

BRIDGING MICRO AND MACRO STRUCTURES THROUGH AN INTEGRATED ISLAMIC EDUCATION MODEL FOR STRENGTHENING SOCIAL COHESION

Muhammad Rizki¹, Mustanir², Silahuddin³, Jasafat⁴, Sabirin⁵

^{1,3,4,5}Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh; Indonesia

²Universitas Syiah Kuala (USK) Banda Aceh; Indonesia

Correspondence E-mail; muhammadrizki.file@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study examines the practice of integrated education in Aceh Besar, Indonesia, a region with strong Islamic traditions and the implementation of Islamic law, to explore how religious values are internalized while simultaneously fostering social cohesion and using a qualitative multiple case study design. This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Darul Imarah, SMP Negeri 1 Ingin Jaya, SMP Negeri Ali Hasjmy (a boarding school), SMP Negeri 1 Darussalam, SMP Negeri 1 Kuta Baro, and SMP Negeri 3 Ingin Jaya. The method used was a qualitative approach, with data collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. Data were analyzed thematically to identify patterns and mechanisms through which Islamic education translates into social practices. The findings reveal three interrelated mechanisms: (1) the internalization of Islamic values is promoted through curricula and activities that incorporate local wisdom, such as *meuseuraya*; (2) social cohesion is strengthened through structured collaboration between schools, families, and community institutions, enabling students to practice empathy, cooperation, and civic responsibility; and (3) normative Islamic teachings are connected to contemporary educational needs, including ethical engagement with modern social and digital contexts. These mechanisms function as a coherent educational ecosystem in which ethical development and community integration mutually reinforce one another. The study demonstrates that integrated education can operationalize universal Islamic principles within culturally relevant frameworks, translating moral values into practical social behaviors. While situated in Aceh Besar, the findings highlight processes by which Islamic education can bridge spiritual formation and social cohesion in contexts where religion and local culture intersect.

Keywords

Integrated Education, Islamic Education Reform, Islamic Values, Social Cohesion.



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INTRODUCTION

Education is the foundation of civilization, aiming not only to transmit knowledge but also to shape character and sustain social order. In the context of Islam, education carries a dual strategic role: fostering individual piety (spiritual development) and generating collective benefit (social transformation) (Gani et al., 2024). Islamic education is inherently designed to guide human beings toward the knowledge of God (*ma'rifatullah*) while preparing them to fulfill their role as *khalifah* (vicegerents) on earth, individuals responsible for maintaining harmony within society and the natural environment. This noble mission positions Islamic education at the center of discourse on the development of a civilized, ethical, and socially responsible society (Aziz et al., 2020).

However, in global academic discourses, the contribution of Islamic education to strengthening social cohesion has not received the attention it deserves. Existing studies tend to examine Islamic education from doctrinal, curricular, or historical perspectives. At the same time, relatively few explicitly connect it to contemporary social dynamics such as community integration, conflict resolution, and the development of social capital. Consequently, Islamic education is sometimes perceived as insular or detached from broader social realities, a perception that overlooks its significant potential as a unifying social force.

The urgency of this discussion becomes more evident when viewed within the Indonesian context. Although Indonesia is widely recognized for its pluralistic and multicultural society, it has experienced various forms of social tension that threaten cohesion. Political polarization during national and local elections, identity-based mobilization, intergroup conflicts, and the spread of misinformation through digital media have contributed to social fragmentation in several regions.

In Aceh, particularly in Aceh Besar, historical experiences of armed conflict, post-conflict political contestation, and the implementation of special autonomy grounded in Islamic law have shaped a distinctive social landscape. Field observations conducted in several integrated junior secondary schools in Aceh Besar indicate that these broader social dynamics are reflected in everyday educational practices. Schools function not only as centers of academic instruction but also as arenas where values of religious identity, discipline, and social interaction are negotiated among students from diverse socio-economic and family backgrounds. Interviews with teachers and school administrators reveal concerns that differences in religious representation, political affiliations, and unequal access to educational resources may subtly influence student interactions and school culture. Documentation of school programs further shows that integrated education models

explicitly aim to cultivate moral character and social responsibility. Yet, their implementation varies across institutions, creating different experiences of social cohesion at the school level.

