



## Integrated Holistic Learning Design for Strengthening Students' Religious Character

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the implementation of integrated holistic-based learning design and its impact on students' religious character. A mixed-methods approach with an Exploratory Sequential Design was used. Researchers first collected and analyzed qualitative data through interviews, observations, and document analysis. These findings were then used to develop quantitative instruments in the form of questionnaires. The results indicate that this learning design effectively strengthens students' religious character. The learning process is directed to always be connected to God by developing all aspects of students' potential in a comprehensive and integrated manner. It is packaged within themes based on verses from the Qur'an, Hadith, and Asmaul Husna, all of which are linked to learning objectives, content, strategies, and evaluation. These qualitative findings are supported by quantitative data, which shows a positive correlation between the variables, with a correlation coefficient of 0.595—classified as moderately strong (range 0.40–0.599). The correlation significance value is 0.001, which is less than 0.05, indicating statistical significance. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a moderately strong and significant relationship between the implementation of integrated holistic-based learning design and the development of students' religious character.

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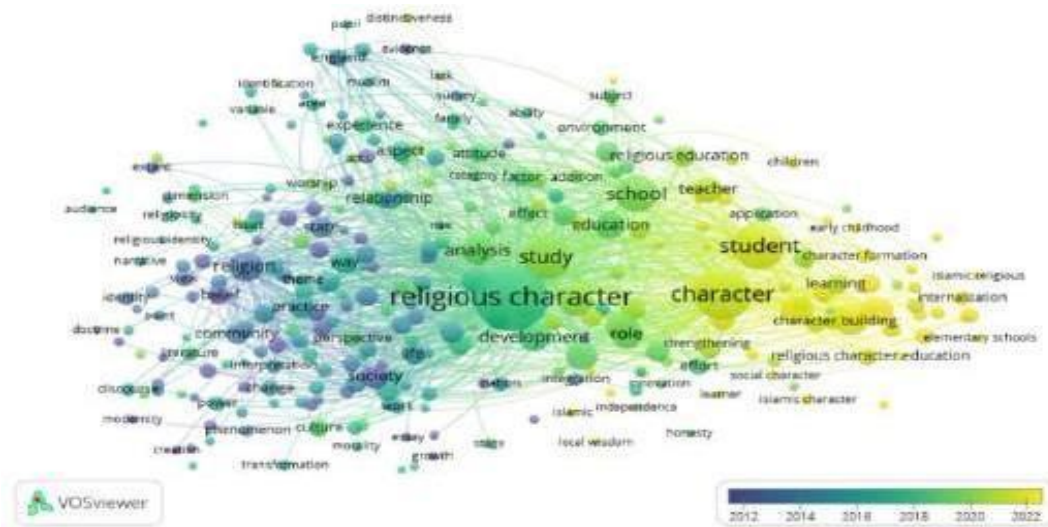
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**Figure 2.** (Overlay Visualization)

*Source: Bibliometric Research Results on Scopus and Google Scholar*

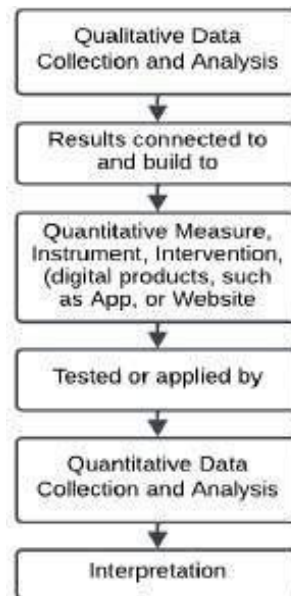
Articles Furthermore, based on the analysis of Figure 2, it is known that research in the last two years tends to focus on the theme of character education. Through this theme being the main concern, researchers see an opportunity to conduct more specific research in topics that are still rarely explored. Thus, the researcher identified four clusters that became the basis for determining the focus of the research. The research topic opportunities from each cluster are:

