

## A Contextual Approach in Islamic Religious Education Learning

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### ABSTRACT

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) plays a strategic role in fostering learners' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development through the integration of religious knowledge, values, and real-life practice. However, IRE learning is often characterized by abstract and text-oriented instruction, which limits students' meaningful engagement. This study aims to examine the implementation of the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach in Islamic Religious Education, identify facilitating and inhibiting factors affecting its application, and analyze its contribution to meaningful learning outcomes. Employing a qualitative literature review design, this study analyzed relevant books and peer-reviewed journal articles published within the last ten years. Data were collected through systematic documentation and analyzed using thematic content analysis to identify recurring concepts, strategies, and outcomes related to CTL in IRE contexts. The findings indicate that CTL in Islamic Religious Education is conceptually grounded in constructivist learning theory, cognitive psychology, and the philosophical foundations of Islamic education. CTL implementation is characterized by experiential learning strategies, including problem-based learning, collaborative activities, reflection, and the use of learners' real-life environments as instructional resources. Teacher pedagogical competence, curriculum flexibility, institutional support, and learning resources emerged as key facilitating factors, while limited infrastructure, insufficient training, time constraints, and technological challenges were identified as major barriers. Furthermore, the contextual approach contributes significantly to meaningful learning outcomes across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains by enhancing understanding, motivation, value internalization, and behavioral practice. This study concludes that CTL serves as a pedagogically relevant approach for strengthening meaningful and holistic learning in Islamic Religious Education.

### INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) plays a strategic role in shaping learners' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development within formal educational institutions. Learning in IRE is not merely aimed at transmitting religious knowledge but also at fostering understanding,

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internalization of values, and their application in daily life. Fundamentally, learning is an interactive process involving reciprocal relationships between teachers and students within instructional settings. Teachers are not only knowledge transmitters but also facilitators and motivators who guide students toward achieving meaningful learning objectives (Maisaroh et al., 2020). Therefore, instructional approaches that actively engage learners and connect learning content with real-life contexts are essential to enhance the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education.

Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) is grounded philosophically in the view that knowledge is constructed through the active role of the learner. From a psychological perspective, CTL is rooted in cognitive psychology, which emphasizes that learning occurs through individuals' understanding of their environment. In this regard, Piaget's theory of cognitive development highlights two fundamental concepts—function and structure—as essential for understanding how learners process and construct knowledge (Hidayat, 2017). This theoretical foundation supports the relevance of contextual approaches that encourage learners to actively construct meaning rather than passively receive information.

Etymologically, the term *contextual* derives from the word *context*, meaning relationship, atmosphere, condition, or situational background. Accordingly, contextual learning refers to instructional processes that are closely related to specific contexts. Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) is an approach that assists teachers in linking instructional material to real-world situations and encourages students to connect their existing knowledge with its application in their lives as family and community members (Satmawati Masalubu, 2018). Similarly, contextual learning helps teachers relate learning materials to real-life situations, thereby motivating learners to establish meaningful connections between knowledge and its practical application in everyday life (Arsyad et al., 2020).

Empirical studies have demonstrated the flexibility and applicability of the contextual approach across various curricula, subjects, and classroom conditions (Zaman, 2019). In the context of Islamic Religious Education, the application of a contextual learning approach has been shown to improve learning outcomes at different educational levels. For instance, contextual learning positively influences IRE instruction in elementary schools by enhancing students' understanding and learning motivation through experiential connections, interactive media, and context-based projects that actively engage learners (Cibro, 2024). Likewise, the quality of Islamic Religious Education in educational institutions can be improved through the systematic implementation of contextual learning approaches (Hermalia, 2024). Furthermore, IRE learning activities are ideally designed using principles of Islamic education that emphasize learning motivation as an integral component of instructional planning (Sukino, 2023).

Despite its potential, the implementation of contextual learning in Islamic Religious Education, particularly in higher education, requires careful evaluation of the achievement of its instructional components to ensure its effectiveness (Sutedja & Parhan, 2019). Additionally, while previous studies indicate that digital technology can enhance interaction and learning experiences, its integration within contextual learning frameworks often faces challenges related to limited infrastructure and insufficient teacher competencies (Fadholi & Nur Wahidah, 2025). These issues suggest that the application of CTL in IRE has not yet been optimally explored and implemented in a comprehensive and systematic manner.

Based on the literature review, a research gap remains regarding how contextual learning approaches are conceptually grounded, practically implemented, and pedagogically aligned within

Islamic Religious Education learning, particularly in addressing cognitive engagement, real-life relevance, and instructional effectiveness. Previous studies tend to focus on outcomes or technological integration, while limited attention has been given to the holistic application of CTL principles in IRE learning contexts.