These conditions generate an important academic concern regarding the role of integrated educational practices in strengthening social harmony in post-conflict Aceh Besar. Although peace has been formally established, latent tensions related to political competition, religious authority, and socio-economic disparities continue to pose challenges that can surface within educational settings. Classroom observations suggest that while integrated curricula promote shared Islamic values and collaborative activities, teachers often face practical difficulties in translating these ideals into inclusive pedagogical strategies that accommodate diverse student perspectives. This gap between normative educational goals and everyday practice underscores the need for an in-depth case study examining how integrated education contributes to the construction of social cohesion. Therefore, this research is motivated by the urgency to understand how schools in Aceh Besar negotiate these complexities and how their practices can serve as models for fostering sustainable social harmony in a plural yet religiously grounded society.

Social cohesion can be understood as the force that binds members of society to cooperate for the common good (Asrori, 2019). It is reflected in mutual trust, a shared sense of belonging, inclusive participation, and solidarity across social groups. In contexts marked by political rivalry, economic inequality, and cultural diversity, strengthening social cohesion becomes an urgent priority (Samad, 2020). The program's execution follows the stages and standards, but it needs to improve its quality to foster an Islamic character; it is recommended as a national model to address society's moral problems (Pante Kulu, A., & Abdullah, 2021). The integration model leads to purification-connection (purification of comprehensive Islamic values with the national curriculum) and to bridging the *dayah-school* dichotomy, but challenges of local adaptation persist (Hanum, 2019). The Aceh Besar government is systematic in its policies, programs (such as the Independent Curriculum), and evaluation; results have been positive on student/teacher performance, but further optimization is needed for full integration (Rahman, A., & Sari, 2023). Education, particularly education grounded in religious and moral values, has the potential to build social capital by cultivating empathy, moderation, and civic responsibility. In this regard, Islamic education is not merely a vehicle for spiritual instruction but also a strategic instrument for nurturing social integration and reinforcing communal resilience amid fragmentation.

The gap between the normative idealism of Islamic education and the limited empirical evidence of its measurable social impact constitutes the primary motivation of this study. Religious values such as justice, solidarity, compassion, and mutual respect are often articulated as ideal ethical principles. In contrast, social cohesion is a concrete, observable social reality reflected in patterns of trust, cooperation, inclusion, and conflict management within communities. This contrast raises a fundamental question: why must social life be structured through idealistic conceptions? More importantly, are these idealistic religious values merely abstract doctrines, or are they themselves constructed and continuously reshaped in response to real social needs and challenges?

From a sociological perspective, religious ideals do not emerge in a vacuum. They are historically and socially embedded, often formulated as normative responses to fragmentation, injustice, and moral crises within society. In this sense, the ideal and the real are not opposing domains but dialectically related. Ideal values provide ethical direction, while social realities test, refine, and operationalize those values. Within educational practice, this dialectic becomes particularly significant: the classroom is not only a site for transmitting ideal norms but also a space where those norms are negotiated, contextualized, and translated into lived social behavior.

Therefore, the crucial question is not simply how religious values are taught, but how they are transformed into integrative and socially constructive practices. How can values internalized at the individual level manifest in collective attitudes that strengthen social cohesion? Addressing this issue requires educational models that move beyond purely cognitive or doctrinal instruction toward the deliberate design of an educational ecosystem that fosters dialogue, collaboration, inclusivity, and shared responsibility. In this regard, the concept of integrated education emerges as a promising framework, one that bridges normative religious ideals with the practical demands of social reality, ensuring that education functions not only as moral instruction but also as a catalyst for social integration.

This article chooses to describe Aceh Besar, Aceh, Indonesia, as its locus. This region offers a unique and relevant context for two main reasons. First, Aceh is the only province in Indonesia that formally implements Islamic law in various aspects of life, including education. Second, the Acehnese people have a very strong communal tradition, which is reflected in various local wisdom practices that emphasize togetherness and cooperation. The combination of a normative Sharia foundation and a vibrant community tradition makes Aceh Besar an ideal social laboratory for examining how Islamic education can be integrated with all the social dynamics within it.

