

# Refocusing Spiritual Assessment in Enhancing Student Learning Motivation in Contemporary Islamic Education: A Systematic Literature Review

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## Abstract

This article explores the potential application of spiritual assessment in contemporary Islamic education to enhance students' learning motivation. To achieve this objective, the article employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method. The study was conducted systematically using the Watase Uake tool. The data for this study consisted of articles indexed in Q1, Q2, Q3, and Q4 journals. These articles were selected using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) technique. Following identification, screening, and eligibility, 26 articles were included in the final analysis and examined using a meta-synthesis approach. The review findings indicate that spiritual assessment positively impacts learning motivation by helping students find meaning and purpose in their learning. Implementing spiritual assessment can help identify and strengthen students' spiritual values, thereby enhancing their engagement and academic performance.

## Keywords

Islamic Religious Education; Learning Motivation; Spiritual Assessment

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic education has long been recognized as a system that enriches not only an individual's intellect but also their spiritual dimension (M. Juzwik et al. 2022). However, the spiritual aspect is often overlooked or inadequately addressed in efforts to enhance students' learning motivation, particularly in contemporary contexts (Crick and Jelfs 2011). A deep understanding of the spiritual dimension in education can in fact serve as a key to building meaningful and sustainable student motivation (Pinto et al. 2023; Fidelis, Moreira, and Vitória 2024).

In exploring student learning motivation, various forms of assessment have been employed, such as formative assessment (Luo and Lim 2024), which emphasizes emotional evaluation through self-efficacy. However, these efforts often fall short of addressing belief systems and self-regulation—areas where spiritual assessment offers a compelling alternative. Spirituality lies at the core of Islamic education, emphasizing faith and the regulation of the self or soul (Schmidt et al. 2017). It is viewed as the capacity to awaken the spirit or soul and is deeply connected with religious values (Grubbs et al. 2016). In Islamic education, spiritual assessment is a reflective process used to understand an



individual's spiritual dimension (Balboni 2013, 332), making it a potentially powerful tool for holistic Islamic education.

By implementing spiritual assessment, educators can explore and understand their students' spiritual dimensions. A strong engagement with Islamic spiritual values can offer students deep intrinsic motivation and enrich their learning experiences with a greater sense of purpose and meaning (Afsar, Badir, and Kiani 2016). Spiritual assessment enables educators to detect and respond to student learning needs in a way that promotes a holistic balance of intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence (Yusof et al. 2014). Consequently, the practice of spiritual assessment can enhance students' motivation to learn. Moreover, it lays a strong foundation for sustained personal growth and development within the framework of Islamic spiritual values (Gomi, Starnino, and Canda 2014).

Spiritual assessment was initially used to evaluate the beliefs (Derezotes 2013), needs (Astrow et al. 2018), and hopes (Gomez-Castillo et al. 2015; Benito et al. 2014; Gielen et al. 2022; Astrow et al. 2018) of patients in clinical settings. It has helped healthcare professionals, especially in palliative care, understand the rationale behind patients' decisions and medical actions (Steinhauser et al. 2020; Giske, Schep-Akkerman, et al. 2023). Studies have shown that spirituality positively affects quality of life. For instance, research by Gonçalves et al. found that religious and spiritual interventions (RSIs) can improve quality of life, reduce pain, and promote healthy behavior (J. P. de B. Gonçalves et al. 2017).

Although spiritual assessment is predominantly discussed within clinical settings, some studies have bridged it to educational contexts. Willow, for example, employed the Spiritual Genogram (a genealogical tool mapping spiritual lineage and influences; see Mitrofan and Petre 2013) to assess the effectiveness of counseling education (Willow, Tobin, and Toner 2009). Haley proposed a method to integrate spiritual/faith assessment into clinical coursework for nursing practitioners (Haley 2014). Prabhu, meanwhile, developed spiritual indicators as a student leadership model in higher education, identifying eight new attributes of spiritual intelligence that significantly influenced student leadership development (Prabhu and Mehta 2023).

From the reviewed literature, there appears to be a notable gap in exploring the direct application of spiritual assessment in enhancing students' learning motivation. Thus, a refocusing of spiritual assessment from clinical to educational settings is necessary to deepen our understanding of student learning experiences. This shift is especially crucial in an era where the challenges of modern life increasingly demand deeper meaning and purpose. Emphasizing the spiritual dimension can provide a strong foundation for enhancing learning motivation within Islamic education.