Therefore, this study offers novelty by examining the application of a contextual approach in Islamic Religious Education learning through a pedagogical lens that integrates cognitive theory, instructional practice, and real-life relevance. This research aims to advance the body of knowledge by providing a more holistic examination of CTL within IRE settings, emphasizing both pedagogical practice and conceptual grounding.

Based on the identified gaps, this study formulates the following research questions: 1) How is the contextual approach (CTL) implemented in Islamic Religious Education learning?; 2) What factors facilitate and hinder the effective implementation of CTL in IRE settings?; and 3) To what extent does the contextual approach contribute to meaningful learning outcomes in IRE?. Aligned with the research questions, this study aims: 1) To analyze the implementation processes of CTL in IRE learning; 2) To identify key enablers and barriers influencing CTL integration in IRE; and 3) To evaluate the contributions of CTL toward enhancing meaningful learning outcomes.

This study contributes to the theoretical and practical discourse on IRE pedagogy by providing comprehensive insights into the implementation, challenges, and impacts of CTL. The findings are expected to inform educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in designing instructional strategies that foster contextualized and meaningful learning in Islamic Religious Education.

## **METHODS**

### **1. Research Approach and Design**

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a literature review design. A qualitative literature review was selected to systematically analyze, interpret, and synthesize theoretical perspectives and empirical findings related to the contextual approach in Islamic Religious Education learning. Literature-based research focuses on examining written sources to develop conceptual understanding and theoretical insights without direct field involvement (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This design was appropriate for identifying patterns, concepts, and pedagogical implications of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) within Islamic Religious Education.

### **2. Data Sources**

The data sources of this study consisted of secondary data obtained from scholarly literature, including books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and relevant academic publications discussing contextual learning, Islamic Religious Education, and instructional approaches. Books were used as foundational theoretical references, while journal articles provided empirical evidence supporting the implementation of CTL. Literature review research relies on credible and authoritative sources to ensure academic rigor and theoretical validity (Machi & McEvoy, 2016).

### **3. Literature Selection Criteria**

The literature was selected based on several criteria: (1) relevance to contextual teaching and learning, (2) focus on Islamic Religious Education or religious education learning, (3) publication within the last ten years to ensure topical relevance, and (4) publication in academic books or peer-reviewed journals. This selection process aimed to ensure that the reviewed literature directly supported the research objectives and reflected current academic discourse (Hart, 2018).

#### **4. Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection was conducted through a systematic literature search and documentation process. First, relevant keywords such as *contextual teaching and learning*, *Islamic Religious Education*, and *contextual learning approach* were identified. Second, academic databases and library resources were explored to obtain relevant books and journal articles. Third, selected literature was carefully read, documented, and categorized according to key themes related to CTL principles, implementation strategies, and learning outcomes. Documentation techniques are commonly used in literature-based research to organize and manage textual data effectively (Zed, 2014).

#### **5. Data Analysis Techniques**

The data were analyzed using thematic content analysis. The analysis process involved several stages: (1) organizing the collected literature, (2) reading and re-reading texts to gain comprehensive understanding, (3) coding important concepts and ideas, (4) grouping codes into broader themes, and (5) synthesizing findings to draw conceptual conclusions. Thematic analysis enabled the researcher to identify recurring patterns and theoretical perspectives regarding the application of contextual learning in Islamic Religious Education (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

#### **6. Trustworthiness of the Study**

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study applied strategies commonly used in qualitative literature research, including source triangulation and theoretical consistency. Triangulation was achieved by comparing arguments and findings across multiple authoritative books and journal articles. Consistency was maintained by aligning interpretations with established theories of contextual learning and Islamic education. These strategies enhanced the credibility and dependability of the literature review findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

## **RESULTS**

### **1. Implementation of the Contextual Approach (CTL) in Islamic Religious Education Learning**

#### **a. Conceptual Foundations of Contextual Teaching and Learning in Islamic Religious Education**

The literature indicates that the implementation of the contextual approach in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is grounded in philosophical, cognitive, and Islamic educational principles that emphasize meaningful learning and real-life relevance. In the context of Islamic education, contextual learning is viewed as a process of preparing human resources to live purposefully and productively by aligning religious knowledge with real-life goals. According to Azyumardi Azra, contextual learning in Islamic education represents a strategic process of human development that enables individuals to face life realistically and achieve their life objectives in a more concrete and meaningful manner (Alfiannur et al., 2024).

From a linguistic perspective, the term *contextual* derives from the word *context*, meaning relationships, situations, atmospheres, or conditions. Accordingly, Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) refers to an instructional approach that connects learning content with specific situational contexts experienced by learners (Zulaiha, 2016). This definition underscores the importance of linking religious instruction with learners' social and cultural realities, rather than presenting Islamic teachings as abstract or detached concepts.

