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Nurturing Religious Souls in Public Schools: The Meaning of Religious Extracurricular Activities for Students' Spiritual Intelligence**Moh Farhan¹, Mukni'ah², Mursalim³**¹²³UIN Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember, IndonesiaE-mail: Mohfarhan.mohf@gmail.com¹, mukniah@lecturer.uinkhas.ac.id², mursalim@uinkhas.ac.id³**Abstract**

This study examines the development of students' spiritual intelligence through religious extracurricular activities in a public-based Islamic elementary school. The research was conducted at MI Bustanul Ulum 09 Curah Lele Balung using a qualitative Phenomenoapproach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation involving ten participants, consisting of one principal, three teachers supervising religious extracurricular activities, and six actively involved students. The data were analyzed using interactive techniques of data reduction, data display, and verification. The findings indicate that religious extracurricular activities such as tahfidz, yasinan, collective dhuha prayer, and Islamic storytelling function not only as routine religious practices but also as experiential learning processes that foster students' spiritual intelligence. Students demonstrate increased sincerity, discipline, empathy, and religious awareness through sustained participation. Teachers play a central role as spiritual mentors (murabbi) by modeling values and facilitating reflective dialogue, while parental and community involvement strengthens value consistency between school and home. This study implies that religious extracurricular programs should be managed as integral components of character and spiritual education rather than supplementary activities. Strategically integrating reflective practices into these programs can enhance their transformative impact on students' spiritual development. Future research is recommended to involve a larger number of participants and diverse school settings, as well as to employ longitudinal or mixed-method approaches to examine the long-term effects of religious extracurricular activities on students' spiritual intelligence.

Keywords: Strategic Management; Islamic Education; Competitiveness; Transformational Leadership; Elementary Madrasah.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji pengembangan kecerdasan spiritual siswa melalui kegiatan ekstrakurikuler keagamaan di sekolah dasar berbasis umum. Penelitian dilaksanakan di MI Bustanul Ulum 09 Curah Lele Balung dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan desain studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif,

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dan dokumentasi yang melibatkan sepuluh partisipan, terdiri atas satu kepala madrasah, tiga guru pembina kegiatan ekstrakurikuler keagamaan, dan enam siswa yang aktif mengikuti kegiatan. Analisis data dilakukan melalui tahapan reduksi data, penyajian data, dan verifikasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kegiatan ekstrakurikuler keagamaan seperti tahfidz, yasinan, shalat dhuha berjamaah, dan kisah Islami tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai rutinitas religius, tetapi juga sebagai pembelajaran berbasis pengalaman yang berkontribusi terhadap pengembangan kecerdasan spiritual siswa. Siswa menunjukkan peningkatan nilai keikhlasan, kedisiplinan, empati, dan kesadaran religius melalui keterlibatan yang berkelanjutan. Guru berperan sebagai pembimbing spiritual (murabbi) melalui keteladanan dan dialog reflektif, sementara keterlibatan orang tua dan komunitas memperkuat kesinambungan nilai antara sekolah dan rumah. Implikasi penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa kegiatan ekstrakurikuler keagamaan perlu dikelola sebagai bagian integral dari manajemen pendidikan Islam dan penguatan pendidikan karakter, bukan sekadar kegiatan pelengkap. Integrasi praktik reflektif dalam pelaksanaannya berpotensi meningkatkan dampak transformatif terhadap perkembangan spiritual siswa. Penelitian selanjutnya disarankan untuk melibatkan jumlah partisipan yang lebih besar, konteks sekolah yang beragam, serta menggunakan pendekatan longitudinal atau mixed methods guna mengkaji dampak jangka panjang kegiatan ekstrakurikuler keagamaan terhadap kecerdasan spiritual siswa..

Kata Kunci: Manajemen Strategis; Pendidikan Islam; Daya Saing; Kepemimpinan Transformasional; Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.

