

From Manifesto to Social Practice: Internalising the Values of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* in Muhammadiyah Vocational Education

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ABSTRACT

Social change, digital transformation, and evolving labour market demands require Islamic education to cultivate religious, adaptive, critical, and socially engaged students. This study explores how the values of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* are internalised in vocational education at SMK Muhammadiyah Tanjung Selor. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Hybrid thematic analysis combined inductive interpretation of participants' experiences with deductive analysis based on the framework of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan*. The findings reveal five patterns: adaptive religious learning rooted in the Qur'an and Sunnah; *tauhid* as the foundation of character formation; learning innovation, critical thinking, and a culture of knowledge; integration of religion and knowledge through social and environmental responsibility; and student participation in socio-religious life. These values are internalised through faith, pedagogical innovation, knowledge development, and social practice.

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INTRODUCTION

Social progress, the advancement of digital technology, and changes in the way people work have introduced new challenges to religious life and education. Progress can no longer be understood solely in terms of technological advancement or the enhancement of technical skills, but also as the capacity to build a meaningful, civilised, inclusive, and responsible society. A growing body of research has shown that digital transformation in education offers opportunities for more adaptive learning while simultaneously presenting new challenges related to character development, digital ethics, social responsibility, and the quality of human interaction (Hadi et al., 2025; Zvereva, 2023). In the context of adolescents and students, the development of digital technology has also been associated with behavioural changes, declining empathy, and emerging moral challenges that require character education strategies to be more responsive to the realities of the digital age (Dwistia et al., 2025). In this context, religion should be understood not as a barrier to progress but as a source of ethical, spiritual, and social guidance. Within Islam, the idea of progress is particularly significant, as Muslims are challenged to remain faithful to the fundamental teachings of the faith while responding creatively and transformatively to contemporary issues.

Within Islamic education, these challenges call for a more contextual approach to the internalisation of values. Religious education should not be limited to the transmission of doctrine, memorisation, or the performance of formal rituals; rather, it should cultivate students' ways of thinking, attitudes towards life, and social conduct. Studies on the transformation of Islamic education in the digital era emphasise that Islamic educational institutions need to renew their curricula, pedagogical approaches, and learning ecosystems to respond more effectively to social change, technological advancement, and the ideological challenges facing younger generations (Suhendi, 2025). Other studies have shown that values-based Islamic education should integrate moral formation, spirituality, responsibility, and wisdom into everyday teaching and learning practices, enabling students to engage critically with the cultural changes brought about by modern society (Mujiburrohman et al., 2025). Accordingly, contemporary Islamic education should integrate faith with knowledge, worship with social ethics, and personal piety with humanitarian responsibility. From the perspective of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan*, religion is not separated from social life but serves as a transformative force that nurtures *tauhid*, promotes knowledge and *tajdid* (renewal), and advances positive social change.

In this context, Muhammadiyah occupies a significant position, having long regarded education as a vehicle for *da'wah*, reform, and social transformation. Muhammadiyah education is not conceived as religious instruction detached from modern life, but as an educational system that integrates faith, knowledge, action, humanity, and social responsibility. Recent studies indicate that Muhammadiyah education is grounded in the spirit of Progressive Islam, which emphasises not only individual piety but also social

reconstruction through education, empowerment, philanthropy, healthcare, and humanitarian action (Arifin et al., 2022; Khoirudin et al., 2020). This vision is articulated more systematically in the *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan*, which identifies five defining characteristics: grounding in *tauhid*; adherence to the Qur'an and Sunnah; the promotion of *ijtihad* and *tajdid* (renewal); the cultivation of *wasathiyah* (moderation); and the realisation of Islam as *rahmatan lil-'alamin* (a mercy to all creation) (Tohirin, 2024).

A growing body of research suggests that Progressive Islam is not merely an organisational slogan, but a religious vision rooted in the Islamic reform tradition and Muhammadiyah's social praxis. Arifin, Mughni, and Nurhakim argue that Progressive Islam has both historical and theological foundations in the thought of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, particularly through the spirit of *Surah al-Ma'un*, which connects religious commitment with education, community empowerment, philanthropy, healthcare, and humanitarian action (Arifin et al., 2022). Widodo and Yusuf further argue that Progressive Islam is oriented towards truth, virtue, peace, justice, public benefit, prosperity, and the promotion of human dignity without discrimination (Widodo & Yusuf, 2019). Other studies further demonstrate that Muhammadiyah's progressive Islamic education can serve as a bridge between Islam, Indonesian identity, and modernity through the values of *tauhid*, mercy, balance, nationalism, and justice (Suyatno et al., 2022).

Within the field of education, research on the internalisation of Islamic values and Progressive Islam has also expanded. A study of the *Al-Islam* and *Kemuhammadiyahan* curriculum in Muhammadiyah Boarding Schools found that the five defining characteristics of Progressive Islam have been internalised through both the formal curriculum and student development programmes (Pajarianto, 2023). Another study found that the internalisation of Islamic values in Muhammadiyah schools is fostered through teachers' role modelling, school culture, integration across the curriculum, and collaboration with parents (Suyatno et al., 2023). Meanwhile, studies on values-based Islamic vocational education indicate that integrating religious values into vocational education can foster students' religiosity, independence, discipline, professional identity, and character development (Aziz & Amir, 2025; Rochayati et al., 2018).

