Journal of Pedagogy and Education Science
Vol. 5, No. 03, pp. 1202-1216
journal.iistr.org/index.php/JPES
DOI: 10.56741/IISTR.jpes.002407



An Ethnopedagogical Approach to Islamic Mindfulness: A Conceptual Model for Holistic Awareness in Early Childhood

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history
Received 05 June 2026
Revised 11 September 2026
Accepted 13 September 2026

ABSTRACT

Early childhood education increasingly emphasizes holistic development beyond cognitive achievement, including spiritual, personal, and social dimensions. However, existing mindfulness practices in educational settings remain predominantly secular, while studies integrating Islamic spirituality and local cultural wisdom are still limited. This study aims to develop a conceptual framework for implementing ethnopedagogy-based Islamic mindfulness to foster holistic awareness among young children. A qualitative literature review was conducted and enriched by limited observations in an early childhood education institution in Magelang, Indonesia. Data were analyzed using thematic and interpretive approaches to synthesize concepts related to Islamic mindfulness, ethnopedagogy, and holistic child development. The findings indicate that the integration of Islamic mindfulness and ethnopedagogy promotes three interconnected dimensions of awareness: spiritual awareness, self-awareness, and social awareness. The study proposes a consciousness-based curriculum framework consisting of Islamic values and local wisdom as inputs, mindfulness-oriented experiential learning processes, and holistic awareness as educational outcomes. The main contribution of this study lies in bridging Islamic psychospiritual principles and ethnopedagogical approaches within a unified educational framework. The findings suggest that contextualized mindfulness practices can strengthen character formation by fostering internal awareness rather than merely emphasizing observable behavior. This framework provides practical guidance for educators seeking to design culturally responsive and spiritually grounded learning experiences. In conclusion, ethnopedagogy-based Islamic mindfulness offers a

promising approach to holistic early childhood education. Future research is recommended to empirically examine the effectiveness of the proposed framework across diverse educational settings.

Keywords
Character Education
Early Childhood
Ethnopedagogy
Holistic Awareness
Islamic Mindfulness

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Introduction

The development of early childhood education (ECE) at the global level indicates a paradigm shift from a cognition-based approach toward a holistic approach that emphasizes a balance among intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions [1]. International organizations such as UNESCO emphasize the importance of well-being-based education and self-awareness as foundations for lifelong learning [2]. In this context, mindfulness practices have become one of the rapidly growing approaches in modern education because they have been proven to enhance children's emotional regulation, attention, and psychological well-being [3]. In Indonesia, the Merdeka Curriculum and deep learning initiatives also underscore the importance of mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning in fostering the Pancasila Student Profile [4]. However, within the context of Islamic education, mindfulness approaches are still dominated by secular perspectives that have not fully integrated spiritual dimensions grounded in Islamic values [5]. At the same time, globalization and digital disruption have generated challenges related to moral degradation and weakened self-awareness and social awareness among children from an early age, thereby requiring educational approaches capable of internalizing values in a profound, contextual, and culturally rooted manner.

In the context of Islamic education, psychospiritual approaches based on concepts such as *tafakur*, *muraqabah*, and *muhasabah* have been identified as forms of Islamic mindfulness capable of strengthening individuals' spiritual and emotional dimensions [6][7]. Research by Widyaningrum et al. demonstrated that play activities based on Islamic mindfulness can improve emotional engagement and spiritual awareness among young children [8]. Furthermore, Hardaker and Sabki emphasized the importance of Islamic pedagogy that highlights embodied learning and spiritual awareness in shaping meaningful learning experiences [9]. On the other hand, the ethnopedagogical approach has also proven effective in integrating local wisdom into learning processes, making them more contextual and relevant to children's lives [10][11]. Mustafa's study even revealed that the integration of cultural values and Islamic teachings in early childhood education can enhance children's

resilience and self-regulation [12]. These findings indicate that the integration of Islamic mindfulness and ethnopedagogy holds considerable potential for fostering children's holistic awareness 36.

