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# Reconstructing the Aqidah Curriculum Through Malay Cultural Values: A Conceptual Literature Synthesis

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## Abstract

This study aims to reconstruct the Aqidah curriculum based on Malay culture as an effort to develop a more contextual Islamic education curriculum while maintaining the core principles of Islamic teachings. The study employed a qualitative approach using library research by analyzing academic books, scientific journal articles, and other relevant literature related to Aqidah education, Islamic education curriculum, and Malay culture. The collected data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis through data reduction, categorization, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that Malay culture contains values closely aligned with Islamic Aqidah, including religiosity, politeness, respect for parents and teachers, togetherness, and social responsibility. These values provide a strong foundation for reconstructing the Aqidah curriculum. The proposed reconstruction model integrates Malay cultural values into four essential curriculum components: learning objectives, learning materials, learning strategies, and the learning environment. This model positions Malay culture not merely as a learning context but as a conceptual foundation for curriculum development. Consequently, the reconstructed curriculum is expected to strengthen students' religious character, reinforce their cultural identity, and create Aqidah learning that is more meaningful, contextual, and relevant to the characteristics of Malay society.

**Keywords:** Aqidah Curriculum; Islamic Education; Malay Culture; Curriculum Reconstruction; Local Wisdom

## Introduction

The curriculum is a crucial part of education because it serves as a guideline for determining learning objectives, materials, processes, and evaluation. In Islamic education, the curriculum serves not only to develop students' academic abilities but also to shape their faith, morals, and character. One subject that plays a crucial role in achieving these goals is Aqidah (Islamic creed). Through learning Aqidah, students are expected to develop a strong belief in Islamic teachings, enabling them to use them as a guide for thinking, behaving, and acting in their daily lives (Trapol & Anggraini, 2025).

As time goes by, the teaching of Aqidah (Islamic faith) faces various challenges. Technological developments, globalization, and social change have significantly influenced students' thinking and behavior. They receive values not only from their families and schools,



but also from digital media and external cultures, which may not necessarily align with Islamic teachings (Alkouatli, 2018; Memon, Chown, & Alkouatli, 2021; Muhja, Shahnaz, & Rohmah, 2022). This situation demonstrates that Aqidah learning cannot be simply delivered theoretically; it must also be developed to be more relevant to students' lives. Therefore, the curriculum needs to be designed contextually so that Aqidah values can be understood through the social and cultural experiences they encounter in their daily lives (Fa'idah, 2025; Syifa, 2024).

In this study, integration refers to the purposeful alignment of culturally embedded knowledge, practices, and meanings with curriculum decisions without altering the doctrinal core of Aqidah. Local culture denotes the historically situated values and practices represented in the reviewed Malay contexts rather than a single, homogeneous Malay tradition (Alhashmi & Moussa-Inaty, 2021; Hasan, 2022; Mundzir, 2022). Curriculum reconstruction is understood as a systematic reconsideration of objectives, content, pedagogy, learning environment, and assessment relationships, not merely the addition of cultural examples to existing lessons. These distinctions are important because contextualization changes how content is taught, whereas reconstruction also revises the organizing logic through which curriculum components are selected and connected (Andini & Sirozi, 2024; Guspani, Satrisno, Rizka, Irawan, & Merliana, 2025).

In Malay society, the relationship between Islam and culture has been established for a long time. The development of Malay culture cannot be separated from the process of spreading Islam so that many cultural values grow based on religious teachings. This can be seen from the philosophy of *adat bersendi syarak, syarak bersendi Kitabullah* which shows that *adat* and *shariah* complement each other in the life of Malay society. Values such as religiosity, good manners, respect for parents and teachers, deliberation, mutual cooperation, and social care have become part of the culture and reflect the practice of *aqidah* values in everyday life (Khoiriyah, Ridwan, & Sumirah, 2026).

Several studies have shown that Malay culture plays a significant role in supporting Islamic education. Islamic values are passed down through family life, educational institutions, community traditions, and various forms of Malay art (Athirah, Nur'azimah, & Ulfa, 2024; Fariati, Riadi, Nur'aina, & Norafiza, 2025). Research by Erika et al. also explains that Malay arts and culture can be an effective medium for internalizing Islamic educational values because they can simultaneously involve aspects of knowledge, attitudes, and skills in students (Erika et al., 2025). Furthermore, the identity of the Malay community itself is formed from a blend of culture and Islamic teachings that develop harmoniously in social life (Azzahra, Trisnawati, Oviyanti, & Maryamah, 2025; Nurani, 2025).