This article, therefore, seeks to: (1) provide an overview of the implementation of spiritual assessment in enhancing student learning motivation; and (2) offer a framework for refocusing spiritual assessment toward increasing learning motivation in contemporary Islamic education. By reviewing relevant literature and articulating recent findings in this field, the article aims to provide valuable insights for Islamic educational practice and for researchers seeking to improve the quality of teaching and learning. A deeper understanding of how spirituality influences student motivation is expected to significantly enhance the effectiveness of Islamic education and foster more meaningful learning environments for future generations.

## 2. METHODS

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to analyze the role of spiritual assessment in enhancing students' learning motivation in Islamic education. The first step was to identify articles relevant to the research topic. To ensure the study's systematic nature, the Watase Uake tool was used. The research process followed several stages, namely: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion (Ma'arif et al. 2023; Purnama, Wilujeng, and Jabar 2023), based on data found in recent articles related to the specified topic.

The first stage was identification. At this stage, Scopus-indexed articles on spiritual assessment were retrieved using the Watase Uake tool. Watase Uake was chosen as the primary tool because it provides features that automatically identify articles indexed in Scopus (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4).

**Table 1.** Keywords Used for Article Search from the Scopus Database via the Watase Uake Tool

No.	Keywords	Quantity Watase Uake
1	Spiritual Assessment	212
2	Spiritual Evaluation	88
3	Spiritual Assessment for Education	3
4	Spiritual Assessment on university	1
5	Spiritual model assessment for education	1
6	Spiritual assessment for counseling	3
7	Spiritual evaluation of education	3
8	Spiritual evaluation of counseling	1
9	Spiritual assessment of motivational life	7
10	Spiritual evaluation model in motivation life	8
	Total	327

Table 1 shows that 327 articles were initially identified. Duplicate articles were removed during the selection process. The remaining articles underwent screening for inclusion and exclusion. The criteria applied for inclusion and exclusion are as follows:

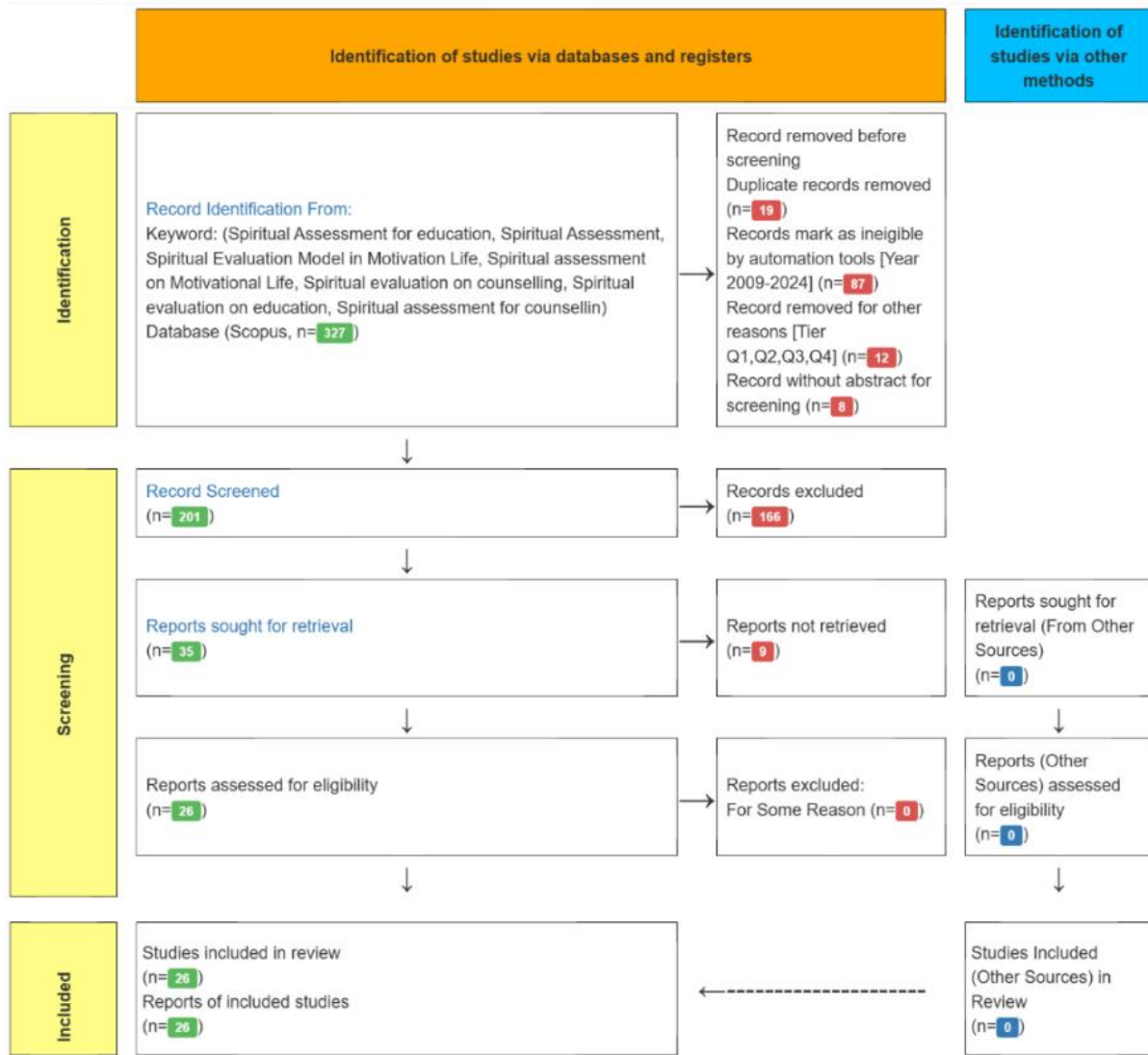
**Table 2.** Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Article Journals	Book chapters, proceedings, and review articles
Articles published between 2009 and 2023	Articles not published between 2009 and 2023
Articles indexed in Q1, Q2, Q3, or Q4 journals	Articles not indexed in Q1, Q2, Q3, or Q4 journals
Articles related to spiritual assessment in educational contexts	Articles related to spiritual assessment but not within the field of education

