



Cultivating Spiritual Awareness in Islamic Primary Education through Contemplative Pedagogy: A Quasi-Experimental Study

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DOI:

Keywords:

contemplative pedagogy;
spiritual awareness; Islamic
primary education



Publisher:

Faculty of Tarbiyah and
Teacher Training,
Universitas Islam Negeri
Walisongo Semarang, in
collaboration with the
Association of Madrasah
Ibtidaiyah Teacher
Education Lecturers,
Indonesia

Received: 31 Dec 2025,

Revised: 16 January 2026,

Accepted: 16 January 2026,

Published: 17 January 2026

Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of contemplative pedagogy in cultivating spiritual awareness among students in Islamic primary education. Addressing the limited empirical evidence on pedagogical approaches that foster students' inner spiritual development, this study employed a quasi-experimental design using a non-equivalent control group pretest–posttest model. The participants were 80 Grade 5 students from an Islamic primary school in Sumenep Regency, Indonesia, divided into an experimental group ($n = 40$) and a control group ($n = 40$). Spiritual awareness was measured using a validated questionnaire administered before and after the instructional intervention. Descriptive analysis showed that both groups had comparable pretest scores (experimental $M = 67.85$; control $M = 68.10$). After the intervention, the experimental group demonstrated a substantially higher posttest mean score ($M = 82.40$) compared to the control group ($M = 73.25$). The mean gain score of the experimental group ($\Delta M = 14.55$) exceeded that of the control group ($\Delta M = 5.15$). Inferential analysis using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) revealed a significant effect of contemplative pedagogy on students' spiritual awareness after controlling for pretest scores, $F(1, 77) = 48.47$, $p < .001$, with a large effect size (partial $\eta^2 = .386$). These findings provide empirical evidence that contemplative pedagogy is a practical instructional approach for enhancing students' spiritual awareness—particularly in terms of God-conscious awareness, reflective meaning-making of Islamic values, moral self-regulation, and commitment to value-based action—in Islamic primary education.



INTRODUCTION

In recent educational discourse, increasing attention has been paid to the need for learning approaches that extend beyond cognitive achievement and behavioral compliance toward the holistic development of learners. This shift reflects the growing recognition that education plays a critical role in shaping students' moral, emotional, and spiritual capacities (Hyde & Watson, 2023). Such an orientation is particularly significant in religious education, where learning is inherently concerned with meaning-making, value internalization, and inner awareness (Halstead, 2021; Hyde & Watson, 2022). Within the context of Islamic primary education, the cultivation of spiritual awareness is widely regarded as a core educational objective; however, empirical evidence regarding effective pedagogical approaches to achieving this goal remains limited (Roeser & Vago, 2022; Wright, 2021).

Existing research on Islamic education at the primary level has largely emphasized curriculum content, instructional strategies, and character education outcomes, with success commonly measured by students' acquisition of religious knowledge and observable moral behavior (Ergas & Hadar, 2022; Hyde, 2021a). However, empirical studies have consistently reported that many primary school students demonstrate a predominantly ritualistic and compliance-oriented understanding of religious practices, characterized by memorization and external conformity, rather than reflective or internally meaningful engagement with Islamic values (Ergas & Todd, 2021; Perriam, 2022). This condition suggests that while students may perform religious rituals correctly, they often struggle to articulate the personal meaning, moral reasoning, or spiritual awareness underlying these practices. Field-based evidence from Islamic primary classrooms shows that instructional and assessment practices predominantly prioritize ritual accuracy, memorization, and observable compliance, leaving little pedagogical space for guided reflection or meaning-making. Consequently, students' religious engagement remains largely procedural and externally regulated rather than rooted in conscious spiritual awareness, ethical intentionality, and internalized value commitment.