Evidence from prior studies suggests that cultural elements in Islamic education are frequently used as local content, teaching examples, extracurricular activities, or character-education supplements rather than as principles that organize the architecture of the Aqidah curriculum. Tambak & Sukenti (2020), for example, reported limited incorporation of Malay cultural elements in the madrasah curriculum in Riau, while more recent studies have largely emphasized learning media, character formation, religious moderation, or local-wisdom-based materials rather than the systematic alignment of objectives, content, pedagogy, environment, and assessment (Fadhilah, Rista, Putria, Asmara, & Maryamah, 2024; Irfan, Ruslan, & Nasaruddin, 2025; Nurfajiani, Fauzan, Agustian, & Suryani, 2025). The available evidence is geographically uneven and does not justify a universal claim about all Aqidah curricula; nevertheless, it indicates a recurring problem of peripheral rather than architecturally

integrated cultural inclusion.

Previous studies generally discussed the integration of Islamic education with local wisdom in the context of character building, learning strategies, and strengthening religious moderation (Aidulsyah, 2023; Julhadi, Muta'allim, Fitri, Efendi, & Yahya, 2023; Rojas-Estrada, Aguaded, & García-Ruiz, 2024). Other studies have also highlighted the relationship between Islamic values and Malay culture in family education, character building, and the development of local wisdom-based teaching materials (Asrinaldi & Yoserizal, 2020a, 2020b; Julhadi et al., 2023)). However, research specifically addressing the reconstruction of the Aqidah curriculum by using Malay culture as the basis for developing objectives, materials, learning strategies, and the educational environment is still very limited.

The unresolved problem is both theoretical and empirical. Theoretically, prior literature does not sufficiently explain the mechanism by which selected Malay cultural values can be translated into coherent curriculum decisions while maintaining the distinction between *Aqidah*, *akhlak*, adab, and broader social ethics. Empirically, existing studies rarely trace how culture-informed objectives are connected to content selection, instructional design, the learning environment, and assessment evidence within one curriculum framework (C. da Silva, Pereira, & Amorim, 2024; Ogegbo & Ramnarain, 2024; Shaltry, 2020). Consequently, the missing relationship is not simply whether Malay culture can be included, but how culturally situated values can be screened, justified, and transformed into curriculum components without reducing faith to behavioral conformity or treating all local practices as doctrinally equivalent.

Building on this gap, the study proposes a preliminary conceptual framework in which Malay cultural values function as a bounded source for curriculum reconstruction rather than as decorative examples or an assumed source of religious legitimacy. Its novelty lies in specifying a decision pathway from cultural-value identification to doctrinal screening, pedagogical translation, curriculum-component alignment, and assessment feedback. This proposition extends local-wisdom-based curriculum approaches by making the selection criteria, construct relationships, and boundary conditions explicit, while recognizing that the framework requires expert validation and field testing.

Accordingly, this study asks: (1) how are Islamic Aqidah values related to the Malay cultural values represented in the reviewed literature; (2) which cultural values can be conceptually justified for inclusion in an Aqidah curriculum; and (3) how can those values be organized into a preliminary curriculum framework encompassing objectives, materials, instructional strategies, the learning environment, and assessment feedback? The unit of analysis is the conceptual relationship among documented Malay cultural values, Aqidah constructs, and curriculum components. Because the reviewed sources cover multiple Malay settings and do not consistently specify a single school level, the framework is presented as a general proposition for subsequent adaptation to a defined madrasah or school context rather than as a ready-to-implement curriculum for a particular grade level.

