

# Evaluating the Ulul Ilmi Model: Enhancing Spiritual and Moral Character through Holistic Islamic Pedagogy in Higher Education

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose** – This study evaluates the effectiveness of the Ulul Ilmi model in enhancing the spiritual and moral character of students at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia. The research addresses gaps in Islamic moral education by integrating spiritual and ethical development into teaching practices, responding to the challenges of moral degradation and limited efficacy of traditional approaches.

**Design/methods/approach** – A quasi-experimental design with pre-test and post-test assessments was employed involving 80 undergraduate students. Data were collected through questionnaires, observations, cognitive tests, and daily spiritual activity forms. The analysis used paired t-tests to measure changes in six dimensions of the Ulul Ilmi character: knowledge, attitude, skill, ethics, social, and spirituality.

**Findings** – The study bridges critical gaps in moral education by introducing and evaluating a comprehensive framework grounded in Islamic principles. The Ulul Ilmi model uniquely addresses knowledge, skills, attitudes, and spirituality, offering an innovative response to contemporary ethical challenges.

**Research implications** – Educational institutions can adopt the Ulul Ilmi model to integrate daily spiritual practices, such as prayer and self-reflection, into curricula. The findings underscore the importance of comprehensive assessment tools to measure and enhance moral education outcomes effectively.

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## 1. Introduction

The development of moral character (*akhlak*) is a fundamental goal in Islamic education, vital for nurturing individuals who contribute positively to society. In the modern educational context, there is a pressing need to enhance the spiritual aspects of students to address moral degradation and ethical challenges faced by youth today. Instances of declining moral behavior among students, such as violence, substance abuse, and disrespect towards elders, highlight the urgency of this issue (Firmansyah, 2007; Ningsih & et al., 2016; Pranoto et al., 2016). Traditional teaching methods in Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam* or PAI) courses may not be sufficient to instill the desired moral values and spiritual depth. Therefore, innovative educational models like the *Ulul Ilmi* model are essential to effectively enhance students' moral and spiritual development.

Previous studies emphasize that moral character is the fruit of an educational process that requires continuous nurturing through sustained guidance (Aziz & et al., 2020; Pranoto et al., 2016; Syamli & Firdausi, 2018). Educators are encouraged to employ diverse educational models derived from Quranic guidance to maximize learning outcomes in moral education (Dianita & Abdussalam, 2020; Pranoto et al., 2016). The integration of spiritual pedagogy in teaching practices is crucial for developing students' spiritual intelligence and moral reasoning (Dardiri, 2019; Halim et al., 2019).



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Moreover, incorporating Islamic values into educational models has been shown to improve students' character and ethical behavior (Amran et al., 2024; Fahyuni et al., 2020). Studies also indicate that spiritual practices and religious engagement enhance students' coping mechanisms and overall well-being (Nuraeni et al., 2024; Seephom et al., 2023).

Despite the recognized importance of spiritual pedagogy, current PAI learning models in public universities often rely on conventional methods, limiting their effectiveness in achieving Islamic educational goals (Arif, 2015; Nurjannah, 2015; Priatna, 2018). This reliance on traditional approaches has been criticized for failing to foster noble character (*akhlakul karimah*) among students (Arif, 2015; Huda, 2024). The challenges posed by globalization and technological advancements necessitate innovative approaches in moral education (Lipina & Shapoval, 2021; Tolchah & Mu'ammam, 2019). Moreover, educators have a pivotal role in character building but often lack the necessary tools and models to effectively enhance students' spiritual dimensions (Hermawan et al., 2021; Parhan & et al., 2020). There is a growing consensus on the need for educational models that integrate spiritual values with contemporary teaching methods (W. N. W. Ismail et al., 2017; Nasir et al., 2019).