Constructivism emerges as a core theoretical foundation of CTL. Constructivist learning theory emphasizes that learners actively construct knowledge based on their prior experiences. In Islamic Religious Education, constructivism plays a crucial role in contextual learning, as students develop religious understanding through interaction with real-life situations and experiential learning processes (Djayadin & Nurhikmah, 2025). This perspective aligns with the broader goals of Islamic education, which seeks not only knowledge acquisition but also internalization and application of Islamic values.

Furthermore, Islamic Religious Education itself is positioned as a strategically important subject aimed at forming holistic individuals (*insan kamil*) who integrate faith, knowledge, and ethical conduct. As part of the national education system, IRE is designed to strengthen students' faith and devotion to Allah while guiding them to apply Islamic values in their daily lives (Romli, 2022). These objectives reinforce the relevance of contextual learning as a pedagogical foundation in IRE.

### **b. Models and Strategies of CTL Implementation in Islamic Religious Education**

Findings from the literature reveal that CTL implementation in IRE is characterized by instructional models that emphasize experiential learning and real-life application. Learning is considered contextual when instructional materials are not limited to textual explanations but are explicitly connected to students' daily experiences within family, school, and community environments (Winataa et al., 2020).

Several studies highlight practical strategies that support contextual learning in IRE. These include problem-based learning, utilization of students' environments as learning resources, collaborative group activities, independent learning tasks, and reflective activities at the end of instruction (Kholifah, 2024). Such strategies allow students to engage actively with Islamic teachings and to understand their relevance in everyday situations.

The literature also emphasizes that contextual learning accommodates diverse student learning styles. Students possess different learning modalities—visual, auditory, and kinesthetic—which influence how they understand and process information (Kismatun, 2021). CTL strategies that combine observation, discussion, and hands-on practice are therefore more inclusive and effective in Islamic Religious Education classrooms.

In addition, contextual learning models encourage innovative instructional approaches to address contemporary educational challenges. The development of innovative IRE learning methods is viewed as essential for improving instructional quality and making Islamic teachings more relevant and engaging for students (Manah, 2024). Through such models, CTL serves as a bridge between religious content and modern educational demands.

### **c. Instructional Roles of Teachers in Applying CTL in Islamic Religious Education Learning**

The literature consistently emphasizes that teachers play a central role in the successful implementation of CTL in Islamic Religious Education. Within the contextual approach, teachers are expected to function as facilitators and motivators who guide students toward active engagement and meaningful learning experiences. By connecting instructional content with students' real-life experiences, teachers make IRE learning more dynamic, relevant, and applicable (Novriyanti, 2025).

Teachers are also responsible for designing learning activities that move beyond conventional lecture-based instruction. Although traditional methods such as lecturing and memorization may support initial content mastery, they often fail to sustain students' interest and

active participation in learning (Nabila & S, 2025). Contextual approaches encourage teachers to involve students in exploration, discussion, and experiential learning, thereby fostering deeper understanding and engagement.

Moreover, the instructional role of teachers in CTL involves aligning Islamic teachings with students' lived realities. By contextualizing religious values within familiar situations, teachers help students recognize the practical significance of Islamic principles in their daily lives. This instructional role supports the broader mission of Islamic Religious Education to nurture students' spiritual awareness and ethical behavior in real-world contexts.

**Table 1: Summary of CTL Implementation in Islamic Religious Education**

Theme	Core Focus	Educational Orientation	Practical Implications in IRE
Philosophical & Theoretical Basis	Integration of Islamic teachings with real-life contexts through constructivist learning.	Holistic formation of students combining faith, knowledge, and ethics.	Religious concepts are linked to students' daily social and cultural experiences.
Learning Models & Strategies	Experiential, contextual, and student-centered learning approaches.	Active, collaborative, and reflective learning processes.	Use of real-life cases, group work, problem-solving, independent tasks, and reflection.
Teacher's Instructional Role	Teachers serve as facilitators and contextual guides.	Transformative and interactive pedagogy.	Teachers connect Islamic values to everyday life, fostering moral awareness and meaningful engagement.

Table 1 illustrates that the implementation of the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach in Islamic Religious Education is built upon a foundation that connects Islamic teachings with students' real-life contexts through constructivist principles. This approach orients learning toward the holistic development of learners by integrating faith, knowledge, and ethical conduct. In practice, CTL is applied through experiential and student-centered strategies such as problem-solving, collaboration, and reflective activities, making religious instruction more meaningful and applicable. Teachers play a crucial role as facilitators who guide students in linking Islamic values to everyday life, thereby fostering moral awareness, active engagement, and deeper understanding.

