backgrounds and experiences enhances the relevance and effectiveness of ethical learning (Day & Gu, 2022; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Schutz & Zembylas, 2020). The integration of real-life issues and digital influences into moral discussions reflects the dynamic nature of moral formation in modern educational settings (Tan, 2023; Abdullah et al., 2022; Sahin, 2020). These findings also highlight the importance of contextual sensitivity in addressing the complexities of globalization and cultural diversity (Biesta, 2021; Teng, 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2022). Therefore, contextual negotiation can be understood as a key mechanism in fostering meaningful and sustainable moral development (Tan, 2023; Tambak & Sukenti, 2022; Abdullah et al., 2022; Sahin, 2020).

Moreover, the study reveals that teachers face challenges in implementing context-sensitive moral education, including institutional constraints and diverse student needs (Day & Gu, 2022; Schutz & Zembylas, 2020; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020). Despite these challenges, teachers demonstrate adaptability by employing innovative and reflective pedagogical strategies (Biesta, 2021; Teng, 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2022). This adaptability highlights the importance of teacher agency in navigating complex educational environments (Tan, 2023; Abdullah et al., 2022; Sahin, 2020). The findings also emphasize the need for continuous professional development to support teachers in implementing adaptive moral

pedagogy (Day & Gu, 2022; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Schutz & Zembylas, 2020). In this context, contextual negotiation emerges as a critical skill for teachers in fostering ethical agency among students (Biesta, 2021; Teng, 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2022). Overall, this study contributes to the development of a comprehensive framework that integrates pedagogical, relational, and contextual dimensions of moral formation (Tan, 2023; Abdullah et al., 2022; Sahin, 2020).

6. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers play a strategic and transformative role in shaping students' moral formation and ethical agency through pedagogical, relational, and contextual practices. The findings demonstrate that moral formation is not merely a process of value transmission but a dynamic and interactional process constructed through teachers' lived practices and engagement with students. Pedagogical modeling emerged as a fundamental mechanism through which teachers embody ethical values and influence students' moral internalization. In addition, relational engagement and dialogical pedagogy were found to enhance students' ethical awareness and critical moral reasoning. Contextual negotiation further enables teachers to adapt moral instruction to socio-cultural realities and contemporary challenges. Overall, the study provides empirical evidence that moral formation in Islamic education is a holistic, process-oriented, and context-sensitive phenomenon. Furthermore, the study contributes to reconceptualizing moral education by positioning teachers as co-constructors of ethical meaning rather than passive transmitters of knowledge. This perspective highlights the importance of integrating pedagogical practices, relational dynamics, and contextual awareness in fostering ethical agency among students. The findings also emphasize that ethical agency is developed through continuous interaction, reflection, and engagement with real-life experiences. This reinforces the need for a shift toward process-based and learner-centered approaches in Islamic education. The study thus extends existing literature by providing a comprehensive framework that integrates key dimensions of moral formation in educational practice. In sum, this research offers a deeper understanding of how moral formation is enacted and sustained within Islamic educational contexts.

This study advances theoretical discourse in moral and Islamic education by proposing a process-oriented framework of moral formation that integrates pedagogical modeling, relational engagement, and contextual negotiation as interconnected dimensions shaping ethical agency, thereby moving beyond static and content-based conceptions of moral education. It highlights the central role of teacher agency and identity in mediating moral learning and emphasizes that ethical development emerges through dynamic interaction, reflection, and context-sensitive practices that integrate cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. The findings further suggest that moral formation should be understood as a continuous and evolving process, offering a foundation for future research to develop more comprehensive empirical models that capture the complexity of moral education. In practical terms, the study underscores the importance of adopting pedagogical strategies that prioritize modeling, dialogue, and contextual adaptation, while also strengthening teachers' reflective, emotional, and relational competencies through targeted professional development. It also points to the need for supportive school environments, context-sensitive curricula, and policies that promote teacher autonomy and innovation in ethical pedagogy. Ultimately, the study highlights the importance of collaborative efforts among educators, institutions, and communities in fostering sustainable moral formation and enhancing ethical agency in contemporary Islamic education.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings, including the use of a single-case design that restricts generalizability, reliance on self-reported teacher data that may introduce subjectivity, and the absence of direct classroom observation which may limit data completeness. The relatively small sample size and focus solely on teachers also constrain the diversity of perspectives, particularly by excluding students' voices and broader institutional or policy influences, while the cross-sectional nature of the study does not capture long-term developments in moral formation. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable, contextually grounded insights