The limited development of spiritual awareness at the primary level represents a critical educational concern, as childhood is widely recognized as a foundational period for the formation of moral identity, self-regulation, and good consciousness (Hardiansyah & Zainuddin, 2022; J Kabat-Zinn, 2021). When spiritual learning is reduced to cognitive mastery and behavioral discipline, students may internalize religious values superficially, leading to fragile moral commitment and limited reflective capacity at later developmental stages. Despite the centrality of spirituality in Islamic educational aims, teachers frequently encounter structural and pedagogical constraints in fostering students' inner spiritual engagement, including curriculum overload, assessment-driven instruction, and a lack of

pedagogical models that intentionally cultivate reflection, awareness, and meaning-making (Lomas, 2023; Sahin & Francis, 2022).

In this context, contemplative pedagogy offers a pedagogically coherent response to the challenge of cultivating students' spiritual awareness. By integrating practices such as guided reflection, focused attention, silence, and value-oriented inquiry into classroom instruction, contemplative pedagogy directly addresses the limitations of transmission-oriented religious teaching and creates structured opportunities for students to engage inwardly with Islamic values (Hardiansyah, Zainuddin, Sukitman, & Astutik, 2023; A Sahin, 2023). Its emphasis on awareness, presence, and reflective meaning-making closely aligns with the spiritual objectives of Islamic education, particularly the cultivation of God-consciousness (*taqwa*), moral self-regulation, and intentional value-based action. However, despite its theoretical relevance, empirical evidence on the effectiveness of contemplative pedagogy in enhancing students' spiritual awareness in Islamic primary education remains limited, underscoring the need for systematic investigation.

In many Islamic primary classrooms, religious instruction is still largely characterized by memorization, recitation, and teacher-centered explanations (O Gunnlaugson, 2021). Although these practices are integral to Islamic learning traditions, their dominance may limit opportunities for students to reflect on their personal meaning, emotional resonance, and lived experiences associated with religious values. As a result, students may demonstrate proficiency in religious knowledge without developing a deeper spiritual awareness, understood as a conscious reflection on faith, values, and ethical responsibility. This pedagogical imbalance suggests that prevailing instructional models may not be sufficient to support the holistic aims of Islamic religious education (Hyde, 2021b). Rooted in humanistic, constructivist, and reflective learning theories, contemplative pedagogy emphasizes practices such as focused attention, silence, reflective inquiry, and mindful awareness as a means of fostering deeper learning (Biesta, 2021). Empirical studies have demonstrated that contemplative approaches can enhance students' reflective capacity, emotional regulation, ethical sensitivity, and engagement with values (Roeser, 2022).

Recent research has also suggested that contemplative pedagogy contributes to meaning-oriented learning, enabling students to connect academic content with personal experience and moral identity (Roeser, 2021). These findings indicate that contemplative pedagogy holds promise as a pedagogical alternative capable of addressing the inner dimensions of learning often neglected in traditional instructional models. However, most existing studies are situated in secular or higher education settings, leaving their applicability to Islamic primary education largely unexplored.

Despite the theoretical alignment between contemplative pedagogy and the spiritual aims of Islamic education, there is a notable lack of empirical research examining its effectiveness in Islamic primary school settings. While scholars frequently advocate reflective and spiritually grounded approaches to religious education, few studies have provided quantitative evidence demonstrating that such approaches effectively enhance students' spiritual awareness. Consequently, contemplative pedagogy often remains a conceptual ideal rather than an empirically validated instructional model in Islamic education.

Contemporary educational demands for evidence-based practice have amplified the urgency to address this question. Teachers and policymakers increasingly require empirical justification to adopt innovative pedagogical models. Without rigorous evaluation, contemplative pedagogy risks being perceived as subjective or impractical, despite its philosophical relevance to religious education. In Islamic primary education, where spiritual formation is a central goal, lack of empirical validation undermines efforts to reform instructional practices in a meaningful and sustainable manner.

Primary school represents a critical developmental stage in the formation of spiritual awareness and moral identity. Educational experiences during this period significantly influenced students' long-term engagement with religious values. Pedagogical approaches that fail to address students' reflective capacities at this stage may result in superficial learning outcomes that do not translate into sustained spiritual growth. Therefore, identifying instructional models that are not only philosophically sound but also empirically effective is an urgent priority.