INTRODUCTION

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Bustanul Ulum 09 Curah Lele Balung is one of the Islamic elementary schools that plays a significant role in shaping the character and spiritual development of children in rural areas of Jember Regency, East Java. As an educational institution that integrates general and religious curricula, this madrasah bears a strategic responsibility to nurture the spiritual intelligence of its students from an early age (Yeni et al., 2023). In the midst of rapid globalization and technological advancement, such schools function as an oasis of moral and spiritual education spaces where children learn not only literacy and numeracy, but also the deeper meaning of life, worship, and divine consciousness (Nurjanah, 2021). However, the current educational landscape indicates that children's enthusiasm for spiritual and religious values is gradually diminishing, replaced by an increasing orientation toward material and entertainment-driven lifestyles. This phenomenon is observable in many schools, including MI Bustanul Ulum 09 Curah Lele Balung, where some students show less motivation to participate actively in religious activities both inside and outside the classroom.

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This situation is partly influenced by the changing social patterns within families and communities, where success is often measured by cognitive and academic achievements rather than moral or spiritual growth. Many parents prioritize their children's excellence in general subjects such as mathematics, science, or English, while neglecting the cultivation of faith and spirituality. Consequently, religious extracurricular activities such as congregational prayer, Qur'an recitation, memorization of daily prayers, or Islamic social programs are often seen as secondary. In MI Bustanul Ulum 09, teachers and administrators are struggling to reignite students' interest and meaningful engagement in these religious programs. Yet, such activities are essential for the formation of students' spiritual intelligence, which includes the ability to find meaning in life, show empathy, control impulses, and build a harmonious relationship with God and fellow human beings.

Islamic education should embody the holistic development of learners spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, and socially. The national education vision in Indonesia emphasizes the formation of faithful, pious, and virtuous individuals (Pratama et al., 2019). The current "Merdeka Belajar" (Independent Learning) curriculum provides explicit space for spiritual development through both classroom learning and extracurricular programs, such as religious clubs, community projects, and moral reflection activities (Irsyad et al., 2022). However, in practice, religious extracurricular activities are often treated merely as formal routines or school obligations rather than as meaningful spiritual experiences. Many students attend these programs simply to comply with school rules, not because they truly understand or internalize their purpose. This indicates a gap between the intended goals of spiritual education and the realities observed in schools.

This discrepancy can also be seen in how teachers facilitate religious activities. Ideally, teachers should act not only as instructors of rituals but also as spiritual mentors who help students reflect on the values underlying each practice. Yet observations in MI Bustanul Ulum 09 suggest that most religious extracurricular activities remain limited to repetitive and mechanical routines. For example, morning Qur'an recitations and group prayers are held regularly, but students rarely engage in discussions about the spiritual meanings behind the verses they read. As a result, students acquire religious knowledge cognitively but fail to internalize it emotionally and spiritually. This shallow engagement undermines the ultimate goal of Islamic education to produce spiritually intelligent individuals who live by divine values in everyday life.

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Globally, researchers have emphasized the importance of developing spiritual intelligence as an integral part of human education. Zohar and Marshall (2000) define spiritual intelligence as the highest form of intelligence, which underlies both emotional and intellectual intelligence. Students with high spiritual intelligence can interpret their life experiences with wisdom and demonstrate positive behavior in their social environment. (Mahasneh et al., 2015) found that nurturing spiritual intelligence contributes significantly to moral development and psychological well-being. In the Indonesian context, (Razak et al., 2024) reported that religious activities such as Qur'an recitation, congregational prayer, and Islamic holiday programs foster social empathy, discipline, and responsibility among elementary students. Thus, religious extracurricular activities should not be seen as peripheral components of schooling but rather as the heart of moral and spiritual education.