## Method

### Review Design

This study used an integrative qualitative literature review followed by conceptual synthesis. An integrative review was appropriate because the inquiry combined theoretical, empirical, and curriculum-oriented publications to explain relationships among Aqidah, Malay cultural values, and curriculum architecture. The review did not collect field data and therefore does

not test implementation outcomes (Olmos-Vega, Stalmeijer, Varpio, & Kahlke, 2023; Saunders et al., 2018; R. N. da Silva, Brandão, & Ferreira, 2020). Instead, it constructs a preliminary framework by comparing concepts, identifying recurrent patterns and tensions, and linking the synthesis to curriculum-development decisions. The design was guided by principles of transparent source identification, explicit eligibility criteria, traceable coding, critical comparison, and cautious interpretation (Abdurrahman, 2024; Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

### **Documentary Corpus and Search Strategy**

The documentary corpus consisted of scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, proceedings, research reports, and other academic publications addressing Aqidah education, Islamic education curriculum, Malay cultural traditions, local wisdom, and the integration of Islamic values with local culture (Lindgren, Lundman, & Graneheim, 2020; Rahimi & Khatooni, 2024; Snyder, 2019). These materials were treated as documentary sources rather than classified as primary and secondary data. Peer-reviewed empirical and theoretical articles carried the greatest evidential weight, while books, proceedings, and reports were used mainly for conceptual clarification, historical context, or curriculum interpretation (Subagiya, 2023).

Source identification used combinations of terms related to 'Aqidah curriculum,' 'Islamic education curriculum,' 'Malay culture,' 'local wisdom,' 'culturally responsive education,' and 'curriculum reconstruction.' Eligibility required direct thematic relevance, sufficient bibliographic information, scholarly credibility, and a substantive contribution to at least one analytical domain. Sources were excluded when they were duplicates, non-scholarly, inaccessible in full text, only tangentially related, or lacked sufficient information for conceptual interpretation. Potentially dissenting sources and accounts of contested cultural practices were retained when relevant so that the synthesis did not equate cultural prevalence with doctrinal legitimacy (Assarroudi, Heshmati Nabavi, Armat, Ebadi, & Vaismoradi, 2018; Kiger & Varpio, 2020; Levitt et al., 2018).

### **Data Analysis and Trustworthiness**

Qualitative content analysis was conducted in six iterative stages. First, each source was read for its context, purpose, method, cultural setting, Aqidah linkage, and curriculum contribution. Second, initial codes were assigned to statements concerning faith, morality, cultural practices, curriculum objectives, materials, pedagogy, environment, and assessment. Third, related codes were compared and refined into categories, with analytic memos recording inclusion decisions, alternative interpretations, and tensions between cultural practice and normative doctrine. Fourth, categories were compared across sources and settings to identify recurrent patterns, negative cases, and contextual differences. Fifth, themes were constructed inductively from the corpus and then interpreted through curriculum theory and the distinction among Aqidah, akhlaq, adab, and social ethics. Sixth, the themes were translated into a preliminary conceptual framework whose components, relationships, scope conditions, and assessment feedback were checked against the documentary evidence (Jaakkola, 2020; Kiger & Varpio, 2020; Levitt et al., 2018).

Trustworthiness was supported through a source-to-theme audit trail, repeated comparison of claims across publications, reflexive memoing, attention to contradictory evidence, and peer review of category definitions and framework logic (Page et al., 2021). The analysis treated conceptual saturation as the point at which additional eligible sources no longer generated a substantively new cultural-value category or curriculum component. The

resulting framework should be understood as an interpretive synthesis grounded in the reviewed corpus, not as evidence of effectiveness or universal applicability (Byrne, 2022; Kraus et al., 2022; Paul & Criado, 2020).