into pedagogical processes in Islamic education and opens avenues for further inquiry. Future research is recommended to employ multi-site and comparative designs, integrate mixed-methods approaches, and include students' perspectives to enhance comprehensiveness and generalizability. Additionally, further studies should explore the role of digital technologies, conduct longitudinal investigations, and examine institutional and policy support in shaping moral education practices. Overall, these directions highlight the need for continued research to deepen understanding of ethical agency development and advance both theoretical and practical dimensions of moral formation in Islamic education.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions of the authors in this article: Bryan Hartama Putra contributed as concepts and drafters of the article; Adini Djasmine contributed as data analyzers and interpreters; Shifa Nur Azilla as the drafter of the manuscript; Faren Fairuz Habib contributed in collecting data and critically revising the article. All authors agree to take responsibility for all aspects of this work.

DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

We have no conflict of interest to declare.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors extend their deepest gratitude to all research participants who were willing to share their life experiences openly and with full trust. Their involvement and courage constitute the most fundamental contribution to this study. Appreciation is also extended to the leadership and colleagues at each author's respective institutions for the academic and institutional support provided throughout the research process. Thanks also to colleagues and peers who provided constructive feedback in refining this manuscript.

REFERENCES

- Abdullah, M., Rahman, A. A., & Ismail, S. (2022). Integrating Islamic values in contemporary education: Challenges and prospects. *British Journal of Religious Education*, 44(3), 307–320. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2021.1997334>
- Anshori, I., & Rahmawati, D. (2021). Digital transformation in Islamic education: Opportunities and challenges. *Journal of Islamic Education Studies*, 9(2), 145–162. <https://doi.org/10.15642/jies.2021.9.2.145-162>
- Azra, A. (2015). Islamic education and social change in Indonesia. *Studia Islamika*, 22(3), 569–596. <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v22i3.2350>
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Prentice-Hall. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203781036>
- Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 544–559. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2008.1573>
- Berglund, J. (2020). Teaching Islam in a globalised world. *Religions*, 11(3), 123. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11030123>
- Biesta, G. (2020). Risking ourselves in education: Qualification, socialization, and subjectification revisited. *Educational Theory*, 70(1), 89–104. <https://doi.org/10.1111/edth.12411>
- Biesta, G. (2021). *World-centred education: A view for the present*. Routledge.

- Bjork, C. (2005). Indonesian education: Teachers, schools, and central bureaucracy. *Routledge*.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in thematic analysis? *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 18(3), 328–352. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2020.1769238>
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/hepl/9780199689452.001.0001>
- Carter, N., Bryant-Lukosius, D., DiCenso, A., Blythe, J., & Neville, A. J. (2014). The use of triangulation in qualitative research. *Oncology Nursing Forum*, 41(5), 545–547. <https://doi.org/10.1188/14.ONF.545-547>
- Chapakiya, A., Abdullah, A. R., Mohamad Salleh, M. N., Luthfi, S., & Panjalu, G. F. (2025). Development of higher order thinking skill for students in madrasa southern Thailand: Engaging case-based learning methods. *Journal of Instruction and Islamic Religious Education*, 1(2), 121–134. <https://doi.org/10.63826/jiire.v1i2.174>
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (8th ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315456539>
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781506335193>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781506330204>
- Day, C. (2018). Professional identity matters: Agency, emotions, and resilience. *Educational Research*, 60(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2018.1449118>
- Day, C., & Gu, Q. (2022). Teacher emotions and resilience. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 109, 103548. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103548>
- Day, C., & Gu, Q. (2022). Teacher emotions and resilience: A qualitative study of teachers' professional lives. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 109, 103548. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103548>
- Denzin, N. K. (2017). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. Routledge.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11>
- Firdaus, F., Siregar, A. S., Abdullah, B. bin, Belbekkai, D., & Jumrodah, J. (2025). The accuracy of developing professional madrasah teachers: Seen from gender and teacher certification in the future profession. *Journal of Instruction and Islamic Religious Education*, 1(1), 15–28. <https://doi.org/10.63826/jiire.v1i1.3>
- Flick, U. (2018). *An introduction to qualitative research* (6th ed.). Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526445653>
- Halstead, J. M. (2007). Islamic values: A distinctive framework for moral education? *Journal of Moral Education*, 36(3), 283–296. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240701643056>
- Hargreaves, A. (2000). Mixed emotions: Teachers' perceptions of their interactions with students. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 16(8), 811–826. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X\(00\)00028-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X(00)00028-7)
- Hefner, R. W. (2009). Islamic schools, social movements, and democracy in Indonesia. *Princeton University Press*. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400837451>