Nevertheless, a significant research gap remains in the existing literature. First, most mindfulness studies in early childhood education still adopt secular approaches without comprehensively integrating Islamic spiritual values [13][14]. second, research on Islamic character education tends to focus on external behavior (doing) and knowledge acquisition (knowing), while paying limited attention to the deeper internalization of consciousness (being) [10]. Third, studies on ethnopedagogy have primarily emphasized local cultural aspects, particularly the transmission of locally embedded values, traditions, social practices, oral narratives, traditional games, local languages, and communal principles such as mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), respect, reciprocity, and care for the social and natural environment. However, these cultural resources have rarely been systematically combined with mindfulness approaches, particularly within the context of Islamic early childhood education [15]. Fourth, there remains a lack of integrative conceptual studies that combine Islamic mindfulness, spiritual awareness, and local wisdom within a systematic curricular framework [16]. Therefore, a theoretical synthesis is needed to comprehensively bridge these three approaches.

Based on these gaps, this study offers a novelty in the form of a conceptual integration of Islamic mindfulness and ethnopedagogy within a framework for developing early childhood awareness. The Islamic mindfulness approach adopted in this study does not merely embrace modern mindfulness concepts but also integrates Islamic spiritual values such as *tafakur* (reflection), *muraqabah* (awareness of God's presence), and *uswah hasanah* (exemplary conduct) as the foundation for consciousness development [17]. Meanwhile, the ethnopedagogical approach is employed to contextualize these values through local wisdom, making learning more meaningful and relevant to children's lives [18]. This integration produces a consciousness-based conceptual model encompassing three primary dimensions: spiritual awareness (*God-awareness*), self-awareness (*self-awareness*), and social awareness (*social-awareness*). Another novelty lies in the effort to shift the paradigm of character education from a behavior-oriented perspective toward sustainable and authentic internal awareness.

This study aims to examine and formulate a conceptual framework for implementing ethnopedagogy-based Islamic mindfulness in developing the spiritual, self, and social awareness of young children. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions: (1) how can the concepts of Islamic mindfulness and ethnopedagogy be integrated into early childhood education; (2) how does this integration contribute to the development of children's

holistic awareness; and (3) how can a consciousness-based curriculum framework be systematically formulated? This study employs a qualitative approach through library research by analyzing various reputable scholarly sources related to mindfulness, Islamic education, and ethnopedagogy. The analysis was conducted through thematic analysis and conceptual synthesis to generate an integrative model that may serve as a foundation for developing a consciousness-based early childhood education curriculum.

Material and Methods

This study was motivated by the need to obtain a comprehensive understanding of reflective and contextual concepts, namely Islamic mindfulness, spiritual awareness, and the integration of local wisdom in early childhood education. The phenomena under investigation are not manifested in the form of quantitative data or variables that can be easily measured through simple procedures; rather, they evolve through everyday practices, internalized values, and children's learning experiences.

On this basis, a qualitative approach was considered the most relevant methodological framework [16][19]. This approach provides opportunities to uncover deeper meanings rather than merely identifying phenomena observable on the surface. In addition, preliminary findings obtained through direct observations conducted in a partner school located in Sawangan District, Magelang Regency, indicated that learning practices incorporating elements of spiritual awareness and local cultural values had already been implemented, although they had not yet been systematically conceptualized. The local wisdom observed in the learning practices included the use of traditional games, local stories and folktales, local language, cooperative activities reflecting the principle of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), sharing, and respect for teachers, parents, and peers [17]. These practices provided children with opportunities to experience cultural values through everyday learning activities rather than receiving them solely through verbal instruction. However, their potential contribution to the development of spiritual, self, and social awareness had not yet been explicitly articulated within an integrated educational framework.

In practice, teachers frequently encourage children to pray, share stories containing moral values, and introduce local traditions [10]. However, these activities have not been explicitly integrated with the development of children's self-awareness and social awareness. This condition highlights the urgency of conducting qualitative research capable of examining such practices in a more in-depth, holistic, and interpretive manner.

The research design employed in this study was a qualitative literature study enriched by contextual findings derived from limited field observations. The literature was not merely collected as a source of information but was positioned as a medium for conceptual dialogue that enabled the elaboration and synthesis of ideas [20][21]. Meanwhile, field observations

served as empirical contextualization by providing factual descriptions of how the values under investigation were implemented in educational practice. Consequently, this study was not entirely abstract in nature but remained grounded in empirical realities. Data analysis was conducted interpretively by considering the interrelationships among the concepts of Islamic mindfulness, ethnopedagogical principles, and learning practices in early childhood education. This approach enabled the researchers to develop a comprehensive understanding through the integration of theoretical frameworks from the literature and empirical dynamics observed in the field.