Various innovations have been introduced to improve moral education, including technology-based models and distinctive learning approaches (Harto, 2018; Rahmat, 2019; Zulkifli, 2013). However, these models often do not specifically target the development of the *Ulul Ilmi* character, which embodies both knowledge and spiritual virtues (Budiyanti et al., 2016; Karadağ, 2019). The concept of *Ulul Ilmi* refers to individuals possessing deep knowledge, strong faith, and exemplary moral qualities (Budiyanti et al., 2016; M. Ismail et al., 2019). Prior research has not fully explored models that aim to cultivate these comprehensive attributes in students (Marzuki, 2017; Rohidin et al., 2015). There is a need to develop and evaluate educational models that holistically address knowledge, skills, attitudes, and spirituality (Ayubi & Masruri, 2025; Purwanto et al., 2021).

Building on these insights, the integration of Islamic values and modern educational practices has shown promise in enhancing students' spiritual and moral development (Latief & Madjid, 2022; Sunarya et al., 2021). Studies highlight the effectiveness of spiritual education in improving emotional intelligence and ethical behavior among students (Alimni et al., 2022; Momivand et al., 2018). Additionally, the use of spiritual care and practices has been beneficial in healthcare settings, suggesting potential applications in education. Educational institutions that emphasize spiritual growth contribute significantly to students' personal development and readiness to face modern challenges (Hazaveh & Arabameri, 2020; Miranda, 2021). However, the lack of models specifically designed to cultivate the *Ulul Ilmi* character remains a significant gap in the literature (Conde Solares, 2020; Mamat & Zarif, 2019).

Despite these advancements, existing educational models often lack a comprehensive approach that integrates knowledge, skills, attitudes, and spirituality as embodied in the *Ulul Ilmi* concept. Previous studies have not adequately addressed the evaluation of the *Ulul Ilmi* model's effectiveness in enhancing students' spiritual dimensions (Flaskerud, 2024; Hernawan et al., 2021). There is a scarcity of assessment tools specifically designed to measure moral learning outcomes through the *Ulul Ilmi* model (Karadag & Yüksel, 2021; Rupčić, 2017). This gap hinders the ability to effectively implement and evaluate educational strategies aimed at fostering comprehensive moral and spiritual development (Hernawan et al., 2021; Anonymous, 2022). Consequently, there is a need for research that develops and validates assessment tools for measuring the impact of the *Ulul Ilmi* model on students' spiritual growth.

Addressing this gap, the present study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the *Ulul Ilmi* model in moral education to enhance the spiritual dimension of students at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia through the use of developed assessment tools. By analyzing both the learning process and outcomes, the research seeks to provide empirical evidence on the model's impact on students' spiritual

development. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of effective educational strategies that integrate knowledge and spirituality, addressing the current shortcomings in moral education. The implementation of the *Ulul Ilmi* model may serve as a solution to the challenges faced in cultivating noble character among students in an era increasingly distanced from Islamic values. Ultimately, this research aims to support the creation of a more religious campus environment and enhance the overall quality of Islamic education.

## **2. Methods**

### **2.1. Research Design**

The participants of this study were undergraduate students enrolled in the Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam, PAI) course at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI). A total of 80 students were selected through purposive sampling, as they were representative of the target population for the application of the *Ulul Ilmi* model. Purposive sampling is a deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). The selection criteria included students who had completed the foundational PAI course and were engaged in moral and spiritual development activities. The sample size was deemed sufficient to ensure statistical power for detecting changes in the spiritual dimension of moral learning outcomes.

### **2.2. Data Collection**

Data were collected through multiple instruments, including pre-test and post-test questionnaires, tests, observations, and documentation. The pre-test was administered at the beginning of the course to measure baseline spiritual characteristics, while the post-test was given after the application of the *Ulul Ilmi* model. Both tests assessed various dimensions of students' spiritual development. Pre-tests and post-tests are commonly used in educational research to assess the effectiveness of interventions (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). Observations were conducted throughout the intervention to capture real-time engagement and behavioral shifts, while documentation was utilized to record qualitative insights related to students' responses and interactions during the learning process. Observation and documentation provide qualitative insights that enrich the understanding of the research findings (Creswell, 2014). The data collection process was standardized to ensure consistency and minimize biases.

