

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF ISLAMIC VALUES INTEGRATION IN THE MEDICAL CURRICULUM: DO THEY EXPERIENCE MEANINGFUL IMPACTS?

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Abstract: As medical education increasingly prioritizes professionalism, ethical reasoning, and cultural competence, integrating Islamic values into the curriculum represents a strategic approach to developing morally grounded and socially responsive physicians. This integration promotes a holistic understanding of patients, encompassing social, psychological, material, and spiritual dimensions rather than focusing solely on diseases or organ systems. This study aimed to explore students' perceptions of integrating Islamic medicine into the medical curriculum. **Methods:** A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted using data collected at a single time point through a 10-item online questionnaire. The study population included second- to sixth-year medical students. A total of 100 students were selected through simple random sampling. **Results:** More than one-quarter of respondents were in their third to fifth years, while sixth-year students comprised 3% and second-year students 14% of the sample. Overall, students reported positive impacts of integrating Islamic values on their academic and professional development. Although some participants indicated that integration increased their academic workload, they considered the benefits to outweigh the challenges. Among the ten perception domains assessed, integration of Islamic education received the lowest mean score (4.06), primarily due to its occasional influence on students' time management. **Conclusion:** Integrating Islamic values within the medical curriculum contributes positively to students' professional identity formation, ethical awareness, spiritual well-being, and clinical preparedness. A holistic educational framework linking Islamic principles with medical knowledge, reflective practice, mentorship, and clinical exposure fosters not only technical competence but also compassion, accountability, and moral integrity essential for quality patient care.

Keywords: Perception, Islamic Values, Integration, Curriculum

Introduction

The integration of Islamic values into professional training has emerged as a significant curricular movement across Islamic universities in Southeast Asia. As medical education increasingly emphasizes professionalism, ethical reasoning, and culturally competent care, embedding Islamic values in medical curricula is seen as an essential strategy to support the formation of morally grounded, socially responsive physicians. Integration of the curriculum implied the practice and teaching of medicine as a holistic approach to the human in the social,

psychological, material, & spiritual dimensions, rather than exclusively focusing on particular diseases or organs.(Kasule, 2010).

Evidence from higher education institutions provides a multidimensional picture of how such integration unfolds. A large-scale study from UIN Jakarta involving 670 students and 90 lecturers found that both groups expressed **positive perceptions** of the integrated curriculum, with students demonstrating more favourable attitudes than faculty. However, challenges persisted, including unclear operational guidelines, limited lecturer competence, and insufficient time for Islamic content, highlighting that integration is conceptually supported but unevenly executed.(Suryadi et al., 2018) In clinical health sciences, similar patterns emerge. A descriptive qualitative study of nursing students revealed that Islamic integration enriched students' self-awareness, ethical decision-making, and empathy toward patients. Yet students also encountered resistance to change, limited understanding, and a lack of resources, indicating that integration's effectiveness depends heavily on faculty mentoring and institutional support.(Setiowati & Handayani, 2025) These findings underscore that while integration enhances professionalism and spiritual sensitivity, its implementation often struggles with structural limitations.

In medical education, embedding Islamic values is **essential** to equip Muslim doctors with religiously informed ethical reasoning to address bioethical dilemmas unique to Islamic contexts. Their analysis stresses that integration must move beyond philosophical discourse and be embedded concretely in curriculum development, learning outcomes, and teaching strategies.(Hikmah et al., 2023) At the pre-university and undergraduate levels, studies from Indonesian Islamic schools and universities reveal strong student support for the integration of science and Islam. Sahil et al. demonstrate that a **comprehensive integration pattern**, which aligns the Islamic worldview with pedagogy, content, and assessment, significantly improves student understanding compared with material-only integration.(Sahil et al., 2024) Likewise, a survey of 175 millennial students across Islamic universities found that students generally perceive Islam and science as mutually reinforcing, believe religion contributes to scientific advancement, and report that lecturers' Islamic insights positively shape learning, especially in biology.(Suciati et al., 2022) These findings highlight that students commonly view integration as intellectually meaningful and culturally relevant.