To ensure transparency and facilitate replication by independent researchers, the study followed a systematic yet flexible sequence of procedures adapted from qualitative literature review and content analysis methodologies [19]. The initial stage involved identifying the focus of the study, namely Islamic mindfulness, children's awareness, and ethnopedagogy. Subsequently, the researchers conducted a systematic literature search using academic databases and reputable scholarly sources, including international journals, academic books, and research reports. During this stage, keywords were developed and refined iteratively to capture a wide range of relevant perspectives and conceptual discussions [22]. The collected literature was then screened based on relevance to the research objectives, conceptual richness, and academic quality.

In parallel, non-participant observations were conducted in a partner school located in Sawangan District. The observations focused on learning activities, teacher–child interactions, and the incorporation of religious and cultural values into daily educational practices. Observation data were recorded through structured field notes to ensure consistency in documentation [20]. Data obtained from both literature and observations were subsequently analyzed through thematic coding procedures. Identified themes were organized, compared, and synthesized to construct a conceptual framework. The final stage of the study involved formulating a model integrating Islamic mindfulness and ethnopedagogy within the context of early childhood education.

The data sources consisted of two main categories: secondary data and contextual data. Secondary data were obtained from scientific literature relevant to the focus of the study, including international journal articles, academic books, and other scholarly documents. Particular emphasis was placed on sources that made significant contributions to the fields of mindfulness, Islamic education, and ethnopedagogy. Contextual data were obtained through observations conducted in the partner school in Sawangan District, Magelang Regency, selected because its educational practices reflected the integration of religious values and local cultural traditions. The observational subjects included teachers and young children as the primary actors in the educational process. However, this study did not involve in-depth direct

interactions such as interviews; therefore, the resulting data remained descriptive and contextual, serving as complementary evidence to support the literature analysis.

Data collection was conducted through two primary methods: document analysis and observation [23]. Document analysis involved systematically collecting, reading, reviewing, and critically examining relevant literature. Each source was analyzed to identify key ideas, patterns of argumentation, and significant findings. On the other hand, observations were conducted directly within the partner school environment by documenting learning activities, daily routines, and forms of interaction reflecting spiritual and social values [24]. Field notes were utilized as the primary instrument for systematically recording observational findings. All collected data were then analyzed using content analysis techniques, including theme identification, categorization, and interpretation of meanings embedded in the data [22]. The content analysis procedures adopted in this study followed established qualitative analytical principles commonly used in educational research and were adapted to accommodate the integration of literature-based evidence and contextual observational findings. To enhance data trustworthiness, triangulation was conducted between findings derived from the literature and those obtained through observations. Through this approach, the study sought to generate findings that possess both conceptual rigor and empirical relevance to educational practice.

Results and Discussions

The findings of this study indicate that the integration of Islamic mindfulness and ethnopedagogy in early childhood education has strong potential to foster children's holistic awareness. This awareness does not exist as separate entities; rather, it reflects the interconnectedness of spiritual, self, and social dimensions. The literature analysis, enriched by observations conducted in a partner school in Sawangan District, Magelang Regency, revealed a consistent pattern: educational practices containing elements of awareness already exist, yet they have not been organized within a comprehensive conceptual framework. Teachers teach values. Children practice positive habits. However, the process of internalizing awareness has not been fully recognized as a primary objective of learning. In general, the findings of this study are organized around three main questions:

- how Islamic mindfulness and ethnopedagogy can be integrated into early childhood education;
- how this integration contributes to the development of children's holistic awareness; and
- how a consciousness-based curriculum framework can be formulated. These three aspects are discussed sequentially and are interconnected.

A. The Integration of Islamic Mindfulness and Ethnopedagogy in Early Childhood Education

The findings indicate that the integration of Islamic mindfulness and ethnopedagogy is not merely technical in nature. It is both philosophical and practical. In the literature, mindfulness is often understood as full awareness of present-moment experiences [25]. However, from an Islamic perspective, such awareness does not stop at the self but is connected to God-consciousness. Concepts such as *muraqabah* (awareness of being observed by Allah), *tafakur* (reflection), and *muhasabah* (self-evaluation) constitute the core of Islamic mindfulness. The analysis reveals that integration occurs at three main levels.