- Hidayat, M., Rozak, R. W. A., Hakam, K. A., Kembara, M. D., & Parhan, M. (2021). Character education in Indonesia: How is it internalized and implemented in virtual learning?. *Jurnal Cakrawala Pendidikan*, 41(1), 186–198. <https://doi.org/10.21831/cp.v41i1.45920>
- Hidayat, T., et al. (2023). Digital pedagogy in Islamic education. *Education and Information Technologies*, 28, 1123–1140. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-022-11234-5>
- Jackson, R. (2014). Signposts: Policy and practice for teaching about religions. *Council of Europe*. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400837451>
- Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), 14–26. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X033007014>
- Kohlberg, L. (1984). *Essays on moral development*. Harper & Row.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2015). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473913953>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.
- Lovat, T. (2019). *Values education and quality teaching*. Springer.
- Mercer, S., & Gregersen, T. (2020). Teacher wellbeing. *ELT Journal*, 74(4), 471–473. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccaa031>
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Jossey-Bass. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119003617>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781506335117>
- Namora, D., Amril, A., Zamsiswaya, Z., Mounadil, A. I., Yasin, M. D. H. bin F., Hamzah, H., & Nurhaliza, A. (2025). Islamic education narratives from the Turkistan Plain: Discovering the heritage of al-Zarnuji's thoughts on Islamic professional teachers. *Journal of Instruction and Islamic Religious Education*, 1(1), 57-69. <https://doi.org/10.63826/jiire.v1i1.6>
- Narvaez, D., & Lapsley, D. (2009). Moral identity and development. *Psychology of Learning and Motivation*, 50, 237–274. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0079-7421\(08\)00408-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0079-7421(08)00408-8)
- Noddings, N. (2013). *Caring: A relational approach to ethics and moral education*. University of California Press. <https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520957343>
- Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847>
- Nucci, L., Narvaez, D., & Krettenauer, T. (2014). *Handbook of moral and character education*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203114896>
- OECD. (2020). *Global competence for an inclusive world*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/d86d6513-en>
- Palinkas, L. A., et al. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health*, 42, 533–544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>
- Panadero, E. (2017). Self-regulated learning: A review. *Educational Psychology Review*, 29, 1–38. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-015-9350-8>
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483385683>
- Prasetyo, Z. K., & Suyanto, S. (2021). Digital learning in Indonesia. *Journal of Educational Technology*, 15(2), 210–223. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jet.v15i2.34567>