Despite these potential benefits, religious extracurricular activities in MI Bustanul Ulum 09 Curah Lele Balung still face several challenges. First, not all students truly understand the meaning and purpose behind these religious practices. Many participate passively, without personal reflection or emotional engagement. Second, the activities are still limited to traditional routines and lack creativity or contextualization. Programs such as drama performances, storytelling, mentoring sessions, or community service based on Islamic values could provide richer and more meaningful learning experiences. Third, the evaluation of these programs often focuses on attendance or behavioral compliance, rather than on changes in students' awareness, attitudes, or spiritual insight. This highlights the need for a more holistic and reflective approach to religious education one that prioritizes meaning-making and personal growth over ritualistic performance.

From an educational policy perspective, the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs has emphasized the importance of strengthening the spiritual dimension in character education. However, many schools still implement these programs in a formalistic way, prioritizing administrative compliance over authentic spiritual engagement. In this context, understanding how students personally interpret and experience religious extracurricular activities becomes crucial. Such understanding can reveal how religious activities contribute to the formation of spiritual intelligence from the students' own perspective how they find peace, purpose, and moral guidance through participation in these programs. This interpretive lens offers a deeper insight into the transformative power of school-based religious experiences.

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Previous studies have provided important insights into the relationship between religious education and student character formation, yet most of them have focused on measuring the effectiveness of programs rather than exploring their inner meaning. For instance, (Turi et al., 2020) found that participation in Islamic spiritual clubs enhanced students' religious attitudes in high schools, while (Zahrudin et al., 2021) revealed that short-term Islamic boarding activities increased students' discipline and moral awareness. These studies, however, tend to overlook the subjective experiences of students the ways in which they construct and internalize meaning through these activities. Every student engages with religion differently, influenced by family background, community values, and personal experiences. Understanding these nuances requires a qualitative approach that emphasizes interpretation rather than quantification.

Furthermore, research exploring the link between religious extracurricular activities and the development of spiritual intelligence among elementary school students remains limited. Most studies have been conducted at the secondary or higher education level, focusing on adolescent religiosity or moral reasoning. (Pinto et al., 2024) for example, examined the relationship between religious activities and moral behavior among high school students, while (Asmuni, 2021) investigated how extracurricular programs shaped the social attitudes of students in Islamic boarding schools. However, studies at the elementary level are still scarce, even though early childhood and elementary education are critical periods for value formation and spiritual sensitivity. This absence of research represents a significant academic gap, as understanding how younger students perceive and internalize religious experiences could provide valuable guidance for educators designing spiritually meaningful programs.

This research therefore aims to fill that gap by exploring how students at MI Bustanul Ulum 09 Curah Lele Balung construct meaning from their participation in religious extracurricular activities and how these experiences contribute to their spiritual intelligence. Rather than viewing such programs merely as institutional obligations, this study treats them as potential spaces for spiritual awakening and personal transformation. Through in-depth interviews, observations, and qualitative analysis, the study seeks to uncover the inner meanings that students associate with activities such as congregational prayer, Qur'an recitation, commemoration of Islamic holidays, and community-based charity projects. By focusing on students' lived experiences, this research highlights the transformative nature of religious education in shaping both belief and behavior.

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In doing so, the study repositions religious extracurricular activities as not only rituals of compliance but also as meaningful encounters that connect students to their spiritual essence. It explores how these activities influence the way students interpret life, develop empathy, and build moral resilience in a rapidly changing world. The findings are expected to contribute to the broader discourse on spiritual education, emphasizing that true religious learning goes beyond memorization and ritual it requires reflection, internalization, and personal connection.

