

Realising Sustainable Islamic Education Through an Integrative Programme

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Abstract

This article aims to explore strategies for realising sustainable Islamic Religious Education (IRE) through the implementation of an integrative programme that combines spiritual, social, and environmental aspects. This study uses a qualitative approach with literature review and case observation methods in several Islamic educational institutions. The results of the study show that integrative programmes involving an Islamic values-based curriculum, social practice activities, and collaborative environmental conservation can improve students' understanding and application of religious values in their daily lives. In addition, the success of this programme is influenced by the active role of educators, community involvement, and adequate policy support. The conclusion of this article is that sustainable Islamic religious education can be achieved by combining theoretical and practical learning through an integrative approach that is relevant to the challenges of the times

Introduction

Education is a vital element in shaping a generation with intellectual intelligence, social skills, and a solid moral foundation (Aini, Yuli, Hasibuan, & Gusmaneli, 2024). Amidst the increasingly intense tide of globalisation, education not only serves as a means of transferring knowledge but also as a medium for character building that is capable of responding to various challenges of the times. These challenges are becoming increasingly complex with the emergence of global issues, such as climate change, social inequality, moral crisis, and cultural conflict, which require a more adaptive and sustainable approach to education.

In the context of Indonesia, known as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, religious education, particularly Islamic Religious

Education (PAI), has a significant responsibility in shaping a generation that is not only faithful and pious but also capable of applying Islamic values in their daily lives (Sunarso, 2020). However, various modern dynamics often create a gap between what is taught in PAI and the realities faced by students. Many students only understand religion as a theory or a series of rituals without seeing how Islamic teachings can be integrated into other aspects of life, such as social, economic, and environmental aspects.

One of the main challenges in implementing PAI is how to make it relevant to contemporary needs and challenges (Jaya, Hambali, & Fakhurrozi, 2023). Curricula that are too theory-oriented are often ineffective in providing meaningful learning experiences. In addition, a fragmented approach between spiritual, social, and environmental education makes it difficult for students to understand the relationship between religious values and daily practices. Therefore, innovation is needed in religious education models that can address these challenges.

Integrative programmes have emerged as a promising approach to meeting these needs. This approach combines various aspects, such as spirituality, social interaction, and environmental awareness, into a holistic educational framework. With this approach, PAI is not only taught as a stand-alone subject, but also becomes part of the process of shaping a well-rounded character. For example, students not only learn about the concept of morals in Islam theoretically, but are also involved in social activities that hone their empathy and concern for others. Similarly, Islamic teachings on protecting the environment can be applied through real activities, such as reforestation programmes, waste management, or water conservation.

This integrative approach is not only relevant in the context of formal education, but can also be implemented in various non-formal and informal education programmes, such as religious classes, Islamic boarding schools, and community activities (Mardani & Siswanto, 2024). By involving various parties, including educators, parents, and the community, this programme has great potential to create an educational ecosystem that supports the sustainability of

Islamic values in everyday life.

This article aims to explore in greater depth the concept of sustainable Islamic religious education through integrative programmes. Using a qualitative approach and case studies, this article will identify the key factors that support the success of integrative programmes, the challenges faced, and the strategic steps that can be taken to realise them. It is hoped that this article can make a real contribution to the development of an Islamic religious education model that is not only relevant to the local context but also capable of providing solutions to the global challenges faced by Muslims.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method, in which the researcher analyses relevant scientific articles related to strategies for optimising Islamic religious education in Indonesian schools published in the last five years. The data prepared in this study is sourced from literature and journals relevant to the research title. Identifying the main topics found in the literature is one of the various steps used in data analysis. Furthermore, the findings are classified based on ways to improve Islamic religious education using the theory of strategies to improve the optimisation of Islamic religious education in Indonesian schools.

Results And Discussion

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) faces major challenges in maintaining its relevance and sustainability amid rapid social, cultural, and technological changes (Aini et al., 2024). One of the main challenges is curriculum fragmentation, where IRE is often separated from other subjects. This makes students view PAI as a stand-alone subject that has little connection to science or everyday life. As a result, many students consider religious lessons to be merely theories that must be memorised for exam purposes, without realising that Islamic values can be a guide in various aspects of life (Novta et al., 2024).