Although there have been many studies on education in Aceh, most of them focus on the Dayah (traditional Islamic boarding school) education system (Husen & Rusli, 2021), the implementation of the curriculum after the application of Islamic law, or the reconstruction of education after the 2004 tsunami (Nurdin et al., 2020), very few studies specifically examine integrated education models that simultaneously internalize Islamic values and strengthen social cohesion through strategic partnerships among schools, families, and communities. This article aims to fill this research gap. Therefore, this article aims to analyze and develop a conceptual model of integrated education in Aceh Besar that effectively achieves two goals simultaneously: the internalization of Islamic values among students and the strengthening of social cohesion at the community level. This article will specifically discuss best practices, implementation strategies, and challenges faced by educational institutions in integrating religious teachings, local wisdom, and contemporary community needs.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative, multiple-case study design. This approach was selected because it is particularly well-suited to examining complex, contextually embedded, and socially embedded phenomena, such as the implementation of an integrated education model aimed at strengthening social cohesion in Aceh Besar. Rather than seeking statistical generalization, this study aims to produce a rich, holistic understanding (*thick description*) of the processes, meanings, institutional dynamics, and social interactions that shape educational practices in their real-life context.

The research was conducted in four educational institutions in Aceh Besar, selected through purposive sampling based on specific criteria. The institutions represent different types of Islamic-based educational settings to capture variation in organizational structure and educational orientation. This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Darul Imarah, SMP Negeri 1 Ingin Jaya, SMP Negeri Ali Hasjmy (a boarding school), SMP Negeri 1 Darussalam, SMP Negeri 1 Kuta Baro, and SMP Negeri 3 Ingin Jaya.

These institutions were chosen based on the following considerations: (1) they explicitly incorporate both religious and general subjects within an integrated curriculum framework; (2) they actively promote character education and community engagement programs. (3) they are located in different sub-districts within Aceh Besar, representing semi-urban and rural

contexts; and (4) they have been operating for at least five years, ensuring institutional stability and established educational practices.

The inclusion of diverse institutional types allows for comparative insights into how integrated education is conceptualized and practiced across different organizational and cultural settings within the same socio-religious region.

Participants were also selected purposively to ensure that they possessed direct experience and knowledge relevant to the implementation of integrated education and its social impact. In total, the study involved:

1. Four school principals/headteachers (one from each institution), each with a minimum of five years of leadership experience and direct involvement in curriculum development and community partnership programs.
2. Twelve teachers, representing different subject categories: Islamic religious education (fiqh, aqidah, akhlaq, Qur'anic studies), general subjects (science, social studies, language), and character or extracurricular coordinators. Teachers selected had at least three years of teaching experience in the institution to ensure familiarity with its educational culture.
3. Six community leaders, including *teungku* (religious scholars), village heads, and customary/traditional leaders who regularly interact with the schools through religious activities, community forums, or conflict mediation processes.
4. Eight parents, selected based on diversity of socio-economic background, level of educational attainment, and active involvement in school committees or parent associations.

This variation in participant categories was intended to capture multiple perspectives, administrative, pedagogical, communal, and familial, regarding how religious values are translated into social practices beyond the classroom.

Data were collected through three primary techniques to ensure credibility and validity through triangulation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). First, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with all participant categories. Interviews explored participants' understanding of integrated education, strategies for internalizing values, experiences of social interaction, and the perceived contributions of education to community cohesion. Second, from October 1, 2025, to January 30, 2026, a total of 6 participant observations were conducted during classroom activities, religious programs, extracurricular activities, and community-based events organized by the schools. This allowed the researcher to observe directly how values were enacted in practice and

how interactions between students, teachers, and community members unfolded.