Nevertheless, an important gap remains in understanding the intersection between *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* and Muhammadiyah vocational education. Existing studies have primarily examined Progressive Islam from conceptual, historical, curricular, or general educational perspectives, with limited attention to how its values are interpreted, internalised, and enacted in everyday vocational school life. This gap is significant because Muhammadiyah vocational schools occupy a distinctive position at the intersection of religious formation, knowledge acquisition, vocational competence, employability, and social responsibility. As such, they should be understood not merely as providers of vocational skills but as institutions that cultivate progressive individuals by integrating faith, knowledge, action, work ethic, and social commitment.

SMK Muhammadiyah Tanjung Selor was selected as the research site because it provides an empirical setting in which the values of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* are translated into everyday educational practice. Interview findings indicate that these values are internalised not only through Islamic Religious Education and *ISMUBA* subjects, but also through school orientation, Qur'an and *hadith* memorisation, religious routines, technology-enhanced learning, literacy programmes, community service, environmental initiatives, charitable activities, and students' participation in religious life within the wider community. These practices position the school as a space where the values of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* are experienced in students' academic, religious, and social lives.

Accordingly, this study explores how the values of Progressive Islam are internalised in vocational education at SMK Muhammadiyah Tanjung Selor. Rather than asking whether these values are taught, it examines how they are interpreted, cultivated, and enacted through learning, school culture, religious practice, technology use, literacy, and social engagement, thereby demonstrating how the *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* is translated into educational practice within Muhammadiyah vocational education.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the meanings, experiences, and practices through which the values of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* are internalised within the natural context of the school. Consistent with the qualitative research tradition, the study sought to understand this phenomenon from the perspectives of participants and within its real-life setting (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A case study design was adopted because the research focused on a single institutional setting, namely SMK Muhammadiyah Tanjung Selor, where the values of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* are embedded in Islamic Religious Education (*PAI/ISMUBA*), school culture, religious practices, literacy activities, technology use, and social and environmental programmes. A case study approach is appropriate for examining contemporary phenomena in depth within their real-life context, particularly where the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly defined (Yin, 2018). Furthermore, a case study approach enables researchers to develop a holistic and contextual understanding of the unique characteristics of a particular case (Stake, 1995).

Participants were selected purposively based on their direct experience and involvement in the internalisation of the values of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* within the school. Purposive sampling is widely used in qualitative research because it enables researchers to recruit participants who can provide rich, in-depth, and relevant insights into the phenomenon under investigation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015). The study involved four participants: two teachers and two students. To ensure confidentiality, the teachers were identified as G1 and G2, and the students as S1 and S2. They provided insights into religious learning, religious practices, school culture, digital media use, literacy activities, social responsibility, and students' participation in religious and community

activities. This composition enabled source triangulation by comparing teachers' perspectives as educators and school culture facilitators with students' experiences of the value internalisation process.

Data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were employed because they allowed the researcher to follow a set of guiding questions while providing the flexibility to explore participants' experiences, meanings, and reflections in greater depth (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015; Patton, 2015). The interviews explored teachers' and students' experiences of how the values of *tauhid*, adherence to the Qur'an and Sunnah, *tajdid*, a culture of knowledge, *wasathiyah*, *rahmatan lil-'alamin*, social action, and school culture were understood and enacted in everyday school life. During the interviews, the researcher employed active listening and probing techniques to encourage participants to move beyond descriptive accounts of school programmes and reflect on the meanings and experiences underlying the internalisation of these values. Document analysis was conducted using the interview coding results and the *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* as the normative framework for interpreting the relationship between school practices and the core values of Progressive Islam.

Data were analysed using a hybrid thematic approach that combined inductive interpretation of the empirical data with deductive analysis informed by the conceptual framework of the *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan*. Inductively, the data were read repeatedly to identify patterns emerging from participants' experiences. The data were then coded according to themes related to learning, religious practices, school culture, literacy, technology use, critical thinking, and social action. This coding process enabled the data to be reduced, organised, and interpreted systematically, allowing key patterns to be identified (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2021). Deductively, the resulting codes were compared with the conceptual elements of the *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan*, particularly its defining characteristics, *manhaj* (methodological framework), movement, and mission of service. Accordingly, the analysis moved beyond identifying themes from the data to interpreting them through a relevant conceptual lens.

Thematic analysis followed the six phases proposed by Braun and Clarke: familiarisation with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was selected because it enables researchers to identify recurring patterns of meaning within qualitative data and relate them to the research focus. Recent developments in reflexive thematic analysis also emphasise the researcher's active role in interpreting, organising, and making sense of the data through a reflective and iterative process (Campbell et al., 2021). Accordingly, the hybrid approach enabled the researcher to remain open to emergent findings while using the values of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* as a conceptual lens through which to interpret the data.

Trustworthiness was enhanced through source triangulation, methodological triangulation, an audit trail, and researcher reflexivity. Source triangulation involved comparing the perspectives of teachers (G1 and G2) and

students (S1 and S2), while methodological triangulation integrated findings from interviews, observations, and document analysis. In qualitative research, triangulation involves the use of multiple sources, methods, theories, or perspectives to strengthen the credibility of the findings (Denzin, 1978).