Second, Screening and Eligibility. After removing duplicate articles and those that did not meet the above criteria, the remaining articles were screened based on their titles and abstracts. Articles that were not relevant to the keywords were excluded. In this stage, the remaining articles were further reviewed to ensure they met the inclusion criteria and were accessible in full text. Articles with restricted access were excluded from the analysis.

Third, Inclusion. Articles that successfully passed the previous stages were included in the systematic analysis to address the research objectives. The details of these stages are summarized using the PRISMA flow diagram presented in Figure 1.

Prisma Reporting: Spiritual Assessment



Generate From Watase Uake Tools, based on Prisma 2020 Reporting

Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram

As illustrated in Figure 1, of the 327 articles that underwent screening, eligibility, and inclusion, 26 were ultimately included. These articles were imported into Zotero, saved in RIS format, and then processed using VOSviewer version 1.6.17 to map thematic networks. The steps to input article data into VOSviewer are as follows: i) open the application and select the “Create” menu; ii) choose “Create a map based on text data”; iii) select “Read data from reference manager file”; iv) select the RIS file from the designated folder; v) choose the source of term extraction: title and abstract fields; vi) select the term counting method: full counting; vii) verify the selected terms.

In the resulting diagram (Figure 2), the network linking spiritual assessment and learning motivation has not yet emerged clearly and does not show a direct connection.