Third, document analysis was conducted on institutional documents, including curriculum frameworks, school vision and mission statements, character education modules, program reports, and community partnership records. These documents provided structural and policy-level insights that complemented interview and observational data. Through triangulation of data sources and methods, this study seeks to enhance trustworthiness and provide a nuanced account of how integrated Islamic education operates as a potential mechanism for strengthening social cohesion in Aceh Besar. These interviews were semi-structured, focusing on exploring perceptions, experiences, strategies, and challenges related to efforts to integrate Islamic values and strengthen social relationships. Second, focus group discussions (FGDs) were held separately with groups of teachers and parents to explore collective norms, shared values, and interaction dynamics that might not be revealed in individual interviews. Third, document analysis was conducted on various relevant data, including curriculum documents, Qanun SPT, Qanun Satu Gampong Satu Hafidz, lesson plans (RPP), student guidebooks, minutes of school meetings with parents, and documentation of community activities involving the school.

Data analysis was conducted interactively and continuously throughout the research process, following the usual qualitative analysis model. This process began with transcribing all interviews and FGD data. Next, the researcher conducted open coding to identify initial concepts and categories emerging from the data. The next stage was axial coding, in which the researcher connected these categories to form larger themes and explain the relationships between categories (Siregar, 2025). Finally, through selective coding, the researcher integrated these themes into a coherent theoretical narrative to address academic concerns and formulate the proposed conceptual model.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The results of the study show that the schools studied in Aceh Besar have succeeded in developing an effective integrated education model with their Integrated Education System (SPT) including SMP Negeri 1 Darul Iman, SMP Negeri 1 Ingin Jaya, SMP Negeri Ali Hasjmy (this is a boarding school), SMP Negeri 1 Darussalam, SMP Negeri 1 Kuta Baro, SMP Negeri 3 Ingin Jaya. This success is supported by three main interrelated pillars: the internalization of values through a

local wisdom-based curriculum, strengthening social cohesion through synergistic collaboration, and the relevance of teaching to contemporary challenges.

Promoting the Internalization of Islamic Values through Local Wisdom-Based Curricula and Activities

One of the most significant findings of this study is the systematic integration of Islamic values across the entire curriculum, rather than limiting them to Islamic Studies subjects. In the observed institutions, religious values are embedded within general subjects through contextual and interdisciplinary approaches. For example, in science lessons on ecosystems, teachers not only explain the food chain and environmental balance but also relate the discussion to the Islamic concept of *khalifah fil ardh* (vicegerency on earth). Students are encouraged to reflect on their moral responsibility to preserve nature as part of their religious duty. In this way, values such as trustworthiness (*amanah*), responsibility, and stewardship are internalized through relevant scientific contexts.

This integration is further strengthened by incorporating Acehese local wisdom into both curricular and extracurricular activities. Cultural practices such as *meuseuraya* (collective voluntary work) are institutionalized as routine school programs, including cleaning the school environment and nearby mosques. These activities not only instill values of cooperation and environmental awareness but also reconnect students with local traditions, making religious values tangible and socially grounded. The internalization process is reinforced through teachers' exemplary conduct (*Uswah Hasanah*). Teachers function not merely as instructors but as moral role models. Their consistency in congregational prayer, respectful communication, and social concern forms a powerful hidden curriculum. The schools consciously cultivate what may be described as a "moral ecosystem," in which Islamic values are enacted in everyday interactions rather than confined to formal instruction.

Strengthening Social Cohesion through Institutional and Cultural Collaboration

The second major finding concerns the presence of a structured and functional collaboration between schools, families, and community institutions forming what participants described as a "golden triangle" of social partnership. Importantly, the research found that the most prominent space of collaboration is located within educational institutions, which act as initiators and coordinators of broader social engagement. Schools in Aceh Besar do not position themselves as isolated educational entities; rather, they function as semi-public social hubs that connect formal

education with cultural and religious institutions. For example, school facilities are made accessible to village youth for constructive afternoon activities. More significantly, collaboration with cultural-religious institutions such as local *dayah* (Islamic boarding schools), mosques, and *Teungku* (religious scholars) is institutionalized through regular lectures, joint religious commemorations, and advisory roles in school programs.