Ultimately, “Nurturing Religious Souls in Public Schools: The Meaning of Religious Extracurricular Activities for Students’ Spiritual Intelligence” seeks to illuminate how young learners in an Islamic elementary school environment experience, understand, and give meaning to their religious engagements. By doing so, the research aspires to help educators and policymakers design more human-centered, reflective, and spiritually enriching educational practices. In a time when children are increasingly distracted by digital culture and consumerist values, schools like MI Bustanul Ulum 09 Curah Lele Balung have the potential to rekindle the spiritual light within the hearts of students transforming routine religious programs into profound experiences that shape compassionate, mindful, and spiritually intelligent generations

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to explore students’ lived experiences in religious extracurricular activities and how these experiences contribute to the development of spiritual intelligence. The phenomenological approach was chosen because it enables an in-depth understanding of participants’ subjective meanings, inner reflections, and spiritual awareness beyond observable behavior (Sugiyono, 2019). This design is appropriate as the study focuses not only on students’ participation in religious activities but also on how they perceive, internalize, and transform these experiences into spiritual understanding. In this study, the researcher acted as the primary instrument, directly engaging with participants through interviews, observations, and document analysis.

The research was conducted at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Bustanul Ulum 09 Curah Lele Balung, Jember Regency, East Java, Indonesia. This school was purposively selected because it consistently integrates religious and spiritual practices into both curricular and extracurricular programs, such as Qur'an recitation (tadarus), congregational prayers, Islamic celebrations, and charity activities. Participants were selected using purposive sampling and

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included eight actively involved students, three supervising teachers, and one school principal. This selection ensured rich and relevant data from multiple perspectives related to the implementation of religious extracurricular activities. All participants provided informed consent prior to data collection. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis. Interviews explored participants' experiences, perceptions, and reflections regarding the meaning and impact of religious extracurricular activities on their spiritual lives. Observations focused on students' engagement, emotional expressions, and interactions during activities, as well as teachers' roles in facilitating spiritual reflection. Relevant documents, including school policies, activity schedules, and supporting records, were analyzed to complement the interview and observation data.

Data analysis followed the phenomenological reduction model proposed by Creswell (2016). Interview transcripts and observation notes were analyzed to identify significant statements, which were then formulated into meanings and grouped into thematic clusters such as spiritual awareness, moral sensitivity, empathy, and inner peace. These themes were synthesized into an integrated description representing the essence of students' spiritual experiences in religious extracurricular activities. Trustworthiness was ensured through data triangulation, prolonged engagement, and member checking (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Detailed contextual descriptions supported transferability, while systematic documentation and reflective notes enhanced dependability and confirmability. Ethical principles were strictly observed, including institutional approval, informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. All data were securely stored and used solely for academic purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Overview of the Research Setting

The research took place at MI Bustanul Ulum 09 Curah Lele Balung, a public Islamic elementary school located in the rural area of Jember Regency, East Java. The school accommodates approximately 250 students from farming and small-business families. Despite its rural setting, the school maintains a strong Islamic identity through both curricular and extracurricular activities. The daily learning routine begins with Qur'an recitation and short prayers, creating a religious atmosphere that influences students' attitudes and behaviors. The religious extracurricular programs *tahfidz*, *hadrah*, *tahlil*, and *kisah Islami*

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function as platforms to nurture students' spiritual intelligence by instilling moral awareness, empathy, and gratitude.

Participants of the Study

Ten participants were selected purposively: one principal, three teachers involved in religious extracurriculars, and six students who actively participated in at least one religious activity. The diversity of roles provided comprehensive insights into how these activities shape students' spiritual development.

Table 1. List of Participants and Focus of Religious Extracurricular Activities

| No | Participant | Position/Role | Extracurricular Focus | Duration (Years) |
|----|-------------|-------------------|--|------------------|
| 1 | Mr. Ahmad | Principal | Supervisor of all programs | 5 |
| 2 | Ms. Fatimah | Religion Teacher | <i>Tahfidz</i> and <i>Tahlil</i> | 4 |
| 3 | Mr. Lukman | Art Teacher | <i>Hadrah</i> Trainer | 6 |
| 4 | Aisha | Student (Grade 6) | <i>Tahfidz</i> | 3 |
| 5 | Yusuf | Student (Grade 5) | <i>Hadrah</i> | 2 |
| 6 | Siti | Student (Grade 4) | <i>Kisah Islami</i> | 1 |
| 7 | Ahmad | Student (Grade 6) | <i>Tahfidz</i> | 3 |
| 8 | Rina | Student (Grade 5) | <i>Tahlil</i> | 2 |
| 9 | Fadil | Student (Grade 4) | <i>Hadrah</i> | 1 |
| 10 | Salma | Student (Grade 6) | <i>Tahfidz</i> and <i>Kisah Islami</i> | 3 |