Concrete implementation models are illustrated in the experiences of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). The Islamic Input in Medical Program (IIMP) embeds Islamic epistemology, bioethics, jurisprudence, and spiritual care throughout a five-year medical curriculum. This approach nurtures students' ethical behaviour, compassion, and professional identity, promoting the formation of "safe doctors" who are clinically competent and morally grounded.(Osman A, 2013) Beyond content-level integration, curriculum design innovations also incorporate Islamic values into pedagogical tools. Rashid et al. propose aligning concept mapping with Islamic epistemology by connecting tawhid (unity of knowledge), ethical virtues, and holistic patient care. Their review argues that such integration strengthens critical thinking, moral reasoning, and reflective practice, ultimately cultivating more compassionate and community-oriented physicians.(Al Rashid et al., 2024)

The objective of this study was to identify students' perceptions of the integration of Islamic medicine into the curriculum.

Method Design

This study employed a descriptive, cross-sectional design, with data collected at a single point in time. The data collected through an online questionnaire consisted of 10 items. The items were developed based on the activities in the curriculum, both preclinical and clinical. The questionnaire was validated for expert and construct validity before distribution to subjects through expert review by medical education experts. Construct validity was analyzed using Pearson’s correlation, which showed that all items had R-values > 0.361, and Cronbach's alpha was 0.95.

Subjects

The study population consisted of medical students in the second to sixth years. The study included 100 medical students, randomly selected using simple random sampling. They experienced the Islamic medical education in their curriculum, even though there were differences in learning activities between the preclinical and clinical curricula. The preclinical phase is for first- to fourth-year students, while the clinical phase is for fifth to sixth-year students.

Context

The integration of Islamic education into the medical curriculum was implemented through several activities in both preclinical and clinical settings, as named by Program Insan Mulia (PIM). Students are also guided by a mentor who acknowledges their strengths and weaknesses, not only in their academic but also in worship activities.

Table 1. Integration of Islamic Values in Medical Curriculum

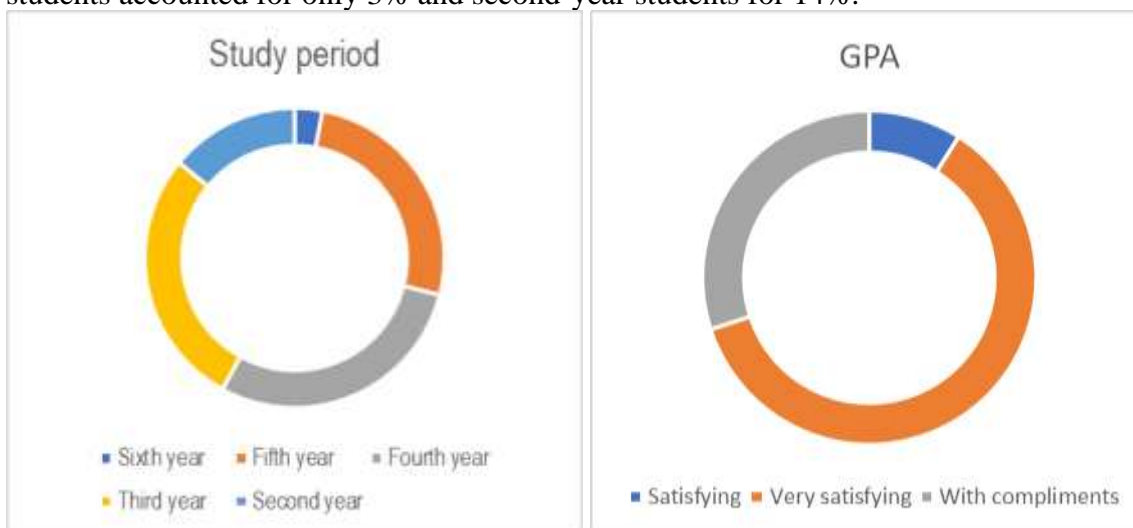
Outcome	Objectives	Learning activities	Settings	Assessment methods
Students actualize integrity and possess Islamic character	Devoted to God Almighty and able to demonstrate a religious attitude, as well as uphold human values in carrying out duties based on religion, morality, and ethics; Respect the diversity of cultures, views, religions and beliefs, as well as the original opinions or findings of others; Behave in accordance with humanitarian, religious, moral and academic ethical values according to their role as medical students; Demonstrate the spirit of independence, fighting spirit, and entrepreneurial values in the health sector.	Lecture	Preclinical	Self-reflection
		Memorizing Quran	Al-Preclinical Clinical	Direct observation Direct observation
		Problem-based learning	Preclinical Clinical	Direct observation
		Case-based discussion	Preclinical and clinical	Direct observation
		Self-reflection		Portfolio