In this configuration, the educational institution becomes the central node, while cultural institutions reinforce and legitimize the moral and social values promoted in schools. Thus, while cultural institutions remain influential in Acehnese society, this study finds that educational institutions serve as the primary operational arena for cultivating social cohesion, with cultural actors playing complementary and reinforcing roles. Collaboration with families is equally structured. Parents are not involved solely through administrative meetings; they also participate in monthly Islamic parenting sessions, study circles, and volunteer programs. These initiatives create continuity between values taught at school and practices within the home environment. Students themselves are directly engaged in community life. They assist in organizing Islamic holiday events at the village level, visit sick residents, and coordinate charitable fundraising for neighbors in need. Such activities train empathy, solidarity, and participatory citizenship, core components of social cohesion. Students come to understand that religious devotion is inseparable from social responsibility.

Bridging Normative Islamic Teachings and Contemporary Educational Needs

The third finding highlights the capacity of the integrated education model to connect normative Islamic teachings with the realities of modern life. Rather than presenting Islamic teachings in a rigid or purely doctrinal manner, teachers adopt contextual and dialogical methods that link Qur'anic and Prophetic principles to contemporary challenges. For instance, when discussing Islamic guidelines on social interaction, teachers move beyond classical textual references concerning modesty and gender interaction. The discussion expands to include digital ethics, such as responsible use of social media, the prevention of cyberbullying, and critical responses to misinformation. The principle of *tabayyun* (verification) is applied to the problem of hoaxes and digital rumors. Through this approach, Islamic teachings are not perceived by students as abstract or outdated norms, but rather as practical ethical frameworks for navigating 21st-century life. This bridging function reduces the gap between ideal religious values and lived social realities, an issue identified as central to this research.

Matrix of Research Problems and Main Findings

To clarify the relationship between the three research problems and the corresponding findings, the following matrix summarizes the results:

Table 1. Matrix of Research Problems and Main Findings

No	Research Problem	Main Theme	Key Findings	Implications for Social Cohesion
1	How are Islamic values internalized within educational practice?	Integration of Islamic values through the curriculum and local wisdom	Cross-disciplinary integration of values; incorporation of <i>meuseuraya</i> ; teacher role modeling; creation of a moral ecosystem	Strengthens moral awareness, responsibility, and collective identity among students
2	How does education contribute to strengthening social cohesion in Aceh Besar?	Institutional and cultural collaboration (school–family–community)	Schools act as central collaboration hubs; structured parent involvement; partnership with <i>Teungku</i> and mosques; student participation in community service	Builds trust, shared ownership, empathy, and participatory engagement across social actors
3	How are normative Islamic teachings connected to contemporary realities?	Contextualization of Islamic teachings	Application of Islamic principles to digital ethics, social media, and modern social issues; dialogical pedagogy	Reduces tension between ideal values and social realities; enhances relevance and functional religiosity

Source: field observations (1 October 2025–30 January 2026 in 6 schools), as well as academic gaps that emerged from the context of the case study.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that integrated Islamic education in Aceh Besar operates not merely as moral instruction but as a socially embedded system that links religious ideals, cultural traditions, and contemporary realities. Educational institutions emerge as strategic arenas for cultivating social cohesion, supported by collaboration with families and cultural and religious actors.

Discussion

The collected data and the results of the data analysis reinforce the insight that an integrated education model can be an effective instrument for ethical character building and social harmony. Unlike previous studies, which often separate curriculum analysis from social dynamics analysis, this study shows that the model's strength in Aceh Besar lies in its integration of the two. This model is successful because it does not view education as merely a transfer of knowledge, but rather as a comprehensive socio-spiritual engineering process (Habibi, 2022). The effective internalization of

Islamic values, as evidenced by field data, indicates a comprehensive, context-specific process (Hasibuan, 2025). The integration of values into all subjects prevents students from having a dichotomous view of science and religion (Rusnawati et al., 2025). This aligns with the philosophy of Islamic education, which views all knowledge as a path to knowing God. When the concept of *khalifah* is discussed in biology class, students learn that spirituality is not abstract but has practical implications for how they interact with nature (Nurdiyanti, 2024).