- (i) Cluster Red: The least researched topics are modernity, creation, and transformation. This theme shows attention to innovation and change in character education that is relevant to the need to integrate religious values in a modern and dynamic context.
- (ii) Cluster Green: The least researched topics are Islamic character, good character, and elementary school. This shows the research interest related to character strengthening that focuses on elementary school students from the perspective of Islamic values and good character development.
- (iii) Cluster Blue: The least researched topic is distinctiveness. This provides an opportunity for research that links religious background with the uniqueness of character learning. This opens up research opportunities that examines how character-based learning in schools can be tailored to the uniqueness of each student.
- (iv) Cluster Yellow: In cluster four, the least researched topic is lesson planning. This topic shows the urgency in planning and effective learning methods to instill character in students. In this context, researchers can highlight how an integrated, holistic learning approach can be applied to the learning process to support the strengthening of religious character.

Based on the analysis of four clusters of bibliometric data results on VOS Viewer software, it shows that no research focuses on examining religious character through integrated holistic learning. Therefore, researchers conducted a study with the title “Integrated Holistic-Based Learning Design for Strengthening Students' Religious Character”. This title reflects an effort to explore learning designs that integrate holistic elements with a focus on strengthening religious character. Thus, this research is expected to be a new contribution to character education with a structured and comprehensive approach.

## 2. METHODS

This research uses a mixed-methods approach with the Exploratory Sequential Design type. Mixed-method research is defined as a study in which researchers collect and analyze data, integrate findings, and draw conclusions using both quantitative and qualitative approaches in one study or program ([Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018](#)).



**Figure 3.** The Exploratory Sequential Design

Source: [Creswell & Plano Clark \(2011\)](#)

integrated holistic-based learning design and examine its effect on strengthening students' religious character. This approach is used so that the data obtained is more comprehensive, which begins with a qualitative approach first to explore the implementation process and views from the perspective of the school, including data collection from interviews, observations, and documentation. Then, the findings of the qualitative approach are used as guidelines in formulating the quantitative approach instruments, in the form of a questionnaire with a measurement scale in the form of a Likert scale. This shows the integration between the results of the qualitative approach and the quantitative instruments designed, so that the instruments made will be more contextual and relevant to the characteristics of the population under study.

In the next stage, the quantitative approach is carried out to measure the effect or correlation of the implementation of integrated holistic-based learning design on strengthening students' religious character. In this research design, the qualitative approach has a greater weight than the quantitative approach. However, data interpretation as a result of the quantitative approach becomes a support to validate the results of the qualitative approach to produce a more comprehensive and in-depth research. This research was conducted in one of the Islamic-based private elementary schools in Bandung City. The main consideration in choosing this school as the research location is that since its establishment, this school has implemented a holistic-based learning design integrated with Islamic values, where each student and all school components are expected to develop holistically, both in terms of religious, spiritual, physical, intellectual, social and emotional aspects with an Islamic positive psychology approach. The school also implements thematic learning programs integrated with Islamic values and seeks to explore the character strengths of each student.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Qualitative Approach Findings

##### 3.1.1. School Profile as The Basis for Implementing Integrated Holistic-Based Learning

Based on the results of the interview, it is known that the name of the school is taken from the word *Manaaratul Iman*, which means the tower of faith or the light of faith. From this name, there is great hope to be able to spread *da'wah* together and be happy with the faith that is owned. The school is expected to provide holistic educational services, not only focusing on the academic curriculum. However, it also pays attention to the social and emotional aspects. In more detail, the following is the vision and mission of SD *Manaaratul Iman Holistic and Integrated Islamic School*:

(i) School Vision

To become a model of Islamic school that forms strong learners, happy with a strong *aqidah* with *ihsan* in doing good deeds.

(ii) School Mission

- a) Develop an integrated, holistic education program with an Islamic Positive Psychology approach.
- b) Strengthening the true happiness of all school components and the surrounding environment.
- c) Developing an extensive network to support an effective and efficient learning organization.
- d) Dynamically develop the school organization by Integrated Quality Management.
- e) Networking with various parties to develop together as a quality Islamic school.

The urgency of holistic-based learning is to see from various phenomena that arise, such as there are students who excel in the field of technology, but their manners are not good. Difficult in worship, too deifying his thoughts, not knowing his God. Or vice versa, learning a lot about the *Qur'an*, but lacking in logic, not keeping up with technological developments, or physically prone to illness. Another example is a student who only memorizes, but has not yet reached an understanding of its meaning. So, this holistic-based learning is needed with its application based on Islamic values.