## **2. Facilitating and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of CTL in Islamic Religious Education Settings**

### **a. Facilitating Factors Supporting Effective CTL Implementation Based on Literature Findings**

The literature consistently identifies teacher pedagogical competence as a primary facilitating factor in the effective implementation of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) in Islamic Religious Education (IRE). Teachers' understanding of CTL principles, instructional strategies, and learner-centered pedagogy significantly influences the quality of contextual learning experiences. Teachers who possess strong pedagogical competence are better equipped to design learning activities that integrate Islamic values with students' real-life contexts, thereby enhancing learning relevance and engagement (Nurmawati & Ananda, 2023).

Curriculum flexibility is another facilitating factor highlighted in previous studies. Flexible curricula allow teachers to adapt learning materials, methods, and assessment strategies to contextual demands without being constrained by rigid instructional structures. In Islamic Religious Education, curriculum flexibility enables the incorporation of local cultural values, social

issues, and students' lived experiences into religious instruction, making learning more meaningful and applicable (Azmi, 2024). Such adaptability aligns well with the core philosophy of CTL, which emphasizes contextual relevance and learner-centered instruction.

In addition, the availability of learning resources—both conventional and digital—supports the implementation of CTL in IRE settings. Learning resources such as textbooks, contextual case studies, multimedia materials, and community-based learning environments serve as important tools for connecting religious concepts with real-world applications. Adequate learning resources enable teachers to create varied and interactive learning experiences that foster students' active participation and deeper understanding of Islamic teachings (Khoiroh et al., 2025).

### **b. Institutional and Environmental Support in Contextual IRE Learning**

Institutional support plays a crucial role in facilitating the successful application of CTL in Islamic Religious Education. Supportive school policies that encourage innovative teaching practices provide teachers with the autonomy needed to implement contextual learning strategies effectively. Studies indicate that schools with policies promoting active learning, reflective practices, and contextual instruction create a more conducive environment for CTL implementation (Yusuf et al., 2024).

Leadership support is equally significant. School leaders who actively support pedagogical innovation, provide professional development opportunities, and foster a culture of continuous improvement contribute positively to the sustainability of contextual learning practices. Leadership that values contextual and meaningful learning encourages teachers to experiment with instructional strategies that connect Islamic teachings with students' daily realities (Munib, 2022).

Furthermore, a collaborative learning culture within educational institutions facilitates CTL implementation in IRE. Collaboration among teachers, through professional learning communities and peer discussions, enables the sharing of best practices and contextual teaching strategies. Such collaboration strengthens teachers' confidence and capacity to apply CTL principles consistently across learning activities, thereby enhancing instructional effectiveness (Jumriah, 2025).

### **c. Inhibiting Factors Identified in Previous Studies**

Despite the identified facilitating factors, the literature also highlights several inhibiting factors that hinder the optimal implementation of CTL in Islamic Religious Education settings. One of the most frequently reported challenges is limited infrastructure, particularly in schools with inadequate classroom facilities, learning media, and technological support. Insufficient infrastructure restricts teachers' ability to design and implement contextual learning activities that require diverse learning resources and interactive media (Zainuri et al., 2024).

Insufficient teacher training is another critical inhibiting factor. While many teachers are familiar with the theoretical concept of CTL, they often lack practical training in designing and implementing contextual learning activities effectively. Limited professional development opportunities result in partial or superficial application of CTL principles in IRE instruction (Sutedja & Parhan, 2019).

Time constraints also pose challenges to CTL implementation. Contextual learning typically requires more instructional time for exploration, discussion, reflection, and real-life application. In tightly scheduled curricula, teachers may struggle to balance content coverage with meaningful contextual activities, leading to a reliance on traditional instructional methods (Hermalia, 2024).

Additionally, challenges related to the integration of digital technology have been identified in recent studies. Although digital tools have the potential to enhance contextual learning, their effective integration is often constrained by limited technological infrastructure and insufficient

digital literacy among teachers. These challenges reduce the effectiveness of technology-supported CTL in Islamic Religious Education, particularly in less-resourced educational settings (Fadholi & Nur Wahidah, 2025).