The trustworthiness of the study was established in accordance with the criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was enhanced through triangulation and by checking participants' quotations to ensure that the identified themes accurately reflected their original meanings. Transferability was supported by providing rich contextual descriptions of the research setting, participants, and educational practices. Dependability was ensured through systematic documentation of the analytical process, including transcription, coding, categorisation, and theme development. Confirmability was established by ensuring that the researcher's interpretations could be traced back to the original data. These strategies are consistent with the principle that the quality of qualitative research is strengthened through transparent analytical procedures, audit trails, triangulation, and researcher reflexivity (Ahmed, 2024; Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Researcher reflexivity was maintained by acknowledging the researcher's position, assumptions, and potential biases throughout the interpretation of the data. As the primary research instrument in qualitative inquiry, the researcher's awareness of subjectivity forms an essential component of ensuring the trustworthiness of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Morrow, 2005). Reflexivity helped ensure that the conceptual framework was not imposed on the data, while allowing participants' voices to shape the emerging themes. Consequently, the findings remain grounded in the lived experiences of teachers and students while being interpreted through the values of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan*.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The findings indicate that the internalisation of the values of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* at SMK Muhammadiyah, Tanjung Selor occurs holistically through teaching and learning, habitual practices, school culture, religious activities, and students' social engagement, extending beyond the classroom into everyday school life. Data were collected from four participants – two teachers (G1 and G2) and two students (S1 and S2) – whose complementary perspectives provided insights into the understanding, internalisation, and enactment of the values of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan*. Thematic analysis identified five overarching themes: Progressive Islam as adaptive religious education grounded in the Qur'an and Sunnah; *tauhid* as the foundation of values; learning that fosters innovation and critical thinking; the integration of religious and scientific knowledge through social and environmental responsibility; and the internalisation of values beyond the classroom into students' wider social lives.

Progressive Islam as Adaptive Religious Education Grounded in the Qur'an and Sunnah

Table 1. Participants' Understanding of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan*

Supporting Codes/Categories	Empirical Indicators from the Data	Participants
Adaptive Islamic education grounded in the Qur'an and Sunnah	<i>PAI/ISMUBA</i> instruction remains grounded in the Qur'an and Sunnah while being delivered through contextual and contemporary approaches.	G1, G2
Integration of technology into learning	Use of PowerPoint, videos, digital media, and creative projects in Islamic religious education.	G1, S1, G2
Project-based and creative learning	Religious learning is developed through presentation assignments, visual design, and educational video projects.	G1
Active and participatory learning	Students are encouraged to express their views and actively participate in the learning process.	S1, S2, G1, G2
Reflective learning through prompting questions	Teachers use prompting questions at the end of lessons to encourage reflection and reinforce understanding.	S2, G2
Integration of theory and religious practice	Religious instruction is complemented by practical worship activities, including the <i>Dhuhr</i> , <i>Asr</i> , and <i>Duha</i> prayers.	G1, S2
Digital dissemination of learning outcomes	Students' work is shared through the school's social media and other digital platforms.	G1

The findings indicate that, at SMK Muhammadiyah Tanjung Selor, Progressive Islam is understood as a model of religious education that integrates the normative values of Islam with pedagogical approaches responsive to contemporary developments. The internalisation of these values is not a spontaneous process but is systematically cultivated from students' entry into the school through structured programmes introducing fundamental Islamic values, reflecting a sustained approach to religious character formation.

In classroom practice, Progressive Islam is implemented by integrating Islamic learning with technology-enhanced pedagogy. Teachers combine religious instruction with project-based learning involving digital presentations, visual design, and educational videos, while students' work is disseminated through the school's digital platforms. These practices demonstrate that Islamic education extends beyond the classroom and engages with contemporary digital learning environments.

From the students' perspective, these approaches enhance engagement and understanding of religious content. The use of visual and digital media makes learning more accessible and interactive, while opportunities to express opinions before receiving teachers' feedback encourage active participation and critical thinking. Reflective questioning at the end of lessons further enables students to reconstruct their understanding, promoting value internalisation beyond the cognitive level.

The internalisation of the values of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* is further reinforced through regular religious practices, including congregational prayers, which integrate theoretical learning with everyday worship. Together, these findings demonstrate that religious education combines *tauhid*-based values, pedagogical innovation, critical thinking, and religious habituation within the school culture. Consequently, religious education functions not merely as the

transmission of values but as a contextual and transformative learning process that shapes students' religious understanding and everyday practice.

Tauhid as the Foundational Principle of Students' Religious Formation

Table 2. *Tauhid* as the Foundational Principle

Supporting Codes/Categories	Empirical Indicators from the Data	Participants
Internalisation of tauhid from school entry	Tauhid is introduced during the school orientation programme as the foundation for students' religious character development.	G1
Tauhid as the foundation of PAI/ISMUBA learning	Islamic religious instruction integrates tauhid into the teaching of the Qur'an, hadith, and basic fiqh.	G1
Daily religious practices reinforcing tauhid	Regular activities, including <i>tahfidz</i> , <i>BTQ</i> (Qur'anic reading and writing), and congregational <i>Duha</i> , <i>Dhuhr</i> , and <i>Asr</i> prayers, form part of the school culture.	G1, G2, S2
Weekly religious practices strengthening spirituality	The weekly recitation of <i>Surah al-Kahf</i> every Friday reinforces students' religious values and spiritual development.	G2
Tauhid as the orientation of learning	Students are encouraged to pursue knowledge as an act of worship and a means of seeking Allah's pleasure.	G2
Internalisation of tauhid through students' social behaviour	The values of tauhid are reflected in behaviours such as mutual assistance, discipline, and responsibility within the school community.	S2, G2
Tauhid as the foundation of the school's religious culture	Faith is embedded not only in classroom instruction but also in the school's culture, shaping students' everyday habits and conduct.	G1

The second theme identifies *tauhid* as the foundational principle underpinning students' religious formation at SMK Muhammadiyah Tanjung Selor. Rather than being treated solely as a theological concept, *tauhid* serves as the basis for shaping students' attitudes, behaviour, and orientation towards learning from the time they enter the school. During the orientation programme, students are introduced to the fundamentals of faith and Islamic teachings as the starting point for religious character development.

