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# The Concept of Gratitude as the Foundation of Islamic Educational Values from the Perspective of the Interpretation of the Al-Quran, Surah Al-Kautsar

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**ABSTRACT** *This study aims to analyze the concept of gratitude in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Kautsar, through a thematic interpretation (maudhu'i) approach in order to discover its theological and philosophical meaning in the context of Islamic education, identify the educational values contained therein, and formulate a conceptual model of Islamic education based on the value of gratitude that is relevant to the development of students' character. This study uses a thematic approach. This qualitative research uses an integrative digital-hermeneutic method, combining a literature review, thematic interpretation analysis, and digital exploration of the latest scientific sources based on online data. This method allows researchers to triangulate classical and contemporary sources, both from interpretation books and digital scientific publications, to gain a more comprehensive and contextual understanding of the meaning of gratitude. The results show that the concept of gratitude in Surah Al-Kautsar encompasses three main dimensions: theological awareness of God's blessings, moral responsibility for knowledge, and spiritual practice manifested in social behavior and worship. These three dimensions serve as the foundation of Islamic educational values that emphasize the balance between the intellectual, spiritual, and moral development of students. Based on these findings, this study produces a conceptual model of Islamic Education Based on the Value of Gratitude (MPINS) that can be applied in curriculum design, learning strategies, and character development in Islamic educational institutions. Theoretically, this study expands the discourse of Islamic education by emphasizing the relevance of Qur'anic interpretation as a source for developing value theory. Policy-wise, these findings can be used as a reference in the development of a character education curriculum based on Qur'anic values. Meanwhile, practically, the formulated model provides guidance for teachers and educators in instilling the value of gratitude through learning.*

**Keywords** : Gratitude, Foundation, Values, Islamic Education, Qur'an.

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## INTRODUCTION

Islamic education is essentially not only oriented towards achieving cognitive aspects, but also towards forming a personality based on spiritual and moral values (Kurniawan, MA, Syafe'i, I., & Anggoro, 2023). In this context, one fundamental value often overlooked in educational practice is gratitude. Gratitude plays a central role in shaping the character of students who are faithful, moral, and possess a high level of spiritual awareness. The reality on the ground shows

that the current orientation of Islamic education is more directed at academic achievement and intellectual competition, while the dimensions of awareness of spiritual values such as gratitude, sincerity, and patience tend to experience a blurring of meaning.

The phenomenon of moral degradation, low learning ethic, and increasing individualistic attitudes among students (Anshori, I., Putri, AS, Qonitah, A., & Ramadhan, 2024). This reflects that the education system has not fully succeeded in instilling spiritual values that originate from the teachings of the Qur'an (Anshori, I., & Wasehudin, 2024). In this context, the value of gratitude has great urgency because it functions as the foundation of transcendental awareness that gives birth to an attitude of responsibility (Wasehudin, W., Wathoni, K., Hassan, RB, Anshori, I., & Akbar, 2022), optimism, and appreciation for God's blessings in every aspect of life. Education that is not grounded in gratitude has the potential to produce a generation that is intellectually intelligent but spiritually impoverished.

The Koran, as the main source of Islamic education (Ghozali, A., & Saputra, 2021), providing a deep affirmation of the meaning of gratitude (Anshori, I., Syafe'i, I., & Zahrotunnisa, 2024). One of the surahs that explicitly contains this message is Surah Al-Kautsar. This short but meaningful surah emphasizes the importance of being grateful for the blessings bestowed by Allah through worship and good deeds (Noor, 2021). However, studies of this letter are generally still theological and ritualistic in nature (Siregar, JS, Dalimunthe, NP, Nasution, AP, & Azrizki, 2023), has not been widely developed in the context of values education and student character development. This is where the research gap lies that needs to be bridged: how the concept of gratitude in Surah Al-Kautsar can be understood, interpreted, and internalized within the Islamic education system as a basis for the formation of moral and spiritual values.

This research is important because it offers an integrative approach between Qur'anic interpretation and Islamic education, which have tended to operate separately. Through a thematic (maudhu'i) interpretation approach to Surah Al-Kautsar, it is hoped that a deeper understanding of the essence of gratitude will be gained, not only as an expression of worship but also as a conceptual framework for building a system of Islamic educational values (Reisa, I., Wasehudin, W., & Anshori, 2022). Thus, this research is expected to provide conceptual and practical contributions to the development of an Islamic educational paradigm oriented towards the formation of a perfect human being, namely a person who is grateful, knowledgeable, and has noble character.