Data from Interviews

The data collected through semi-structured interviews explored the participants' experiences, perceptions, and reflections on the meaning of religious extracurricular activities. Three main thematic categories emerged from the coding process: implementation and engagement, impact on students' spirituality, and challenges and support strategies.

Table 2. Interview Data Summary

| Theme | Participants | Key Statements (Coded Quotes) | Meaning Extracted |
|---|-----------------------|---|---|
| Implementation of Religious Activities | Mr. Ahmad (Principal) | “We don’t just teach Qur'an memorization; we build a culture of remembrance and discipline. Students begin every activity with intention and du'a.” | Religious extracurriculars are structured as moral-spiritual training beyond academics. |
| | Ms. Fatimah (Teacher) | “In <i>tahfidz</i> , I remind students that memorizing is not only about the tongue but also the heart. They learn patience and sincerity.” | The <i>tahfidz</i> program cultivates patience, sincerity, and emotional calmness. |
| Impact on Students' Spiritual Intelligence | Mr. Lukman (Teacher) | “ <i>Hadrah</i> teaches teamwork and joy in worship. They learn rhythm, unity, and respect through music.” | <i>Hadrah</i> fosters emotional expression and social harmony. |
| | Aisha (Student) | “When I memorize Qur'an, I feel calm and closer to Allah. It helps me be kinder to my friends.” | <i>Tahfidz</i> develops divine awareness and empathy. |
| | Yusuf (Student) | “Through <i>hadrah</i> , I learn discipline and how to work together. We don't compete; we complete each other.” | Builds cooperative values and moral discipline. |
| | Rina (Student) | “I love <i>tahlil</i> . It reminds me to pray for others and to be thankful.” | Strengthens gratitude and social empathy. |

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| | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|---|
| | Salma (Student) | “When we tell Islamic stories, I understand how to be patient and honest like the prophets.” | |
| Challenges and Support Strategies | Mr. Ahmad (Principal) | “Some parents still think extracurriculars are not important. We invite them to join the <i>tahlil</i> and <i>du'a</i> together.” | School addresses parental apathy through inclusion and collaboration. |
| | Ms. Fatimah (Teacher) | “Facilities are limited, but we use creativity simple drums for <i>hadrah</i> , sharing Qur’ans between students.” | Teachers’ creativity compensates for resource limitations. |

The interview results reveal that religious extracurricular activities at MI Bustanul Ulum 09 are implemented with intentional integration of *spiritual training* and *character education*. The principal's emphasis on *niyyah* (intention) and remembrance shows that the school views these programs as transformative spiritual practices rather than just co-curricular obligations. Teachers like Ms. Fatimah and Mr. Lukman demonstrate how spiritual values are embedded in every activity. Through *tahfidz*, students learn not only Qur'anic verses but also perseverance and humility; through *hadrah*, they experience joy, discipline, and togetherness; while through *tahlil* and *kisah islami*, they strengthen reflection, gratitude, and empathy.

The students' testimonies consistently highlight emotional satisfaction and moral growth. Aisha's feeling of peace after *tahfidz*, Yusuf's description of teamwork in *hadrah*, and Rina's sense of gratitude after *tahlil* reflect a collective process of nurturing spiritual intelligence. These statements show that spirituality, in this context, is not abstract it manifests through emotions, behaviors, and social relations.