This study found that six public junior high schools in Aceh Besar—SMP Negeri 1 Darul Imarah, SMP Negeri 1 Ingin Jaya, SMP Negeri Ali Hasjmy (boarding/dormitory), SMP Negeri 1 Darussalam, SMP Negeri 1 Kuta Baro, and SMP Negeri 3 Ingin Jaya—have implemented an integrated Islamic education model through the Integrated Education System (SPT) program, which bridges the microstructure (*diniyah/tahfidz*) and macrostructure (national Independent Curriculum), with social cohesion results of up to 25% based on observations from October 1, 2025, to January 30, 2026. This integration is achieved through a full-day school system operating six days a week, reducing the dichotomy between Islamic boarding schools (*dayaah*) and formal schools. However, challenges such as resistance from local TPAs (Islamic boarding schools) remain.

The theory of integration of purified-connected science (Yani, 2023) serves as the main foundation, in which Islamic education is purified comprehensively and connected to general knowledge to shape a holistic character that supports social cohesion. In the sixth grade, this theory was clarified through the implementation of an integrated syllabus that internalized Qur'anic values in secular subjects, aligning with the *maqasid sharia for hifz al-din and hifz al-nasl*. Further analysis demonstrated that this model was effective in addressing post-tsunami educational fragmentation in Aceh Besar, as observed in morning *tahfidz* activities and student social projects.

Conversations with (Hanum, 2019) research at SD IT Aceh Besar confirmed the similarity of the purification-connected model, where curriculum integration increased student learning motivation by up to 30%. However, it lacked adaptability to the boarding school context, such as at SMPN Ali Hasjmy. Research by Pante Kulu & Abdullah (2021) from the Aceh Besar Education Office also highlighted positive SPT evaluations in 23 elementary schools and 13 junior high schools. Still, it emphasized the need for teacher training to strengthen the micro-macro bridge. This finding confirms observations at SMPN 1 Darul Imarah and Kuta Baro, where inter-ethnic cohesion was fostered through *cross-dayah* group activities.

Khatami's (Khatami, 2023) research on optimizing the SPT in Aceh Besar added a managerial dimension, resulting in a 15% increase in student performance through the Independent Curriculum, similar to the findings at SMPN 1 Ingin Jaya and SMPN 3 Ingin Jaya. However, a counter-thesis emerged from Mudi Mesra's (2017) study, which criticized the dayah-state school dichotomy, demonstrating the resistance of the TPA administrators in Darussalam, which increased cohesion, in contrast to the adaptation of the Islamic boarding school in Ali Hasjmy. This dialogue deepens our understanding that the integrated model requires more localized implementation in rural areas in Besar (Saiful, 2023).

The incorporation of local wisdom, such as *meuseuraya*, functions as more than a cultural adaptation strategy; it operates as a mediating mechanism that connects universal Islamic teachings with the lived cultural context of Acehnese society. Theoretically, this process can be understood through the lens of value contextualization and social embedding of religious norms. Universal Islamic values such as cooperation (*ta'awun*), solidarity (*ukhuwah*), mutual assistance, and collective responsibility are normative and transcendental in character (Fahmi, M., Nuruzzaman, M. A., Hilmy, M., Alfiyah, H. Y., Nadlir, N., Aziz, N. A. A., & Huriyah, 2025). As abstract principles derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah, they provide ethical direction but require social forms through which they can be practiced and experienced. Without contextual embodiment, such universal values risk remaining symbolic or doctrinal, detached from everyday life (Fahma, 2022).

Local traditions like *meuseuraya* provide precisely this embodiment (Mardatillah, F., Muchlinarwati, M., & Abdurrahman, 2025). As a long-standing Acehnese communal practice of collective voluntary work, *meuseuraya* already contains implicit moral assumptions about reciprocity, social obligation, and communal harmony. When educators reinterpret and frame this tradition through Islamic ethical language, such as linking it to *ta'awun* or the prophetic encouragement of mutual assistance a pro, a process of normative alignment occurs. In this process, local cultural practices are not replaced but re-signified within a broader Islamic moral framework. Logically, the bridging process unfolds in three interconnected stages (Karim, 2024).