	Able to apply logical, critical, systematic and innovative thinking in the context of developing or implementing science and technology that pays attention to and applies humanities and Islamic values in the field of medicine;			
	Conduct self-reflection, self-awareness and self-evaluation, as well as accept and respond positively to feedback from others for self-development and professionalism.			
Students integrate Islamic values into community services and patient management	Carrying out promotion and prevention of health problems by involving individuals, families, communities, and society based on Islamic principles; Carrying out holistic and comprehensive management (pharmacological, nutritional, physical activity, mental and rational behavioural changes) in medical practice;	Health promotion Clinical skills	Preclinical and clinical Preclinical Clinical	Direct observation OSCE Direct observation
	Communicate clearly, effectively and demonstrate empathy for reactions when communicating with academics, simulated patients and the general public;			

Result And Discussion

Subjects' characteristics

More than a quarter of the subjects were third- to fifth-year students, while sixth-year students accounted for only 3% and second-year students for 14%.



a

b

Figure 1. a) Subjects’ characteristics based on the study period, b) based on GPA

Students’ perception of the integration of Islamic Values in the Medical Curriculum

Students experienced positive impacts of the Islamic values in their activities, as shown in Table 3. It means the integration might add to their study load, though it was worth undertaking given its advantages. One of the ten aspects of perception had fewer points than others (4.06); it was the Islamic education integration, which sometimes affected their time management. Despite the time management issue, this integration enhanced their preparedness to practice as doctors by strengthening their skills, patient management, professionalism, and mental health. Students felt that feedback from their mentor motivates them to develop as human beings and future doctors.

Table 3. Mean score of students’ perception on the integration of Islamic education in Medical Curricula

Students’ perception	Mean
Integration of Islamic medical topics in medical lectures helps professional practice as a doctor	4.21
Memorizing Al-Qur’an can calm feelings	4.41
Islamic skills (such as thoharoh, tayamum, etc.) integrated into the practice of medical clinical skills support a professional attitude towards patients	4.30
It is important to study the basics of Islamic religion (monotheism, muamalah, worship, etc.) as a foundation for implementing Islamic values	4.41
Getting used to doing the 9 golden habits has a positive impact on daily life	4.40
Studying Islamic values in various methods in medicine prevents me from doing things that are not in accordance with the teachings.	4.46
Islamic medical lectures are useful for increasing my understanding in applying Islamic values and the medical sciences I have studied.	4.20
Working on a portfolio is a self-reflection to improve my morals and behavior.	4.18
My time management is honed by running the Program Insan Mulia	4.06
Undergoing guidance with the mentor motivates me to continue improving myself.	4.23

