

# An Interdisciplinary Approach to Islamic Religious Education in Elementary Schools

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## ABSTRACT

This research aims to address the limited implementation of an interdisciplinary approach in Islamic religious education for elementary school students. An interdisciplinary approach involves integrating two educational disciplines to explain religious content alongside non-religious material, offering a potential solution to reduce the educational dichotomy in Indonesia. While incorporating interdisciplinary methods in education, particularly at the elementary level, is not a new concept, it remains underutilized due to the limited student response, which often discourages educators from applying it. This qualitative descriptive study involved fifth-grade students from SDI Insan Kamil Tuban. Findings from the implementation of the interdisciplinary approach in these classes indicated that not all students were enthusiastic, though high-performing students showed greater engagement. These students, with their critical thinking skills, responded positively, creating a more dynamic and enjoyable classroom environment compared to the previous monotonous setup. The experiment to enhance learning motivation was deemed 75% successful, as only a portion of students displayed enthusiasm. Thus, educators are encouraged to be more innovative and creative in designing engaging lessons, which could be facilitated by surveying students' learning preferences to reduce passivity. An active classroom, in turn, can lead to improved learning outcomes.

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## INTRODUCTION

The development of technology that continues to occur in every part of the world requires all parties to contribute to it, including in the education factor. In the world of education, the ability to be able to utilize and maximize technology for the learning process is expected to help in improving understanding and learning achievement in students (Syarnubi.S., 2024). Not only as a tool or media in learning, technology also plays a role as science and also functions to minimize the gap in mastery of the latest technology, especially in the world of education (Salsabila, U. H., & Agustian, 2021).

Along with the development of technology in education, the emergence of various kinds of learning models can also be an educator's choice in applying suitable learning models in the teaching and learning process carried out in the classroom. A good learning model can help students understand subject matter better, acquire critical and creative thinking skills, and encourage character development (Regina Yoantika Natalie, et al, 2023).

In the context of Islamic religious education, the delivery of religious material to students, especially in elementary school students, makes educators have to find strategies and approaches that are suitable and easily understood by students (Syarnubi.S., Syarifuddin, A., & Sukirman, 2023). The learning approach is one part of the learning model where the approach is the point of view used by an educator towards the learning process (Syarnubi, S, Mansir F., Purnom, M.E., Harto, K., & Hawi, 2021). The existence of innovations or ideas in PAI learning practices that occur, refers to the interdisciplinary approach, which connects one subject with other subjects included in thematic learning (Syarnubi, S., Efriani, A., Pranita, S., Zuhijra, Z., Anggara, B., Alimron, A., ... & Rohmadi, 2024).

In the implementation of Islamic religious education learning in elementary schools using an interdisciplinary approach is a new thing because previously educators used a monodisciplinary approach, Islamic religious education subjects were taught separately from other subjects. Islamic education learning that has been too focused on one thing, because it is based on revelation from Allah SWT (Khakim Ashari, et al 2023) Learning with a monodisciplinary approach is less attractive to students in the era of education 5.0 which can result in low learning achievement.

PAI learning which contains religious material, which is a guide to life, should be presented more interestingly so that students can easily understand the material delivered by educators (Syarnubi, 2023). The interdisciplinary approach in its application does not only teach about religious values but can be combined with other subjects, such as combining with social science and natural science (Syarnubi, 2019a). By applying an interdisciplinary approach, it does not only focus on cognitive aspects, but affective and psychomotor aspects in students will also develop. According to Piaget, grade IV elementary school students are at the concrete operational stage of development with an age range of 9-10 years, so students can already think logically, flexibly, and more easily understand something in concrete form (Wiradarma, K., Suarni, N., & Renda, 2021) So that in the application of Islamic religious education learning using an interdisciplinary approach at the elementary school level is a new thing that must be developed so that students can easily understand the concept of learning Islamic religious education.

The interdisciplinary approach can also be a solution to Islamic learning with the implementation of the independent curriculum, where learning must use technology and prioritize student learning interests (Syarnubi, 2022). The incorporation of other subjects in PAI learning can also overcome the problem of educational dichotomy that continues to emerge, because the interdisciplinary approach integrates religious and general sciences but does not eliminate the value or meaning of the PAI learning.

## METHODS

Included in descriptive qualitative research, which is research that seeks to explain descriptively the topics of discussion (Syarnubi, 2019b). This study describes descriptively the interdisciplinary approach, PAI in elementary schools, and the implementation of the interdisciplinary approach in PAI subjects in elementary schools. This research uses data collected through documents and researcher observation.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Interdisciplinary Approach

Quoted in reference terms from a symposium that appeared in the report of the Director General of UNESCO to the Executive Board on the preparation of the Medium Term Plan for 1984-1985, indicating that the problems faced by humans today cannot only be solved with one discipline but with various disciplines to solve complex problems (Faizal, R. A., Azima, F., Maunti, O., & Nasor, 2023). In the perspective of Islamic education, education does not only make humans have intelligence in one science but become a complete human being who understands many sciences known as interdisciplinary. The interdisciplinary approach is an approach in solving a problem by using a review of various points of view of relevant or appropriate cognate sciences in an integrated manner (Kurnia, A., Koswara, T., & Ruswandi, 2022). What is meant by allied sciences are sciences that are in a certain family of sciences, namely the natural sciences,

social sciences, or cultural sciences, while relevant sciences mean sciences that are suitable for use in solving a problem (Surohim, 2021).