This foundation is reinforced through PAI/ISMUBA, where *tauhid* is integrated into the teaching of the Qur'an, *hadith*, and basic *fiqh*, linking theological understanding with religious practice. Beyond the classroom, *tauhid* is strengthened through daily religious routines, including *tahfidz*, Qur'anic reading and writing (*BTQ*), and congregational *Duha*, *Dhuhr*, and *Asr* prayers, as well as the weekly recitation of *Surah al-Kahf*. These activities form part of the school's religious culture and promote both spiritual discipline and continuity.

Teachers also encourage students to regard the pursuit of knowledge as an act of worship and a means of seeking Allah's pleasure, thereby integrating academic learning with spiritual purpose. From the students' perspective, these sustained practices foster religious awareness that extends beyond ritual observance to everyday conduct, including mutual assistance, discipline, cleanliness, and responsibility. Overall, the findings demonstrate that *tauhid* functions not only as a theological principle but also as the pedagogical foundation of the school's educational practices, integrating formal learning,

religious habituation, and school culture to support the holistic development of students' religious character.

Learning Innovation, Critical Thinking, and a Culture of Knowledge

Table 3. Learning Innovation

Supporting Codes/Categories	Empirical Indicators from the Data	Participants
Learning through prompting questions	Teachers use prompting questions to encourage students to solve problems and think critically.	G2, S2
Learning that promotes reflective thinking	Students are encouraged to revisit and deepen their understanding of the lesson through reflective questions at the end of each class.	S2
Interactive and participatory learning	Students are encouraged to ask questions, express their views, and participate actively in classroom discussions.	S1, S2
Integration of technology into learning	Digital technologies are used to enhance the effectiveness and relevance of teaching and learning.	G1, G2, S1
Strengthening literacy and a culture of discussion	Learning activities emphasise discussion, problem-solving, and classroom literacy.	G1, G2
Experiential learning (learning by doing)	Students learn through direct practice and active participation in classroom activities.	G1, S2
Innovation in teaching methods	Teachers are encouraged to develop creative and innovative teaching approaches.	G1, G2

The third theme highlights that teaching and learning at SMK Muhammadiyah, Tanjung Selor extend beyond knowledge transmission to foster learning innovation, critical thinking, and a culture of knowledge. Teachers act not only as instructors but also as facilitators who encourage students to question, reflect, and solve problems throughout the learning process.

One prominent strategy is the use of prompting questions to stimulate critical thinking and guide students in developing solutions to classroom problems. Rather than emphasising memorisation, this approach encourages students to construct their own understanding through active engagement. From the students' perspective, learning is experienced as interactive and participatory, with opportunities to express opinions, ask questions, and engage in classroom discussions. Reflective questioning at the end of lessons further reinforces understanding by encouraging students to revisit and consolidate what they have learned.

Learning innovation is also supported by the integration of digital technologies, which enhance both the effectiveness of teaching and students' access to diverse and contextual learning resources. In addition, classroom activities promote literacy, discussion, and problem-solving, helping students develop habits of academic inquiry. This culture of knowledge is further strengthened through experiential learning, in which students participate directly in practical classroom activities rather than passively receiving information.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that learning innovation at SMK Muhammadiyah Tanjung Selor encompasses not only creative teaching methods but also a learning ecosystem that promotes critical thinking, active participation, and a culture of knowledge. Consequently, education functions not merely as the

transmission of knowledge but as a process of developing reflective and intellectually engaged learners.

Integration of Religion and Knowledge through Social and Environmental Responsibility

Table 4. Integration of Values

Supporting Codes/Categories	Empirical Indicators from the Data	Participants
Balance between religious and general knowledge (<i>wasathiyah</i>)	Teaching emphasises a balanced integration of religious and general knowledge to prepare students for active engagement in society.	G1, G2
Integration of religious values into contextual learning	Religious values are connected to real-life situations and social practice rather than taught solely as theoretical concepts.	G1, G2, S2
Social responsibility through school activities	Students participate in social initiatives, including fundraising for victims of natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, and fires.	G2
Learning through social action	Learning is linked to practical activities that promote cooperation, mutual assistance, and community engagement.	G1, S1, S2, G2
Reinforcing <i>rahmatan lil-'alamin</i> through social interaction	Students are encouraged to treat all people with kindness regardless of their religious background.	G1, G2, S1, S2
Character education through school culture	Discipline, empathy, tolerance, and responsibility are cultivated through school rules and everyday practices.	G1, G2, S1, S2
Environmental responsibility	Students are encouraged to maintain a clean and comfortable school environment as part of their moral responsibility.	S1, G2

The fourth theme demonstrates that religion and knowledge are understood not as separate domains but as complementary dimensions of students' holistic development. Teachers emphasised the importance of balancing religious and general knowledge so that students develop both academic competence and a strong moral foundation. This reflects the principle of *wasathiyah* as a guiding framework for educational practice.