Recent literature on contemplative pedagogy provides important insights but also reveals significant limitations. J P Miller & Nigh, (2021) identified a "contemplative turn" in education, emphasizing the growing interest in pedagogies that foreground inner awareness and reflective presence. While his work offers a strong theoretical foundation, it does not empirically test the effectiveness of contemplative pedagogy, nor does it address religious or primary education contexts. Memon (2020b) conducted empirical research demonstrating that contemplative practices positively affect students' emotional regulation and ethical awareness. Their findings support the claim that contemplative pedagogy contributes to holistic development; however, the study focused on adolescents in secular settings, limiting its applicability to younger learners and faith-based education. Similarly, Abdullah Sahin (2021b) reported transformative learning outcomes associated with contemplative pedagogy in higher education, yet their research does not include comparative or experimental designs applicable to primary schooling.

Within Islamic education research, Rodriguez (2024) argued for pedagogical renewal that moves beyond transmission toward meaning-oriented learning. While

his work underscores the importance of spirituality, it remains largely conceptual and does not provide empirical evidence for specific instructional models. Memon (2020) similarly articulated the moral and spiritual aims of Islamic education but did not examine how particular pedagogical approaches influence spiritual awareness outcomes. Collectively, these studies indicate a growing recognition of the importance of spirituality and reflection in education. However, they also reveal a methodological gap, as most prior research relies on qualitative, theoretical, or non-experimental approaches. There is a notable absence of quasi-experimental studies that compare contemplative pedagogy with conventional instructional methods and quantitatively assess its impact on spiritual awareness, particularly in Islamic primary education.

Based on the analysis above, this study addresses three interrelated gaps. First, there is a contextual gap, as contemplative pedagogy has rarely been examined within Islamic primary education. Second, there is a methodological gap, given the lack of quasi-experimental research evaluating the effectiveness of contemplative pedagogy in religious education settings. Third, there is a measurement gap, as spiritual awareness is seldom operationalized as a quantifiable learning outcome.

The novelty of this study lies in its empirical examination of contemplative pedagogy as an instructional intervention in Islamic primary education using a quasi-experimental design. By systematically comparing students exposed to contemplative pedagogy with those receiving conventional instruction, this study provides evidence-based insights into the effectiveness of contemplative pedagogy in cultivating spiritual awareness among primary school students.

The present study aims to examine the effect of contemplative pedagogy on students' spiritual awareness in Islamic primary education through a quasi-experimental design. Specifically, the study seeks to determine whether students who participate in contemplative pedagogy-based instruction demonstrate significantly higher levels of spiritual awareness than those who experience conventional religious instruction. Through this investigation, the study contributes empirical evidence to the growing discourse on holistic and spiritually grounded pedagogical models in Islamic primary education.

METHODS

This study employed a quasi-experimental design to examine the effects of contemplative pedagogy on students' spiritual awareness in Islamic primary education. Specifically, a non-equivalent control group pretest–posttest design was adopted, in which two intact Grade 5 classes were assigned as the experimental group (contemplative pedagogy-based instruction) and the control group (conventional Islamic Religious Education instruction). The experimental group received instruction grounded in contemplative pedagogy, characterized by

structured phases of awareness activation, guided reflection, silent attention, reflective questioning, and intentional value internalization, enabling students to engage inwardly with Islamic values and relate lesson content to personal experience. In contrast, the control group was taught using the school's conventional Islamic Religious Education approach, which primarily emphasized teacher explanation, recitation, memorization of religious content, question-answer activities, and practice exercises focused on knowledge acquisition and observable behavior. Random assignment of individual students was not feasible due to school scheduling and administrative constraints; therefore, intact classes were used. To minimize potential confounding effects, both groups received comparable instructional time, covered the same curricular topics, and followed identical assessment schedules, differing only in the pedagogical approach employed during instruction.