Learning is carried out with a holistic approach, one of which involves all stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and the community to be involved. In terms of school vision, this starts from studying QS. Ibrahim: 26-27, which gives an analogy that a strong Muslim is like a tree with strong roots, then grows a good trunk, branches, and fruit. In this case, the root means the faith, the trunk is the worship/Islam, and the leaves, branches, and fruit are called *ihsan*. Starting from a strong faith, then the worship is correct, so that it reaches *ihsan*, which is always connected to Allah in any condition.

In implementing holistic learning, SD MIHIS also uses an Islamic positive psychology approach in which it has the concept of true happiness, although it seems very Western, but when studied with Islamic teachings, it is very correlated. Furthermore, the concept of resilience, or in research from Western psychology, is known as resilience. When studied again, it turns out that this has the same meaning as the concept of patience as explained in many verses in the *Qur'an*. In positive psychology research shows that people who have resilience are far more successful than just IQ alone. So, it is clear that Allah tells humans to always be patient, strong, and resilient. The implementation of this holistic-based learning is directed at achieving the student profile of SD MIHIS, which, when studied, has a correlation with the *Pancasila Student Profile* as contained in the *Merdeka Curriculum*.



**Figure 4.** MIHIS Elementary School Student Profile and Pancasila Student Profile  
 Source: Education Unit Curriculum Document

Based on Figure 4. It is known that SD MIHIS has a student profile that is correlated and aligned with the Pancasila learner profile in the Merdeka Curriculum. This shows that SD MIHIS has already established the student profile, before the existence of the Pancasila student profile established in the Merdeka Curriculum.

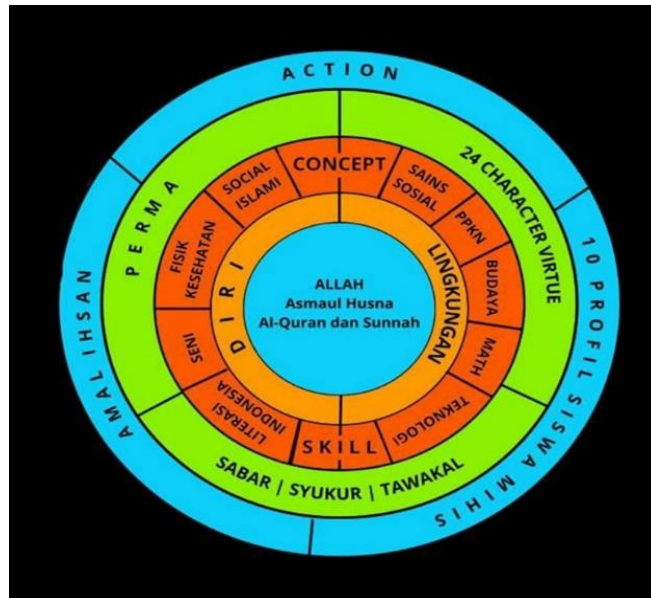
### 3.1.2. Implementation of Integrated Holistic-Based Learning to Strengthen Students' Religious Character

The MIHIS elementary curriculum develops holistic principles. As (Miller et al., 2019) points out, holistic education is concerned with educating the whole person, including body, mind, and spirit, in the context of a world that is interconnected with each other. In this school, the learning process is directed to develop all aspects of students holistically by using the principle of Islamic values, where Allah, who created humans, other living things, and heaven and earth, is the center of learning. In this principle, students are invited to activate all senses, including sight, hearing, touch, and heart, to understand the evidence of Allah's power. In this case, students are invited to use their bodies, feelings, minds, and souls fully to get closer to and understand Allah in every learning process.