Integrating religious values into various subjects such as Science,

Mathematics, and Social Studies is a strategic step to overcome this problem. For example, in Physics lessons, the concept of order in the universe can be linked to verses in the Qur'an that explain creation and the laws of nature. Similarly, in Economics lessons, students can be encouraged to study Islamic economic principles that emphasise justice and social welfare. This approach not only enriches students' knowledge but also strengthens their understanding of Islam as a comprehensive religion. However, the implementation of this integration faces challenges, mainly because many Islamic Education teachers find it difficult to incorporate religious values into general subjects. Therefore, teacher training and the development of integrative learning modules are urgently needed to support this step.

In addition to curriculum issues, another major challenge is the relevance of religious learning methods in the digital age. Today's young generation is growing up in a highly dynamic digital ecosystem (Aini et al., 2024). They are more familiar with social media, interactive applications, and visual content than with traditional lecture methods. If PAI is unable to keep up with these developments, it will be difficult to attract students' interest in studying religion. The use of technology such as Islamic-based educational applications, interactive videos, dakwah podcasts, and social media is an effective solution. For example, Islamic-themed educational games that teach the stories of the prophets or the laws of fiqh have been proven to increase students' interest in learning. However, the challenge that arises is the flood of digital content that is not in accordance with Islamic values. Therefore, schools and parents must play an active role in guiding and providing access to positive and educational Islamic content.

The lack of involvement from parents and the community is also a major obstacle to achieving sustainable religious education. Many parents leave their children's religious education entirely to the school, resulting in the neglect of Islamic character building at home (Aini et al., 2024). In fact, the role of the family is very important in reinforcing the religious understanding that has been taught at school. An unsupportive family environment will make it difficult for students to internalise Islamic values in their daily lives. Therefore, Islamic

parenting programmes that involve parents in religious activities at school can be

a solution to strengthen the synergy between education at home and at school. Thus, religious values are not only the responsibility of teachers, but also a shared responsibility within the family and community.

Role models are also a crucial issue in Islamic religious education. Students need not only theory but also real examples from the people around them. Teachers, parents, and community leaders should be role models in practising Islam (Sujarwo, 2024). Unfortunately, in some cases, the discrepancy between what is taught and the actual behaviour of educators or parents can cause confusion and even distrust among students. This role model is an important foundation in building students' Islamic character and noble morals. A teacher who teaches the importance of praying on time but does not do so will find it difficult to gain respect and trust from students.

Another challenge that needs to be addressed is the difference in interpretation of Islamic teachings, which sometimes leads to narrow and exclusive understandings. In some cases, a rigid and textual approach to Islamic education that does not allow room for dialogue and differences of opinion can instil intolerance (Sujarwo, 2024). Religious education must instil values of moderation (*wasathiyah*) and teach Islam as a religion that brings mercy to all of creation (*rahmatan lil alamin*). This approach will produce students who not only understand religious teachings well, but also have a tolerant attitude and are able to appreciate diversity.

In addition to the issues mentioned above, the limited religious education facilities and infrastructure in a number of regions also pose a significant challenge. Schools in remote areas often face a lack of facilities and limited access to technology. These conditions make the process of religious learning difficult to develop and tend to rely solely on traditional lecture methods. Therefore, special attention is needed from the government and educational institutions to provide adequate facilities, such as digital libraries, religious laboratories, and internet access, to support a better learning process.

Religion-based extracurricular programmes also play a strategic role in shaping students' character. Activities such as Islamic Spirituality (Rohis), short-term Islamic boarding schools, and Islamic-based social service have been proven to increase students' spiritual awareness and foster empathy. Through these activities, students not only learn about religion from a theoretical perspective, but also practise Islamic values in real life. Social activities such as visiting orphanages, helping others, and maintaining environmental cleanliness are effective means of instilling values of goodness that are in line with Islamic teachings.

