Instructional Media for Fiqh of Funeral Rites: A Comparative Analysis in Indonesia and Thailand

Rizka Fatchurrohman[1,] Prawidya Lestari[2], Najmee Bindulem[3]

STAINU Purworejo Indonesia[1,2], Chariyatham Suksa Foundation School Thailand[3]

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menyajikan analisis komparatif media pembelajaran fikih pemulasaraan jenazah di tingkat menengah, sebuah topik yang sering kali menimbulkan kecemasan pedagogis karena sifatnya yang sensitif dan abstrak. Kesenjangan ini mendorong perlunya memahami bagaimana institusi pendidikan mengatasi tantangan tersebut melalui media. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membandingkan model pedagogis yang diterapkan di dua konteks sosio-kultural yang berbeda. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, studi ini berfokus pada dua lembaga: SMP Nurul Muttaqin di Indonesia dan Chariyathamsuksa Foundation School di Thailand, dengan data yang dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan analisis dokumen. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan dua model yang berbeda secara fundamental. SMP Nurul Muttaqin menerapkan model sistematis yang terintegrasi teknologi, menggunakan video dan manekin untuk mengurangi kecemasan serta memastikan akurasi teknis. Sebaliknya, Chariyathamsuksa menggunakan model pembelajaran komunal dan peragaan langsung (*embodied learning*) dengan siswa sebagai peraga untuk mendemistifikasi kematian dan menanamkan nilai-nilai. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa pemilihan media bukan sekadar keputusan teknis, melainkan cerminan mendalam dari filosofi kelembagaan dan konteks sosio-kultural. Implikasi penelitian ini menantang pandangan monolitik tentang pendidikan Islam dan menawarkan wawasan global mengenai adaptasi pedagogis untuk mengajarkan materi keagamaan yang sensitif.

Kata kunci: Kecemasan Pedagogis; Pembelajaran yang Mewujudkan; Mediasi Teknologi; Pendidikan Islam Komparatif; Pedagogi Ritus Pemakaman.

Abstract

This study provides a comparative analysis of learning media for the Fiqh of funeral rites at the secondary level, a topic that has been shown to trigger pedagogical anxiety because death-related practical learning often elicits emotional tension and discomfort among students.. This qualitative study focuses on two institutions: Nurul Muttaqin Junior High School in Indonesia and Chariyathamsuksa Foundation School in Thailand, with data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The results reveal two fundamentally different pedagogical models. Nurul Muttaqin adopts a technocratic instructional model, which is operationalized through technology-based strategies such as video simulations and mannequin-guided practice, using videos and mannequins to reduce anxiety and ensure technical accuracy. Conversely, Chariyathamsuksa adopts a communal learning model, while embodied learning and the use of student proxies constitute its pedagogical strategies. This study highlights that the distinction between model and strategy is central to understanding how institutional values shape media selection. The implications of this study challenge monolithic views of Islamic education and offer global insights into pedagogical adaptations for teaching sensitive religious materials.

Keywords*: Pedagogical Anxiety; Embodied Learning; Technological Mediation; Comparative Islamic Education; Funeral Rites Pedagogy.*

INTRODUCTION

Teaching the practical side of Fiqh—like funeral rites—is key to passing down religious knowledge and values to the next generation. It's more than just learning steps; it's about building the right mindset and spiritual preparation for death, which Islam sees not as an ending but a doorway to the afterlife. Handling a fellow Muslim's body is a shared duty (fardhu kifayah) that teaches empathy, respect, and community spirit. Still, at the secondary school level—when teens are already dealing with emotional ups and downs—this topic hits hard because it's abstract, sacred, and scary, often sparking anxiety or even pushback from students (Blake & Dewaele, 2022).

Hands-on lessons with death rituals, like washing and shrouding, ramp up this "pedagogical anxiety" since kids have to grapple with intense, taboo stuff. Studies show teens get really tense—anxious, uncomfortable—especially their first time trying simulations (Arrasyid et al., 2016). Seeing or touching body stand-ins makes it worse, leading to avoidance or overload, and teachers feel the heat too, juggling accuracy with kids' feelings (Smith et al., 2025). So the challenge isn't just the how-to—it's the emotional, cultural, and big-life questions tied to death education.