The population comprised all Grade 5 students at SDIT Al Hidayah, Sumenep Regency, totaling 80 students. Given the manageable population size, the study employed a total sampling (census) approach involving all Grade 5 students, who were distributed into two existing classes serving as the experimental and control groups. Before data collection, formal permission was obtained from the school administration, and ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from the students' parents or legal guardians, and age-appropriate assent was obtained from the students themselves. Participation was voluntary, and students were informed that their responses would be used solely for research purposes. To ensure confidentiality and protect participants' privacy, all collected data were anonymized, with no personally identifiable information recorded or reported. The data were stored securely and accessed only by the researchers in accordance with ethical standards for educational research involving children.

The research commenced with obtaining administrative permission and coordinating with the school and the Islamic Religious Education teacher to ensure alignment of learning objectives and content coverage across both groups. Before the intervention, all participating students completed a pretest using the Spiritual Awareness Scale. The instructional intervention was implemented over six weeks, consisting of 12 sessions (2 per week, each lasting approximately 70 minutes). The learning content for both groups was drawn from the Grade 5 Islamic Religious Education curriculum and focused on selected themes related to faith (*iman*), worship practices (*ibadah*), and moral conduct (*akhlak*), including sincerity in worship, honesty, responsibility, and respect for others.

In the experimental group, instruction was delivered using the contemplative pedagogy model through a structured instructional syntax comprising four main phases: (1) awareness activation, in which students were guided to focus attention and recall personal experiences related to the lesson theme; (2) guided reflection,

involving silent attention, reflective questioning, and short reflective writing or sharing; (3) meaning internalization, where students connected Islamic teachings with personal values and everyday situations; and (4) value commitment, in which students articulated specific intentions or actions to practice the discussed values. In contrast, the control group received conventional Islamic Religious Education instruction following the school's usual teaching approach, which typically involved teacher explanation of religious concepts, recitation and memorization of key texts, question-answer activities, and practice exercises aimed at reinforcing knowledge and observable behavior.

To control for curricular differences, both groups were taught the duplicate thematic content within equivalent instructional timeframes. Throughout the intervention, teaching logs and structured classroom observation sheets were used to monitor instructional fidelity and student engagement. Following the intervention, students in both groups completed the posttest using the same spiritual awareness instrument. The collected data were subsequently screened, scored, and analyzed to examine changes in students' spiritual awareness and to estimate the magnitude of the intervention effect.

Main Outcome Instrument. Students' spiritual awareness was measured using the Spiritual Awareness Scale (SAS), a self-report questionnaire developed explicitly for primary school learners. The development of the instrument was grounded in a review of relevant literature on spirituality in education, contemplative learning theory, and Islamic educational philosophy, particularly concepts related to God-consciousness (*taqwa*), reflective meaning-making, moral self-regulation, and value commitment. Based on this conceptual framework, an initial pool of items was generated to represent each dimension of spiritual awareness, formulated in age-appropriate language suitable for Grade 5 students. The final instrument employed a 4-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree) to minimize neutral responses and enhance response clarity among children. To ensure content validity, the instrument items were reviewed by a panel of experts comprising Islamic education scholars, an educational measurement specialist, and an experienced primary school teacher, who evaluated item relevance, clarity, and developmental appropriateness. Construct validity was subsequently examined through exploratory factor analysis and corrected item-total correlation analysis, confirming that the items adequately represented the intended dimensions of spiritual awareness. The internal consistency reliability of the SAS was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding acceptable reliability coefficients, indicating that the instrument consistently measured students' spiritual awareness.

Table 1. Blueprint of the Spiritual Awareness Scale (SAS)

Dimension of Spiritual Awareness	Key Indicator	Sample Item
God-conscious awareness (<i>Taqwa</i>)	Awareness of God's presence in daily actions	I remember Allah doing something before.
Reflective meaning-making	Connecting lesson content with personal meaning	The lesson helps me understand why doing good matters.
Moral sensitivity	Awareness of right and wrong and responsibility	I feel responsible when my actions hurt others.
Moral-spiritual self-regulation	Self-control based on Islamic values	When I am angry, I try to calm myself as Islam teaches.
Value commitment (intention to act)	Intention to apply values in daily life	I plan to practice one good deed after the lesson.
Reflective habit	Willingness to reflect after actions or events	After making a mistake, I think about how to improve.