### **2.3. Data Analysis**

The data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistics. The pre-test and post-test data were compared using paired sample t-tests to determine the statistical significance of the changes in students' spiritual characteristics. A paired sample t-test determines whether the mean difference between two sets of observations is zero (Pallant, 2016). SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software was used for the analysis, providing precise calculations and ensuring reliability in the results. SPSS is a comprehensive software for analyzing data in social sciences and education (Field, 2013). Additionally, observational and documentation data were analyzed qualitatively to provide a deeper understanding of students' behavior and spiritual development throughout the intervention.

### **2.4. Ethics**

Ethical considerations were rigorously followed throughout the study. Prior to participation, all students were informed about the research objectives and provided written consent. Ethical

considerations, including informed consent and data confidentiality, are critical in ensuring the integrity of educational research (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Confidentiality of the participants was maintained by anonymizing the data, ensuring that no personal information could be traced back to individuals. The study was conducted following the ethical guidelines set forth by the Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia's research ethics committee, ensuring that the rights and well-being of all participants were safeguarded throughout the research process.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Design of Learning Achievement Measurement Instrument for Morals Through the *Ulul Ilmi* Model

The *Ulul Ilmi* model emphasizes integrating Islamic values into the teaching process by applying core principles of Islamic education. These principles as Rahmaniyyah, Rabbaniyyah, Takamuliyyah, Istimrariyah, Tawazuniyyah, Wasaliyyah, and Syumuliyyah (Dianita & Abdussalam, 2020; Marwah & Abdussalam, 2020). In the initial stage, educators focus on fostering the Rabbaniyyah principle by starting with prayers and intentions. This helps students direct their minds and hearts towards Allah. The learning process, when initiated with gratitude and proper intention, facilitates better understanding. The educators also communicate learning objectives clearly, aligning them with the *Ulul Ilmi* model to form a distinct character while establishing minimum benchmarks for success using the Takamuliyyah principle. Learning content is determined based on the Syumuliyyah principle, ensuring that all aspects of life are covered. The chosen content focuses on Islamic morals, particularly the character development of *Ulul Ilmi* among students.

During the core learning activities, educators prioritize empowering learning resources by instructing students to engage with reading materials and educational videos. The Rahmaniyyah principle guides actions such as motivating students to present and explore their understanding of Islamic moral education with compassion and kindness. The teaching method employs a student-centered approach where students actively seek and present information. Educators encourage students to ask questions and engage in discussions, fostering independence and confidence in expressing their thoughts. Through role models (*uswah hasanah*), educators exemplify proper behavior and speech in the classroom. The *ibrah mauidzah* method delivers moral lessons and advice, while the *targhib-tarhib* method reinforces students' moral character by analyzing the rewards and punishments mentioned in the Qur'an for different behaviors. Ultimately, educators lead students to internalize the principle of Tawazuniyyah, guiding them toward a balanced life with both worldly and spiritual orientations.

In the final stage, educators evaluate both the process and the outcomes of learning. Process evaluation focuses on students' participation in discussions, respect for others' opinions, collaboration, politeness, and religious attitudes as documented in daily activity forms and peer assessments. Outcome evaluation involves cognitive tests to measure students' comprehension of the learning materials. Additionally, educators provide heart-touching educational messages encouraging students to apply *Ulul Ilmi* values in six domains: cognitive, affective, psychomotor, ethical, social, and spiritual. This comprehensive evaluation aligns with the ultimate goal of Islamic education: fostering individuals who are knowledgeable, faithful, and righteous.

To achieve these goals, educators must develop an assessment tool that measures the success of moral learning based on the *Ulul Ilmi* model. Previous research has identified six dimensions of *Ulul Ilmi*: knowledge, attitude, skill, social, ethics, and spirituality (Abdussalam et al.,

2021; Abdussalam & Supriadi, 2020; Budiayanti et al., 2020). These dimensions can be mapped into specific assessment indicators, as illustrated in the table 1.