As (Abdussalam, 2017), found the principles of learning derived from the concept of ta'lim in the Qur'an, two of the nine are *syumūliyyah* (comprehensive), meaning that learning must develop all entities (concrete and abstract), all verses (*qurāniyyah* and *kauniyyah*) and all dimensions of life (world and hereafter). *Takaamuliyyah* (integrative), meaning that learning is developed based on integration, there is no dichotomy, both regarding learning resources, aspects of personality, as well as regarding learning experiences (not duplicating between knowledge and charity, theory and practice, concrete and abstract, general and religious, material and spiritual, world and hereafter). This is also in line with what is conveyed by (Phenix, 1964) in his book entitled "Realms of Meaning" that the purpose of the implementation of General Education is to form a whole human being (holistic and integrative) in its various aspects.

Furthermore, learning at MIHIS Elementary School is integrated (not separated) into whole and interconnected elements to achieve the full development of students. For example, in sports learning, students not only understand the concept of movement and practice it, but

also realize that their limbs are God's creation that can be moved and used for personal health, independence, and to help others. This sports learning is also integrated with thematic learning, where there are core concepts, asmaul husna, and characters that become learning targets. For example, learning about accepting the diversity of people in physical characteristics and hobbies, learning the nature of Allah, the Creator, the Shaper (varied human forms), and the character of self-confidence. All of this learning is attempted to be integrated into the thematic.



**Figure 5.** Curriculum Framework of MIHIIS Elementary School  
*Source: Education Unit Curriculum Document*

Based on Figure 5. It is known that the curriculum framework of SD MIHIIS places the center of its development on belief in God as the center of learning. Through a holistic approach, learning will connect the dialogic triangle (self, environment, and God). To achieve the curriculum framework of SD MIHIS, there are four aspects of development, namely Intracurricular, Co-curricular, Extracurricular, and School Environment Culture.

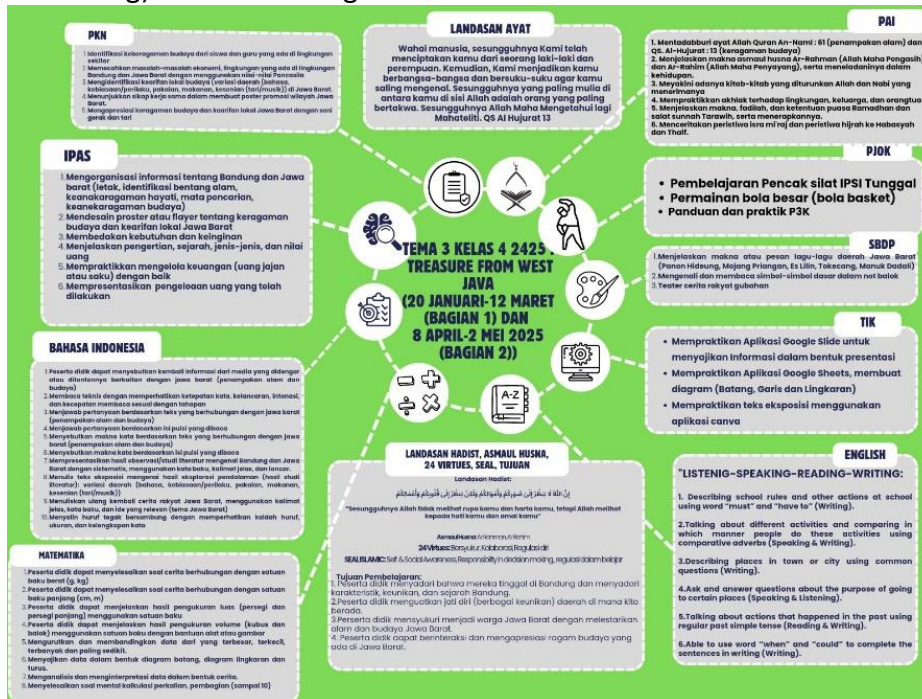


**Figure 6.** Four Aspects of Curriculum Development at MIHIIS Elementary School  
*Source: Education Unit Curriculum Document*

(i) Intracurricular

MIHIIS Elementary School implements intracurricular activities with an integrated thematic learning approach, including learning: PAI, IPAS, Indonesian Language, PPKN, Art, ICT, and Islamic SEAL. Other lessons, if the Learning Objectives are still appropriate,

can be integrated with themes, such as Physical Education, Mathematics, and English. Meanwhile, West Java Culture learning is packaged in learning activities during the week (West Java Culture Week). This school uses the Learning Outcomes of Merdeka Curriculum as a reference in setting Learning Objectives and Criteria for Learning Objective Completion. In addition, this school also has school-specific programs related to intracurricular activities, namely: BTAQ Tahfiz and SEAL Islami (Social Emotional Academic Learning) which are integrated with Islamic values.