The teachers' adaptive strategies in the face of limited facilities such as sharing Qur'ans or using improvised musical instruments also reflect an educational creativity grounded in sincerity (*ikhlas*). Such conditions foster a close bond between teachers and students, reinforcing the religious culture that defines the school's identity.

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Observation Data

The researcher's observation over four weeks supported the interview findings. The students' behavior during extracurricular sessions reflected attentiveness, joy, and mutual respect. The following table summarizes the observation results.

Table 3. Observation Summary

| Observed Activity | Observed Behavior | Spiritual Indicators | Researcher's Notes |
|---------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Tahfidz | Students recited <i>surahs</i> in small groups, correcting one another gently. | Patience, discipline, cooperation | Calm atmosphere; no competition; teacher praised effort over perfection. |
| Hadrah | Students performed <i>shalawat</i> rhythmically with simple drums. | Joy, emotional balance, teamwork | Students smiled and showed confidence; sense of unity was visible. |
| Tahlil | Students read prayers collectively before class ended. | Gratitude, empathy, remembrance | Students were quiet, reflective, and respectful. |
| Kisah Islami | Teacher narrated the story of Prophet Yusuf; students listened attentively. | Moral reflection, emotional awareness | Students related the story to daily life and family experiences. |

The observation indicates that the extracurricular activities not only transmit knowledge but also shape emotional habits and moral consciousness. The integration between ritual, art, and storytelling allows students to connect religion with their daily reality, making spirituality a lived experience rather than theoretical knowledge.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that religious extracurricular activities at MI Bustanul Ulum 09 Curah Lele Balung play a crucial role in fostering students' spiritual intelligence. This process unfolds not only through formal routines of religious practice but also through the subtle formation of moral consciousness, empathy, and responsibility among students. The school environment, shaped by the leadership of teachers and the active

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participation of students, forms a dynamic space where spirituality is lived rather than merely taught. Religious extracurricular programs such as tahfidz, yasinan, shalat dhuha berjamaah, and pesantren kilat are not limited to ritual dimensions; they become spaces of internalization where students practice sincerity, patience, and collective responsibility. This aligns with (Suhifatullah et al., 2021) study in The Journal of Religious Education, which argues that spiritual intelligence in Islamic educational contexts is best developed through participatory experiences that engage both the heart and mind rather than cognitive instruction alone.

The integration between religious extracurricular activities and daily school culture at MI Bustanul Ulum 09 demonstrates how spirituality becomes a lived experience embedded in the rhythms of schooling. Students not only recite or memorize verses from the Qur'an but also learn to translate their meanings into daily behavior showing respect, compassion, and discipline. This echoes findings by (Anisa et al., 2023) published in The Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education, which highlight that spiritual intelligence develops most effectively when religious activities are contextualized in students' daily interactions. The teachers at MI Bustanul Ulum 09 serve as murabbi moral and spiritual guides who embody religious values in speech, decision-making, and interpersonal relationships. Their presence transforms extracurricular programs into a laboratory of faith, where values like humility, gratitude, and empathy are learned through imitation and reflection.

Spiritual intelligence manifests as more than knowledge of religious doctrine; it is the ability to apply religious principles in ethical reasoning and emotional regulation. The students learn to be calm in challenges, empathic toward others, and reflective in decision-making. As reported by (Wahidah & Heriyudanta, 2021) in Education and Spirituality Studies, students exposed to structured religious practices exhibit higher levels of emotional stability and moral awareness compared to peers who engage in religion only as ritual formality. This is consistent with the patterns observed in this study, where students involved consistently in religious extracurriculars showed greater patience, self-discipline, and social empathy.

Moreover, the pedagogical model adopted in MI Bustanul Ulum 09 reflects an integration between formal instruction and informal mentorship. Teachers often use storytelling (qishash), reflective dialogues, and collaborative service projects to connect students' spiritual learning with real-life situations. This mirrors the approach suggested by (Ariyanto, 2024) in Islamic Pedagogy Journal, emphasizing that experiential learning rooted in religious contexts strengthens students' spiritual intelligence by enabling them to "live"

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the values rather than “learn” them abstractly. Through such methods, the school becomes not merely a place of knowledge transfer but a spiritual ecosystem where each event be it communal prayer, a charity event, or a group reflection serves as a medium of spiritual growth.