Note. The dimensions of spiritual awareness were adapted from and theoretically informed by prior studies on spirituality in education, contemplative learning, and Islamic educational philosophy, including God-consciousness (*taqwa*) (Beauchamp, 2022; John P Miller, 2022), reflective meaning-making (Jon Kabat-Zinn, 2024; Abdullah Sahin, 2021a), moral sensitivity and self-regulation (Brendan Hyde, 2021; Memon, 2020a), and value commitment or intention to act (Olen Gunnlaugson & Sarath, 2022).

The validity and reliability of the Spiritual Awareness Scale (SAS) were systematically examined prior to its use in the main study. Content validity evaluation by a panel of experts confirmed that all items were relevant, clearly worded, and developmentally appropriate for primary school students. Construct validity analysis using an exploratory factor analysis supported the instrument's intended multidimensional structure, with satisfactory sampling adequacy ($KMO = 0.82$) and factor loadings exceeding 0.40 across all dimensions. In addition, corrected item-total correlation coefficients ranged from 0.41 to 0.72, indicating acceptable item discrimination. The internal consistency reliability of the SAS was high, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87, demonstrating that the instrument reliably measured students' spiritual awareness.

Data analysis began with preliminary screening and descriptive statistics to summarize pretest and posttest scores. To examine the effect of contemplative

pedagogy on students' spiritual awareness, analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was employed, using posttest scores as the dependent variable, group as the independent variable, and pretest scores as the covariate. This approach controlled for initial group differences inherent in the quasi-experimental design. In addition to statistical significance, effect sizes (partial eta squared and/or Cohen's d) were calculated to determine the practical importance of the intervention.

RESULTS

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Spiritual Awareness (Experimental Group)

Dimension of Spiritual Awareness	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	N-Gain	N-Gain Category
God-conscious awareness (Taqwa)	68.20	84.50	0.52	Medium
Reflective meaning-making	66.75	82.30	0.48	Medium
Moral sensitivity & self-regulation	69.10	83.40	0.46	Medium
Value commitment (intention to act)	67.35	81.60	0.44	Medium
Overall Spiritual Awareness	67.85	82.40	0.47	Medium

Table 2 shows that students in the experimental group experienced consistent improvements across all dimensions of spiritual awareness after participating in instruction grounded in contemplative pedagogy. The highest increase was observed in God-conscious awareness, indicating that contemplative practices were particularly effective in fostering students' understanding of God in daily life. Improvements in reflective meaning-making, moral self-regulation, and value commitment were also evident, with all dimensions demonstrating medium N-gain values. These findings suggest that contemplative pedagogy supported multidimensional spiritual development rather than enhancing a single aspect of spirituality.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Spiritual Awareness (Control Group)

Dimension of Spiritual Awareness	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	N-Gain	N-Gain Category
God-conscious awareness (Taqwa)	68.40	73.90	0.18	Low
Reflective meaning-making	67.90	72.60	0.15	Low
Moral sensitivity & self-regulation	69.30	74.10	0.16	Low
Value commitment (intention to act)	66.80	72.40	0.17	Low
Overall Spiritual Awareness	68.10	73.25	0.16	Low

As shown in Table 3, students in the control group exhibited only modest improvements across all dimensions of spiritual awareness following conventional Islamic Religious Education instruction. The N-gain values for each dimension fell

within the low improvement category, indicating that while some progress occurred, conventional instruction was less effective in promoting substantial growth in students' internal spiritual awareness. The relatively uniform low gains across dimensions suggest that traditional approaches primarily support surface-level learning outcomes rather than deeper reflective and value-oriented development.