**Table 1.** Measuring Tools of the *Ulul Ilmi* Model

No	<i>Ulul Ilmi</i> Dimension	Process and Outcome Evaluation
1	Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student opinions in discussions</li> <li>• Responses to questions</li> <li>• Cognitive test results</li> <li>• <i>Ulul Ilmi</i> survey results</li> </ul>
2	Attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student attitude in class</li> <li>• Respect for others' opinions</li> <li>• Willingness to ask questions</li> <li>• Response to assignments</li> <li>• <i>Ulul Ilmi</i> survey results</li> </ul>
3	Skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student performance in assignments</li> <li>• Practical application of moral concepts in daily life</li> <li>• <i>Ulul Ilmi</i> survey results</li> </ul>
4	Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speech during discussions</li> <li>• Speech in consultations</li> <li>• Speech during class activities</li> <li>• <i>Ulul Ilmi</i> survey results</li> <li>• Peer assessment</li> </ul>
5	Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compassion towards ill or struggling peers</li> <li>• <i>Ulul Ilmi</i> survey results</li> <li>• Peer assessment</li> </ul>
6	Spiritual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to spiritual growth through daily activity forms</li> <li>• Spiritual guidance</li> <li>• <i>Ulul Ilmi</i> survey results</li> </ul>

This table reflects the evaluation aspects of moral education in Islamic studies courses, designed to achieve the intended learning objectives. The required assessment tools include written tests, oral exams, surveys, peer evaluations, classroom activities, and daily activity forms that capture students' religious practices such as prayer, remembrance, polite speech, time management, reading, listening to Islamic messages, filial piety, helping others, and charity.

### 3.2. Evaluation of the Moral Learning Process Through the *Ulul Ilmi* Model

The evaluation of the moral education process through the *Ulul Ilmi* model involves assessing both the learning process and outcomes. Initially, students are instructed to complete a pre-test, which maps their *Ulul Ilmi* character, a cognitive test on Islamic morals, and a form of daily spiritual activities (*amalan yaumiyyah*) reflective of *Ulul Ilmi* values. These forms act as tools for self-reflection and encourage positive behavioral change. However, several challenges emerged during implementation. Many students were absent during the application of the *Ulul Ilmi* model, limiting their participation. Additionally, time constraints hindered the completion of class discussions, leaving many student questions unanswered.

These challenges highlight the need for better preparation to accommodate larger groups of students in the learning process. The materials related to *Ulul Ilmi* character in the context of Islamic ethics and Sufism were also not well understood by the students. It is essential to provide students with a deeper understanding of the *Ulul Ilmi* character and to motivate them to engage actively in the learning process. Continuous reinforcement from all stakeholders is also necessary to ensure that the *Ulul Ilmi* character is consistently applied in students' daily lives.

To address these issues, educators must evaluate the learning process by providing spiritual guidance in filling out the daily spiritual activity forms (*amalan yaumiyyah*) reflective of *Ulul*





spiritual activity forms and the significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results, which will be further discussed in the next section.

### 3.3. The Effectiveness of the Ulul Ilmi Model in Increasing the Spiritual Dimension

The effectiveness of the *Ulul Ilmi* model in enhancing the spiritual dimension of students was evaluated through a trial involving 80 students from two classes in the Guidance and Counseling Department. The pre-test results showed that 3.75% of students were categorized as high, while 96.25% were categorized as medium. Post-test results indicated a significant improvement, with 38.75% categorized as high and 61.25% as medium. The overall representation of the *Ulul Ilmi* character is illustrated in the following figure:

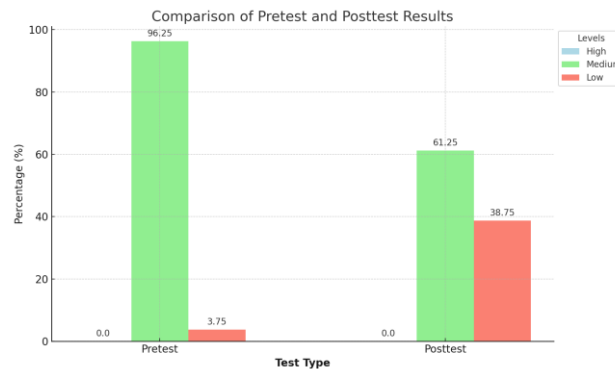


Figure 2. Student *Ulul Ilmi* Character Representation

Table 2. Description of the Dimensions of Students' *Ulul Ilmi* Character

No	<i>Ulul Ilmi</i> Dimension	Indicator	Criteria	Interval	Pre-test (F)	Pre-test (%)	Post-test (F)	Post-test (%)
1	Knowledge	Intelligence	High	3.68 - 5.00	2	2.50	32	40.00
			Medium	2.34 - 3.67	73	91.25	48	60.00
			Low	1.00 - 2.33	5	6.25	0	0.00
2	Attitude	Care	High	3.68 - 5.00	13	16.25	35	43.75
			Medium	2.34 - 3.67	67	83.75	45	56.25
			Low	1.00 - 2.33	0	0.00	0	0.00
3	Skill	Fair Behavior	High	3.68 - 5.00	3	3.75	24	30.00
			Medium	2.34 - 3.67	67	83.75	56	70.00
			Low	1.00 - 2.33	10	12.50	0	0.00
4	Social	Cooperation	High	3.68 - 5.00	9	11.25	28	35.00
			Medium	2.34 - 3.67	71	88.75	52	65.00
			Low	1.00 - 2.33	0	0.00	0	0.00
5	Ethics	Polite Language	High	3.68 - 5.00	4	5.00	34	42.50
			Medium	2.34 - 3.67	67	83.75	46	57.50
			Low	1.00 - 2.33	9	11.25	0	0.00
6	Spiritual	Religiosity	High	3.68 - 5.00	2	2.50	57	71.25
			Medium	2.34 - 3.67	68	85.00	23	28.75
			Low	1.00 - 2.33	10	12.50	0	0.00

Based on the data, the knowledge dimension showed a pre-test result of 2.50% in the high category, 91.25% in the medium category, and 6.25% in the low category. This improved significantly in the post-test, with 40.00% in the high category and 60.00% in the medium category. In the attitude dimension, the pre-test showed 16.25% in the high category and 83.75% in the medium category, which increased to 43.75% in the high category and 56.25% in the medium category during the post-test.

For the skill dimension, the pre-test revealed 3.75% in the high category, 83.75% in the medium category, and 12.50% in the low category. This improved in the post-test, with 30% in the high category and 70% in the medium category. In the social dimension, the pre-test showed 11.25% in the high category and 88.75% in the medium category, increasing to 35% in the high category and 65% in the medium category in the post-test.

The ethics dimension displayed 5.00% in the high category, 83.75% in the medium category, and 11.25% in the low category during the pre-test. These results improved in the post-test, with 42.50% in the high category and 57.50% in the medium category. Finally, the spiritual dimension showed 2.50% in the high category, 85.00% in the medium category, and 12.50% in the low category during the pre-test. In the post-test, these results shifted to 71.25% in the high category and 28.75% in the medium category.