- Rahman, F., et al. (2022). Digital ethics and education. *Computers & Education*, 180, 104451. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2021.104451>
- Raihani. (2012). Multicultural education in Indonesia. *Compare*, 42(2), 269–291. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2012.650444>
- Raihani. (2020). Islamic education and pluralism in Indonesia. *Religions*, 11(4), 203. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11040203>
- Rasyidi, R., Hafizoh, A., Masrom, M. binti, Astuti, D., Narongraksakhet, I., Husti, I., & Nurhaliza, A. (2025). Inquiry-based learning method: Is it effective in improving madrasah teacher social competence in student-centered learning. *Journal of Instruction and Islamic Religious Education*, 1(1), 29-44. <https://doi.org/10.63826/jiire.v1i1.4>
- Rosser, A. (2018). Education reform in Indonesia. *Lowy Institute*.
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2012). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Sage.
- Sahin, A. (2018). Critical issues in Islamic education. *Religions*, 9(11), 335. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel9110335>
- Sahin, A. (2020). Rethinking Islamic education. *British Journal of Religious Education*, 42(2), 123–135. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2019.1610058>
- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473909487>
- Schraw, G. (2021). Metacognition and learning. *Educational Psychologist*, 56(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2020.1861433>
- Schutz, P. A., & Zembylas, M. (2009). *Advances in teacher emotion research*. Springer.
- Schutz, P. A., & Zembylas, M. (2020). Teacher emotion research. *Educational Psychologist*, 55(4), 213–229. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2020.1796515>
- Setiawan, A., et al. (2023). Digital learning engagement. *Education Sciences*, 13(5), 455. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13050455>
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage.
- Sukenti, D., & Fauzan, A. (2024). Self-esteem, Islamic Behavior, and Writing Assessment for Indonesian Language Madrasa Teachers: An Empirical Phenomenological Investigation. *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 7(3), 570-589. <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v7i3.31>
- Sukenti, D., & Tambak, S. (2020). Developing Indonesian Language Learning Assessments: Strengthening the Personal Competence and Islamic Psychosocial of Teachers. *International Journal of Evaluation and research in education*, 9(4), 1079-1087. <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v9i4.20677>
- Sukenti, D., & Tambak, S. (2023). Islamic Teacher's Ethical Behavior, Identity Formation, and Writing Assessment: A Phenomenological Inquiry. *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 15(4), 4943-4952. <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v15i4.4570>
- Sukenti, D., & Tambak, S. (2025). The impact of teacher professional identity and psychological capital on learning assessment: Exploring emotional intelligence in language teachers. *Journal of Pedagogical Research*, 10(1), 18-36. <https://doi.org/10.33902/JPR.202638001>
- Sukenti, D., Idris, N. S., Bonk, C. J., Hani'ah, H., Tupas, J. B., Febria, R., & Syafitri, W. (2025). Development of assessment rubric for writing narrative texts in madrasa: The implementation of the Bloom taxonomy. *Journal of Instruction and Islamic Religious Education*, 1(2), 87-104. <https://doi.org/10.63826/jiire.v1i2.172>