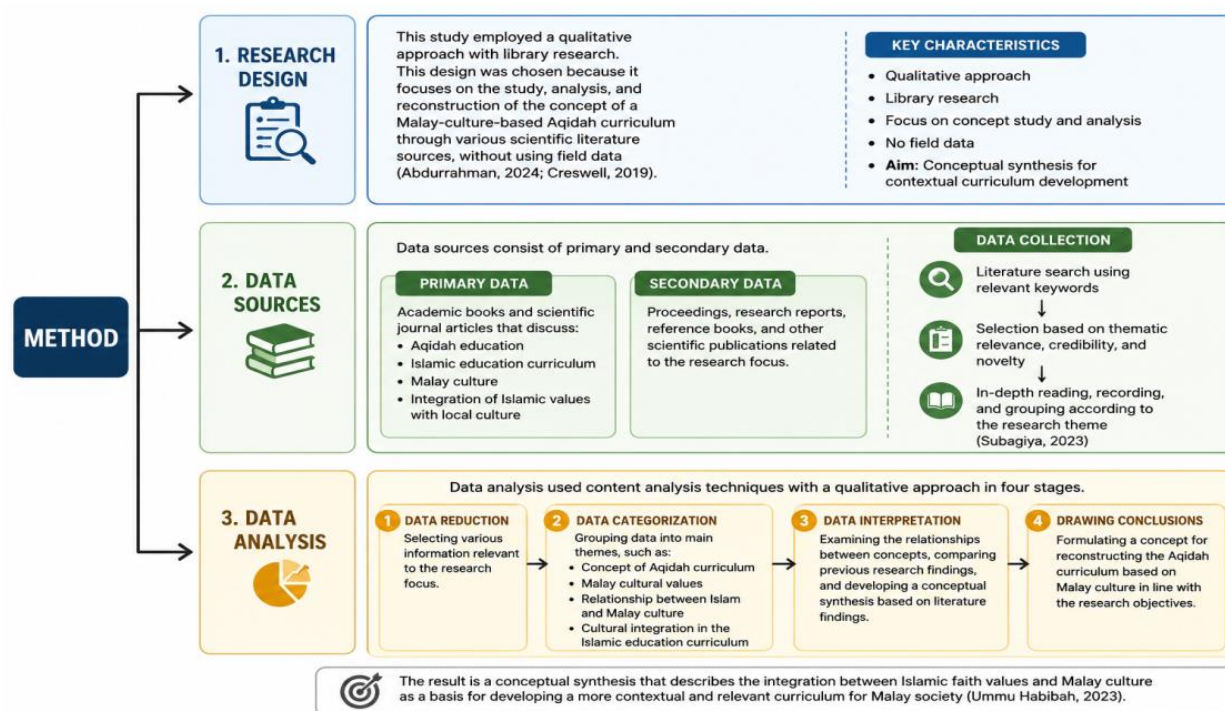


Fig 1. Research Methodology Flowchart

## Results

The synthesis indicates a strong but context-dependent relationship between Islamic Aqidah and the Malay cultural traditions represented in the corpus. This relationship is visible in historical processes of Islamization, in value systems used to regulate social conduct, and in educational practices that connect belief with everyday experience. The evidence does not support the essentialist claim that all Malay cultural practices are inherently aligned with Islamic teaching. Rather, it shows a long process of adaptation, negotiation, and selective legitimization in which some traditions became vehicles for Islamic meaning while others require doctrinal and ethical scrutiny.

Three analytical dimensions were derived through repeated source comparison: historical formation, value alignment, and educational translation. The historical dimension concerns the ways Islamization shaped Malay social orientation through preaching, trade, education, and community interaction while regional identities remained diverse (Azzahra et al., 2025; Susilasari, Yusnel, & Rasyidi, 2024). The value dimension concerns recurring cultural norms that were explicitly related to Islamic concepts. The educational dimension concerns how those norms were used as contexts, examples, learning resources, or organizing principles. These categories emerged inductively from the corpus and were subsequently interpreted through the study's curriculum framework.

Across the reviewed literature, religiosity, politeness, respect for parents and teachers, deliberation, mutual cooperation, and social responsibility were repeatedly connected with Islamic teaching (Khoiriyah et al., 2026). The connection requires theological differentiation. Aqidah concerns foundational belief and orientation toward Allah, whereas akhlaq and adab

concern the moral and behavioral expression of that belief. Accordingly, the selected cultural values are not treated as articles of creed; they are included insofar as they provide observable contexts in which faith commitments are interpreted, enacted, reflected upon, and assessed without reducing Aqidah to outward compliance.

The educational dimension is another finding that strengthens the relationship between Islamic faith and Malay culture. Literature analysis shows that cultural values developed in society can be utilized as a learning context, making Islamic faith material more relevant to students' experiences. When cultural values are incorporated into the learning process, students not only understand the concept of faith conceptually but also see its implementation in the lives of their surrounding communities. This provides an opportunity for teachers to develop more contextualized learning without diminishing the substance of Islamic faith teachings (Andini & Sirozi, 2024; Guspani et al., 2025).