**Table 2. Facilitating and Inhibiting Factors in CTL Implementation in Islamic Religious Education**

Aspect	Core Elements	Educational Orientation	Practical Implications in IRE
Facilitating Factors	Teacher competence, pedagogical flexibility, curriculum availability of learning resources, institutional support, leadership support, collaborative school culture	Learner-centered, adaptive, and context-responsive religious learning	Teachers design contextual activities linked to students' real-life experiences; curriculum can integrate local culture and social issues; varied resources support interactive and meaningful learning; school policies and leadership encourage innovative CTL practices; collaboration strengthens consistency and quality of instruction
Inhibiting Factors	Limited infrastructure, insufficient teacher training, time constraints, limited digital literacy and technological access	Constrained and less optimal contextual learning implementation	Teachers rely more on traditional methods; limited media and facilities reduce experiential learning opportunities; superficial CTL application due to lack of training; tight schedules limit reflection and discussion; technology integration in IRE remains minimal in under-resourced schools

Table 2 shows that the success of CTL implementation in Islamic Religious Education is strongly influenced by both supporting and hindering factors. Effective application is facilitated by competent teachers, flexible curricula, adequate learning resources, and strong institutional and leadership support that promote innovative, student-centered learning. However, the implementation often faces barriers such as limited infrastructure, lack of practical teacher training, restricted instructional time, and challenges in digital technology integration. These inhibiting factors tend to push teachers back toward conventional teaching methods, reducing the depth and contextual relevance of Islamic learning experiences.

### 3. Contribution of the Contextual Approach to Meaningful Learning Outcomes in Islamic Religious Education

#### a. Cognitive Outcomes of CTL in IRE Learning as Reported in the Literature

The literature indicates that the contextual approach significantly contributes to students' cognitive development in Islamic Religious Education by enhancing conceptual understanding, critical thinking, and practical application of Islamic teachings. CTL emphasizes the integration of learning materials with students' lived experiences, enabling learners to move beyond rote memorization toward meaningful comprehension. Learning is considered contextual when instructional content is not merely textual but is directly linked to its application in students' everyday lives, both within family and broader social environments (Winataa et al., 2020).

From a cognitive perspective, CTL aligns closely with constructivist learning theory, which posits that learners actively construct knowledge based on prior experiences. In the context of IRE, constructivism enables students to interpret Islamic values through real-life situations, thereby fostering deeper understanding and reflective thinking. This approach helps bridge the gap

between abstract religious concepts and concrete social realities faced by students (Djayadin & Nurhikmah, 2025).

Moreover, cognitive learning in IRE becomes more effective when contextual strategies are used to balance theoretical knowledge with experiential learning. Previous studies highlight that cognitive-oriented instructional models that focus solely on theoretical mastery often fail to cultivate students' social awareness and practical religious responsibility. CTL, by contrast, encourages critical engagement with religious knowledge and its relevance to contemporary challenges, thereby producing learners who are not only intellectually competent but also socially conscious (Ahmad & Arifin, 2024).

### **b. Affective and Motivational Outcomes of Contextual Learning**

In addition to cognitive gains, the literature strongly supports the contribution of CTL to affective and motivational learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education. Contextual learning creates a more engaging and meaningful learning environment by actively involving students in the learning process. When teachers function as facilitators who connect religious content with students' personal experiences, students demonstrate higher levels of motivation and emotional engagement in learning activities (Novriyanti, 2025).

The affective dimension of IRE is particularly crucial, as Islamic education aims not only to transmit knowledge but also to cultivate faith (*īmān*), piety (*taqwā*), and religious attitudes. Contextual learning supports this objective by linking Islamic values to real-life moral dilemmas and social situations, enabling students to internalize religious teachings more deeply. This approach reinforces the developmental function of Islamic Religious Education in strengthening students' faith, which initially develops within the family and is further nurtured through formal education (Nurmawati & Ananda, 2023).

Furthermore, CTL has been shown to increase students' intrinsic motivation by accommodating diverse learning styles, including visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities. By providing varied learning activities that resonate with students' preferred learning styles, contextual instruction enhances engagement and reduces learning boredom, which is often associated with conventional lecture-based methods (Kismatun, 2021; Nabila & S, 2025). As a result, students become more emotionally invested in the learning process and more receptive to Islamic values conveyed through instruction.