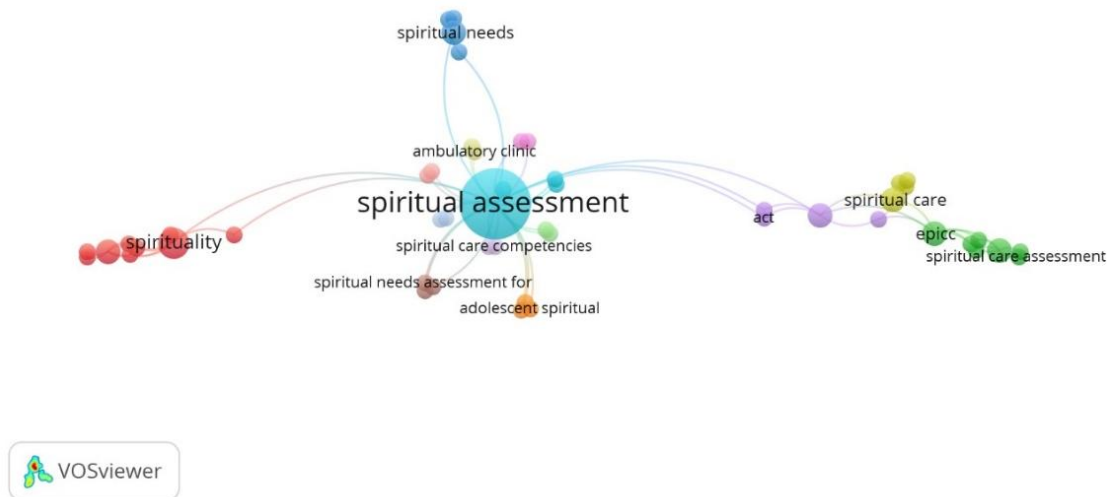


Figure 2. Initial Network Visualization from VOSviewer

The VOSviewer diagram in Figure 2 shows that spiritual assessment is associated with a complex network of concepts. Research on authentic assessment shows connections with thematic areas closely related to spirituality, including spiritual care competencies, spiritual needs assessment, adolescent spirituality, and several other themes illustrated in the figure. Spiritual assessment also shares a similar network, though on a smaller scale, related to spiritually-based curative themes such as spiritual care and spiritual care assessment.

However, the theme connecting spiritual assessment with students' learning motivation in the context of educational implementation is not yet visibly linked. This indicates a promising potential for further research in this area to enrich the understanding and application of spiritual assessment within the framework of Islamic education.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### *Spiritual Assessment: Within the Mapping Distribution*

The articles included in the inclusion stage were then mapped based on publication data and their relevance to the research objectives. From the 26 articles that passed the inclusion criteria, a year-by-year mapping was conducted. Research on spiritual assessment in recent years can be classified as follows:

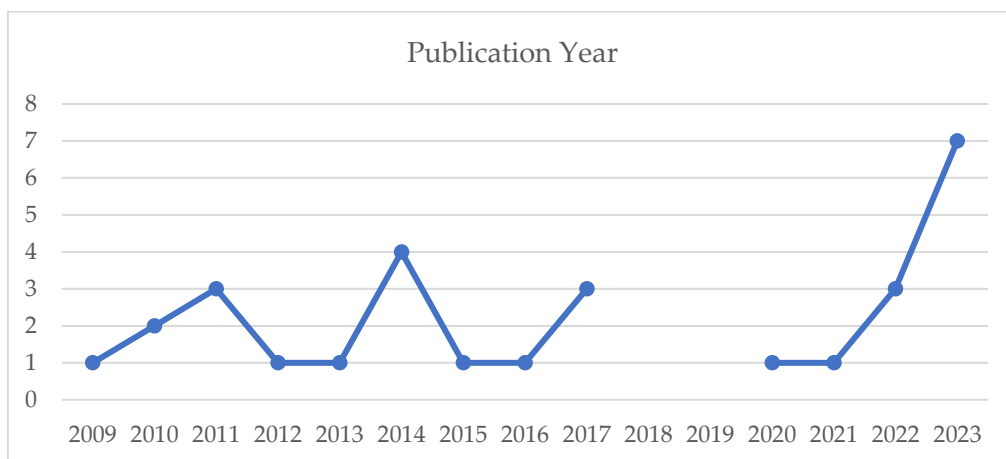


Figure 3. Distribution of Articles by Year of Publication

Figure 3 presents the distribution of articles published between 2009 and 2023 that met the inclusion criteria. During this period, the number of available articles fluctuated, with an uneven spread across the years. From 2009 to 2011, there was a consistent increase, followed by a decline and stagnation at just one article per year in 2012–2013. In 2014, a sharp increase occurred, followed by a return to the previous level in 2015–2016. In 2017, a second peak was observed, but the subsequent two years saw no publications. It was only after 4 years that publication numbers began to rise again, culminating in a significant spike in 2023, reflecting growing interest in spiritual assessment.