These findings demonstrate that the relationship between Islamic faith and Malay culture has a broader meaning than simply the relationship between religion and tradition. Malay culture can be positioned as part of a learning environment that supports the process of instilling Islamic faith values more concretely. This perspective expands on previous research, which generally positions Malay culture as a learning medium or a means of character formation. In this study, Malay culture is understood as a conceptual foundation that contributes to the development of the Islamic faith curriculum. This position is important because it opens up space for the development of a curriculum that is not only oriented towards mastering the material, but also towards strengthening Islamic identity that is in harmony with the cultural character of the Malay community.

### **Malay Cultural Values as a Basis for Aqidah Curriculum Reconstruction**

The five-value taxonomy was formed by comparing the cultural values that recurred across the reviewed sources and selecting those that met three criteria: an explicit conceptual connection to Islamic faith or its moral manifestation, relevance to curriculum decisions, and recurrence across more than one documented context. The selected values were religiosity, politeness, respect for parents and teachers, togetherness, and social responsibility. Alternative values were considered but were not retained when their connection to Aqidah was indirect, highly context-specific, or insufficiently supported. Because the corpus represents multiple Malay settings, the taxonomy should be read as a transferable analytical set rather than a definitive description of a single, uniform Malay culture.

Religiosity was a recurrently identified value rather than a quantitatively established dominant value. The reviewed literature described religious practices such as Qur'anic learning in mosques or surau, study groups, Islamic commemorations, and sharia-oriented customary traditions as contexts through which tawhid and faith become socially visible (Athirah et al., 2024; Fariati et al., 2025). These practices may inform Aqidah learning when they are used to connect doctrinal concepts with reflection on lived religious experience, but they should not be treated as automatic evidence of personal faith.

The next finding relates to politeness as a characteristic inherent in Malay culture. Respecting others, being mindful of one's words, and building harmonious relationships are values passed down through generations. The synthesis of these values shows that these values are closely related to the formation of morals as a manifestation of faith. This suggests that Aqidah (Islamic creed) learning should not be solely focused on mastering the concept of monotheism but also on shaping students' behavior to reflect Islamic values in social life. Thus,

Malay culture can serve as a medium for strengthening the internalization of Aqidah through the inculcation of polite behavior in daily life.

This study also found that respect for parents and teachers is a value strongly relevant to the goals of Aqidah education. In Malay culture, respect is seen as an ethical principle that must be upheld in all social interactions. This value aligns with Islamic teachings on *birr al-wālidayn* and respect for those who possess knowledge. These findings demonstrate that respect for parents and teachers is not only a cultural identity but also an indicator of the practice of Islamic values in students' lives. Therefore, these values have the potential to be integrated into the objectives, materials, and activities of Islamic learning, so that the educational process not only produces religious understanding but also shapes Islamic character.

Further findings indicate that togetherness and social responsibility are values that strengthen the social dimension of Aqidah education. The traditions of deliberation, mutual cooperation, and concern for others reflect the strong social solidarity within Malay society. These values align with the concepts of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *ta'awun* (community), and *amanah* (trustworthiness) in Islamic teachings. The analysis shows that integrating the value of togetherness into the Aqidah curriculum can help students understand that faith is not only realized through a relationship with Allah SWT, but also through caring, cooperation, and responsibility for community life. Thus, Malay culture strengthens the social dimension of Aqidah through real-life experiences that are close to students' lives.

In addition to being reflected in community life patterns, this study also found that various Malay cultural practices have a pedagogical function in Aqidah education. Traditions, arts, and cultural activities not only serve as cultural heritage but also serve as effective media for conveying Islamic values. Utilizing culture as a learning resource provides students with the opportunity to understand the concept of Aqidah through experiences they encounter in their daily lives. This approach makes learning more contextual while strengthening the internalization of faith values. These findings align with research by Erika et al., which demonstrated that Malay arts and culture can serve as a medium for internalizing Islamic educational values because they simultaneously involve cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects (Erika, Jarir, Azmira, & Pangestu, 2025).

Overall, the five values were retained because they appeared across the corpus, could be related to Aqidah through a defensible theological pathway, and had implications for more than one curriculum component. Conceptual sufficiency was reached when additional reviewed works reinforced the existing categories without producing a substantively different value domain. This conclusion remains bounded by the composition of the documentary corpus and should be revisited when the framework is applied to a specific Malay region or education level.