### **c. Psychomotor and Behavioral Implications of CTL Implementation**

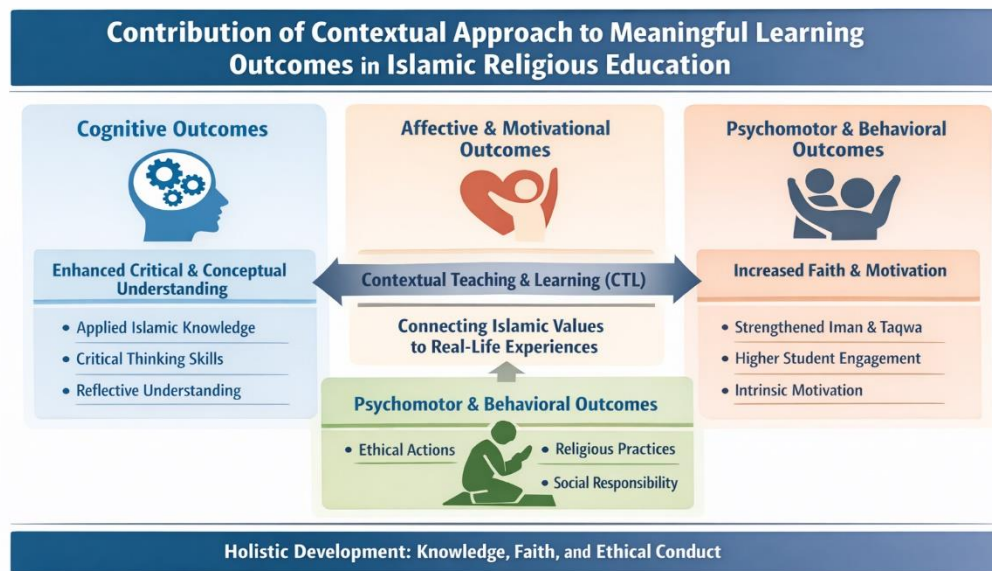
The literature also highlights the psychomotor and behavioral implications of CTL implementation in Islamic Religious Education. Contextual learning encourages students to translate religious knowledge and values into concrete actions and daily practices. Through activities such as direct practice, problem-solving tasks, group projects, and reflective exercises, students are guided to apply Islamic teachings in observable behaviors (Azmi, 2024).

Psychomotor learning outcomes in IRE are evident when students actively practice religious values, such as cleanliness, honesty, discipline, and social responsibility, in their school and community environments. Teachers who contextualize Islamic teachings by linking them to students' daily routines—such as maintaining cleanliness at school or demonstrating honesty in peer interactions—enable students to embody religious values in real-life contexts (Sari, 2024).

Behaviorally, CTL supports the broader objectives of Islamic Religious Education, which aim to develop learners into *insān kāmil*—individuals who integrate faith, knowledge, and moral conduct. By contextualizing religious instruction within students' socio-cultural realities, CTL helps foster consistent religious practices and ethical behavior beyond the classroom. This holistic

learning outcome reflects the dual orientation of the IRE curriculum, which combines divine revelation with human experience to promote comprehensive understanding, internalization, and application of Islamic teachings in everyday life (Zainuri et al., 2024; Romli, 2022).

Overall, the findings from the literature review demonstrate that the contextual approach contributes significantly to meaningful learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. By integrating Islamic teachings with students' real-life experiences, CTL facilitates deeper understanding, stronger religious attitudes, and consistent moral behavior, thereby reinforcing the transformative role of Islamic education in contemporary educational contexts.



The figure illustrates how the contextual approach (Contextual Teaching and Learning/CTL) contributes to meaningful learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education by integrating Islamic values with students' real-life experiences. It shows that CTL enhances cognitive outcomes through deeper conceptual understanding, critical thinking, and the practical application of Islamic knowledge. At the same time, it strengthens affective and motivational outcomes, such as increased faith (īmān), piety (taqwā), engagement, and intrinsic motivation, because learning becomes personally relevant and emotionally meaningful. Furthermore, the approach influences psychomotor and behavioral outcomes by encouraging students to translate religious knowledge into ethical actions, religious practices, and social responsibility in daily life. Overall, the figure emphasizes that CTL supports holistic student development—linking knowledge, faith, and moral conduct—so that Islamic teachings are not only understood but also internalized and practiced.

## DISCUSSION

### 1. Results Analysis

#### a. Implementation of the Contextual Approach in Islamic Religious Education Learning

The findings demonstrate that the implementation of CTL in Islamic Religious Education is firmly grounded in constructivist learning theory, cognitive psychology, and the philosophical foundations of Islamic education. This conceptual alignment confirms the assumption stated in the introduction that learning in IRE should not be limited to the transmission of religious knowledge but should foster understanding, internalization of values, and real-life application. As emphasized

earlier, Islamic Religious Education plays a strategic role in shaping learners' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development, making pedagogical approaches that emphasize meaning and relevance particularly essential.

The literature reviewed indicates that CTL operationalizes these principles by encouraging learners to actively construct knowledge through interaction with their social and cultural environments. This finding supports the introductory argument that teachers in IRE function not merely as transmitters of knowledge but as facilitators who guide students toward meaningful learning experiences (Maisaroh et al., 2020). By linking Islamic teachings to everyday situations, CTL addresses a persistent challenge in IRE instruction—namely, the tendency toward abstract, text-oriented, and memorization-based learning.

In terms of instructional practice, the results show that CTL is implemented through experiential strategies such as problem-based learning, collaborative group activities, reflection, and the utilization of students' environments as learning resources. These strategies position students as active participants in learning and reinforce learner-centered pedagogy. This pedagogical shift is consistent with the psychological foundation of CTL rooted in cognitive theory, which emphasizes that learning occurs through individuals' understanding of their environment (Hidayat, 2017). In the context of IRE, such strategies are particularly significant because meaningful religious learning is closely linked to students' ability to relate Islamic teachings to their lived experiences.