The 2009 study provided an early conceptual framework for implementing spiritual assessment by linking individual experiences to family spiritual history through a genogram. Students were assigned to present this genogram under the theme “Counseling and Spirituality”, focusing on their personal learning experiences. The findings revealed significant benefits of this constructivist and experience-based learning approach through the use of genograms (Willow, Tobin, and Toner 2009).

In 2010, spiritual assessment was introduced as an initiative and served as a rationale for developing skills-based curricula. (Attar et al. 2010). In addition, spiritual assessment was developed into a structured tool known as FICA (Faith, Importance, Influence, Community, and Address). The FICA framework encompasses an individual’s faith or beliefs, the importance and influence of spirituality in their life, their spiritual community, and the appropriate interventions to address spiritual needs (Borneman, Ferrell, and Puchalski 2010).

In 2011, spiritual assessment in education appeared to play a role, particularly in counseling. It was utilized to identify and evaluate spiritual dimensions in counseling practices directed toward American Muslim students and Muslim immigrant students in the United States. (Ibrahim and Dykeman 2011). Subsequently, spiritual assessment was also utilized as a component in conducting palliative counseling for children with cancer in hospital settings (Lunder, Furlan, and Simonič 2011).

During 2012–2013, spiritual assessment focused on developing assessment instruments, such as the Spiritual Needs Assessment for Patients (SNAP) (Sharma et al., 2012), and on interprofessional approaches that integrated spiritual evaluation into collaborative care practices across disciplines (Best et al. 2013). In addition, discussions emerged regarding guidelines for spirituality in counseling assessments at the university level. There were also examinations of spiritual assessment in the context of liturgies related to false deities, highlighting critical perspectives on spiritual evaluation frameworks. (Bishop 2013).

Between 2014 and 2016, there were two key discussions on spiritual assessment in relation to mental development (Gomi, Starnino, and Canda 2014; Starnino, Gomi, and Canda 2014). In addition, there were two discussions on spiritual assessment in relation to the resilience of nursing students undergoing clinical practice in hospitals (Haley 2014; L. M. Gonçalves et al. 2016). In parallel, there was one discussion that emphasized spiritual assessment as a means of supporting students’ personal development (Bradfield 2014). Additionally, one discussion focused on the design of a spiritual assessment tool. (LaRocca-Pitts 2015).

In 2017, the discussion on spiritual assessment centered on its role in enhancing the emotional intelligence of gifted children through spiritual education (Pandya 2017). In addition, a standardized curriculum was implemented for students in health-related practicums to guide them in providing care for patients, which included components of spiritual assessment to support holistic patient care (Schmidt et al. 2017). Moreover, parallel to the two aforementioned studies, there was also a spiritual evaluation conducted for nursing students using a psychometric strategic scale (Cruz et al. 2017). There was also an evaluation approach conducted through partnership-based methods (Strand, Carlsen, and Tveit 2017).

In 2020, this article discussed the development and evaluation of an approximately 11-minute educational video designed to enhance nursing students’ understanding of assessing patients’ spiritual

needs. The study emphasized the significance of spiritual aspects in healthcare and the perceived training gap among nurses and nursing students in providing spiritual care. The findings revealed that the educational video was well-received by the students. Approximately 75% of the students who evaluated the video found it enjoyable and useful for learning, and reported that it helped them understand and assess patients' spiritual needs. Overall, the video was considered an effective tool for improving students' knowledge and competence in delivering spiritual care, as well as motivating them to incorporate spiritual aspects into their future clinical practice (Rodrigues et al. 2020).

In 2021, an article investigated the relationship between mental assessment and spiritual assessment among undergraduate and postgraduate dental students at Kerman University of Medical Sciences, Iran. Although the term "spiritual assessment" was not explicitly mentioned in the title or instruments used, the article is highly relevant to the concept. The study reported a high average score for spiritual well-being (71.48), while mental health scores revealed signs of vulnerability, particularly in aspects related to sleep and anxiety. A positive and significant correlation was found between spiritual and mental health ( $p = 0.045$ ) (Sajadi et al. 2021).