To test the effectiveness of the *Ulul Ilmi* model in improving students' *Ulul Ilmi* character, data from pre-test and post-test evaluations were analyzed. The first step involved testing the statistical assumptions through normality tests of both pre-test and post-test data using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, as shown in the following table:

**Table 3.** Normality Test of Pre-test and Post-test *Ulul Ilmi* Character Data

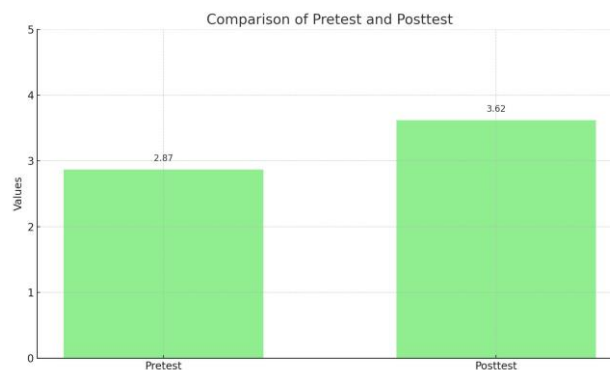
Data	n	Mean	KS-Z	Sig. (2-tailed)	Ho
Pre-test	80	2.8748	0.115	0.070	Accepted
Post-test	80	3.6236	0.092	0.090	Accepted

The table above shows that both data sets have sig. (2-tailed) values greater than 0.05, indicating that Ho is accepted, and the data is normally distributed. After confirming normality, a paired t-test was conducted. The detailed results of the paired t-test are presented below:

**Table 4.** Paired T-Test of Students' Character Data

Data	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean Difference	t-value	Sig.	Ho
Pre-test	2.8748	0.28440	0.74887	20.235	0.000	Rejected
Post-test	3.6236	0.20474				

The table shows that the probability value (sig. 2-tailed) is 0.000, which is less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ , resulting in Ho being rejected. Therefore, the *Ulul Ilmi* character of students significantly improved after the implementation of the *Ulul Ilmi* model. The comparison between the pre-test and post-test averages is presented in the following figure:



**Figure 3.** Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Averages of *Ulul Ilmi* Character

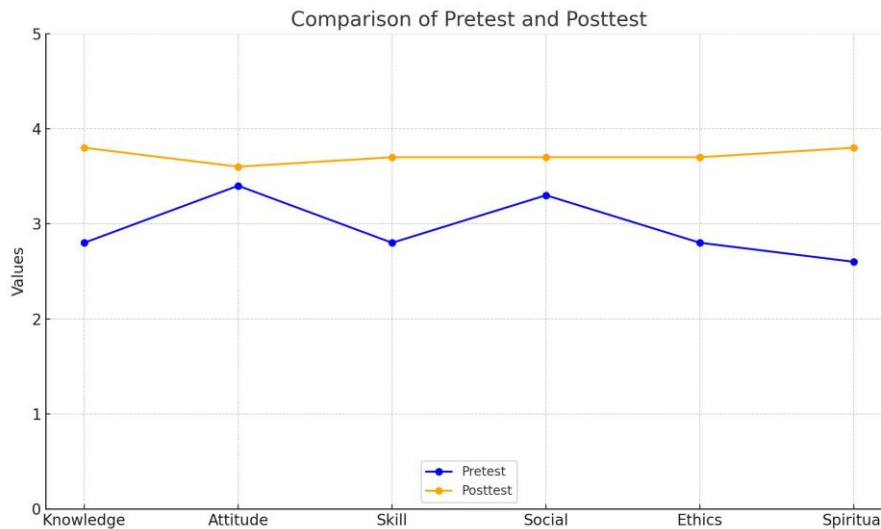
The effectiveness test is further elaborated based on the dimensions of the *Ulul Ilmi* character using the paired t-test, as follows:



**Table 5.** Paired T-Test of *Ulul Ilmi* Character Dimensions

Dimension	Data	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean Difference	t-value	Sig.	Ho
Knowledge	Pre-test	2.7200	0.37329	0.94250	21.688	0.000	Rejected
	Post-test	3.6625	0.25969				
Attitude	Pre-test	3.3625	0.35018	0.30000	7.339	0.000	Rejected
	Post-test	3.6625	0.30950				
Skill	Pre-test	2.7500	0.41185	0.78750	12.730	0.000	Rejected
	Post-test	3.5375	0.35234				
Social	Pre-test	3.2000	0.40752	0.34250	5.968	0.000	Rejected
	Post-test	3.5425	0.40277				
Ethics	Pre-test	2.7475	0.46196	0.79000	10.354	0.000	Rejected
	Post-test	3.5375	0.45294				
Spiritual	Pre-test	2.4700	0.32312	1.33000	29.544	0.000	Rejected
	Post-test	3.8000	0.22276				