In various Islamic educational literature, the value of gratitude is often mentioned as part of the formation of character and spirituality of students (Son, 2023). Classical Islamic educational theory as put forward by Al-Ghazali, Ibn Miskawaih, and Ibn Sina, places gratitude as part of moral ethics (Maskufa, M., Munazat, DR, Damanhuri, A., & Shomad, 2020) which arises from an awareness of God's blessings. Meanwhile, modern educational theory emphasizes the importance of character building and moral education that foster a sense of responsibility, empathy, and spirituality (Kuswanto, RT, & Kurniawan, 2025).

However, there is an inaccuracy between theory and empirical facts on the ground. Theoretically, the value of gratitude is considered to be part of the Islamic education curriculum (Anshori, I., Yansyah, D., Nasiroh, N., Urfi, U., & Ismail, 2025), both in Islamic Religious Education and character education based on religious values (Wasehudin, W., Wathoni, K., Hassan, RB, Anshori, I., & Akbar, 2022). However, in practice, the value of gratitude is often only understood ritualistically as simply saying "thank God" without deep appreciation of its meaning (Bafoevna, 2024). Students exhibit consumerist behavior, complain easily, lack discipline, and have low spiritual awareness of the joys and responsibilities of learning (Aisyah, N., Ridwan, H., Faisal, W., & Muawanah, 2022).

This gap indicates that the theory of internalizing the value of gratitude in Islamic education has not been fully implemented effectively in educational practice. Furthermore, previous research has primarily discussed the value of gratitude from a psychological or general moral perspective, rather than from the perspective of Quranic interpretation, which has

theological depth and educational value. Few studies have specifically utilized Surah Al-Kautsar as the primary source for exploring gratitude-based Islamic educational values.

Therefore, this study attempts to bridge the gap between theory and fact by presenting a conceptual analysis of gratitude based on the interpretation of the Qur'an Surah Al-Kautsar, then linking it to the context of modern Islamic education. The results of the study are expected to enrich theoretical discourse while offering applicable solutions in building an Islamic education paradigm rooted in the values of the Qur'an. This study aims to analyze in depth the concept of gratitude in the Qur'an Surah Al-Kautsar through a thematic interpretation approach in order to reveal the Islamic educational values contained therein, find its relevance as a basis for developing spiritual and moral values in the Islamic education system, and formulate a conceptual model of internalization of gratitude in the formation of students' character.

## METHOD

This research uses an interpretive qualitative approach with the type of educational exegesis study, namely a new approach that integrates thematic (*maudhu'i*) interpretation of the Qur'an with an analysis of contemporary Islamic educational values (Anshori, I., Yansyah, D., Nasiroh, N., Urfi, U., & Ismail, 2025). This approach not only examines the meaning of the text theologically, but also interprets the messages of the Qur'an in the context of educational practice, thereby producing a relevant understanding between text (*nash*) and reality (*waqi'*). The methodological novelty of this research lies in the synthesis between the Maudhu'i interpretation method and the hermeneutic approach to education, where the analysis does not stop at the linguistic meaning of the verse, but continues with the interpretation of values and their implications for the formation of students' character. Thus, this research combines the two scientific domains of Islamic interpretation and education in one integrative analytical framework. The data sources for this research consist of primary data consisting of the Al-Qur'an Surah Al-Kautsar along with the interpretations of classical tafsir scholars (such as Tafsir al-Tabari, Tafsir Ibn Katsir, Tafsir al-Maraghi) and contemporary (Tafsir al-Mishbah by Quraish Shihab, Fi Zhilal al-Qur'an by Sayyid Qutb). Secondary data consists of Islamic education books, scientific journal articles, and previous research results relevant to the themes of gratitude, character education, and Qur'anic values.