In 2022, two articles were published. The first article focused on the development and evaluation of a measurement tool designed to assess spiritual care following the COVID-19 pandemic in Iranian society. This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative in-depth interviews with psychometric analyses to assess the instrument's validity and reliability. The main focus was to describe the concepts, needs, characteristics, outcomes, and challenges in providing spiritual care during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The resulting assessment tool comprised 38 items grouped into four key factors: spiritual care needs, characteristics of spiritual care providers, outcomes of spiritual care, and challenges in its provision (Bostani Khalesi and Pourmohammad 2022). Secondly, an article discusses the development and validation of a learning outcomes checklist to enhance nursing students' competencies in providing spiritual and emotional care to patients. The study highlights the importance of educational preparation for nurses to support patients' religious, spiritual, and emotional aspects holistically, and explores how this framework can be integrated into the nursing education curriculum (Sarrión-Bravo et al. 2022).

In 2023, there were 6 articles on spiritual assessment. The first article examined the effectiveness of the ISPEC curriculum—a six-module, evidence-based program utilizing a generalist–specialist model for delivering spiritual care—in an interprofessional context involving physicians, nurses, and healthcare providers, implemented through an online format (Best et al. 2023). The second article discussed the development and testing of the validity and reliability of the EPICC Spiritual Care Competency Self-Assessment Tool for undergraduate nursing and midwifery students (Giske, Schep-Akkerman, et al. 2023). The third article explores the concept of spiritual intelligence (SI) by investigating two different models: the strong and the weak versions. (Watts and Dorobantu 2023). The fourth article presents the development and validation of a short-form version of the SAIL instrument, designed to measure universal aspects of spirituality (Bohlmeijer et al. 2023). The fifth article presents qualitative findings from nursing and midwifery students at eight universities across five countries, assessing their spiritual care competencies using the EPICC tool. (Cone et al. 2023). The sixth article introduces and evaluates a new psychometric instrument, the Spiritual Supporter (SpSup) Scale, designed to measure spiritual care competencies among professionals, particularly in the Polish context. (Fopka-Kowalczyk, Best, and Krajnik 2023).

### ***Implementation of Spiritual Assessment in Enhancing Students' Learning Motivation***

Implementing spiritual assessment to enhance students' learning motivation can be achieved through several strategies. One such strategy is adapting interventions within a spiritually based curriculum. A study found that 13 medical students misunderstood the experience of applying the curriculum simulation; they believed they had addressed patients' religious and spiritual needs, whereas patients reported no improvement. In a four-month follow-up, religious assessment improved;

however, retention decreased at the twelve-month follow-up. (Schmidt et al. 2017). Therefore, the curriculum was designed as a response to the implementation of spiritual assessment in enhancing students' motivation.

In addition, the implementation of spiritual assessment can use the strategy of spiritual education, which focuses on developing students' intrinsic motivation through spiritual teaching grounded in religious and spiritual values. In this strategy, teachers can use various methods to enhance students' motivation, such as providing independent exercises. Ultimately, students can improve their emotional intelligence. In this context, spiritual assessment serves as a control measure for the emotional intelligence post-test scale (Pandya 2017).

Furthermore, spiritual assessment can be implemented using a spiritual andragogy approach that focuses on developing the self-directed learning motivation of social work students by providing them with the freedom to grow and develop independently. They reflect on their spiritual identity in relation to their professional identity. They can connect spirituality and social work while considering the religious context (Ranz 2021). In this approach, the teacher uses methods to enhance student motivation, such as providing opportunities for students to participate in the social work-based learning process actively.

In research conducted by other authors regarding several applications or tools, such as GDI (Bradfield 2014), FICA (Borneman, Ferrell, and Puchalski 2010), SNAP (Sharma et al. 2012), EPICC (Giske, Schep-Akkerman, et al. 2023), and FACTs (LaRocca-Pitts 2015) The results showed that spiritually based learning motivation can influence student learning outcomes. The conclusions of several of these studies, which used the associative explanation method, found that spiritually based learning motivation has a positive, significant effect on student learning outcomes.