The integration of religious values is further achieved by connecting Islamic teachings with students' everyday experiences and contemporary social issues. Rather than presenting religion as abstract knowledge, teachers encourage students to apply Islamic values in practical contexts, thereby fostering social awareness alongside cognitive understanding.

Students' social responsibility is reinforced through participation in activities such as fundraising for communities affected by natural disasters. These initiatives provide experiential learning opportunities through which students develop empathy, solidarity, and cooperation. Similarly, the principle of *rahmatan lil-'alamin* is reflected in encouraging students to show kindness and respect towards all people, regardless of their religious background, demonstrating an inclusive and humanitarian understanding of Progressive Islam.

Character development is further supported through the school's culture, which promotes discipline, empathy, tolerance, and responsibility. Environmental responsibility is likewise incorporated into everyday school life by encouraging students to maintain a clean and orderly environment as part of their moral obligations. Collectively, these findings suggest that the integration of religion, knowledge, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship creates a holistic educational ecosystem in which students' spiritual, intellectual, social, and ecological development is nurtured simultaneously.

Value Internalisation Beyond the Classroom and into Students' Social Lives
Table 5. Characteristics of Value Internalisation

Supporting Codes/Categories	Empirical Indicators from the Data	Participants
Internalisation of Islamic values in everyday social life	The values of <i>Risalah Islam Berkemajuan</i> are reflected in students' everyday interactions, including mutual assistance and social engagement beyond the classroom.	S1, S2
Universal social responsibility (<i>rahmatan lil-'alamin</i>)	Students are encouraged to treat all people with kindness regardless of their religious background.	S1, S2
Implementation of values through school culture	Religious values are internalised through everyday school practices that shape students' character.	G1, G2, S1, S2
Character development through discipline and responsibility	Discipline, responsibility, empathy, and tolerance become part of students' daily habits at school.	G2, S2
Translating religious values into practice	Religious values extend beyond classroom instruction and are expressed through students' personal conduct and social actions.	G1, G2, S1, S2
Strengthening social responsibility through collective activities	Students participate in collaborative and humanitarian activities organised by the school.	G2, S1
Character education through habituation	Islamic values are cultivated through consistent daily habits in both worship and social interaction.	G1, G2, S2

The fifth theme demonstrates that the internalisation of the values of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* at SMK Muhammadiyah Tanjung Selor extends beyond classroom instruction into students' everyday social lives. Values introduced through teaching and reinforced by the school culture become embedded in students' daily behaviour, indicating that education functions not only as the transmission of knowledge but also as the formation of enduring social dispositions.

This internalisation is evident in students' social responsibility, particularly through practices of mutual assistance and participation in community-oriented activities. Rather than merely understanding social responsibility as a theoretical concept, students apply these values in their interactions with peers and in broader social contexts. Similarly, the principle of *rahmatan lil-'alamin* is reflected in students' inclusive attitudes, encouraging them to treat all people with kindness regardless of religious background and fostering a humanitarian approach to social relationships.

The internalisation process is further reinforced through the school's culture of habituation. Values such as discipline, responsibility, empathy, and

tolerance are cultivated through consistent daily routines and expectations rather than through classroom instruction alone. Collective school activities likewise provide opportunities for students to develop solidarity, cooperation, and social responsibility through shared experiences.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that the internalisation of the values of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* extends beyond formal learning to shape students' character, habits, and social behaviour. The educational process therefore equips students not only with religious knowledge but also with the dispositions and practices required to embody Islamic values in everyday life.

Discussion

Progressive Islam as Adaptive Religious Education Grounded in the Qur'an and Sunnah

This theme reflects participants' understanding of *Islam Berkemajuan* as religious education that remains firmly grounded in the Qur'an and Sunnah while adopting pedagogical approaches responsive to contemporary developments. Teachers maintained the substance of Islamic teachings but delivered them through digital presentations, visual design, educational videos, and social media. S1 perceived these approaches as making Islamic learning more engaging, relevant, and accessible within their digital learning environment.

Viewed through the framework of the *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* (RIB), these findings correspond to two of its core principles: adherence to the Qur'an and Sunnah as the primary sources of Islamic teaching and the commitment to *ijtihad* and *tajdid*. While RIB affirms the authority of these foundational sources, it also recognises that their interpretation and implementation should respond to changing social contexts through reason, scientific knowledge, empirical experience, and methodological renewal. The integration of digital media into PAI/ISMUBA therefore represents not merely a technical innovation but a form of pedagogical *tajdid* that renews the delivery of religious education without compromising its doctrinal foundations.

These findings suggest that the internalisation of the values of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* operates through a process of translation rather than substitution: the core values remain unchanged, while their pedagogical expression evolves to meet contemporary educational needs. At SMK Muhammadiyah Tanjung Selor, technology functions not as a replacement for religious substance but as a medium connecting Islamic source with students' lived learning experiences. This finding supports (Suyatno et al., 2022) who argue that Muhammadiyah's progressive Islamic education bridges Islam, Indonesian identity, and modernity. It also aligns with (Herlandy et al., 2024) who demonstrate that digital learning modules can integrate Islamic, Muhammadiyah, and character education in vocational settings, and with (Pamungkas, 2023) who found that digital platforms enhance students' understanding in Muhammadiyah educational institutions.