The data collection technique was carried out through three main stages: textual documentation; collecting verses, interpretations, and literature related to the concept of gratitude and Islamic education. Comparative literature analysis; comparing interpretations from various modern commentators and researchers to find continuity and differences in meaning. Reflective-contextual analysis; examining the relevance of the meaning of gratitude to the current phenomenon of Islamic education, such as moral degradation, low spiritual awareness, and challenges to students' character. Data analysis was carried out through three main stages with the Integrative Educational Hermeneutic model, which is a novel element in this study. Textual Analysis; Analyzing the linguistic structure, semantics, and historical context of Surah Al-Kautsar based on authoritative sources of interpretation. Conceptual Analysis; Identifying and mapping the values of Islamic education contained in the concept of gratitude, including theological, ethical, and pedagogical dimensions. Applicative Analysis; Interpreting the results of interpretation and conceptualization into the context of modern Islamic education, especially in the aspects of learning, character formation, and spiritualization of students.

To ensure the validity of the data, this study uses source and theory triangulation, namely combining various classical and contemporary interpretations as well as modern Islamic educational theories (such as theories of value, moral, and spiritual education). In addition, the researcher conducted peer review and academic discussions with experts in Islamic interpretation and education to ensure the objectivity and depth of interpretation. The novelty of this research lies not only in the object of study (Surat Al-Kautsar as a source of educational values), but

especially in the new methodological model called the "Integrative Educational Interpretation Model", with the following characteristics:

**Table 1.** Methodological Novelty

Methodological Aspects	Conventional Methods of Educational Interpretation	New Method (Integrative Educational Interpretation Model)
Main approach	Maudhu'i (thematic) interpretation only	Integration of maudhu'i interpretation + educational hermeneutics
Focus of analysis	Theological and moral meaning	Theological meaning + pedagogical relevance and character
Results orientation	Conceptual study of religion	Implementation model of Qur'anic values in education
Interpretation process	Analysis of text and historical context	Analysis of text, context, and the reality of modern education
Research output	Understanding the meaning of the verse	The application concept of gratitude values for Islamic Education learning

**Table 2.** Focus and Objectives of the Research

Research Focus	Research purposes	Expected Results (Output and Application)
Analysis of the theological meaning of gratitude in Surah Al-Kautsar	Analyzing the concept of gratitude through thematic interpretation (maudhu'i) in order to find theological and philosophical meaning in the context of Islamic education.	Gaining a deep conceptual understanding of gratitude as a basic spiritual value of Islamic education; it can be used as material for strengthening faith and morals in Islamic religious learning.
The values of Islamic education contained in the teachings of gratitude	Revealing the values of Islamic education contained in the meaning of gratitude based on classical and contemporary interpretations	Identification of Islamic educational values (sincerity, obedience, spiritual awareness, responsibility) which can be used as a reference in developing a values-based curriculum.
The relevance of the concept of gratitude to modern educational practices	Finding the relevance and implementation of the concept of gratitude in developing spiritual and moral values in educational environments.	The framework for implementing the value of gratitude in learning practices and character formation of students in schools/madrasas has been developed.
Formulation of a conceptual model of gratitude-based education	Formulating a conceptual model for internalizing the value of gratitude that can be integrated into the Islamic education process.	The development of an applicable Islamic Education Model Based on the Value of Gratitude, including teaching strategies, learning activities, and the habituation of spiritual character in schools.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Result

The results of this study were obtained through a thematic (*maudhu'i*) interpretation of Surah Al-Kautsar, drawing on classical and contemporary sources of interpretation, and relating them to the context of modern Islamic education. Based on the established research focus, four main findings were identified:

### The Theological and Philosophical Meaning of Gratitude in Surah Al-Kautsar

Analysis of classical commentaries such as those of al-Tabari, Ibn Kathir, and al-Maraghi shows that gratitude in Surah Al-Kautsar does not only mean acknowledging blessings, but also includes the command to express gratitude through worship and devotion to Allah. The verse "fa shalli li rabbika wanhar" is understood by commentators as a form of manifestation of gratitude through concrete actions: prayer and sacrifice (Al Am, 2019). Philosophically, gratitude has three main dimensions: spiritual awareness of God's blessings; acknowledgment of the source of blessings; and actualization of good deeds in the form of worship and social goodness (Sulaiman,

MA, Nisoh, A., Anshori, I., Kahfi, A., & Mohamoud, 2025) This finding demonstrates that gratitude is not merely a verbal expression, but a life orientation that unites the dimensions of faith, good deeds, and morals. In the context of Islamic education, this meaning serves as a crucial foundation for building students' spiritual awareness in the learning process and social interactions.