Based on the mapped display of discussions identified each year, spiritual assessment can be summarized in the following table 3:

**Table 3.** The Mapped Display of Discussions Identified Each Year

Type of Tool/Method	Article/Author
Genogram	Willow et al. (2009)
FICA	Borneman et al. (2010)
SNAP	Sharma et al. (2012)
SAIL / SAIL-SF	Bohlmeijer et al. (2023)
EPICC Tools	Giske et al. (2023), Cone et al. (2023)
Spiritual Supporter Scale (SpSup)	Fopka-Kowalczyk et al. (2023)
ISPEC Curriculum	Best et al. (2023)
Educational Video	Rodrigues et al. (2020)
Learning Outcomes Tool	Sarrión-Bravo et al. (2022)
Spiritual-Mental Health Correlation	Sajadi et al. (2021)
Theology and Liturgy	Bishop (2013), Watts and Dorobantu (2023)
Integrated/Constructivist/Reflective Curriculum	Attar et al. (2010), Pandya (2017), Bradfield (2014), Schmidt et al. (2017)

### *Refocusing Spiritual Assessment to Enhance Student Learning Motivation*

Refocusing spiritual assessment from the clinical sector to the educational sector is an innovative step that can enhance students' learning motivation (Stewart 2014). In the clinical context, spiritual

assessment is often used to identify and understand spiritual aspects that affect an individual's well-being. Applying this method in education can help identify students' spiritual values and beliefs that positively impact their motivation and engagement in the learning process. According to Rumbold's (2007) research, integrating spiritual elements into education can increase students' sense of purpose and meaning in learning, which, in turn, drives improved academic performance and emotional well-being.

Spiritual assessment in education can help teachers identify students' values, beliefs, and life goals that may not be apparent through conventional teaching approaches. By understanding students' spiritual dimensions, teachers can better adapt their teaching methods to support individual student needs. Research by Lennon-Dearing et al. (2012) shows that integrating spirituality into education can enhance intrinsic motivation and student engagement. This occurs because spiritual assessment helps students connect the knowledge they gain with their personal values and beliefs, making the learning experience more relevant and meaningful.

The implementation of spiritual assessment in educational settings functions not only as a tool to support students' academic development but also as a means to foster their holistic well-being (Brooke 1987; Daniel, Chowdhury, and Gentina 2024; Karacan et al. 2024). When students feel their values and beliefs are recognized and respected, they are more likely to feel motivated and engaged in learning (Dunn 2010). This can improve academic achievement, reduce stress levels, and enhance students' emotional well-being (Ozcan et al. 2024). Moreover, this approach helps create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment, which is vital for students' social and emotional development.

Applying spiritual assessment in education requires specific training for teachers to ensure they can effectively and sensitively implement this method (Hodge 2004). Teachers need to be trained to recognize students' various spiritual dimensions and to create classroom environments that support spiritual exploration. According to Cone et al. (2023) spiritual assessment and spiritually based interventions can be applied in school practice to support students' overall well-being. Therefore, educational institutions need to provide the necessary resources and training to support the implementation of spiritual assessment.

The implementation of spiritual assessment in contemporary Islamic education holds undeniable significance. First, spiritual assessment enables Islamic educational institutions to better understand and integrate spiritual dimensions into the educational process. This not only covers ritual aspects but also the moral and ethical values underlying Islamic teachings (Mulianah 2023). Consequently, spiritual assessment helps create a learning environment that promotes character development in accordance with Islamic teachings, thereby providing a strong foundation for Muslim individuals to face life's challenges.

Second, spiritual assessment plays an important role in maintaining the relevance of Islamic education to current demands. In a rapidly changing world, Islamic educational institutions need to adapt to these changes (Juzwik et al. 2022). By paying attention to spiritual aspects, Islamic education becomes not only a means to acquire knowledge but also to shape character and attitudes aligned with religious values. This is crucial to ensure that Islamic education remains relevant and beneficial for today's Muslim generation.

Furthermore, spiritual assessment contributes to the development of more well-rounded Muslim individuals. Islamic education focused solely on academic aspects may produce intellectually sharp individuals, but may lack the spiritual depth and moral awareness necessary for ethical and competitive leadership. Therefore, spiritual assessment helps ensure that Islamic education pays balanced attention to intellectual, spiritual, and moral development.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the systematic review, it can be concluded that implementing spiritual assessment in contemporary Islamic education has significant potential to enhance students' learning motivation. By helping students find meaning and purpose in their learning, spiritual assessment serves as an effective tool for identifying and strengthening students' spiritual values. This strengthening directly encourages greater engagement and academic achievement. Therefore, integrating spiritual assessment into Islamic educational practices is not only relevant but also strategic for developing a more holistic and meaningful learning experience. Further research can be conducted to develop more practical, context-specific models for implementing spiritual assessment that account for students' characteristics and diverse educational environments.

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