The study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that digital adaptation in Muhammadiyah vocational education should be understood not simply as a pedagogical strategy but as an expression of Progressive Islam within vocational education. Given that vocational students learn in technology-rich, visually oriented, and practice-based environments, religious education must remain firmly grounded in Islamic sources while adopting flexible pedagogies, creative media, and learning approaches that are responsive to their educational context.

***Tauhid* as the Foundational Principle of Students' Religious Formation**

The theme of *tauhid* emerged prominently from the teachers' accounts. G1 explained that *tauhid* is introduced from students' first days at school through the orientation programme and reinforced through *PAI*, *ISMUBA*, Qur'anic and *hadith* memorisation. G2 further described how the school strengthens students' religious formation through *tahfidz*, BTQ, congregational Duha, Dhuhur, and Asr prayers, as well as the weekly recitation of *Surah al-Kahf*. These findings indicate that *tauhid* is not treated as a discrete theological topic but as the foundation of religious formation, established during school entry and strengthened throughout students' educational experience.

Within the framework of the *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* (RIB), *tauhid* constitutes the first defining characteristic of Progressive Islam. RIB presents *tauhid* not merely as a theological doctrine but as the foundation of a Muslim's worldview, shaping moral conduct, worship, courage, courtesy, and commitment to good deeds. Interpreted through this framework, orientation activities, *PAI*, *ISMUBA*, memorisation, and religious habituation function as mechanisms for cultivating transcendental awareness. Rather than simply teaching belief in Allah, the school seeks to nurture a faith-based orientation that informs students' thinking, behaviour, worship, and social responsibility.

This interpretation reinforces the view that RIB understands *tauhid* as a source of lived practice rather than an abstract doctrine. Daily prayers, memorisation, and *ISMUBA* therefore represent more than routine religious activities; they provide sustained opportunities for cultivating students' religious consciousness. These findings are consistent with (Suyatno et al., 2023) who found that Islamic values in Muhammadiyah schools are internalised through teachers' role modelling, school culture, curriculum integration, and supportive educational environments. They also support the findings of (Khasanah et al., 2025), who showed that religious habituation and school culture strengthen students' discipline, responsibility, honesty, and spirituality, as well as (Utomo & Mindani, 2025), who highlighted the contribution of congregational prayer to students' behavioural, psychological, and social development.

The context of SMK Muhammadiyah, Tanjung Selor further highlights the significance of these findings. G1 noted that students enter the school with diverse religious backgrounds and varying levels of religious practice, including inconsistent observance of the five daily prayers. Consequently, the school adopts a gradual approach to value internalisation, beginning with the

introduction of *tauhid*, followed by formal instruction, memorisation, and sustained religious habituation. This study therefore demonstrates that, within Muhammadiyah vocational education, *tauhid* serves not only as a theological foundation but also as the basis for cultivating vocational character, where discipline, responsibility, ethical conduct, and moral commitment are rooted in faith.

Learning Innovation, Critical Thinking, and a Culture of Knowledge

The theme of learning innovation, critical thinking, and a culture of knowledge emerged from evidence relating to teacher reflection, problem-based learning, small-scale research projects, Friday literacy activities, visits to the regional library, and the use of digital learning resources. Rather than passively receiving information, G1 and G2 described the use of problem-based learning and prompting questions to encourage critical thinking, while S1 reported being given opportunities to express opinions. S2 further explained that teachers provided feedback, repetition, games, and open-ended questions at the end of lessons to help students revisit and deepen their understanding. These practices indicate that religious education was designed not only to promote religious commitment but also to develop students' intellectual capacities.

Within the framework of the *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* (RIB), these findings can be interpreted through three interconnected principles: *ijtihad* and *tajdid*, the role of reason and scientific knowledge, and the movement for knowledge (*gerakan ilmu*). RIB affirms that *ijtihad* is essential because human society continues to evolve, while reason is regarded as a divine gift for understanding both revelation and the natural world. It further identifies the pursuit of knowledge as a defining characteristic of Progressive Islam. From this perspective, problem-based learning, small-scale research, Friday literacy activities, and teachers' reflective practice represent practical expressions of the RIB educational framework.

Problem-based learning demonstrates that the values of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* are cultivated not only through moral instruction but also through opportunities for inquiry and problem-solving. Likewise, teachers' reflective evaluation of their own practice can be understood as a form of pedagogical *tajdid*, whereby teaching strategies are continually refined to improve students' learning experiences. These findings support (Sutopo et al., 2022), who identified problem-solving, discussion, student projects, information renewal, reading initiatives, and critical thinking as key features of progressive learning in Muhammadiyah schools. They also align with Wiandani et al. (2025), who found that Islamic Religious Education teachers contextualise learning through contemporary social issues and that values-based vocational education is most effective when supported by curriculum integration, mentoring, reflective practice, a religious school environment, and teacher role modelling.

The distinctive contribution of this study lies in demonstrating the relationship between critical thinking and a culture of knowledge within Muhammadiyah vocational education. Beyond transmitting religious

knowledge, vocational schools prepare students to address practical challenges in the workplace and society. Consequently, literacy, numeracy, small-scale research, and problem-solving serve as bridges between religious values and vocational competence. These findings suggest that *PAI/ISMUBA* should be developed as a space for cultivating critical and applied religious reasoning, enabling students to relate Islamic values to contemporary social, environmental, technological, and occupational issues.