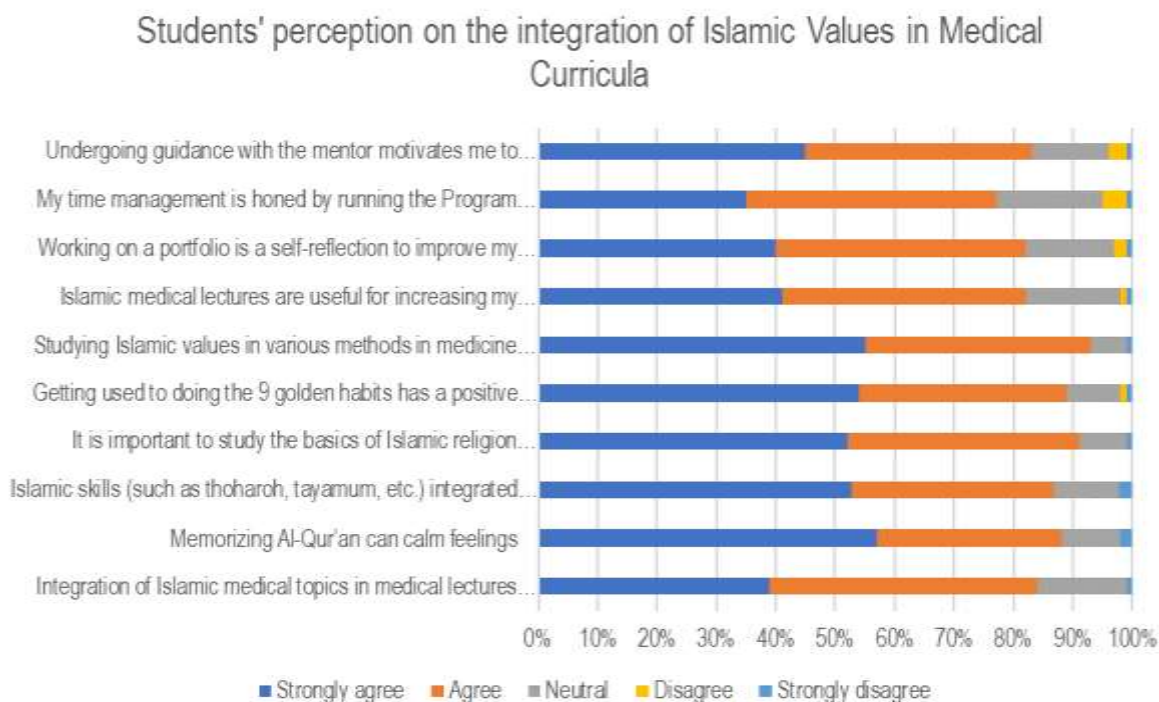


Figure 2. Students’ perception of the integration of Islamic Values in medical curricula

Integration of Islamic medicine fosters the development of students’ professional identity.

This study demonstrates that integrating Islamic values across the medical curriculum substantially contributes to students’ professional identity formation, ethical development, spiritual well-being, and readiness for clinical practice. Students consistently reported that embedding Islamic principles, for example, compassion, accountability, trustworthiness, and service, helped them develop a morally grounded understanding of what it means to be a physician. This aligns with prior literature illustrating how Islamic ethical frameworks strengthen professionalism, empathy, and responsibility in healthcare settings, shaping how future physicians internalize their roles and duties in culturally congruent ways.(Al-Shahri, 2002; Risdawati, n.d.) Students' attitudes and behavior all improved as a result of Islamic integration. These changes were observed in their self-awareness, ethical decision-making, and confidence in using Islamic-based healthcare, for example, antenatal care.(Setiowati & Handayani, 2025)(Noviani et al., 2021)

Memorizing Al-Qur’an enhances students’ well-being.

Students also perceived that memorizing and reciting the Qur’an enhanced their well-being, emotional resilience, and ability to cope with academic pressures. Existing evidence supports these experiences, showing that Qur’anic recitation produces physiological relaxation, reduces stress, and improves emotional regulation through both autonomic and neurophysiological pathways. For students in demanding medical programs, such practices may serve as meaningful buffers against anxiety and burnout.(Ali, n.d.; Yordan et al., 2025)

Integration of Islamic medicine into skills training supports patient management.

The integration of Islamic values within clinical skills training further supported students in managing patients ethically and holistically. By learning clinical competencies alongside Islamic moral principles, students reported greater clarity in navigating patient care decisions, particularly in ethically sensitive scenarios. This integration of *naqli* (a source of knowledge in Islam that is derived from **divine revelation**, namely the **Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad**) knowledge and contemporary medical science strengthens the moral foundations underpinning clinical practice. (Fadhillah Khalid et al., 2025; Mahmood et al., 2023; Musa et al., 2022)

Basic Islamic education as a foundation for the implementation of Islamic values implementation

Students emphasized that basic Islamic education provides the foundation for understanding and consistently applying Islamic values throughout the curriculum. This is consistent with ethical theory, which suggests that moral literacy grounded in Qur'anic and Prophetic teachings equips learners with shared concepts, language, and principles that enable deeper integration of values into professional learning. Without such a foundation, advanced ethical or value-based modules may be less effective or less meaningful. (Firdaus Binti Fatah Yasin et al., 2013; Tolchah & Mu'ammam, 2019)

Integrating the nine golden habits concept in the curriculum impacts students' daily lives

The incorporation of character-building approaches such as the "Nine Golden Habits" was also reflected in students' daily behavior. They described improvements in discipline, honesty, courtesy, punctuality, and self-regulation. Prior research supports this, showing that Islamic moral education can shape behavioral habits and strengthen character development in higher learning environments. These habits appear to function as behavioral anchors that reinforce both academic and personal conduct. (Putri Utami et al., 2023; Yunus & Siregar, 2025)

The integration of Islamic values prevents students from causing harm.