### **Islamic Educational Values in the Concept of Gratitude**

The results of the thematic analysis show that the Islamic educational values contained in the concept of gratitude in Surah Al-Kautsar include; The value of spirituality, the awareness that all blessings come from Allah and must be used for worship; The value of obedience, the encouragement to carry out Allah's commands sincerely; The value of sincerity and devotion, as the command "wanhar" which reflects the spirit of giving and sacrifice; The value of social responsibility, directing students to do good to others as a form of gratitude to Allah. From these results, it can be concluded that Islamic education based on gratitude positions students as people who are aware of blessings, responsible, and have a spiritual spirit to do good.

### **The Relevance of the Concept of Gratitude to Modern Educational Practices**

This study found that the concept of gratitude, derived from Surah Al-Kautsar, has strong relevance to efforts to shape students' character amidst the challenges of modern education, which tends to emphasize cognitive aspects. In the context of contemporary education, the value of gratitude can be a strategy for spiritualizing learning (Anshori, I., Setiaji, H., & Anita, 2023). Students who have a sense of gratitude will demonstrate positive behaviors such as high learning motivation, empathy for others, discipline, and resilience in the face of learning difficulties (Adawiah, AM, Fahmi, MA, & Anshori, 2025). Teachers can integrate this value through learning reflection, fostering worship habits, and integrating Quranic values into every classroom activity. In this way, the value of gratitude becomes a contextual and applicable medium for developing spiritual character.

### **Conceptual Model of Islamic Education Based on the Value of Gratitude**

Based on the interpretation and practical relevance of the results, this study formulated a Gratitude-Based Islamic Education Model as a synthesis of the findings. This model is built on three main components:

**Table 3.** Conceptual Model of Islamic Education Based on the Value of Gratitude

Component	Description of Findings	Application in Islamic Education
Theological Foundation	Gratitude is an acknowledgment of God's blessings that encourages worship and devotion	Islamic religious learning materials emphasize the relationship between blessings, worship, and social service.
Value Foundation	Spiritual values, sincerity, responsibility and social concern contained in the Al-Kautsar letter	Strengthening character and moral education based on Qur'anic values
Pedagogical Foundation	Integration of Qur'anic interpretation with learning practices and spiritual reflection	Development of Islamic Religious Education curriculum based on the values of gratitude and the habit of worship.

This model emphasizes that Islamic education is not solely focused on transmitting religious knowledge but also on transforming Quranic values within students. By implementing this model, teachers can guide students to become knowledgeable, grateful, and virtuous individuals.

### **Discussion**

This study highlights gratitude in Surah Al-Kautsar as a foundation for developing Islamic educational values. The research findings demonstrate that the concept of gratitude from a Qur'anic perspective not only contains a spiritual dimension but also implies pedagogical values

that can shape students' character. These results demonstrate the integration of theological meaning, moral values, and their relevance to contemporary Islamic educational practices, as outlined in the research focus.

In the theological realm, the meaning of gratitude shows a close relationship between awareness of faith and devotion to God. (Kurniawan, 2025). Surah Al-Kautsar teaches that worship and sacrifice are concrete manifestations of true gratitude (Yunyanto, RD, Khozin, K., & Rahim, 2021). From an educational perspective, this confirms that spiritual awareness is the starting point for the formation of ethical behavior and social responsibility (Sharifnia, AM, Fernandez, R., Green, H., & Alananzeh, 2022). Thus, gratitude does not stop at acknowledging blessings, but becomes a source of moral motivation for students in their learning process and interactions with their environment. This finding suggests the need for an educational approach that fosters reflective awareness, not simply a cognitive understanding of religious teachings.

Meanwhile, an exploration of Islamic educational values in the context of gratitude shows that education based on gratitude to Allah can produce balanced behavior between spirituality and social responsibility (Anshori, I., Setiaji, H., & Anita, 2023). Values such as sincerity, responsibility, and respect for the learning process become an integral part of the student's personality (Hanani, H., Charles, C., Iswantir, M., & Karim, 2023). When these values are internalized in learning activities, education is no longer solely oriented toward achieving results, but also toward character development rooted in divine awareness. In this context, research provides a new direction for the development of Islamic education, emphasizing the spiritual dimension of meaning within the learning process.