**Figure 7.** Mind Map of Theme 3 Class IV

Source: Document Study

Based on Figure 7, it is known that MIHIS Elementary School applies holistic-based learning that is packaged in a certain theme, integrated with Islamic values. This Theme Mind Map in the design of a lesson is inseparable from the components that are interconnected in it. These components are:

a) Learning Objective

In setting Learning Objectives, teachers are guided by the Learning Outcomes as in the Merdeka Curriculum. In addition to formulating each TP specifically, teachers also design general Learning Objectives in each theme. In each theme planning, it is based on Al-Qur'an verses, hadith, and Asmaul Husna. For example, based on Figure 7 above, the theme studied is Treasure from West Java. From this theme, the foundation verse is QS. Al-Hujurat:13 (diversity), then the basis of the hadith is "Verily Allah does not look at your appearance and your wealth, but Allah looks at your hearts and your deeds". Then, Ar Rahman and Ar Rahim formed the foundation of Asmaul Husna. The main character virtues it develops are: gratitude, collaboration, and self-regulation. Referring to the foundation of the theme, the general Learning Objectives (TP) of the theme can be formulated as follows:

- 1) Learners realize that they live in Bandung and are aware of the characteristics, uniqueness, and History of Bandung.
- 2) Learners strengthen the identity (various uniqueness) of the region where we live.
- 3) Learners are grateful to be citizens of West Java by preserving the nature and culture of West Java.

4) Learners can interact and appreciate the variety of cultures in West Java.

b) Material/Content

The subject matter provided is tailored to the Learning Objectives that have been formulated. In the formulation of the theme, the framework is the content of IPAS. Integrated core subjects include: PAI, IPAS, Civics, and Indonesian Language. However, it does not rule out the possibility that when the theme discussed relates to material in other subjects, it will be integrated. As in ICT learning, the material is from the Indonesian Language, the media practice uses Microsoft Word. On the other hand, when the content of the material cannot be integrated, then in this case the teacher adjusts flexibly.

The observation results show that students include the basis of the Al-Qur'an verses and Asmaul Husna in the PowerPoint slides they make. Students even took the initiative to recite the verse foundation before the presentation. The theme of diversity is also integrated into the content of math story problems. Including in Indonesian lessons, students learn diversity through reading texts given by the teacher, including not making fun of other religions, diversity of traditional clothes, religions, skin colors, and ethnic groups. This material is integrated with Civics and Social Studies lessons. As for the Islamic SEAL material studied, it is related to self and social awareness, responsibility in decision making, and regulation in learning. In essence, the material presented is not only to increase students' knowledge, but they also know the reasons and meanings why they have to learn the material.

c) Strategy

This integrated holistic learning design uses multi-strategy and multimedia approaches, adequate learning resources and technology, and utilizes the surrounding environment as a learning resource, with the principle of nature takambang jadi guru (everything that happens, unfolds and develops in the community / surrounding environment is used as a learning resource, example, and example. The curriculum is adapted to the learning characteristics of all students involved, for example: integrating visual, auditory, and kinesthetic methods so that all students can be involved in actively participating in the learning process so that achieving the effectiveness of the curriculum objectives can be achieved.

A variety of learning methods and techniques are applied by teachers, such as teachers giving problems, but not explaining them first, to give students the freedom to work independently or discuss with their friends. Other methods that are often used include contextual learning, socio drama, storytelling, bringing in resource persons, and making a project. In addition, teachers also provide understanding related to recognizing each other's strengths and weaknesses to achieve optimal learning outcomes. In addition to learning in the school environment, students also participate in outing classes that are tailored to the theme being studied.