A comparison of Tables 2 and 3 reveals apparent differences in the magnitude of improvement between the experimental and control groups. Students exposed to contemplative pedagogy demonstrated medium-level improvements across all dimensions of spiritual awareness, whereas those receiving conventional instruction showed consistently low gains. This pattern indicates that contemplative pedagogy was more effective in facilitating reflective engagement, moral self-regulation, and value internalization. The multidimensional nature of the gains further supports the conclusion that contemplative pedagogy enhances spiritual awareness holistically rather than targeting isolated outcomes.

Table 4. ANCOVA Results for Posttest Spiritual Awareness Scores

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Partial η^2
Pretest (Covariate)	1,245.32	1	1,245.32	32.18	< .001	.295
Group	1,876.54	1	1,876.54	48.47	< .001	.386
Error	2,984.21	77	38.76			
Total	6,106.07	79				

The ANCOVA results indicate a statistically significant effect of group on posttest spiritual awareness scores after controlling for pretest scores, $F(1, 77) = 48.47$, $p < .001$. The partial eta squared value (.386) indicates that a substantial proportion of variance in posttest scores was associated with group differences. These results suggest that the two groups differed significantly in posttest outcomes after adjustment for baseline scores.

Table 6. Effect Size Estimates

Comparison	Effect Size Metric	Value	Interpretation
Experimental vs Control	Cohen's d	1.38	Large
ANCOVA Group Effect	Partial η^2	.386	Large

The effect size estimates indicate a large magnitude of difference between the experimental and control groups. Both Cohen's d and partial eta squared values suggest that the observed group differences were substantial in size.

DISCUSSION

The present study demonstrated that contemplative pedagogy significantly enhanced Grade 5 students' spiritual awareness across multiple dimensions, including God-conscious awareness, reflective meaning-making, moral self-regulation, and commitment to value-based action. The descriptive and inferential results consistently showed higher posttest scores and greater learning gains among students exposed to contemplative pedagogy compared to those receiving conventional Islamic Religious Education instruction. These findings align closely with the theoretical foundations of contemplative learning, which emphasize awareness, presence, and reflection as core mechanisms for meaningful learning (Sarath, 2021).

From a constructivist perspective, contemplative pedagogy facilitates active meaning construction by encouraging learners to connect instructional content with personal experience and inner reflection (John P Miller, 2022). The observed improvements in reflective meaning-making and value commitment suggest that students were not merely acquiring religious knowledge but were engaging in deeper processes of interpretation and internalization. This supports reflective learning theory, which posits that reflection transforms information into personally meaningful knowledge and guides moral action (Beauchamp, 2022). In the context of Islamic education, such processes resonate strongly with the concepts of *taqwa* (God-consciousness) and *niyyah* (intentionality), which emphasize inner awareness as the foundation of ethical behavior.

The findings are also consistent with prior empirical studies reporting positive effects of contemplative pedagogy on students' reflective capacity, ethical sensitivity, and emotional regulation (Tim Lomas, 2021). Although most of these studies were conducted in secular or higher education contexts, the present research extends their conclusions to Islamic primary education, demonstrating that contemplative pedagogy is developmentally appropriate and pedagogically effective for younger learners in faith-based settings. In contrast, some studies in Islamic education have reported the limited impact of traditional instructional approaches on students' internal spiritual development, noting that ritualistic and memorization-based instruction often leads to surface-level learning outcomes (Rodriguez, 2024). The relatively low gains observed in the control group in the present study further corroborate these concerns.

Theoretically, the superiority of contemplative pedagogy observed in this study can be explained by its alignment with holistic education theory, which views learning as an integration of cognition, emotion, and spirituality (Hardiansyah, 2022). By incorporating silence, guided reflection, and intentional value articulation into classroom practice, contemplative pedagogy creates pedagogical conditions that support students' inner engagement with religious values—an aspect largely absent in conventional instruction. However, implementing contemplative

pedagogy also presents challenges that teachers must anticipate, including limited instructional time, insufficient teacher training in reflective facilitation, and students' initial unfamiliarity with reflective and silent learning practices. Addressing these challenges requires thoughtful pedagogical design and gradual integration of contemplative practices into existing curricula.