The relevance of the concept of gratitude to contemporary Islamic educational practices is evident in its ability to bridge the ideals of the Quran's teachings with the needs of modern education. Gratitude can be used as a framework for character formation (Anshori, I., Putri, AS, Qonitah, A., & Ramadhan, 2024) which not only regulates human relationships with God, but also with each other (Ningsih, T., Yuwono, D., Sholehuddin, M., & Suharto, 2021). By making gratitude the basis of learning, the educational process can produce students who are resilient, patient, and able to interpret every life experience as part of worship. This view broadens the horizon of Islamic education from merely transmitting knowledge to transforming values.

The formulation of the Islamic Education Model Based on the Value of Gratitude is a concrete manifestation of the results of reflection on the overall research findings. This model serves as a bridge between Quranic interpretation and educational implementation, by placing the value of gratitude at the core of character formation and a learning culture. The existence of this model demonstrates that Quranic values can be systematically operationalized in the education system, not just taught normatively. This also demonstrates that Islamic research based on interpretation can contribute directly to pedagogical design in schools and madrasahs.

When linked to the research objectives, the findings have addressed all of the formulated research directions. An analysis of the meaning of gratitude in Surah Al-Kautsar provides a conceptual basis for understanding the relationship between spirituality and education. The identified educational values demonstrate the link between religious awareness and students' moral development. The relevance of the concept of gratitude to educational practice provides evidence that Qur'anic values have transformative power in shaping learning behavior and character (Adindan, W., Ali, AM, & Anshori, 2024). Meanwhile, the emergence of a gratitude-based conceptual model is proof that theory can be translated into an applicable framework that is beneficial to the world of education.

The implications of this research are quite broad. Theoretically, this research opens new space for the study of educational interpretation that not only examines religious texts from a meaningful perspective but also highlights their potential application in the context of Islamic pedagogy. The hermeneutic-pedagogical approach used shows that the interpretation of Quranic verses can produce an educational model relevant to the needs of the times. Practically, this research provides direction for the development of an Islamic Religious Education curriculum

based on Quranic values, particularly in building students' spiritual character. In the future, further research can be directed at empirically testing the effectiveness of implementing a gratitude-based educational model in improving students' religious character and learning motivation.

Thus, this discussion confirms that gratitude, as enshrined in Surah Al-Kautsar, is not only a religious value but also an educational paradigm that guides humans to learn with awareness, act with sincerity, and live responsibly. Integrating the value of gratitude into the Islamic education system not only brings the teachings of the Quran to life in the intellectual realm, but also serves as a catalyst for the development of Islamic morality (Anshori, I., Husaini, UM, Nurhidayati, D., & Fidiyani, 2025), but also make it a moral force that is able to grow a generation of faith, knowledge, and noble character amidst the increasingly complex challenges of modernity (K Wathoni, I Anshori, R Sirojudin, Y Kuakul, 2023).

This study finds that the concept of gratitude in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Kautsar, contains theological, philosophical, and pedagogical dimensions that are highly relevant for development in the Islamic education system. Through a thematic interpretation (*maudhu'i*) approach, this study reveals that the meaning of gratitude is not limited to acknowledging God's blessings but also encompasses spiritual awareness that gives rise to moral responsibility, social ethics, and a spirit of charity. Thus, gratitude serves as a conceptual foundation for character formation and the integration of spiritual values in modern Islamic education.

The analysis also shows that Islamic education oriented toward the value of gratitude can foster reflective awareness in students, enabling them to understand the learning process as part of worship. Values such as sincerity, perseverance, and appreciation for effort are crucial instruments in developing a balanced personality (Wasehudin, W., Anshori, I., Rahman, MT, Syafe'i, I., & Kesuma, 2021) between intellectual, spiritual and social aspects (Fitria, RA, Jalaluddin, J., Azhari, F., & Hamdi, 2024). This research then formulates a Model of Islamic Education Based on the Value of Gratitude as a practical contribution that can be applied to learning and character development in educational institutions. Overall, the findings of this study provide important implications for three main domains: educational theory, policy, and practice, as described in the following table.