With various challenges and issues at hand, sustainable Islamic religious education requires collaboration from all parties, starting from schools, parents, the community, to the government. An integrative and innovative approach is key to ensuring that religious education is not only carried out formally in the classroom, but also takes root in the daily lives of students (Zakariyah & Hamid, 2020).

In the modern context, where the flow of information is rapid and global values increasingly influence the younger generation, an integrative approach to religious education is a relevant solution. However, this effort is not without various issues that require serious attention and a critical approach.

Some of the issues circulating include:

1. The Challenge of a Fragmented Curriculum

One of the main challenges in Islamic religious education is the separation of the PAI curriculum from other subjects. This causes students to tend to view PAI as a stand-alone subject, unrelated to daily life or other fields of study. As a result, PAI is often only understood at a theoretical and normative level, while its implementation in daily life is less than optimal (Asep Nursalim & Nico Verdianto, 2020).

An integrated curriculum, in which Islamic values are linked to science, technology, arts, and even sports subjects, is an important solution. For example, in biology lessons, students not only learn about life processes, but are also encouraged to reflect on the greatness of Allah through verses

that discuss the creation of humans and the universe. In this way, religious education becomes more alive and relevant in various aspects of students' lives.

However, the challenge in implementing this integration is the limited practical guidance and resources available to teachers. PAI teachers often do not have sufficient background in science or technology, making it difficult to integrate religious teachings into other subjects. Therefore, intensive training and comprehensive integrative modules are needed to support educators (Nur Sakinah Siregar, Putri Salehah Siregar, & Gusmaneli Gusmaneli, 2024).

2. The Relevance of Learning in the Digital Age

The current generation, often referred to as "Generation Z" and "Generation Alpha," is growing up in a digital ecosystem. They are more familiar with technology, social media, and visual content than with conventional learning methods (Afsari, 2024). Therefore, Islamic religious education that is only delivered through lectures or textbooks is less effective in attracting their interest and attention.

Technologies such as *mobile* applications, interactive videos, and social media platforms have great potential to become effective tools for conveying Islamic values (). For example, interactive applications for learning the Qur'an, Islamic-themed educational games and religious podcasts packaged in a modern style can help reach students outside of school hours. However, on the other hand, exposure to technology also brings its own challenges. Negative content that contradicts Islamic values is so easily accessible (Setiadi, Maryati, & Mubharokkh, 2024). Therefore, it is important for educators and parents to accompany students in using technology, and provide alternative content Islamic that is interesting and inspiring.

3. The Lack of Parental and Community Involvement

Sustainable religious education does not only depend on schools, but also requires the active role of parents and the community (Kholil, 2021).

Unfortunately, in many cases, religious education is still considered the primary responsibility of schools. Parents tend to leave religious education entirely to teachers, so that the home environment does not always support the practice and reinforcement of Islamic values.

Effective religious education requires synergy between schools, families, and the community. Religious activities at home, such as performing congregational prayers, reading the Qur'an together, and discussing religious values, contribute significantly to building children's character. In addition, the role of local communities, such as mosques and Islamic organisations, is also very important in supporting the continuity of holistic religious education.

To overcome this, schools can involve parents in Islamic-based *parenting* programmes, family seminars, and joint religious activities. In this way, religious education becomes a collective responsibility involving all parties (Tauhid, 2024).

4. Lack of Role Models

Role modelling plays a key role in Islamic religious education. In the learning process, students not only need theoretical understanding, but also need real examples of behaviour from teachers, parents, and community leaders that are in line with Islamic teachings. However, in reality, this role modelling is often not fully implemented, thus posing a challenge in building students' character in accordance with religious values. The discrepancy between what is taught in the classroom and what they witness in their daily environment can create confusion and even reduce students' enthusiasm for practising Islamic teachings. Therefore, it is very important for educators and parents to be good role models, demonstrating the application of Islamic values in every aspect of life.

In this way, students will have a clear picture of how to practise their religion consistently.

5. Differences in Interpretation and Radicalism

Another sensitive issue in religious education is the difference in interpretation of Islamic teachings. In some cases, religious education that is not managed properly has the potential to lead to narrow and exclusive, even radical, understandings (Jannah, 2023).