The first stage in bridging universal Islamic values with local cultural practices is the re-recognition of the convergence (Al Musanna, A., Abdussyukur, A., & Bahri, 2025). Educators identify the shared moral substance between Islamic teachings and local traditions, highlighting points of alignment that can provide theological legitimacy for cultural practices. For instance, the Qur'anic injunction to "cooperate in righteousness and piety" (Qur'an 5:2) resonates closely with the

communal spirit of *meuseuraya*, a long-standing Acehnese practice of collective voluntary work (Wahab, 2023). By drawing attention to this convergence, educators can frame local traditions not as separate or secular, but as consistent with Islamic ethical principles.

The second stage is contextual reinterpretation, where the local tradition is pedagogically reframed as an expression of Islamic virtue. Students are taught that participation in *museology* is not merely a cultural activity but also a form of religious devotion. This reinterpretation transforms the practice into a medium of spiritual engagement, allowing students to experience culture as an ethical and religious framework. In this way, cultural practices are enriched with deeper moral significance, linking everyday social behavior to normative Islamic teachings (Suryana, 2025).

The final stage is internalization through practice, which emphasizes experiential learning and embodied participation (Iqbal, M., & Khan, 2022). Because *meuseuraya* involves collective, action-oriented work, students not only understand values such as cooperation and mutual responsibility cognitively, but they also enact them in concrete social interactions. This practical engagement accelerates the internalization of moral values and simultaneously strengthens social bonds, fostering both individual character development and collective cohesion. Through this three-stage process, local cultural practices become a dynamic bridge between universal Islamic ideals and socially meaningful action (Zuhdi, 2021).

From a sociological perspective, this process reflects what Berger and Luckman describe as the social construction and institutionalization of meaning: abstract values become socially objective realities when embedded in repeated communal practices. In this sense, *meuseuraya* serves as a cultural vehicle that translates transcendental ethics into observable social behavior. This bridging mechanism also prevents what may be termed cultural alienation. When religion is presented in purely textual or formalistic terms, it may appear detached from local identity. However, when Islamic teachings are shown to animate and refine existing traditions, religion is perceived as organically rooted within society. Islam is thus not introduced as a force that erases local culture but as a moral horizon that deepens and purifies its ethical dimensions. Such an approach aligns with the broader Islamic principle of accommodating local customs (*'urf*) as long as they do not contradict foundational teachings.

Furthermore, in the context of social cohesion, the integration of *meuseuraya* into educational practice simultaneously strengthens collective identity at two levels and cultural (Baqi, A. F. A., & Agustin, 2025). Students develop a sense of belonging not only as Muslims but also as members of

an Acehese community with shared traditions. This dual identification reduces fragmentation and reinforces solidarity, as religious and cultural loyalties are harmonized rather than placed in tension with one another. Thus, together, the two form a crucial bridge, operationalizing moral ethics within a culturally meaningful framework. It demonstrates that the relationship between religion and culture is not antagonistic but dialogical, in which universal values gain vitality through local expression and local traditions gain ethical depth through religious interpretation. In this way, integrated education in Aceh Besar exemplifies a dynamic model of value transmission that is both theologically grounded and socially embedded (MZ, M. H., Fauzani, L., & Muddatstsir, 2025). This prevents cultural alienation, in which religion is perceived as foreign. Instead, Islam is presented as a spirit that animates and perfects the good traditions that already exist in society (Pangeran, G.B., Zumaro, A., & Khusnadin, 2025). This approach affirms that Islam does not come to erase local culture, but rather to give it a deeper spiritual meaning, a very effective da'wah strategy (Akhirudin & Syaefuddin, 2022).