1. Conceptual Level

   Islamic mindfulness provides the spiritual foundation, while ethnopedagogy provides the cultural context. Both converge within children's learning experiences. In practice, religious values are not taught in an abstract manner but are conveyed through cultural practices that are closely connected to children's daily lives, thereby creating a bridge between transcendent theology and localized human experience [26].

2. Pedagogical Level

   In the partner school, teachers frequently encourage children to pray before learning activities, exchange greetings, and demonstrate respect toward their parents. These practices represent forms of Islamic mindfulness, although they are not explicitly identified as such. At the same time, the use of folktales, traditional games, and local languages constitutes an expression of ethnopedagogy. When these two approaches are integrated, learning becomes not only meaningful but also deeply rooted in children's cultural realities.

3. Practical Level

   The integration is evident in simple daily activities. For example, children are encouraged to sit quietly before lessons begin. They are asked to take deep breaths while reciting short prayers. This activity simultaneously cultivates concentration and spiritual awareness. In other activities, children learn to share through traditional games, which subconsciously embeds social ethics into early childhood routines [17].

These findings are consistent with the study of Felver, which emphasizes that mindfulness is most effective when integrated into everyday activities [27], as well as the study by septi, which demonstrates that local wisdom strengthens the meaning and relevance of learning experiences [28]. Nevertheless, this integration remains largely implicit. Teachers do not yet possess a systematic framework. There is no guideline linking activities, values, and awareness-related learning objectives. This is where the need for developing a conceptual model becomes evident.

Table 1. Levels of Integration

Level	Description	Examples of Practice	Educational Impact
Conceptual Level	Islamic mindfulness serves as the spiritual foundation, while ethnopedagogy provides the cultural context.	Religious values are taught through cultural practices familiar to children.	Learning becomes more meaningful and contextually relevant.
Pedagogical Level	Integration occurs within learning processes and teacher–child interactions.	Prayers, greetings, and respect for parents combined with folktales and local language use.	Learning becomes more grounded and enriched with values.
Practical Level	Integration is reflected in everyday classroom activities.	Sitting quietly, deep breathing while reciting prayers, and participation in traditional games.	Enhances concentration, awareness, and social development.

B. Contribution of the Integration to the Development of Children's Holistic Awareness

The findings of this study indicate that the integration of Islamic mindfulness and ethnopedagogy makes a significant contribution to three dimensions of awareness: spiritual awareness, self-awareness, and social awareness.

1. Spiritual Awareness

Spiritual awareness emerges through simple yet consistent practices. Children learn about God not through lectures but through lived experiences. They pray. They express gratitude. They are encouraged to realize that every action is observed by Allah. Field observations indicate that children who are accustomed to spiritual routines tend to be calmer. They are easier to guide. They also demonstrate a higher level of respect toward their teachers. The literature supports these findings. Schonert-Reichl and Lawlor argue that value-based awareness practices enhance children's emotional well-being [29]. In the Islamic context, Badri emphasizes that spiritual awareness serves as the foundation of character formation [30].

2. Self-Awareness

Self-awareness develops through reflective activities. Children are encouraged to recognize their emotions. They learn to understand feelings of anger, happiness, or sadness. In the partner school, teachers employ a simple approach. For example, when children are involved in conflicts, teachers do not immediately impose punishment. Instead, teachers invite children to engage in conversation. Children are asked to explain their feelings. This represents an early form of mindfulness. The results are clearly observable. Children become more capable of self-regulation. They are less likely to react impulsively. These findings are consistent with Dunning, who reported that mindfulness enhances emotional regulation and self-control among children [13][31].

3. Social Awareness

Social awareness develops through interaction. Children learn to share, cooperate, and understand others. The ethnopedagogical approach plays an important role in this process. Traditional games, such as small-scale mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), group play, and culturally based activities, teach the values of togetherness and collective responsibility. In the partner school, children are encouraged to help classmates who encounter difficulties. They are also taught to apologize and forgive. As a result, children demonstrate higher levels of empathy. They show greater concern for their surrounding environment. Zenner emphasize that mindfulness in education enhances children's social competence [14]. Meanwhile, ethnopedagogical studies indicate that local values strengthen social relationships.