**Table 1** Synthesis of Malay Cultural Values Relevant to Aqidah Curriculum Reconstruction

| Malay cultural value             | Related Aqidah or faith-expression construct      | Curriculum implication                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Religiosity                      | Tawhid and faith orientation                      | Inform objectives and reflective learning experiences without treating ritual participation as direct evidence of faith. |
| Politeness                       | Akhlaq and adab as manifestations of faith        | Support guided practice, reflection, and context-sensitive indicators of respectful conduct.                             |
| Respect for parents and teachers | Birr al-walidayn, adab, and respect for knowledge | Integrate into materials, dialogue, case analysis, and age-appropriate learning activities.                              |

| Malay cultural value                | Related Aqidah or faith-expression construct | Curriculum implication                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Deliberation and mutual cooperation | Ukhuwah and ta'awun                          | Support collaborative, contextual, and reflective learning tasks.                                                 |
| Social responsibility               | Amanah and care for others                   | Inform assessment evidence through reflection, responsible participation, and ethically designed social projects. |

Table 1 shows that Malay cultural values are closely related to the objectives of Aqidah education and can be integrated into various curriculum components. Religious values form the basis for strengthening aspects of faith, while politeness, respect for parents and teachers, togetherness, and social responsibility contribute to the formation of students' Islamic character. The results of this synthesis indicate that Malay culture serves not only as a learning context but also as a source of values that can enrich the development of the Aqidah curriculum. Thus, the integration of Malay culture into the curriculum provides direction for the development of more contextual learning objectives, material selection, learning strategies, and evaluation. These findings serve as a conceptual basis for formulating a model for reconstructing the Aqidah curriculum based on Malay culture, which is presented in the next section.

### A Preliminary Framework for Aqidah Curriculum Reconstruction

The synthesis supports a preliminary framework rather than an empirically validated model. The framework comprises four interdependent curriculum components learning objectives, learning materials, instructional strategies, and the learning environment connected by a cross-cutting assessment and feedback loop. Assessment is not omitted; it functions across all components by examining conceptual understanding, reflective reasoning, contextual application, and ethically interpreted evidence of participation. The framework is bounded by three decision rules: cultural practices must be doctrinally compatible, pedagogically relevant, and ethically inclusive.

Learning objectives should translate each selected value into developmentally appropriate outcomes that distinguish knowledge, reflection, disposition, and participation. For example, students may be expected to explain the relationship between tawhid and responsibility, analyze a culturally situated moral dilemma, justify respectful conduct using Islamic sources, or reflect on cooperation as an expression of amanah. Such outcomes must avoid equating faith with simple behavioral compliance and should be adapted to the learners' education level.

Learning materials should connect Aqidah concepts with documented Malay traditions, narratives, language, and social practices that have passed doctrinal, pedagogical, and ethical screening. Selection should consider whether a practice is consistent with the intended Islamic legal interpretation, whether it advances the learning objective, whether it represents the relevant regional context, and whether it includes rather than marginalizes learners from different cultural backgrounds. Contested customs should be presented as objects of critical inquiry rather than as unquestioned religious norms.

Instructional strategies should move through a clear sequence: activation of learners' prior cultural knowledge, presentation of the Aqidah concept, analysis of a local example or dilemma, comparison with scriptural and scholarly principles, collaborative dialogue, reflective application, and collection of assessment evidence. Teachers facilitate conceptual clarification and critical reflection, while students interpret sources, discuss alternatives, complete context-based tasks, and justify conclusions. Adaptation is required for learners who