Overall, the findings suggest that CTL is not merely a methodological alternative but a pedagogical necessity for Islamic Religious Education, as it aligns instructional processes with the holistic objectives of Islamic education—integrating faith, knowledge, and ethical practice.

#### **b. Facilitating and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of CTL in Islamic Religious Education**

The second major finding concerns the factors that facilitate or hinder the effective implementation of CTL in Islamic Religious Education settings. The literature consistently highlights teacher pedagogical competence as a key facilitating factor. Teachers who possess a strong understanding of contextual learning principles are more capable of designing instructional activities that connect Islamic teachings with students' real-life contexts. This finding reinforces the introductory assertion that effective learning depends on the reciprocal interaction between teachers and students, in which teachers act as motivators and guides rather than sole sources of knowledge.

Curriculum flexibility and institutional support also emerge as important enabling factors. Flexible curricula allow teachers to contextualize learning materials by integrating local cultural values, social issues, and students' experiences into IRE instruction. This supports the notion introduced earlier that contextual learning helps learners establish meaningful connections between knowledge and its practical application in daily life (Satmawati Masalubu, 2018; Arsyad et al., 2020). In addition, supportive leadership and collaborative school cultures encourage pedagogical innovation and sustain the application of CTL practices.

Conversely, the findings identify several inhibiting factors that limit the optimal implementation of CTL. Limited infrastructure, insufficient teacher training, and time constraints are frequently reported challenges. These obstacles explain why, despite the recognized potential of contextual learning, its application in IRE has not yet been comprehensively and systematically implemented. This observation aligns with concerns raised in the introduction regarding the need for careful evaluation of CTL implementation, particularly in higher education and technology-integrated contexts (Sutedja & Parhan, 2019; Fadholi & Nur Wahidah, 2025).

Thus, the findings indicate that the effectiveness of CTL in IRE is not determined solely by its conceptual strength but also by systemic and institutional conditions that support or constrain pedagogical practice.

### **c. Contribution of the Contextual Approach to Meaningful Learning Outcomes in Islamic Religious Education**

The third set of findings addresses the contribution of CTL to meaningful learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education, encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Cognitively, the literature shows that contextual learning enhances students' understanding of Islamic concepts, critical thinking skills, and ability to apply religious knowledge in real-life situations. This supports the constructivist assumption that learners actively construct meaning by relating new knowledge to prior experiences, rather than merely memorizing doctrinal content.

From an affective perspective, CTL is shown to increase students' motivation, engagement, and religious attitudes. This finding is particularly important given that one of the primary aims of Islamic Religious Education is the cultivation of faith (*īmān*) and piety (*taqwā*), not merely academic achievement. As noted in the introduction, learning activities in IRE should be designed to emphasize motivation as an integral component of instruction (Sukino, 2023). Contextual learning fulfills this aim by making religious instruction more relevant, engaging, and emotionally meaningful for students.

In the psychomotor and behavioral domain, the findings indicate that CTL encourages students to translate Islamic values into observable actions and daily practices. Through contextual activities and reflective exercises, students are guided to practice moral behaviors such as honesty, discipline, and social responsibility in real-life contexts. These outcomes align with the broader objective of Islamic education to develop *insān kāmil*—individuals who integrate faith, knowledge, and moral conduct. By bridging the gap between religious theory and everyday practice, CTL reinforces the transformative role of Islamic Religious Education in shaping students' character and behavior.

Collectively, these findings address the third research question and confirm that the contextual approach contributes significantly to meaningful learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education. CTL enables IRE learning to move beyond cognitive mastery toward holistic development, encompassing understanding, internalization, and application of Islamic teachings.

## **2. Comparison with Previous Studies**

The findings of this study are largely consistent with previous research on contextual learning and Islamic Religious Education. Earlier studies have emphasized that CTL enhances learning relevance and student engagement by linking instructional content with real-world contexts (Zulaiha, 2016; Arsyad et al., 2020). The present findings reinforce this argument by demonstrating that contextualization is particularly effective in IRE, where learning objectives extend beyond knowledge acquisition to value internalization and moral behavior.

Consistent with constructivist perspectives highlighted in prior studies (Djayadin & Nurhikmah, 2025), this review confirms that students' prior experiences play a critical role in shaping their understanding of Islamic teachings. The emphasis on experiential and reflective learning aligns with previous findings that criticize conventional lecture-based methods for limiting student participation and deeper comprehension (Nabila & S, 2025).