This anxiety cuts both ways: students wrestle with heavy feelings, while teachers balance sensitivity and skill-building. That's where Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) comes in—teachers turning tough topics into something students can handle. For religious stuff like this, PCK means emotional smarts, cultural awareness, and picking the right media to convey not just facts, but feelings and faith. Too often, lessons stay theoretical, missing the jump from knowing to doing—and really feeling the spiritual side—which is why smart media choices are make-or-break.

In Indonesia, Fiqh teaching leans hard into tech to make things better, matching the push for modern, digital schools. Studies cover everything from YouTube videos boosting understanding (Brookhart & Nitko, 2018), to apps and games, mannequins for hands-on demos (Ulfi Al Magh Firoh, 2023), even project-based sims building

character like teamwork and care (Saputro and Nugroho, 2023). The idea? Tech makes it efficient, uniform, and less emotionally rough.

Other work flags these Fiqh teaching hurdles and stresses media that fits students' emotions. Tech like videos and props cuts anxiety while nailing procedures; meanwhile, embodied and group learning builds real empathy and spiritual depth through hands-on rituals. This study bridges them—tech vs. communal practice—in a cross-country look at how media links skills to deeper faith experiences in funeral rites classes.

Thailand's Southern Islamic schools (Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat) tell a different story, rooted in old-school traditions to protect Malay-Muslim identity as a minority (Setiarini et al., n.d.). Pondok schools aren't just classrooms—they're cultural strongholds against modern pressures (Samartdee, 2019). Comparisons show big gaps in curriculums, philosophies, and practices between here and Indonesia (Arrasyid et al., 2016), shaped by top-down policies clashing with local needs (Faridah & Asy'ari, 2024).

But past research stays narrow: Indonesia tweaks specific media's effectiveness ("Does tool X work?"), Thailand zooms out to curriculums and identity. What's missing? In-depth comparisons of hands-on Fiqh teaching for touchy topics, especially amid tech globalization vs. local traditions. Understanding this matters for handling classroom emotions (Sartika, 2023) and how values survive in a media-saturated world—this study dives in with a fresh comparative angle on death ed at school level (Ionio et al., 2018).

Specifically, this study pursues three linked goals. First, detail how funeral rites media works at Nurul Muttaqin (Indonesia) and Chariyathamsuksa (Thailand). Second, unpack how tech sims vs. group practices affect kids' thinking, feelings, and faith growth. Third, build a framework explaining the philosophies and cultural drivers behind each—laid out step-by-step in the discussion.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a comparative case study approach, following Robert K. Yin (2018), who argues case studies work well for digging into real-world issues where the topic blends into its setting—perfect for "how" and "why" questions like ours. We're not chasing stats for everyone, but thick, detailed insights into how school philosophies shape Fiqh teaching on tough topics. The two schools—Nurul Muttaqin (tech-savvy Indonesian model) and Chariyathamsuksa (traditional Thai pondok)—were picked on purpose as prime examples, letting us spotlight what context does to classroom choices.

Coming from Indonesia's structured, tech-heavy Islamic education scene, I started with a bias toward organized, mediated teaching. But I stayed reflexive, setting aside assumptions to let interviews, observations, and docs drive the analysis—especially when Thailand's hands-on communal style challenged my views. This openness helped balance the interpretations across both worlds.

We picked key players on purpose: Fiqh teachers for teaching logic, six Grade 8-9 students per school for their experiences and feelings, plus principals/vice-principals for the big-picture philosophy. Data came from three angles for solidity: semi-structured chats with teachers and kids on why they do things that way; 8 hours of quiet classroom watching (funeral rites sessions) to catch real interactions, media in action, and student vibes; plus digging into syllabi, lesson plans, textbooks, and school visions. (Note: The detailed informant breakdown follows right after, specifying roles at each site for fuller transparency.)

Ethics mattered big time with kids and a heavy topic—got school approvals first, written OKs from adults, parental consent plus kids' verbal buy-in (they could bail anytime), all names scrubbed, and extra care describing Thailand's student-proxy setup to keep dignity intact.