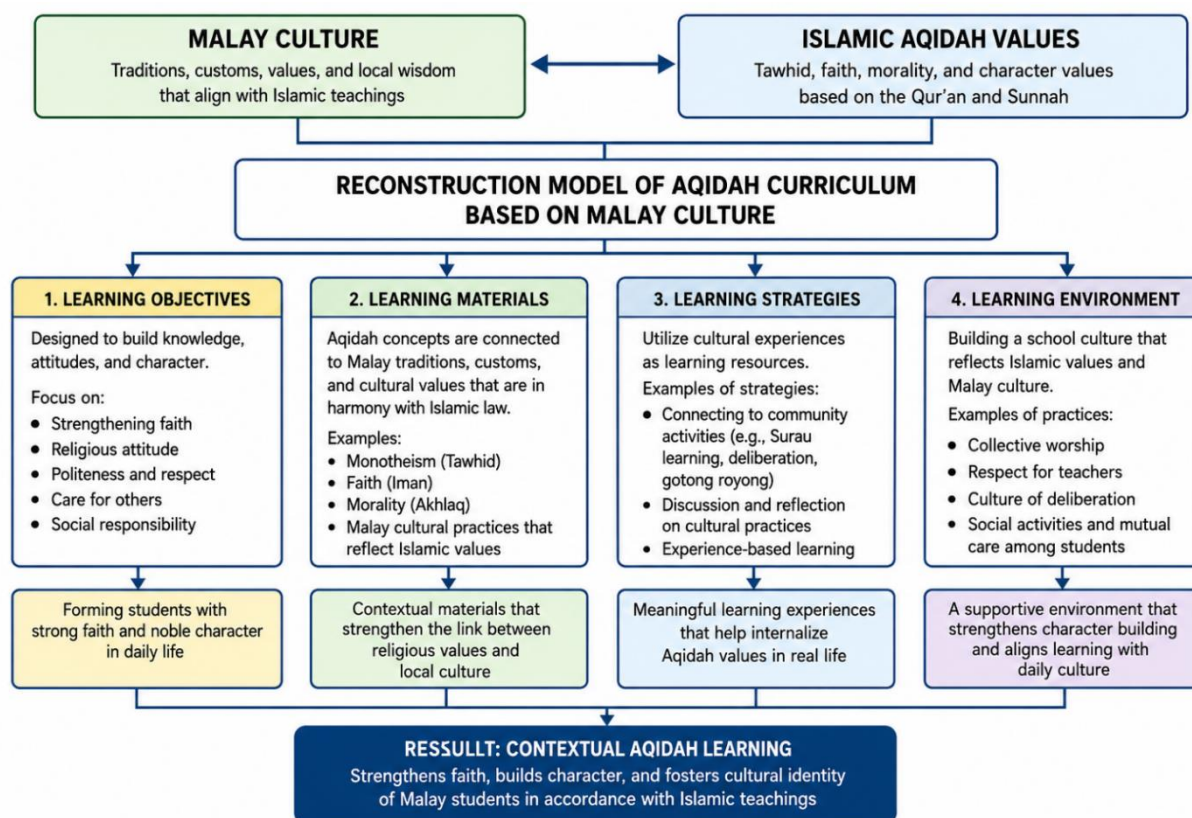
do not share the same cultural background so that local examples support inclusion rather than cultural essentialism.

The learning environment should align classroom norms, school routines, teacher modeling, stakeholder participation, and institutional policy with the framework's educational purposes. Implementation requires teacher preparation, access to credible cultural and religious sources, collaboration with community and religious experts, and monitoring to prevent symbolic cultural inclusion without substantive pedagogical change. Evaluation should examine curriculum fidelity, learner understanding, inclusiveness, feasibility, and unintended effects, while feedback should be used to revise objectives, materials, strategies, and environmental supports.

The resulting framework proposes directional relationships rather than causal effects: screened cultural values inform curriculum objectives; objectives guide materials and instructional design; the learning environment supports enactment; and assessment evidence feeds back into curriculum revision. Its scope is limited to the Malay contexts represented in the corpus and to cultural elements that meet the stated decision rules. Expert appraisal, regional adaptation, and classroom-based validation are required before the framework can be described as an established curriculum model.

This architecture shifts the role of culture from supplementary illustration to a structured source for curriculum decision making. At the same time, it resists the assumption that cultural familiarity automatically produces meaningful or effective learning. Contextual relevance is treated as a proposition that must be tested through implementation data, learner responses, and assessment evidence.

The preliminary framework therefore offers a theoretically bounded alternative for Aqidah curriculum development. It integrates faith concepts, cultural interpretation, moral reflection, pedagogy, learning environment, and assessment feedback while maintaining a distinction between doctrinal content and its social expression. Its practical value depends on careful adaptation to a specified education level, regional Malay context, teacher capacity, and institutional conditions.