Table 2. Dimensions of Awareness

Dimension	Description	Examples of Practice	Impact on Children
Spiritual Awareness	Awareness of God developed through everyday spiritual experiences	Praying, expressing gratitude, and recognizing Allah's supervision	Children become calmer, easier to guide, and more respectful
Self-Awareness	The ability to recognize and understand one's own emotions	Reflection following conflicts and discussions about feelings	Improved emotional regulation and reduced impulsive behavior
Social Awareness	The ability to understand and interact positively with others	Traditional games, sharing, and cooperative activities	Higher empathy, greater concern for others, and stronger collaboration skills

C. Consciousness-Based Curriculum Conceptual Framework

The consciousness-based curriculum conceptual framework developed in this study demonstrates a comprehensive integration of Islamic spiritual values, local wisdom, and contextualized learning practices. The framework is structured around three interrelated components. At the input stage, Islamic values function as the spiritual foundation that cultivates God-consciousness, while local wisdom serves as the cultural context that brings learning experiences closer to children's everyday lives. The process stage emphasizes the implementation of Islamic mindfulness activities manifested through experiential learning and value-laden social interactions. Children do not merely receive knowledge; rather, they directly experience processes of reflection, internalization, and value-based practice in their daily lives. Through this process, the expected output is holistic awareness encompassing spiritual awareness (relationship with God), self-awareness (understanding emotions and self-regulation), and social awareness (care and empathy toward others). This structure is not linear but dynamic and cyclical, thereby enabling the continuous internalization of values 26.

The development of this framework is grounded in several key principles that define its implementation. Interconnectedness serves as the primary foundation, recognizing that the

relationship among God, the self, and the environment should be simultaneously present within the learning process. Contextuality ensures that learning experiences remain closely connected to children lived realities, allowing the values being taught to feel meaningful and relevant.



Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework of a Consciousness-Based Curriculum

The principle of direct experience emphasizes that children learn through concrete practice rather than solely through verbal explanations, while exemplarity positions teachers as central figures who embody values through their actions. The implementation of the curriculum is then realized through simple yet consistent daily activities, such as spiritual routines involving prayer and dhikr, reflective activities through storytelling and emotional dialogue, social interactions through cooperation and sharing, and cultural integration through traditional games and local stories. Overall, this framework addresses the need for an educational model capable of bridging spiritual, psychological, and cultural dimensions within a unified approach that is both practical and relevant to early childhood education.

The findings presented above confirm that the integration of Islamic mindfulness and ethnopedagogy makes a tangible contribution to fostering the holistic awareness of young children, encompassing spiritual, self, and social dimensions. These findings are consistent with a number of previous studies that position mindfulness as an effective approach for enhancing children's emotional regulation and self-awareness. Hayati and Zahra demonstrated that Islamic mindfulness-based play activities can improve children's mental well-being and emotional engagement in the post-pandemic context [32] [27]. These findings reinforce the results of the present study, particularly regarding the dimensions of self-awareness and spiritual awareness, which develop through simple yet meaningful activities such as prayer, reflection, and emotional recognition. Similarly, Mustafa emphasized that the integration of Islamic values into early childhood educational practices contributes to

strengthening resilience and self-regulation among children [12]. This finding is consistent with observations conducted in Sawangan District, where children who regularly engaged in spiritual routines tended to be calmer and demonstrated better emotional regulation.

However, when compared with mindfulness research from Western perspectives, a fundamental difference emerges. Conventional mindfulness studies tend to focus on intrapersonal awareness without explicitly incorporating a divine dimension. In this regard, the present study offers an important enhancement by positioning the transcendental dimension as the core of awareness. Syafii refer to this approach as psychospiritual mindfulness, emphasizing the interconnectedness between self-awareness and awareness of God [33]. The findings of this study support this perspective. Children's awareness develops not only within psychological dimensions but also within spiritual dimensions [29]. This constitutes both a distinguishing feature and a significant contribution of the study. On the other hand, critical perspectives suggest that mindfulness risks losing its meaning when culturally adapted without sufficient depth of understanding. This critique is particularly relevant when mindfulness practices become routine activities devoid of reflection. The findings of this study indicate that such a condition indeed exists in practice: the activities are already present, but they have not yet been conceptualized within a coherent framework.