Analysis followed Miles and Huberman (2014): boil down raw notes and transcripts, organize into stories/tables/comparisons, then draw/test conclusions against the data. Sticking to Yin's (2018) quality checks, we nailed validity with mixed

sources, patterns with explanations, theory links for broader reach, and steady protocols for repeatability (Brookhart & Nitko, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Institutional Profiles and Philosophies: SMP Nurul Muttaqin and Chariyathamsuksa

SMP Nurul Muttaqin represents a modern Islamic educational environment that adopts a technocratic and procedural orientation in its teaching practices. The school integrates the national curriculum with pesantren-based instruction and consistently utilizes technology to support learning activities. This institutional character shapes a technocratic–procedural pedagogical model, where structured sequencing, standardization, and technology-based strategies—such as instructional videos and mannequin-assisted simulations—are employed to guide students gradually and safely through sensitive content like funeral rites.

Chariyathamsuksa Foundation School, by contrast, embodies a communal and tradition-oriented educational philosophy deeply rooted in Malay-Muslim cultural identity. The institution blends the Thai national curriculum with classical Islamic learning traditions, emphasizing values of togetherness, oral transmission, and embodied participation. These characteristics give rise to a communal–experiential pedagogical model, operationalized through strategies such as talaqqi, halaqah, teacher modeling, and direct practice in which students serve as proxies during funeral-rite simulations.

The distinct institutional orientations of the two schools strongly influence their approaches to teaching the Fiqh of funeral rites. SMP Nurul Muttaqin's focus on efficiency, structure, and procedural accuracy naturally leads to the adoption of technology-mediated strategies designed to minimize anxiety and ensure technical mastery. Meanwhile, Chariyathamsuksa prioritizes authentic experience, collective meaning-making, and affective engagement, allowing students to internalize spiritual and communal values through direct participation. These institutional profiles

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therefore provide the contextual foundation that explains the contrasting pedagogical models and strategies observed in this comparative study.

Institutional Orientation and Pedagogical Models in Teaching the Fiqh of Funeral Rites

The teaching of the fiqh of funeral rites constitutes one of the most sensitive topics within Islamic Religious Education, both emotionally and spiritually, as it directly addresses themes of death, sacred rituals, and profound religious values. Therefore, the manner in which this subject is taught cannot be separated from an institution's orientation, educational philosophy, and the surrounding socio-cultural context. The findings of this study demonstrate that the differing approaches to teaching funeral jurisprudence at SMP Nurul Muttaqin (Indonesia) and Chariyathamsuksa Foundation School (Thailand) are deeply rooted in contrasting institutional orientations and pedagogical paradigms embraced by each institution.

SMP Nurul Muttaqin represents a model of modern Islamic education that integrates the national curriculum with pesantren traditions, while being managed within a systematic framework of formal educational administration oriented toward instructional effectiveness. Field observations indicate that learning activities at this school take place in a highly structured classroom environment, supported by comprehensive instructional tools such as lesson plans (Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran/RPP), digital media, and competency-based assessment systems. Technology is not positioned merely as a supplementary tool, but rather as a central instrument in facilitating instructional delivery, including in the teaching of funeral jurisprudence.

This institutional orientation gives rise to what can be described as a technocratic–procedural pedagogical model, characterized by orderly sequencing, clearly defined stages, procedural standardization, and the gradual mastery of technical skills. In the context of funeral jurisprudence, this model is operationalized through the use of simulation videos and mannequins as primary instructional media.

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The fiqh teacher deliberately avoids the use of live human bodies in simulations, based on psychological and pedagogical considerations.

As stated by the fiqh teacher at SMP Nurul Muttaqin:

"Many students initially feel anxious when dealing with topics related to death. Using videos helps them enter the topic more safely" (Interview, Teacher NM, 12 January 2023).

This statement indicates that pedagogical decisions are not neutral, but rather grounded in an awareness of students' affective conditions. Within this paradigm, effective learning is understood as learning that successfully regulates students' emotions so that cognitive processes can function optimally. Technology thus serves as a mediating tool that creates psychological distance between students and sensitive learning objects.

Similar views were expressed by students. One student noted:
"I feel nervous at first because it is about death, but the video makes it easier to understand before practicing" (Interview, Student F, 13 January 2023).

Another student emphasized the role of mannequins in reducing emotional tension:

"It would feel strange or scary if we practiced on a friend, so the mannequin makes it less stressful" (Interview, Student H, 13 January 2023).