Therefore, religious education must prioritise the principle of moderation (*wasathiyah*) and teach Islam as a religion that is *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (a blessing for all creation). Students need to be taught to respect differences, be tolerant, and be open to dialogue. In this way, religious education not only shapes individuals who are devout in their faith, but also enables them to contribute to creating a peaceful and harmonious society.

6. Limitations in Facilities and Infrastructure

In various regions, the challenge of providing integrated Islamic religious education is still faced with limitations in facilities and infrastructure. Schools in remote areas often lack access to adequate technology and learning resources, while the limited number of religious teachers hinders the effectiveness of learning. To overcome this, more attention is needed from the government and related institutions in providing adequate facilities and improving the welfare of religious teachers. In addition, the development of community-based programmes involving volunteers and local religious leaders can be an effective solution.

In addition, there are also several discussions on issues such as this, namely: *first, the principles of integrative programmes*. Integrative programmes in Islamic religious education are based on several principles, namely holism, interdisciplinarity, participation, sustainability, and flexibility. The holistic principle ensures that education does not only focus on spiritual aspects, but also intellectual, emotional, and physical aspects (Firman, 2024). Meanwhile, the interdisciplinary principle combines religious, social, and scientific knowledge to provide a broader understanding. Participatory involves students, teachers, and the community in the educational process, while sustainability ensures that education focuses on long-term development.

Flexibility allows for adaptation to social and cultural changes.

Second, the components of the Integrative Programme. The integrative programme in Islamic religious education consists of several components, namely an integrated curriculum, active learning, character development, community service, and evaluation and supervision. The integrated curriculum combines religious, social, and scientific knowledge to provide a broader understanding. Active learning uses discussion, project, and research methods to increase student engagement. Character development focuses on morals, empathy, and responsibility. Community service develops social awareness and concern, while evaluation and supervision monitor progress and identify areas for improvement.

Third, Implementation Strategies. The implementation of integrative programmes in Islamic religious education requires several strategies, namely teacher training, curriculum development, community cooperation, use of technology, and evaluation and supervision. Teacher training improves teachers' competence in integrative approaches. Curriculum development ensures that the curriculum is relevant and integrated. Community cooperation involves the community in the education process. The use of technology improves the efficiency and effectiveness of the learning process. Evaluation and supervision monitor progress and identify areas for improvement.

Fourth, Benefits of Integrative Programmes. Integrative programmes in Islamic religious education have several benefits, namely improving student competence and character, developing a deeper understanding of religion, increasing social awareness and concern, developing life and career skills, and improving the quality of Islamic religious education. *Fifth, challenges and solutions.* The implementation of integrative programmes in Islamic religious education also faces several challenges, such as a lack of resources, a lack of teacher competence, integration difficulties, community resistance, and evaluation and supervision. Solutions to these challenges include allocating resources effectively, implementing teacher training and development, developing an integrated curriculum, involving the community in the educational

process, and developing an effective evaluation system.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the discussion on sustainable Islamic Religious Education (IRE) through an integrative approach emphasises that the success of religious education in the modern era requires synergy between the curriculum, technology, family environment, and society. Religious education cannot be taught as a separate subject, but must be integrated into all aspects of life and knowledge. This integration will instil an understanding that Islam is not just a theory, but an applicable guideline that touches every aspect of students' lives, from academics and social life to daily activities.

A curriculum that connects religious values with other subjects will open students' minds to the fact that Islam is in line with the development of science and technology. Religious education linked to science, economics, and technology can build awareness that Islam is a religion that is relevant in all ages and can provide solutions to various challenges in life. However, this integration can only be successful if it is supported by educators who have the competence to connect religious values with other fields of study. Therefore, teacher training and capacity building are key factors in promoting the effectiveness of this approach. With various challenges and opportunities, sustainable Islamic religious education requires commitment and collaboration from various parties, ranging from schools, families, communities, to the government. Synergy between an integrative curriculum, the use of technology, role models, and family involvement will create a strong and relevant religious education ecosystem. Through this approach, it is hoped that the younger generation will not only have a deep understanding of religion but also be able to become agents of change that bring benefits to society and the nation.

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