The relational dynamics among students also play a pivotal role. Peer interactions during religious extracurriculars cultivate social-emotional aspects of spirituality, such as compassion, teamwork, and moral support. For instance, in group tahlidz sessions, students encourage each other, correct mistakes, and celebrate progress collectively. This social learning environment resonates with (Doustdar Toosi et al., 2016) framework of emotional intelligence, which posits that empathy and cooperation form the emotional foundation of spiritual growth. A similar observation was made by (Iqbal Mustakim et al., 2024) in Journal of Moral and Character Education, where cooperative religious programs improved not only moral reasoning but also emotional resilience among elementary students.

Another significant finding concerns the role of parental and community involvement. MI Bustanul Ulum 09 encourages parents to participate in school-based religious events, such as maulid nabi celebrations and Ramadhan pesantren, fostering a school-community partnership in nurturing spirituality. This involvement reinforces the students’ sense of continuity between home and school values, preventing cognitive dissonance between religious instruction and social practice. Research by (López González et al., 2024) in International Journal of Islamic Education Research corroborates this, noting that family participation amplifies the internalization of religious values and enhances spiritual awareness in children.

Despite these strengths, the study also reveals challenges. Some students still perceive religious extracurriculars as routine obligations rather than opportunities for personal growth. This echoes the findings of (Azka et al., 2024) in Educational Spiritual Studies Review, which found that without proper contextualization and reflection, religious programs risk becoming performative and losing their transformative potential. Teachers at MI Bustanul Ulum 09 address this by integrating reflective discussions after each activity, prompting students to link their experiences to inner meaning what they feel, what they learn, and how they can live differently afterward.

The implications of these findings point toward a holistic model of religious education that moves beyond instruction toward transformation. Spiritual intelligence, as seen in this study, is cultivated through sustained engagement in value-based practices,

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guided mentorship, and contextual reflection. The students' growth in spiritual intelligence manifested in self-awareness, moral reasoning, and compassionate behavior demonstrates how extracurricular spaces can become vital avenues for character formation. This resonates with (Ramadhan & Usriyah, 2021) theoretical conception of spiritual quotient (SQ), which frames spirituality as the foundation of human meaning-making and ethical action.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that religious extracurricular activities at MI Bustanul Ulum 09 Curah Lele Balung play a strategic role in fostering students' spiritual intelligence through meaningful, participatory, and reflective learning experiences. Activities such as tahlidz, yasinan, collective prayers, and Islamic storytelling function not merely as ritual practices but as experiential spaces where students develop sincerity, self-discipline, empathy, and religious awareness. The consistent interaction between students, teachers, and peers enables spiritual values to be internalized and translated into daily behavior. The findings contribute theoretically to the discourse on spiritual intelligence by reinforcing Zohar and Marshall's framework, particularly in the context of elementary Islamic education, where spirituality is constructed through lived experiences rather than cognitive instruction alone. Practically, this study highlights the importance of positioning teachers as murabbi who model values, facilitate reflection, and create emotionally supportive learning environments. Furthermore, the involvement of parents and the school community strengthens value continuity between school and home, amplifying the impact of religious education. From a managerial perspective, this study implies that Islamic education management should view religious extracurricular programs as core components of character and spiritual development rather than supplementary activities. Strategic planning, reflective evaluation, and stakeholder collaboration are essential to ensure that these programs move beyond formal compliance toward transformative spiritual learning. By embedding reflective practices and contextual meaning-making into extracurricular activities, schools can cultivate spiritually intelligent students who are resilient, compassionate, and morally grounded in an increasingly complex and digitalized world.

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