These findings indicate that at SMP Nurul Muttaqin, the learning orientation is not limited to achieving normative fiqh competencies, but also focuses on managing students' learning experiences to ensure psychological safety. This approach aligns with the characteristics of modern Islamic education in Indonesia, which increasingly emphasizes professionalism, efficiency, and learner comfort (Wahyuni, 2021).

In contrast, Chariyathamsuksa Foundation School exhibits a markedly different institutional orientation. Rooted in the classical Islamic educational tradition of Southern Thailand, the school functions not only as a formal educational institution but also as a center for the transmission of Malay-Muslim cultural values and identity. Observations reveal that the teaching of funeral jurisprudence is conducted in the musala using a halaqah format, where teachers and students sit in a circle without the

use of modern digital media. Classical Islamic texts (kitab kuning) and oral explanations in the Malay language serve as the primary learning resources.

This orientation gives rise to a communal–experiential pedagogical model, which emphasizes direct involvement, embodied experience, and collective meaning-making. In the context of funeral jurisprudence, instructional practice does not involve mannequins, but instead engages one of the students to assume the role of the deceased. The practice is carried out solemnly under the direct guidance of the ustaz, within a deeply emotional and reverent atmosphere.

The ustaz at Chariyathamsuksa articulated the pedagogical philosophy as follows:

"Death is not a theory; it is something we will all experience" (Interview, Ustaz CFS, 20 February 2023).

This statement reflects a pedagogical view that learning funeral jurisprudence is insufficient if confined to cognitive and procedural understanding alone; rather, it must be internalized as an existential reality. Within this paradigm, learning is considered meaningful precisely when students are directly confronted with the symbolism of death within a sacred and supportive communal context.

One student who acted as the "deceased" described the experience as follows: "I felt calm but also reflective. It made me think about real life and death" (Interview, Student A, 21 February 2023).

Another student added:
"Practicing with a friend helps me understand the seriousness of the ritual. It feels different compared to just watching or reading" (Interview, Student K, 21 February 2023).

These findings demonstrate that at Chariyathamsuksa, the teaching of funeral jurisprudence is directed toward cultivating empathy, spiritual awareness, and social responsibility. The learning process is inseparable from interpersonal relationships and communal bonds, which are reinforced through shared practice.

The contrasting institutional orientations of the two schools directly influence the pedagogical models adopted. SMP Nurul Muttaqin, as a modern Islamic educational institution in a Muslim-majority context, prioritizes standardization,

psychological safety, and instructional efficiency. Conversely, Chariyathamsuksa, situated within a Muslim-minority context in Southern Thailand, views education as a means of preserving identity, communal values, and authentic religious experience.

These differences are summarized comparatively in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Comparison of Pedagogical Models in Teaching Funeral Fiqh at SMP Nurul Muttaqin and Chariyathamsuksa Foundation School

Comparative Dimension	SMP Nurul Muttaqin (Indonesia)	Chariyathamsuksa Foundation School
Primary Model	Systematic and technology-integrated	Contextual and communal (embodied learning)
Affective Objectives	Reducing anxiety and building mental readiness	Demystifying death and fostering empathy
Key Media	Video (YouTube) and mannequins	Students as models and oral interaction
Teacher's Role	Facilitator and content curator	Expert model (*uswah*) and community learning leader
Learning Priority	Technical accuracy and procedural understanding	Authentic experience and transmission of communal values

This table confirms that the differences in teaching funeral jurisprudence between the two institutions are not matters of right or wrong, but rather rational reflections of distinct institutional contexts and pedagogical needs. Institutional orientation thus serves as the foundational factor explaining why SMP Nurul Muttaqin develops a technology-based technocratic–procedural model, while Chariyathamsuksa maintains a communal–experiential model rooted in tradition and lived experience.

Media, Affective Approaches, and Learning Experiences: Anxiety Reduction versus Embodied Learning

The differing institutional orientations outlined above not only shape pedagogical models but also directly influence the selection of instructional media and affective approaches in teaching funeral jurisprudence. The findings of this study indicate that learning media are not neutral tools; rather, they function pedagogically by implicitly shaping how students experience, interpret, and respond to emotionally and spiritually sensitive material.