**Table 4.** Research Findings and Implications

<b>Implication Aspects</b>	<b>Description of Findings and Contributions</b>	<b>Impact or Direction of Development</b>
Theological Implications	This research expands Islamic educational theory by adding the dimension of thematic interpretation as a source of educational values. Gratitude is positioned as a core value in Islamic character formation theory.	To be the basis for the development of Islamic educational theory based on Qur'anic spirituality; to open up space for the interpretation approach as a method for developing a value curriculum.
Policy Implications	The research findings can be the basis for policies in strengthening character education based on the Qur'an in schools and madrasas.	Encourage educational institutions and relevant ministries (such as the Ministry of Religion) to integrate the values of gratitude into the Islamic religious education curriculum and teacher training.
Practical Implications	The resulting Islamic Education Model Based on the Value of Gratitude can be applied in teaching and learning activities.	Help teachers develop learning strategies that foster spiritual awareness, reflective attitudes, and resilient character in students.
Social and Spiritual Implications	The value of gratitude encourages the formation of social awareness and empathy in students' daily lives.	Improving the quality of relationships between individuals in society and strengthening an educational culture based on Islamic morals

Theoretically, this research enriches the scientific discourse on Islamic education by introducing a hermeneutic-pedagogical approach that connects Qur'anic interpretation with the

construction of educational theory. This demonstrates that the Qur'an is not only a source of moral teachings but also a methodological reference in formulating contextual and transformative educational concepts.

From a policy perspective, the results of this study have the potential to serve as a reference for strengthening the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum based on Qur'anic values. Education policy needs to focus on integrating gratitude into learning design, across materials, methods, and evaluation, so that religious learning doesn't stop at the cognitive level but transforms students' behavior and character.

Practically, this research provides an implementation model that can be directly applied by teachers or educational practitioners. Through the MPINS (National Islamic Education Program), the value of gratitude can be internalized in learning through strategies such as spiritual reflection, role-modeling, and social charity. This approach enables students to learn not only to know, but also to be and do within the framework of Islamic values.

These findings confirm that contemporary Islamic education needs to move beyond dogmatic teaching to one that fosters reflective, active, and applicable spiritual awareness and character. By establishing the value of gratitude as its foundation, Islamic education can address the challenges of modernity without losing the divine roots that serve as the source of its strength and identity.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study confirms that gratitude in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Kautsar, is not merely a spiritual expression, but rather the foundation of Islamic educational values, with intertwined theological, ethical, and pedagogical dimensions. Through a thematic interpretation approach, this study reveals that the meaning of gratitude in the context of Islamic education encompasses awareness of blessings, moral responsibility for knowledge, and the encouragement to do good deeds as a form of devotion to God. These values shape an educational orientation that is not only centered on mastering knowledge, but also on the formation of character and spiritual awareness of students. This study shows that internalizing the value of gratitude in the educational system can strengthen the balance between cognitive and affective aspects, so that Islamic education does not stop at the level of knowledge transfer, but moves towards the formation of individuals who are faithful, reflective, and contribute to society. From these results, a conceptual model of Islamic education based on the value of gratitude was born, which can be used as a basis for developing a curriculum, learning strategies, and character development that are more contextual to the challenges of the modern era. Theoretically, this finding enriches the scientific treasure of Islamic education by linking the interpretation of the Qur'an and the development of value theory. From a policy perspective, the research findings offer opportunities for integrating the value of gratitude into Quran-based character education programs in schools and Islamic schools. Practically, the developed model can be applied in learning through a reflective approach, fostering the practice of good deeds, and strengthening spiritual culture within educational settings. This research is limited by its focus on a single chapter of interpretation, Al-Kautsar. Therefore, future studies are recommended to expand the study by examining the concept of gratitude across relevant Quranic verses and testing its application in empirical educational contexts, both in formal and non-formal institutions. Further research should also explore how the value of gratitude can be integrated with modern pedagogical approaches, such as transformative learning or spiritual pedagogy, resulting in a more holistic and adaptive Islamic educational paradigm for social change. Therefore, this research not only provides a conceptual contribution to the development of Islamic educational theory but also opens up space for the implementation of Quranic values in sustainable educational policies and practices.

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