At the same time, this study extends previous research by synthesizing findings across multiple educational levels and contexts, rather than focusing on isolated outcomes or technological integration alone. While earlier studies often examined CTL effectiveness in terms of motivation or achievement, this review highlights its holistic contribution across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Additionally, the identification of institutional support, leadership, and collaborative culture as key facilitating factors provides a broader systemic perspective that complements earlier, teacher-centered analyses.

#### Implications of the Findings

The findings of this study have important theoretical and practical implications for Islamic Religious Education. Theoretically, the study strengthens the argument that CTL is pedagogically aligned with the aims of Islamic education, particularly the development of *insān kāmil*. By integrating constructivist learning theory with Islamic educational philosophy, this study contributes to the conceptual advancement of IRE pedagogy as a contextual and transformative educational process.

Practically, the findings suggest that educators should prioritize contextual strategies that connect Islamic teachings with students' lived experiences. Teacher training programs should emphasize not only theoretical understanding of CTL but also practical skills in designing contextual learning activities. Moreover, curriculum developers are encouraged to provide greater flexibility to allow contextual adaptation based on students' social and cultural realities.

At the institutional level, the results highlight the importance of supportive leadership, adequate infrastructure, and collaborative professional cultures in sustaining contextual learning practices. Policymakers and educational leaders should therefore consider CTL as a strategic approach in strengthening the quality and relevance of Islamic Religious Education, particularly in responding to contemporary social and moral challenges.

### **3. Limitations of the Study**

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, as a qualitative literature review, the findings are dependent on the scope and quality of the selected literature. Although rigorous selection criteria were applied, the review may not fully capture emerging practices or unpublished studies related to CTL in IRE. Second, the study does not include empirical field data, which limits the ability to examine contextual implementation challenges in specific institutional settings. Third, variations in educational levels and sociocultural contexts across the reviewed studies may influence the generalizability of the synthesized findings.

Based on the discussion, it can be concluded that the contextual approach represents a pedagogically sound and conceptually relevant strategy for Islamic Religious Education. CTL supports meaningful learning by integrating religious knowledge with real-life application, fostering cognitive understanding, affective engagement, and ethical behavior. However, its effectiveness is contingent upon teacher competence, institutional support, and adequate resources. These partial conclusions provide a foundation for the final conclusion and underscore the need for future empirical research to validate and extend the insights generated from this literature-based study.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study examined the implementation of the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) through a qualitative literature review, with a focus on its pedagogical foundations, facilitating and inhibiting factors, and contributions to meaningful learning outcomes. The findings provide clear responses to the research objectives and research

questions formulated in this study. First, the results indicate that the implementation of CTL in Islamic Religious Education is conceptually grounded in constructivist learning theory, cognitive psychology, and the philosophical foundations of Islamic education. CTL enables Islamic learning to move beyond abstract and text-centered instruction by connecting religious content with learners' real-life experiences. Through experiential strategies and learner-centered practices, CTL supports the core objectives of IRE, namely the integration of faith, knowledge, and practice. Second, the study found that the effectiveness of CTL implementation in IRE is influenced by both facilitating and inhibiting factors. Teacher pedagogical competence, curriculum flexibility, availability of learning resources, institutional support, and collaborative learning culture serve as key enablers of contextual learning. Conversely, limited infrastructure, insufficient teacher training, time constraints, and challenges in integrating digital technology remain significant barriers that hinder the optimal application of CTL in Islamic Religious Education settings. Third, the findings demonstrate that the contextual approach contributes substantially to meaningful learning outcomes across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Cognitively, CTL enhances students' understanding, critical thinking, and ability to apply Islamic concepts in real-life contexts. Affectively, it increases learning motivation, engagement, and the internalization of religious values. In terms of psychomotor and behavioral outcomes, CTL encourages students to consistently practice Islamic values in their daily lives, reflecting the holistic aims of Islamic education.

The implications of this study are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, the findings enrich the discourse on Islamic Religious Education pedagogy by reinforcing the relevance of contextual and constructivist approaches in achieving meaningful learning. Practically, the study provides insights for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers to design and support instructional strategies that promote contextualized, student-centered, and value-oriented learning in IRE. Future research is recommended to extend this literature-based analysis through empirical studies, including classroom-based qualitative research, experimental designs, or mixed-methods approaches, to examine the effectiveness of CTL in diverse educational levels and institutional contexts. Further studies may also explore the integration of digital technologies within contextual learning frameworks in Islamic Religious Education to address contemporary educational challenges. In conclusion, this study underscores the importance of the contextual approach as a pedagogical foundation for Islamic Religious Education. By aligning religious instruction with learners' real-life experiences, CTL contributes to the development of meaningful, holistic, and transformative learning, thereby strengthening the role of Islamic education in responding to the needs of learners in contemporary educational contexts.

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