Within the context of ethnopedagogy, the findings of this study are also consistent with various studies emphasizing the importance of local wisdom in learning. Hashim, in a scoping review, highlighted that ethnopedagogy plays a crucial role in creating contextual and relevant learning experiences for young children [15]. Similar findings were reported by Putra Yasa et al. [34], who demonstrated that local cultural values can strengthen children's character and social identity. The present study extends these findings by integrating ethnopedagogy into an Islamic mindfulness framework. As a result, the impact is not limited to social dimensions but also strengthens spiritual awareness and self-awareness. Furthermore, Hasnadi found that local wisdom-based approaches can enhance students' social awareness and reflective behavior [35] [28]. This is consistent with the findings of the present study, in which culturally based activities such as traditional games and local storytelling promoted empathy and more positive social interactions.

Nevertheless, not all studies fully support this integration. Several studies indicate that the implementation of ethnopedagogy is often limited to symbolic aspects and has not sufficiently addressed deeper reflective dimensions [36] [29]. In other words, cultural values are frequently taught as knowledge rather than experienced as lived practices. These findings partially correspond with the conditions observed in the partner school, where local cultural practices had already been incorporated but were not explicitly linked to the development of awareness. This is where the present study offers a novel contribution. Through its integration

with Islamic mindfulness, ethnopedagogy becomes not merely a vehicle for cultural transmission but also a means of cultivating consciousness.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that the primary strength of this integration lies in the learning experience itself. Children learn through practice. Through habits. Through interaction. This finding is supported by Franciska, who emphasized that experiential learning is more effective in shaping children's self-identity than purely instructional approaches [37] [38]. In this context, Islamic mindfulness and ethnopedagogy converge at a common point: both emphasize direct experience as the essence of learning. However, they differ in terms of value orientation. Islamic mindfulness is rooted in spirituality, whereas ethnopedagogy is rooted in culture. Their integration results in a more comprehensive educational approach.

On the other hand, this study also identified limitations that warrant discussion. The absence of a systematic conceptual framework in educational practice represents a major challenge. Teachers teach values intuitively. Practices emerge naturally. However, without a clear structure, the process of internalizing awareness becomes less effective. This finding is consistent with the study of Jakandar, which argues that value integration in education is often implicit and insufficiently planned in a systematic manner [39] [40]. Therefore, the conceptual model developed in this study becomes important as a guide for implementation.

Overall, this discussion demonstrates that the findings of this study do not stand alone. Rather, they intersect with various previous findings, including both supportive evidence and critical perspectives. The primary contribution of this study lies in its effort to connect three domains that have traditionally been treated separately: mindfulness, Islamic spirituality, and ethnopedagogy. This integration is not merely a combination of concepts but a reconfiguration of how early childhood education is understood. Education is no longer solely concerned with what children know, but with how children become aware of themselves, their God, and their environment in a holistic manner.

Conclusion

This study highlights the potential of integrating ethnopedagogy-based Islamic mindfulness to foster holistic awareness among young children, encompassing spiritual, self, and social dimensions. Islamic mindfulness practices, grounded in *muraqabah*, *tafakur*, and *muhasabah*, provide opportunities to strengthen spiritual consciousness, self-reflection, and emotional regulation. Integrating these practices with local wisdom promotes culturally relevant and meaningful learning experiences. Observations at the partner school revealed existing awareness-oriented practices, including prayer routines, social interactions, and culturally embedded activities, although their implementation remains fragmented. The study proposes a consciousness-based curriculum framework comprising three interconnected components: input (Islamic values and local wisdom), process (mindfulness practices,

experiential learning, and social interaction), and output (spiritual, self, and social awareness). This framework contributes theoretically by connecting Islamic spirituality, mindfulness, and ethnopedagogy while offering practical guidance for educators in designing reflective, value-based learning environments. However, the study is limited by its literature-based approach, observations at a single school, and the absence of empirical testing. Future research should validate the proposed framework through classroom interventions, experimental studies, and the development of reliable instruments to measure children's holistic awareness across diverse educational and cultural contexts.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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