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At SMP Nurul Muttaqin, instructional media—particularly simulation videos and mannequins—serve as central instruments in an anxiety mitigation strategy. Teachers deliberately employ these media to create emotional distance between students and the theme of death, allowing learning to occur within a relatively safe and controlled environment. In practice, before students engage in hands-on simulations of washing and shrouding the deceased, the teacher first presents instructional videos that depict the procedures in a systematic and professional manner.

Observations show that during video screenings, students display focused and serious attention, yet with relatively neutral emotional expressions. Some students take notes on key procedural steps, while others observe visually without overt signs of distress. The classroom atmosphere is academic and formal, resembling other forms of technical skills instruction. These findings suggest that video functions as a transitional medium that gradually introduces students to a sensitive topic.

The fiqh teacher at SMP Nurul Muttaqin emphasized this function:

"If students go straight into practice without videos, they are usually still tense. With videos, they already have an overview, so they are more prepared" (Interview, Teacher NM, 12 January 2023).

From a pedagogical perspective, this statement reflects the teacher's awareness of the affective filter—emotional barriers that can inhibit cognitive processing when anxiety levels are high. In this context, videos and mannequins function as emotional scaffolding, enabling students to rationally comprehend procedures before confronting heavier emotional loads.

Student responses further reinforce this finding. One student stated:

"If we practice immediately without watching the video, it still feels scary. But after watching the video, it becomes clearer and less stressful" (Interview, Student F, 13 January 2023).

Another student added:

"The mannequin helps, because using a friend would feel awkward and could lead to joking. With the mannequin, we focus on the steps" (Interview, Student H, 13 January 2023).

The consistent use of mannequins demonstrates how SMP Nurul Muttaqin deliberately separates the technical dimension from the emotional dimension in teaching funeral jurisprudence. The living human body is perceived as potentially generating awkwardness, tension, or unserious behavior, and is therefore replaced with an inanimate object that allows greater classroom control and procedural focus.

This approach aligns with Media Richness Theory, which categorizes videos and mannequins as relatively "lean media." Such media are highly effective for transmitting explicit and procedural information but limited in conveying emotional, symbolic, and relational meanings. In the context of SMP Nurul Muttaqin, this limitation is viewed as an advantage, as the primary instructional goal is to ensure accurate, orderly, and standardized implementation of funeral rites.

By contrast, teaching at Chariyathamsuksa Foundation School reflects a paradigmatically opposite approach. The primary medium in teaching funeral jurisprudence is neither technology nor artificial objects, but the human body itself, embodied through students acting as the deceased. In this context, instructional media are extremely "rich," involving physical presence, interpersonal relations, emotional expression, and a sacred learning atmosphere.

Observations indicate that learning practices in the musala are conducted in a deeply solemn environment. When a student is asked to lie down and assume the role of the deceased, the entire room becomes silent. There is no visible joking or disruption. Other students move carefully and deliberately, following the ustaz's instructions with reverence. In this situation, learning operates not only at the cognitive level but also engages students' emotional and existential dimensions.

The ustaz at Chariyathamsuksa explained the pedagogical rationale:

"If students only see or hear, they know the procedures. But when they touch their friend's body directly, they learn respect and empathy" (Interview, Ustaz CFS, 20 February 2023).

This statement underscores that the primary goal of instruction is not merely procedural mastery, but the cultivation of inner disposition and spiritual awareness. Anxiety is not entirely avoided, but rather confronted and processed within a sacred

communal framework. Anxiety is thus understood as an integral component of authentic learning, rather than a barrier to be eliminated.

Students' experiences further illuminate the affective depth of this approach. One student who acted as the deceased stated:

"I felt calm, but also reminded that one day we will all be like that" (Interview, Student A, 21 February 2023).

Another student remarked:

"Practicing with my own friend makes me more serious. It feels different from just watching a video or reading" (Interview, Student K, 21 February 2023).

These findings demonstrate that Chariyathamsuksa applies an embodied learning approach, in which the body is not treated as a passive object but as an active subject in meaning-making. Learning occurs through direct physical experience, allowing ritual meanings to be not only understood but deeply felt. From a phenomenological perspective, such experiences facilitate deeper internalization of values compared to representational or simulated learning (Karim, 2019).