Every teacher shows an attitude of reminding their students regarding learning manners, so that when there are still students who show an attitude of not being ready to learn, the learning process will not begin. After the learning situation is deemed ready for learning, the teacher invites students to reflect on the intention of coming to school to study, namely, in the context of worship to Allah. At the end of each lesson, teachers and students reflect together. In this case, the method used by each teacher also influences the situation and conditions of the learning that takes place. However, in reality, it was found that not every teacher had fully implemented the learning process in an integrated, holistic manner.

Likewise, the media chosen is adjusted to the learning needs. In addition to teaching media, this school is also equipped with several posters that can be a reminder and guide for students, namely the Pancasila Student Profile, student profile, 24 character strengths, vision and mission, playground guide, conflict resolution guide for students (SITAR), prayer procedures, adab to meet teachers, prayer before learning, emotional thermometer, and picket schedule.

d) Evaluation

SD MIHIIS places teachers and parents as educators in the process of achieving the school's vision and mission, and student profile. For this reason, the continuous learning process is an important part of strengthening the role of educators for teachers and parents. The school organizes periodic training for internal and parenting for teachers and parents to increase the capacity of teachers and parents as the main educators of students.

Various evaluations are conducted every semester, such as asking for feedback from parents, teachers, and staff, which are then made into a SWOT analysis study and action plan to become a Strategic Work Plan. This shows that formal evaluation continues to be carried out. This includes frequent supervision as one of the ways the principal monitors the quality of the learning process. As for the evaluation of the learning process, it is carried out in a variety of ways, including formative evaluation, summative evaluation, theme evaluation, projects, monitoring worship, tilawati, and others.

(ii) Co-curricular

The Elementary School has a variety of programs to accommodate variations in interests, ways of learning, character strengths, and the potential of each student, including through Project Fair learning, IED (Islamic Entrepreneurship Days), ISSL (Islamic Social Service Learning), MABIT (Malam Bina Iman dan Takwa), Assembly, and Tasyakur Binimah. This co-curricular is sought to be integrated with intracurricular to be integrated in achieving Learning Outcomes, Pancasila Student Profile, and MIHIIS Elementary School Student Profile.

(iii) Learning Environment Culture

MIHIIS Elementary School establishes a learning environment by the positive psychology approach and Islamic values in applying behavior (Islamic manners and morals). In the Islamic positive psychology approach, are PERMA (positive, engagement, relationship, meaningful, accomplishment). PERMA is applied in a series of learning, both in the classroom and outside the classroom. The environment that supports student development for learning consists of physical and non-physical environments. In terms of the physical environment, there is still a lot to improve, such as the availability of sports fields, but not yet representative. Outside the physical environment, such as the psychosocial environment, there are two mosques flanking the school. The existence of this environment is very beneficial, because students starting from class IV for males perform dzuhur prayers there with male teachers. So, they learn related to the real setting of the mosque, as well as adab-adab in the mosque directly, as well as provide opportunities to interact with the surrounding community.

(iv) Extracurricular

In the context of Merdeka Curriculum, extracurricular activities play an important role in supporting holistic learning and creating space for students to explore outside the boundaries of the formal curriculum, so that they can become more balanced individuals who are ready to face various challenges in the future. Therefore, SD MIHIIS selects

extracurricular activities based on a survey of students' interests and talents outside of academic learning. In this case, the school collaborates with various competent parties in organizing activities to develop students' interests and talents. So, in the implementation of intracurricular, co-curricular, learning environment culture, and extracurricular activities are connected.

### 3.1.3. The Effect of Integrated Holistic-Based Learning Design in Strengthening Students' Religious Character

According to Stark & Glock (1969), a person's religiosity refers to a person's obedience and commitment to the religion they adhere to. In other words, a person's religiosity shows the process of internalizing religious values, which are then integrated into a person then manifested in the form of behavior that is reflected in everyday life. To see a person's level of religiosity, several indicators can be measured. This refers to the opinion of Stark and Glock ([Ancok, 2012](#)), namely: a) the dimension of belief; b) the dimension of religious worship or practice; c) the dimension of knowledge; d) the dimension of practice; and e) the dimension of appreciation.