**Fig 2.** Reconstruction Model of the Aqidah Curriculum Based on Malay Culture

Figure 2 visualizes the proposed framework as a decision pathway linking cultural-value identification, doctrinal-pedagogical-ethical screening, curriculum-component alignment, implementation, assessment evidence, and iterative revision. The arrows represent conceptual direction and feedback, not empirically demonstrated causality.

## Discussion

The findings extend previous local-wisdom-based Islamic education studies by distinguishing cultural contextualization from curriculum reconstruction. Earlier work commonly presents culture as a learning medium, a source of character values, or a support for religious moderation (Al-Siyabi, Sisson, Whittington, Memon, & Harris, 2025; Ialuna, Civitillo, & Jugert, 2024; Sahin, 2018). The present synthesis argues that reconstruction requires a stronger mechanism: cultural values must be screened, translated into curriculum decisions, connected across components, and reviewed through assessment feedback. This mechanism provides the study's principal conceptual contribution.

The framework is broadly consistent with culturally responsive education because it treats learners' cultural experiences as legitimate resources for meaning making. However, it also introduces a theological boundary that culturally responsive approaches do not always address: cultural recognition cannot by itself establish doctrinal validity. The proposed screening criteria therefore mediate a productive tension between cultural relevance and normative Islamic commitments. This prevents the framework from romanticizing Malay culture or assuming that every customary practice is equally suitable for Aqidah education (Jin, Mikeska, Hokayem, & Mavronikolas, 2019; Kehl, Ott, Schachner, & Civitillo, 2024; Lim, 2024).

The five-value taxonomy also clarifies the relationship between Aqidah and moral-cultural

constructs. Religiosity is directly related to faith orientation, whereas politeness, respect, togetherness, and social responsibility belong more immediately to akhlaq, adab, and social ethics. Their place in an Aqidah curriculum is justified only when teaching explicitly examines how belief informs moral reasoning and social responsibility. This distinction reduces conceptual overlap and provides a basis for observable outcomes that include explanation, interpretation, justification, reflection, and ethically situated participation rather than behavioral compliance alone (McKenney & Reeves, 2025; Morris, Perry, & Wardle, 2021; Portes, González Canché, Boada, & Whatley, 2018).

This integrative synthesis identified a context-dependent relationship between Islamic Aqidah and five recurrent Malay cultural values: religiosity, politeness, respect for parents and teachers, togetherness, and social responsibility. These values can inform Aqidah curriculum reconstruction when their relationship to faith is conceptually justified and when cultural practices are screened for doctrinal compatibility, pedagogical relevance, and ethical inclusiveness. The study proposes a preliminary framework connecting learning objectives, materials, instructional strategies, and the learning environment through a cross-cutting assessment and feedback process (Ucan & Wright, 2019).

The conceptual contribution lies in explaining how cultural values may move from contextual resources to curriculum decisions without treating Malay culture as homogeneous or collapsing Aqidah into akhlaq and social behavior. Because the study is based solely on documentary synthesis and lacks expert validation, implementation evidence, and learner-outcome data, the framework should not yet be described as effective or universally transferable. The next research priority is expert appraisal followed by region- and level-specific field testing of feasibility, inclusiveness, instructional enactment, and assessment validity.

## Conclusion

This research demonstrates that Malay cultural values are closely related to the principles of Islamic faith and can therefore serve as a basis for developing the Islamic faith curriculum. Based on the literature synthesis, five core relevant values were identified: religiosity, politeness, respect for parents and teachers, togetherness, and social responsibility. These values not only reflect the cultural identity of the Malay community but also align with the goal of Islamic faith education in developing students with faith and morals.

The research also yielded a model for reconstructing the Islamic faith curriculum based on Malay culture, encompassing four main components: learning objectives, learning materials, learning strategies, and the learning environment. Through this model, Malay culture is positioned as part of the conceptual foundation for curriculum development, rather than merely as an adjunct to the learning process. This approach is expected to provide Islamic faith learning that is more contextual, accessible, and aligned with the socio-cultural lives of students.

The contribution of this research lies in the development of a conceptual model that integrates Islamic faith values with Malay culture within a single curriculum development framework. This model is expected to provide an alternative for developing an Islamic education curriculum that is more adaptive to the characteristics of local communities without compromising the substance of Islamic teachings. Further research is recommended to test the application of this model at various levels of education to obtain empirical evidence of its effectiveness in strengthening students' religious character and cultural identity.

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