- Sun, T., & Zhang, L. J. (2022). Understanding the role of metacognitive knowledge in L2 writing. *System*, 106, 102761. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2022.102761>
- Suyadi, S., et al. (2022). Islamic education in pandemic era. *HTS Teologiese Studies*, 78(4), a7075. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v78i4.7075>
- Tambak, S., & Sukenti, D. (2020). Strengthening Islamic behavior and Islamic psychosocial in developing professional madrasah teachers. *Cakrawala Pendidikan: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan*, 39(1), 65-78. <https://doi.org/10.21831/cp.v39i1.26001>
- Tambak, S., & Sukenti, D. (2024). Case-Based Learning Method in Learning: Is it Effective to Improve Teaching Skills of Madrasa Teachers in Indonesia? *Journal of Learning for Development*, 11(1), 151-164. <https://doi.org/10.56059/jl4d.v11i1.763>
- Tambak, S., & Sukenti, D. (2024). Student Involvement Within Islamic Teacher Education: For a Future Profession. *QIJIS (Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies)*, 11(2), 317-352. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21043/qijis.v11i2.8141>
- Tambak, S., & Sukenti, D. (2025). Islamic professional madrasa teachers and motivation for continuous development: a phenomenological approach. *Journal of Education and Learning (EduLearn)*, 19(1), 81-90. <https://doi.org/10.11591/edulearn.v19i1.21301>
- Tambak, S., Amril, A., & Sukenti, D. (2021). Islamic Teacher Development: Counstructing Islamic Professional Teachers Based on the Khalifah Concept. *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 4(1), 117-135. <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v4i1.1055>
- Tambak, S., Amril, M., Khairi, Z., & Sukenti, D. (2018, October). Development of Madrasah Teacher Professionalism by Strengthening the Khalifah Concept and Islamic Psychosocial Perspective. In *International Conference on Islamic Education (ICIE 2018)* (pp. 34-42). Atlantis Press. <https://doi.org/10.2991/icie-18.2018.7>
- Tambak, S., Hamzah, H., Ahmad, M. Y., Siregar, E. L., Sukenti, D., Sabdin, M., & Rohimah, R. B. (2022). Discussion method accuracy in Islamic higher education: the influence of gender and teaching duration. *Cakrawala Pendidikan: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan*, 41(2), 507-520. <https://doi.org/10.21831/cp.v41i2.40644>
- Tambak, S., Mahfud, C., Latipah, E., & Sukenti, D. (2021). Professional Madrasah Teachers in Teaching: The Influence of Gender and the Length of Certification of Madrasah Teachers. *Dinamika Ilmu*, 21(2), 417-435. <https://doi.org/10.21093/di.v21i2.3527>
- Tambak, S., Sukenti, D., & Firdaus, F. (2024). Indigenous knowledge of Malay culture and Islamic professional madrasa teachers: a phenomenological investigation. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)*, 13(6), 4296-4306. <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v13i6.29650>
- Tambak, S., Sukenti, D., bin Fatah, M. M. U. H., bin Fatah, M. D. U. H., & Zakaria, G. A. N. (2025). Shaping Islamic higher education in Riau's Malay context in the thought of Haji Zaini Kunin. *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Keislaman*, 49(1), 1-21. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v49i1.1336>
- Tambak, S., Sukenti, D., Razak, A. Z. A., Agustina, A., Ahmad, K. A., Firdaus, F., & Syarif, M. (2025). Continuous professional development for madrasa teacher professionalism: engaging motivation for engagement. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)*, 14(4), 3171-3182. <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v14i4.33501>
- Tambak, S., Yasin, M. D. H. bin F., Lubis, F. S., & Tambak, F. A. M. (2026). Negotiating authority and innovation: project-based learning and the changing professional landscape of madrasah teachers. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam Al-Thariqah*, 11(1), 21–39. [https://doi.org/10.25299/althariqah.2026.vol11\(1\).27544](https://doi.org/10.25299/althariqah.2026.vol11(1).27544)

- Tan, C. (2011). *Islamic education and indoctrination*. Routledge.
- Tan, C. (2023). Islamic education in globalization. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 55(2), 145–158. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2021.1982417>
- Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2010). *Mixed methods in social & behavioral research*. Sage.
- Teng, F. (2020). Metacognitive strategies in writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 47, 100757. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2020.100757>
- Teng, F. (2020). The role of metacognitive knowledge in EFL writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 47, 100757. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2020.100757>
- Tracy, S. J. (2020). *Qualitative research methods*. Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119390786>
- UNESCO. (2021). *Reimagining our futures together*. UNESCO Publishing.
- Widodo, H. P., et al. (2025). Teacher pedagogy and reform. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2024.104567>
- Widodo, W., Hoogervorst, T. G., Syarif, M., Yueming, L., Mamat, M., Fauziah, V. N., & Suyitno, S. (2025). The impact of professional commitment on madrasa teacher performance: A study of professional learning communities in Indonesian madrasa. *Journal of Instruction and Islamic Religious Education*, 1(2), 105-120. <https://doi.org/10.63826/jiire.v1i2.173>
- Yasin, M. M. H. bin F., Restyani, D., Ahmad, M., Abdel-Latief, S., Duhani, E. M., Ismawan, Y., & Fidzi, R. (2025). Wahdah method for madrasah teacher professionalism: Is it effective for improving al-Qur'an reading skill?. *Journal of Instruction and Islamic Religious Education*, 1(1), 45-55. <https://doi.org/10.63826/jiire.v1i1.5>
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications* (6th ed.). Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781506336169>
- Zimmerman, B. J. (2020). Self-regulated learning. *Educational Psychologist*, 55(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2019.1650441>