The table illustrates that the probability value (sig. 2-tailed) is 0.000 for all dimensions, which is less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ , leading to  $H_0$  being rejected. This indicates that all dimensions of the *Ulul Ilmi* character improved significantly after implementing the *Ulul Ilmi* model. The comparison of pre-test and post-test averages for the *Ulul Ilmi* character dimensions is shown in the Figure 4.

**Figure 4.** Pre-test and Post-test Averages of *Ulul Ilmi* Character Dimensions

Thus, the trial phase demonstrates significant improvements in students' activities related to moral education in Islamic Studies courses. This is evident from the substantial increase in the completion of the daily spiritual activity forms (*amalan yaumiyyah*) and the significant pre-test and post-test results, as illustrated in the figures and tables above. The spiritual dimension, in particular, saw a marked improvement, which plays a crucial role in fostering noble character (*akhlaq al-karimah*).

Based on the findings, it can be understood that educators, as facilitators managing the learning process in the classroom, play a crucial role in determining the quality of education. Consequently, educators must carefully plan and implement educational actions in the classroom to ensure effective learning. The success of the learning process is contingent upon the educational communication between educators and students, ensuring that Islamic teachings are not only conveyed but also internalized and practiced in daily life (Hj Othman, 2015; Nuridin, 2015; Umami et al., 2019).

## 4. Discussion

The study revealed significant improvements in all dimensions of the Ulul Ilmi character, supported by statistical analysis of pre-test and post-test data. In the spiritual dimension, students categorized as high increased from 2.50% pre-test to 71.25% post-test, demonstrating marked enhancements in religiosity and spiritual practices. Similarly, the knowledge dimension showed an increase in high-category students from 2.50% to 40.00%, reflecting improved understanding of Islamic morals. These results underscore the model's effectiveness in fostering spiritual, cognitive, ethical, and social dimensions of moral character (Abdussalam & Supriadi, 2020; Budiyanti et al., 2016; Marwah & Abdussalam, 2020). Paired t-tests confirmed statistically significant improvements across all dimensions, with p-values below 0.05.

These findings align with previous studies advocating for integrating Islamic values and spiritual pedagogy into education, which have shown positive effects on motivation, self-awareness, and moral behavior (Amran et al., 2024; Fahyuni et al., 2020; Halim et al., 2019). The increased engagement in spiritual practices and moral behaviors corroborates research linking spiritual education to enhanced emotional intelligence and ethical conduct (Majid & Laird, 2023; Nuraeni et al., 2024). Unlike earlier models focusing on cognitive or behavioral aspects, the Ulul Ilmi model's holistic approach—emphasizing comprehensive character development—fills a gap identified in existing literature (Abdussalam et al., 2021; Ayubi & Masruri, 2025).

Furthermore, this study contributes to addressing moral degradation among youth by demonstrating the practicality and adaptability of the Ulul Ilmi model in fostering noble character (Harto, 2018; Rahmat, 2019; Zulkifli, 2013). Compared to previous models, the observed improvements in the spiritual dimension uniquely highlight the model's capacity to enhance students' moral and spiritual growth.

The Ulul Ilmi model reinforces the theoretical framework advocating for the integration of Islamic principles in pedagogy, emphasizing the importance of aligning educational methods with students' cultural and spiritual contexts (W. N. W. Ismail et al., 2017; Sunarya et al., 2021). By addressing gaps in prior research, this study extends the discourse on holistic moral education, highlighting how tailored models can contribute to cultivating noble character in diverse educational settings.