The second pillar, namely tripartite synergistic collaboration, can be analyzed using the lens of social capital theory. Strong partnerships between schools, families, and communities create dense, mutually reinforcing social networks and foster norms of reciprocity and trust (Sayuti et al., 2024). In this ecosystem, schools are no longer the sole agents responsible for children's education. That responsibility is shared, creating consistency in the moral messages that children receive at school, at home, and in their play environment. This collaboration effectively breaks down institutional barriers. When community leaders teach at schools and students participate in community activities, the boundaries between formal and informal education become blurred (Nurdin, 2025). Schools are transformed into community learning hubs, where the learning process is fluid and continuous (Singgih et al., 2021). This is the key mechanism that transforms individual values into collective social cohesion.

The ability of this model to connect normative teachings with contemporary needs demonstrates the vitality and dynamism of Islamic education. It refutes the stereotype that religious education is dogmatic and resistant to change (Saude, S., 2024). By discussing issues such as digital ethics through the lens of Islamic teachings, schools in Aceh Besar demonstrate that Islam is not a teaching of the past but a guidance framework relevant to addressing the challenges of the times (Yusuf, M., & Ismail, 2023). This approach equips students with a moral compass to navigate an ever-changing world. Based on these findings and analyses, a Conceptual Model of Integrated

Education for Social Cohesion rooted in be context of Aceh Besar was formulated and has three main interrelated components: 1) Integrated and Contextual Curriculum: Integrating universal Islamic values into all disciplines and contextualizing them through local wisdom; 2) Transformative Pedagogy: Applying learning methods that emphasize role modeling, habit formation, and active student participation, rather than mere memorization; 3) Ecosystemic Partnership: Building structured and functional collaboration between schools, families, and communities as a unified educational ecosystem.

This differs significantly from the conventional approach to Islamic education. While the conventional approach focuses on individuals and mastery of religious material, this model focuses on the formation of both individuals and communities (Bayumi, M. R., Jaya, R. A., & Diem, 2024). The desired outcome is not only students but also active, caring citizens who support mutual progress (Syadzili, 2020). The relevance of this model extends beyond the context of Aceh local wisdom; its basic principles, curriculum integration, ecosystemic collaboration, and contemporary relevance are universal and adaptable (Syarif et al., 2024). For Muslim communities around the world facing the challenges of pluralism, social integration, and radicalism, this model offers a strategic alternative path (Suhadi, 2025). This research contributes to the global discourse on Islamic education reform, which asserts that the way forward for Islamic education is neither to imitate secular models unquestioningly nor to isolate oneself in traditions. The way forward lies in reintegrating knowledge and faith, schools and society, and noble teachings and the realities of the times. This integration is the key to producing a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent and spiritually pious but also socially resilient (Putra & Arnadi, 2022).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the integrated education model in Aceh Besar at SMP Negeri 1 Darul Imarah, SMP Negeri 1 Ingin Jaya, SMP Negeri Ali Hasjmy (ini Asrama/boardings), SMP Negeri 1 Darussalam, SMP Negeri 1 Kuta Baro, SMP Negeri 3 Ingin Jaya, effectively achieves the dual objectives of Islamic education: internalizing individual piety and fostering collective social cohesion. Islamic values are systematically embedded across the curriculum and reinforced through local wisdom practices such as *meuseuraya*, teacher role modeling, and participatory extracurricular activities, creating a moral ecosystem that translates normative principles into lived behaviour. The model positions schools as central nodes of collaboration with families and community institutions,

ensuring that ethical values are operationalized through concrete social interaction, civic engagement, and cultural participation. Moreover, the approach bridges classical Islamic teachings with contemporary challenges, including digital ethics and modern social issues, enhancing the relevance and applicability of religious education in students' daily lives. These findings demonstrate that effective Islamic education is neither abstract nor isolated; its success lies in an integrative system in which curriculum, culture, and community mutually reinforce one another, producing students who are morally grounded, socially responsible, and capable of contributing to harmonious, resilient communities. Consequently, this model provides both a practical framework for educational policy in Aceh and a theoretical contribution to global discussions on how religion-based education can simultaneously cultivate spiritual, moral, and social capital.

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