Students also felt that integrating Islamic values helped prevent harmful behaviors, both academically and professionally. Islamic ethics emphasizes accountability, modesty, moral self-restraint, and avoidance of harm, which aligns with literature indicating that religious values can reduce engagement in unethical actions and strengthen adherence to professional norms. These values may act as internal safeguards against lapses in professionalism, academic misconduct, or negligent behavior. (Rifani et al., 2021; Stavrova & Siegers, 2014)

Delivering Islamic values through a lecture enhances students' knowledge and attitudes.

Islamic religious education has proven effective in improving students' critical analysis skills and forming professional ethics. This is an essential asset for Islamic college graduates as they face the competitive world of work. The role of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in improving intellectual competence is diverse, encompassing teacher competence, innovative teaching methods, and the integration of technology. (Kardina Engelina Siregar & Ali Musri Semjan Putra, 2024)

Writing a portfolio provides students with the opportunity to reflect on their behaviours and morals.

Reflective portfolio writing offered students opportunities to examine their behaviors, moral development, and professional growth. Reflection is widely recognized as essential for professional formation, enabling learners to cultivate self-awareness, assess their conduct, and refine their ethical reasoning. This aligns with broader medical education literature demonstrating that reflective writing fosters professionalism and moral insight.(Puri et al., 2025; Yelder & Moir, 2016)

Taking the Program Insan Mulia supports students' time management

Participation in personal development programs such as Program Insan Mulia contributed to improvements in students' time management, discipline, and self-organization. Comparable findings in spirituality-integrated education suggest that structured spiritual programs can enhance students' coping mechanisms, organizational skills, and resilience.

The mentoring program motivates students' professional development.

The structured mentoring program was deemed satisfactory by the majority of mentees. The goal of mentoring is to help all medical students grow both personally and professionally. It is necessary to include ways to support students facing personal or professional issues, in addition to the helpful recommendations made by the mentees.(Aziz et al., 2023) There are a few ways to improve the personal and professional issues of medical students that also facilitated in this integration program, for instance, making the learning environment more positive, finding and helping students who are having trouble, teaching them how to deal with stress, encouraging them to be aware of themselves.

For a mentoring relationship to be successful, mentees must meet certain expectations of their mentors, such as the ability to form friendships and offer tailored advice. Later, this relationship helps mentees develop their careers.(Aagaard & Hauer, 2003) Mentees in this study expressed satisfaction with their mentors' personal attributes and emotional support. In one study, mutual trust and respect were identified as desirable traits in a mentor.(Hauer et al., 2005; Ssemata et al., 2017)

Despite the advantages they experienced, students face challenges in implementing Islamic integration principles, including resistance to change, limited understanding, and insufficient resources. However, with personal commitment, mentorship, and a supportive environment, successful implementation leads to increased self-awareness, improved ethical decision-making, and enhanced empathy in patient care.(Suryadi et al., 2018)

This study focuses on students' perceptions of the integration of Islamic values into the medical curriculum. At the same time, many people contributed to its implementation, including faculty members and healthcare providers in clinical settings who served as mentors, curriculum developers, and healthcare providers. Exploring another perspective might enrich the implementation of Islamic medicine education; thus, it should be conducted for further study to identify factors that affect their perceptions and to directly observe the advantages for students' knowledge, attitudes, and skills.

Conclusion

Integrating Islamic values throughout the medical curriculum positively shapes students' professional identity, ethical sensitivity, spiritual well-being, and clinical readiness. Students benefit from a holistic educational approach that connects Islamic principles with medical knowledge, reflective practice, mentorship, and clinical training. This integration supports not only technical competence but also compassion, accountability, and moral integrity, attributes crucial for high-quality patient care. A curriculum that thoughtfully embeds cultural and religious values can strengthen moral character formation and help develop future physicians who are both clinically competent and ethically grounded. Faculty development is crucial to ensure that educators are prepared to integrate Islamic perspectives into teaching, supervision, and assessment. Additionally, institutions should implement supportive programs such as spirituality-informed student development initiatives to strengthen discipline, time management, and resilience. Ongoing evaluation and research are essential to refine these curricular approaches and ensure they continue to meet students' needs while aligning with professional standards.

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