Educational institutions can adopt the Ulul Ilmi model to address moral degradation and nurture students' spiritual and moral development. Practical applications include incorporating structured daily spiritual activities (*amalan yaumiyyah*) such as prayer and self-reflection into curricula. The success of the Ulul Ilmi model also underscores the necessity of comprehensive assessment tools for evaluating moral education outcomes, ensuring targeted and effective interventions (Abdussalam et al., 2021; Budiyanti et al., 2020).

The findings, while significant, are subject to limitations. The study's sample was restricted to Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, limiting generalizability. Additionally, the model's effectiveness was assessed over a relatively short period, which may not capture long-term impacts. Challenges such as absenteeism and time constraints also suggest the need for further refinement of implementation strategies.

Future research should validate the Ulul Ilmi model across diverse educational contexts and populations to assess its broader applicability. Longitudinal studies are recommended to evaluate the sustained impact of the model on students' moral and spiritual development. Expanding the scope of research to include comparative studies with other character development models could further substantiate the model's efficacy.

This study highlights the Ulul Ilmi model's effectiveness in fostering noble character by enhancing spiritual, cognitive, ethical, and social dimensions of students' moral education. It bridges critical gaps

in existing research by providing a comprehensive framework for character development rooted in Islamic values. These findings contribute to advancing Islamic education practices, emphasizing the need for innovative, culturally aligned educational models to address contemporary ethical challenges.

## 5. Conclusion

This study highlights the effectiveness of the Ulul Ilmi model in enhancing students' spiritual, cognitive, ethical, and social dimensions through moral education. The model significantly improved the proportion of students categorized as high across all dimensions of Ulul Ilmi character, with the spiritual dimension increasing from 2.50% in the pre-test to 71.25% in the post-test. These findings affirm the success of a holistic educational approach that integrates Islamic values into the learning process to cultivate noble character (*akhlaq al-karimah*). Statistical analysis confirmed significant improvements across all character dimensions, with p-values below 0.05, demonstrating the model's efficacy in fostering comprehensive character development.

These results align with prior research emphasizing the positive impact of spiritual pedagogy and the integration of Islamic values in education to enhance self-awareness, motivation, and moral behavior. However, the Ulul Ilmi model advances the scope of moral education by adopting a comprehensive framework that addresses the holistic development of students, providing a relevant solution to the challenges of moral degradation in modern education.

Educational institutions can adopt the Ulul Ilmi model to address issues of moral degradation and foster students' spiritual and moral development. Practical applications include integrating structured daily spiritual activities (*amalan yaumiyyah*), such as prayer and self-reflection, into curricula. The study underscores the importance of comprehensive assessment tools for measuring moral education outcomes, ensuring targeted and effective interventions.

This study has several limitations. The sample was restricted to Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, limiting the generalizability of findings to broader educational contexts. Additionally, the study was conducted over a relatively short period, which may not fully capture the long-term impacts of the model. Challenges such as absenteeism and time constraints during implementation also suggest the need for refined strategies to ensure effective participation.

Future research should validate the Ulul Ilmi model across diverse educational settings and populations to assess its broader applicability. Longitudinal studies are recommended to evaluate the sustained impact of the model on students' moral and spiritual development. Comparative studies with other character development models could further substantiate the Ulul Ilmi model's effectiveness.

This study demonstrates that the Ulul Ilmi model serves as an innovative approach to moral education, integrating Islamic values into a comprehensive framework for character development. The findings contribute to advancing Islamic education practices by addressing critical gaps in moral education research. The adoption and further refinement of this model hold significant potential for cultivating a generation of students who are knowledgeable, spiritually enriched, and morally upright, providing a strategic response to contemporary ethical challenges.

## Declarations

### *Author contribution statement*

Nurti Budiyaniti initiated the idea and all activities in this research paper. Muhamad Parhan as the parties who have been guiding the completion of the research paper.

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### Data availability statement

The datasets generated during and analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.


### Declaration of Interest's statement


The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

### Additional information

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