This approach can also be analyzed through the framework of Situated Cognition (Lave & Wenger), which conceptualizes learning as social participation within a community of practice. At Chariyathamsuksa, students do not learn funeral jurisprudence as abstract knowledge, but as a living social practice within a Muslim community. The musala functions as a legitimate learning space where students gradually move from novice positions toward spiritually and socially mature participation.

The comparison between these two approaches reveals fundamental differences in affective learning objectives. SMP Nurul Muttaqin prioritizes individual psychological safety and mental readiness before exposing students to emotionally demanding realities. In contrast, Chariyathamsuksa prioritizes collective meaning-making and empathy, treating emotional experience as an integral part of the learning process.

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Importantly, these approaches should not be viewed hierarchically as "better" or "worse." Both represent pedagogically rational responses to their respective socio-cultural contexts. In Indonesia's education system, which emphasizes standardization and scalability, technology-based media enable funeral jurisprudence instruction to be delivered safely, efficiently, and replicably. Meanwhile, in the Muslim-minority context of Southern Thailand, embodied and communal learning becomes a crucial means of fostering solidarity, empathy, and the continuity of religious identity.

Hidden Curriculum, Teacher Authority, and the Reproduction of Religious Identity

The findings presented in the preceding sections indicate that differences in pedagogical models and media selection in teaching funeral jurisprudence cannot be understood merely as technical or methodological decisions. Rather, these differences reflect what Philip Jackson (1968) terms the hidden curriculum—a set of values, norms, and ideological orientations implicitly transmitted through everyday educational practices. In this context, the teaching of funeral jurisprudence serves as a critical site for examining how Islamic educational institutions reproduce meanings related to modernity, religious authority, and collective identity among younger generations.

At SMP Nurul Muttaqin, the emerging hidden curriculum aligns with the characteristics of modern Islamic education in Indonesia. The integration of technology, reliance on visual media, and mannequin-based practices implicitly promote values of efficiency, objectivity, procedural control, and individual psychological safety. Instruction is oriented toward ensuring that students understand funeral jurisprudence as a body of rules and steps to be mastered accurately, systematically, and in standardized form.

Within this framework, death is presented as an object of knowledge that can be approached rationally and professionally. The use of videos and mannequins contributes to the demystification of ritual, whereby emotional and spiritual dimensions are not eliminated but placed outside the primary instructional focus. The

hidden curriculum thus conveys that proper religious practice is one that is orderly, safe, and controlled—reflecting the logic of modern education that prioritizes measurability and accountability.

This hidden curriculum also reshapes the role and authority of the teacher. At SMP Nurul Muttaqin, the fiqh teacher does not function primarily as a charismatic or spiritual authority figure, but rather as a learning facilitator and content curator. Teacher authority derives from competence in lesson design, media selection, and classroom management in accordance with formal lesson plans (RPP).

Classroom observations reveal that the teacher primarily guides the learning flow rather than serving as a symbolic focal point. Videos become the main reference, while the teacher ensures comprehension and correct procedural replication. This pattern reflects a shift in religious authority from personal figures toward institutional and technical authority, a characteristic widely observed in modern educational systems (Loglo et al., 2024).

In contrast, the hidden curriculum at Chariyathamsuksa Foundation School reflects a markedly different orientation. In the Muslim-minority context of Southern Thailand, Islamic education functions not only as a vehicle for knowledge transmission but also as a crucial mechanism for preserving Malay-Muslim cultural and religious identity. Consequently, the teaching of funeral jurisprudence is positioned as a pedagogical ritual imbued with deep symbolic and spiritual meaning.

The use of halaqah, talaqqi, and direct embodied practice implicitly instills values of communal solidarity, respect for tradition, and existential awareness of life and death. Rather than emphasizing efficiency or standardization, the hidden curriculum prioritizes value transmission and religious character formation through shared experience.

Within this framework, death is not demystified but presented as a sacred reality that must be approached with etiquette (adab), empathy, and spiritual readiness. When students handle their peers' bodies during funeral simulations, they learn not only "how" to perform the rites, but also "how to be." Learning thus

becomes a process of value internalization that is difficult to achieve through impersonal media.

These contrasting hidden curricula are closely related to teacher authority and positioning. At Chariyathamsuksa, the ustaz occupies a central role as uswah hasanah (exemplary model) and shaykh within the halaqah. His authority is personal, charismatic, and spiritual rather than administrative. He is respected not for technical mastery of media or formal curricula, but for his knowledge, piety, and connection to Islamic scholarly lineages (sanad).