Integration of Religion and Knowledge through Social and Environmental Responsibility

This theme demonstrates that the internalisation of the values of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* extends beyond cognitive learning to shape students' social and environmental engagement. Interview data show that, according to G1, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) relates to general subjects such as social studies and, in some instances, mathematics. This integration helps students understand that religion and general knowledge are not separate domains but are interconnected in interpreting social realities and everyday life. In addition, religious values are expressed through concrete practices, including mutual respect, greeting others, respecting teachers, helping peers, distributing *takjil* during Ramadan, community service, tree planting, fundraising for disaster victims, maintaining school cleanliness, and showing kindness to all people regardless of religious background.

From the perspective of the *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* (RIB), these practices reflect the principles of *wasathiyah*, the comprehensive scope of Islamic teachings, *rahmatan lil-'alamin*, and the movement of *amal* or social action. RIB presents *wasathiyah* as more than moderation; it encompasses openness, balanced judgement, respect for diversity, responsiveness to social realities, and flexibility in applying Islamic teachings. Likewise, RIB understands Islam as encompassing *aqidah*, worship, ethics, and social relations. Consequently, integrating PAI with general subjects challenges the dichotomy between religious and secular knowledge, while students' participation in charitable, social, and environmental activities demonstrates the translation of religious values into ethical and civic practice.

The findings further illustrate that social and environmental responsibility constitutes a practical expression of *rahmatan lil-'alamin*. G1 and S1 emphasised the importance of mutual respect, greeting others, and respecting teachers, while S2 highlighted mutual assistance, helping peers, and doing good to all human beings, not only to fellow Muslims. S1 also referred to distributing *takjil*, community service, tree planting, and plant cultivation, whereas G2 described fundraising for disaster victims, maintaining school cleanliness, tolerance, empathy, discipline, and responsibility. These examples show that *rahmatan lil-'alamin* is internalised not only through religious instruction but also through social interaction, humanitarian concern, and environmental care.

These findings consistent with Hakim (2022), who found that multicultural values in Islamic Religious Education are internalised through role modelling,

habituation, congregational worship, cooperation, social care, and respect for diversity. Similarly, Khasanah et al. (2025) demonstrated that Muhammadiyah values, including diligence, independence, and social responsibility, can be effectively integrated into vocational curricula and partnerships with industry.

The principal contribution of this study is to show that the integration of religion and knowledge in Muhammadiyah vocational education is fundamentally practical. Rather than merely connecting Qur'anic teachings with general subjects, it cultivates students' social responsibility, environmental stewardship, and collaborative engagement. This suggests that Progressive Islamic education in vocational schools should be understood as an integrative educational practice that connects faith, knowledge, vocational competence, community engagement, and environmental responsibility.

Value Internalisation Beyond the Classroom and into Students' Social Lives

The final theme suggests that the internalisation of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* values extends well beyond formal classroom instruction. While learning activities provide the initial foundation, these values are reinforced through religious practices, school routines, discipline, responsibility, and everyday interactions within the school community. More importantly, S1 reported that some students had been given opportunities to serve as Tarawih prayer leaders or deliver short religious talks in local mosques and prayer rooms. This indicates that value internalisation progresses from classroom learning to school culture and, ultimately, into students' engagement with the wider community.

This progression reflects the vision articulated in the *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* (RIB), which understands Islamic education as preparation for meaningful social engagement rather than solely personal religious development. The concepts of *gerakan dakwah*, *gerakan amal*, and *pengkhidmatan* emphasise that faith should be expressed through service, social responsibility, and constructive participation in society. In this sense, students who take on religious leadership roles are no longer simply recipients of religious instruction but begin to act as contributors to their communities. The transition from learner to community participant represents an important stage in the internalisation of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* values.

The findings also highlight the significance of the *hidden curriculum*. Students' character is shaped not only through formal lessons but also through school culture, daily routines, collective worship, interpersonal relationships, and opportunities to assume responsibility. This is evident in S2's account of how school values are embedded in everyday practices, including helping friends during classroom duties, praying together, mutual assistance, and doing good to all human beings. These examples indicate that the internalisation of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* values occurs through repeated social and religious practices that gradually shape students' conduct beyond formal instruction. These findings support (Suyanti et al., 2023), who argue that *hidden curriculum* practices in Muhammadiyah vocational schools foster religious habits, empathy, tolerance,

and collaboration. Likewise, Nasrullah et al. (2023) found that teachers play a central role in character education through congregational prayer, Qur'anic literacy, and extracurricular activities, while Wahab et al. (2025) emphasised that Muhammadiyah's Progressive Islamic education is strengthened through students' direct involvement in community life.

The vocational context makes these findings particularly significant. Unlike students in more academically oriented schools, vocational students are expected to enter the workplace and society shortly after graduation. Consequently, religious education should cultivate not only religious understanding but also confidence, communication skills, responsibility, and a willingness to contribute to others. Although opportunities such as leading prayers or delivering religious talks may involve only a limited number of students, they illustrate how schools can provide authentic contexts in which religious values are translated into social practice.