**Table 1. Observation Results of Students' Religious Character**

Indicator	Observation Findings
Belief Dimension	Students show reflective and critical thinking in the discussion by asking some in-depth questions regarding the concept of divinity, heaven, and the signs of doomsday. This reflects high curiosity about religious teachings and human existence.
Dimensions of Worship/Religious Practice	Students are accustomed to carrying out religious practices such as congregational prayer, dhikr, and BTAQ, as well as showing religious attitudes through the habit of praying sunnah, murojaah memorization, giving religious advice, and fasting, although there are still variations in understanding and consistency of implementation.
Knowledge Dimension	Students demonstrate knowledge of Qur'anic verses relevant to the learning theme and can relate Islamic values to life, such as diversity, protecting the environment, self-change, and preparing for the end of the world through good deeds.
Dimension of Practice	Students demonstrate the application of religious values in daily life at school, such as habitually saying greetings, istigfar, being orderly when queuing, reminding each other of manners, and interactions that reflect care, cooperation, and gratitude, including towards friends with special needs.
Appreciation Dimension	Students show a deep and reflective understanding of the meaning of fasting and its spiritual value, with answers that reflect awareness of the wisdom of fasting, such as gratitude, empathy, and reward, and show critical thinking and honesty regarding the motivation for fasting, both because of the promise of parents and because they expect heaven from Allah.

Source: Analyzed by The Researcher

Referring to Table 1, it shows that the efforts of the integrated holistic-based learning process can bring up five dimensions as indicators of religious character. This means that this learning design can reinforce students' religious character.

### 3.2. Quantitative Approach Findings

To determine the relationship between the integrated holistic-based learning design variable (variable x) as the independent variable and the religious character variable (variable y) as the dependent variable, the product-moment correlation test was conducted. This is based on the pre-requisite test that is fulfilled, namely, normally distributed and linear data (there is a significant linear relationship between the two variables studied).

**Table 2. Product Moment Correlation Test Results Correlations**

		Holistic- Integrated Learning Design	Students' Religious Character
Holistic-Integrated Learning Design	Pearson Correlation	1	.595**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001
	N	56	56
Students' Religious Character	Pearson Correlation	.595**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	
	N	56	56

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: The result of SPSS analysis

Based on Table 2, it is known that there is a positive correlation sign (+), meaning that there is a positive direction between integrated holistic-based learning design and students' religious character. This shows that the higher the teacher implements integrated holistic-based learning, it will have an impact on increasing students' religious character, and vice versa. Furthermore, judging from the level of correlation strength, which is 0.595, which is in the range (0.40 - 0.599), shows a fairly strong correlation. As for the significance value of the correlation of 0.001, meaning that the value is <0.05. So, it can be concluded that there is a fairly strong relationship between integrated holistic-based learning design and students' religious character significantly.

### 4. CONCLUSION

Since its establishment, SD MIHIIS has implemented integrated holistic-based learning, which is a learning process directed at developing all the potential in students holistically (as a whole) using Islamic principles. In this principle, students are invited to activate all their senses to understand the evidence of Allah's power. In this case, students are invited to use their bodies, feelings, minds, and souls fully to better connect and understand Allah in every learning process. To achieve complete development, the learning process is carried out in an integrated manner, packaged through a theme. Each theme is based on the verses of the Qur'an, Hadith, and Asmaul Husna, which will be connected to the learning design components (starting from objectives, materials, strategies, and evaluation). Not only does it apply to intracurricular activities, cocurricular, learning environment culture, and extracurricular also refers to an integrated holistic.

Based on the findings and data analysis through a qualitative approach (results of interviews, documentation, and observations), it shows that the implementation of integrated holistic learning can provide strengthening of students' religious character. This is indicated by the emergence of students' religious character in each dimension of the observed

indicators. The results of this qualitative approach are supported by the results of quantitative testing, namely, there is a positive correlation (+) between variables with a correlation strength of 0.595, which means it is in the range (0.40 - 0.599), indicating a fairly strong correlation. As for the significance value of the correlation of 0.001, meaning that the value is <0.05. So, it can be concluded that there is a fairly strong relationship between integrated holistic-based learning design and students' religious character significantly.

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## 6. AUTHORS' NOTE

In publishing this article, there is no specific conflict of interest, and this article is free of plagiarism.

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