In instructional practice, the ustaz not only explains concepts but also embodies proper conduct—through solemn tone, careful movements, and controlled emotional expression. Through the process of talaqqi, students learn that religious knowledge cannot be fully separated from the human figure who transmits it. This reinforces a traditional model of religious authority that centers direct teacher–student relationships within Islamic education (Taufiq, 2018).

From the perspective of Situated Cognition, these practices reproduce what Lave and Wenger describe as a community of practice. Students are not merely recipients of information, but are gradually enculturated into a religious community that carries social and spiritual responsibilities. The musala functions simultaneously as a symbolic and pedagogical space where religious values are transmitted through active participation.

Comparing these two contexts reveals that pedagogical differences in teaching funeral jurisprudence reflect two distinct ontologies of Islamic education. SMP Nurul Muttaqin represents a modernist ontology that conceptualizes education as the acquisition of competencies through abstraction, technological mediation, and procedural control. This ontology is particularly rational in Indonesia's context as a large Muslim-majority nation where standardization and scalability are pressing educational needs.

Conversely, Chariyathamsuksa represents a traditionalist–experiential ontology that views education as human formation through lived experience, social

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relationships, and direct value transmission. In the context of a Muslim minority facing pressures of cultural assimilation, this approach serves as a strategic means of sustaining collective identity and religious continuity.

Therefore, the differences between these two models should not be simplistically framed as "modern" versus "traditional" in normative terms. Rather, both constitute contextually rational pedagogical responses. Technology-mediated approaches excel in procedural accuracy and efficiency but risk emotional detachment, whereas embodied and communal approaches foster deep empathy and spiritual meaning while facing limitations in scalability and standardization.

CONCLUSION

This study offers several integrated contributions to the theoretical and practical understanding of Islamic pedagogy, particularly in the teaching of sensitive religious content such as funeral rites. Theoretically, the study refines the distinction between pedagogical models and pedagogical strategies by demonstrating how institutional philosophies shape the ways these constructs are operationalized in classroom practice. It extends existing frameworks—such as Media Richness Theory and Situated Cognition—by showing that media selection and strategy implementation are not merely technical decisions, but culturally embedded pedagogical acts that reflect broader institutional orientations. Through comparative case analysis, the study also contributes to case-based theorizing by illustrating how technocratic–procedural and communal–experiential models produce distinct affective and cognitive conditions for learning.

Practically, the findings provide actionable recommendations for educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers. In modern, structured school environments, technology-mediated strategies—such as video demonstrations and mannequin-assisted simulations—may effectively reduce students' anxiety while maintaining procedural accuracy. Conversely, educational institutions rooted in communal and traditional cultures may benefit from embodied and participatory strategies that

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enhance empathy, internalization of values, and spiritual meaning-making. These insights underscore the need for teacher training programs that equip Islamic Religious Education teachers with the skills to align pedagogical strategies with institutional culture and learners' emotional readiness, especially when addressing topics that carry emotional or existential weight.

Future research could build upon this study by expanding the comparative framework to include a wider range of cultural and institutional settings, particularly those employing hybrid or transitional pedagogical models. Longitudinal studies could examine how students' affective responses to death-related learning develop over time and how these responses influence their broader religious or moral formation. Additionally, mixed-method or quantitative designs may be used to measure the effectiveness of specific strategies—such as video simulations or embodied learning—in reducing pedagogical anxiety or improving procedural mastery. Such extensions would deepen and broaden the contributions initiated by this research.

Theoretically, this study strengthens the conceptual differentiation between pedagogical models and pedagogical strategies in Islamic education. By applying comparative case analysis, the research offers an enriched theoretical lens for understanding how sensitive religious knowledge is mediated across different socio-cultural environments.

Practically, the results highlight the need for teachers to intentionally select strategies aligned with both institutional culture and student affective readiness. Technology-mediated strategies may be more appropriate for reducing anxiety in modern urban settings, whereas embodied and communal strategies may be more effective in culturally cohesive environments. Training programs for Islamic Religious Education teachers should incorporate modules on managing pedagogical anxiety and selecting media appropriate to local institutional contexts.

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