Beyond its theoretical contributions, this study offers important practical implications for Islamic primary education. The findings indicate that contemplative pedagogy can be effectively integrated into existing Islamic Religious Education lessons without requiring fundamental curriculum changes. Teachers can begin by incorporating brief contemplative activities, such as short moments of silent attention, guided reflective questioning, or value-focused journaling, at key points during instruction. These practices help students pause, attend inwardly, and connect lesson content with their daily experiences.

The results also suggest that a practical implementation of contemplative pedagogy should follow a clear instructional syntax, including awareness activation, guided reflection, meaning internalization, and value commitment. Such a structure supports students' gradual engagement with reflective learning and ensures that contemplative activities remain purposeful rather than incidental. Teacher preparation is, therefore, essential; professional development programs should equip Islamic Religious Education teachers with practical strategies to facilitate reflection, manage classroom silence, and create a supportive learning environment that encourages openness and self-awareness.

Furthermore, assessment practices should move beyond purely cognitive measures to include tools that capture students' reflective and spiritual development. The use of validated instruments, such as the Spiritual Awareness Scale employed in this study, can assist teachers and schools in monitoring students' spiritual growth and refining instructional practices accordingly. In this way, contemplative pedagogy can contribute to a more balanced and holistic model of Islamic primary education that aligns instructional practice with the spiritual aims of the curriculum.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the quasi-experimental design relied on intact classes rather than random assignment, which may limit causal inference despite the use of statistical controls. Second, the sample was drawn from a single Islamic primary school, potentially restricting the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. Third, spiritual awareness was assessed using self-report measures, which may be influenced by social desirability bias, particularly in religious settings.

Additionally, the intervention was relatively brief, and the study did not examine the long-term sustainability of the observed improvements in spiritual awareness. Future research should consider longitudinal designs, larger and more

diverse samples, and the integration of qualitative methods—such as student interviews or reflective journals—to more comprehensively capture the depth of students’ spiritual experiences. Further studies may also explore how specific components of contemplative pedagogy interact with students’ developmental stages and cultural backgrounds, thereby refining its application in Islamic primary education.

CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical evidence that contemplative pedagogy is a practical instructional approach for enhancing students’ spiritual awareness in Islamic primary education. The findings demonstrate that students who participated in contemplative pedagogy-based instruction achieved significantly higher posttest scores and greater learning gains than those who received conventional Islamic Religious Education. Notably, the improvements were observed across multiple dimensions of spiritual awareness, including God-conscious awareness, reflective meaning-making, moral self-regulation, and commitment to value-based action, indicating that contemplative pedagogy supports holistic spiritual development rather than isolated learning outcomes.

By operationalizing spiritual awareness as a measurable construct and examining it through a quasi-experimental design, this study advances educational research in primary education by bridging the gap between the philosophical aims of Islamic education and evidence-based pedagogical practice. The results extend existing theories of contemplative and reflective learning by demonstrating their applicability and effectiveness in a primary school and faith-based context, which has been underexplored in prior research.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that contemplative pedagogy can serve as a viable solution to the persistent challenge of fostering students’ internal spiritual engagement in primary classrooms. When implemented through structured phases of awareness activation, guided reflection, meaning internalization, and value commitment, contemplative pedagogy enables teachers to move beyond transmission-oriented instruction toward learning experiences that cultivate students’ inner awareness and moral responsibility. Consequently, this approach offers meaningful implications for the development of instructional strategies, teacher professional development, and curriculum design in primary education.

Overall, this study highlights the potential of contemplative pedagogy as an evidence-based pedagogical model that addresses both theoretical and practical challenges in elementary education, particularly in supporting students’ spiritual and moral development. These findings underscore the importance of integrating reflective and awareness-oriented practices into primary education as a foundation for holistic learning and sustainable character formation.

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