This study therefore suggests that Muhammadiyah vocational schools' function not only as providers of vocational education but also as spaces for developing future social and religious leaders. Through this process, the values of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* move beyond conceptual understanding and become embodied in students' participation and service within their communities.

Synthesising the Findings through the *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan*

Taken together, the findings suggest that the internalisation of the values of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* at SMK Muhammadiyah Tanjung Selor is best understood as a developmental process that moves from the cultivation of faith to active social engagement. This trajectory closely reflects the vision of the *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* (RIB), which presents Islam as an integrated framework grounded in *tauhid*, the Qur'an and Sunnah, *ijtihad* and *tajdid*, *wasathiyah*, and *rahmatan lil-'alamin*. Rather than remaining abstract principles, these values are embedded in teaching and learning, religious habituation, school culture, literacy activities, technology-enhanced learning, social and environmental initiatives, and students' participation in community life.

A key contribution of this study is the identification of a layered process of value internalisation. The first layer establishes a foundation of faith through the school orientation programme, *PAI*, *ISMUBA*, Qur'anic and hadith memorisation, *tahfidz*, BTQ, congregational prayers, and the weekly recitation of Surah al-Kahf. These practices, reflected particularly in the accounts of G1, G2, and S2, indicate that religious formation is developed gradually through both formal instruction and repeated religious habituation. The second layer is characterised by pedagogical renewal through technology-enhanced learning, digital presentations, educational videos, prompting questions, problem-based learning, teacher reflection, games, Friday literacy activities, classroom discussion, and the use of diverse learning resources. These practices, supported by G1, G2, S1, and S2, embody the RIB principles of reason, knowledge, *ijtihad*, and *tajdid*. The final layer extends learning into social practice through distributing *takjil*, community service, tree planting, helping peers, fundraising

for disaster victims, IPM, HW, and opportunities for students to serve as Tarawih prayer leaders or deliver short religious talks. This layer, also reflected across G1, G2, S1, and S2, shows that *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* values move beyond classroom learning and are expressed through *amal*, *da'wah*, and public service.

These findings indicate that *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* in Muhammadiyah vocational education should not be understood merely as an institutional ideology but as an educational framework that integrates faith, knowledge, vocational competence, critical thinking, and social responsibility. Within the vocational context, *tauhid* can be understood as the basis for cultivating discipline and responsibility; *tajdid* as a foundation for pedagogical innovation and technological adaptation; a culture of knowledge as a means of strengthening literacy and problem-solving; *rahmatan lil-'alamin* as a basis for social and environmental responsibility; and *da'wah* and *amal* as expressions of meaningful community engagement. Accordingly, this study argues that the internalisation of the values of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* in Muhammadiyah vocational schools is not simply a process of transmitting religious ideals but of developing progressive individuals who are religious, adaptive, critical, socially responsible, and prepared to contribute positively to society.

CONCLUSIONS

This study explored how the values of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* are internalised within vocational education at SMK Muhammadiyah Tanjung Selor. The findings identified five interconnected patterns of internalisation: adaptive religious education grounded in the Qur'an and Sunnah; *tauhid* as the foundation of students' religious formation; learning innovation that promotes critical thinking and a culture of knowledge; the integration of religion and knowledge through social and environmental responsibility; and the extension of value internalisation beyond the classroom into students' social and religious engagement. Viewed through the framework of the *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* (RIB), these patterns demonstrate the interrelationship between its defining characteristics, methodological framework (*manhaj*), movement, and mission of service. Rather than remaining normative principles, *tauhid*, the Qur'an and Sunnah, *ijtihad* and *tajdid*, *wasathiyah*, and *rahmatan lil-'alamin* are translated into teaching and learning, religious habituation, literacy, technology-enhanced pedagogy, social action, environmental stewardship, and students' participation in community life.

The study contributes theoretically by extending the literature on Progressive Islamic education into the context of Muhammadiyah vocational schools. It shows that value internalisation is not confined to religious formation but also encompasses critical thinking, technological adaptability, vocational competence, social responsibility, environmental awareness, and students' readiness to contribute to society. More broadly, the findings propose a layered model of value internalisation that links faith formation, pedagogical renewal, a culture of knowledge, and social praxis within vocational education.

From a practical perspective, Muhammadiyah vocational schools should

develop PAI and ISMUBA as integrated value ecosystems that connect school culture, literacy, technology, community engagement, and religious practice. Programmes such as tauhid-based orientation, religious habituation, Friday literacy activities, problem-based learning, social projects, environmental initiatives, and students' participation in community religious activities should be systematically planned and continuously evaluated. Responsibility for value internalisation should extend beyond Islamic Religious Education teachers to involve the wider school community, including vocational teachers, class teachers, student organisations, and community partners.

This study is limited by its focus on a single school and a small number of participants, comprising two teachers and two students. In addition, the findings are based primarily on interviews and document analysis, without prolonged observation of everyday school practices. Future research should therefore examine multiple Muhammadiyah vocational schools across different regions and vocational specialisations, while involving a broader range of stakeholders, including school leaders, vocational teachers, parents, alumni, industry partners, and community leaders. Employing ethnographic, longitudinal, or mixed-methods approaches would also provide a deeper understanding of how the values of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* are sustained over time and translated into students' character, work ethic, and social behaviour. Such research would contribute to the development of a more robust and practically applicable model of Progressive Islamic education within Muhammadiyah vocational schools.

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