## 2. Islamic Religious Education in Primary Schools

In the Merdeka curriculum at the Basic Education level, there is a P5PPRA project in its application which combines general and religious materials. In its implementation, this program is only implemented in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah while elementary schools only implement P5 (Syarnubi, 2020). The implementation includes several things such as creating knowledge, understanding and behavior of *tafahquh fiddin* in the field of Islam in madrasah, then the Rahmatan Lil Alamin program is also an effort to preserve the diversity that exists in Indonesia without leaving religious values (Ariyanti, S., et al, 2024). From the program, we can conclude that interdisciplinary can also be applied in elementary school education, except that the interdisciplinary approach is a model of approach in learning Islamic religious education, so as not to be monotonous, the delivery of religious material is combined with general subjects such as Natural Sciences, Social, and Citizenship. Religious learning that is religious and abstract can be concretized by combining other subject matter in it (Afnii, 2023).

From research conducted by (Haris, 2024) states that PAI learning with an interdisciplinary approach can be applied at the elementary school level, so that PAI learning can be more relevant to the development of the times and technology. Proven by the existence of the Qur'an as a holy book for Muslims in which there are various kinds of knowledge not only about religion, but there are social sciences, and natural sciences about the creation of the earth is found in the Qur'an and explained in detail. This of course can be used as a foundation and reference in learning Islamic religious education which in its implementation uses an interdisciplinary approach. Combining religious science and general science in a lesson will make it easier for students to understand and understand the subject matter because the material is more flexible and does not seem monotonous.

The implementation of an interdisciplinary approach in Islamic religious education learning can also be a solution to the dichotomy problem, besides that Islamic religious education learning becomes more relevant (Haris, 2024). interdisciplinary approach in the learning process trains students to explore more so that students do not only focus on one context but several learning contexts that are put together so that students have a broader insight, this will have an impact on students' increased learning achievement (Syarnubi et al., 2022).

Learning Islamic religious education using an interdisciplinary approach makes learning more lively and meaningful (Faisal, 2022). Learning carried out with an interdisciplinary approach, looks the same as learning in general, educators teach learning materials as usual. But the subject matter is packed with religious values combined with nationalism and cultural, scientific and social values. Like the teaching of mutual cooperation, in Islamic religious education learning material it is one of the *akhlaqul kharimah* because it is a praiseworthy act, besides that in social science it is social interaction and is a form of cooperation between humans, because humans live side by side, it is necessary to have an attitude of mutual cooperation.

The interdisciplinary approach is a method that teaches students to deal with a problem with different perspectives but has similarities from several aspects so that there is still a coordination (Syarnubi, 2016). So that the problem can be solved with just one solution. The interdisciplinary approach in learning Islamic religious education will provide a new atmosphere for elementary school students, because students in the learning process not only get religious knowledge but also get teaching about general science. The development of the times towards technological sophistication, it is necessary to combine some knowledge that is considered difficult to understand by students into things that can be easily remembered, one of which is by combining two different sciences but still has a coordination, so as not to eliminate the religious meaning of the religious science.

### 3. Implementation of Interdisciplinary Approach in Islamic Education Learning at Elementary School

Interdisciplinary learning is the integration or combination of two subjects in the learning process, making it an integrated learning (Rusmawati, Suci, N. R., & Nisa, 2022). The purpose of interdisciplinary learning is to optimize students' abilities in cognitive, psychomotor, and affective aspects (Durhan., 2020). But in its application, there are still many educational institutions that are reluctant to implement it on the grounds that it cannot be applied due to the lack of student response.

In the findings in several schools that have implemented interdisciplinary learning, it can provide a pleasant learning atmosphere for students. By using interdisciplinary learning, Islamic religious education learning from what previously had a classical learning concept becomes learning with a modern concept (Durhan, 2020). The implementation of the interdisciplinary approach provides a broader insight for students who do not only see Islamic religious education on halal and haram laws but become Islamic religious education that can be seen from various dimensions of science (Syarnubi, S, et al, 2023).

Several studies that have been conducted state that interdisciplinary learning by combining religious science with general science is not new and not something that perverts religion (Fauzi, M., Lestari, A.R.S., & Ali, 2023). Because the Qur'an itself does not only discuss religious issues, but it also discusses social science, natural science, even mathematics and science are written in the Qur'an (Kenedi, 2021). This proves that the combination of religious and general sciences can be done in learning Islamic religious education in elementary schools.

Islamic Religious Education in elementary schools seems monotonous, because it only studies religious sciences. Unpleasant issues about learning Islamic Religious Education continue to emerge, one of which is dichotomy. This requires educators to make an innovation in order to create a new paradigm in the world of education, so that in learning Islamic religious education can provide new knowledge not only about religious sciences (Syarnubi, &ahiroh, 2024). Indonesia, which is a country with diverse cultures and religions, is also one of the factors so that in religious learning there is no wall of separation between religious science and general science. In the interdisciplinary approach, Islamic education can not only teach religious sciences, but also examine various learning materials so that it can give birth to new views in Islamic learning (Wantini, W., & Rahmawati, 2022). Through an interdisciplinary approach, it can also strengthen students' understanding of religious and general sciences, because in essence all knowledge is a unity.

In its implementation in Islamic Religious Education learning at Insan Kamil Tuban Islamic Elementary School, the interdisciplinary approach was piloted by being applied to class V, in which learning was combined with Natural Science. The diverse abilities of students in capturing a learning material, and the delivery of educators can be a factor in its success. Looking at the students' responses, there are some students who are still the same as the usual day, namely looking ordinary, not even caring about the teacher's explanation. But some students are enthusiastic, they are the best achievers in their class. With their critical thinking skills, these students are more interested in interdisciplinary learning, so that the learning atmosphere that previously seemed monotonous became more fun.

The implementation of the interdisciplinary approach in learning Islamic Religious Education integrated with Natural Sciences does not eliminate the meaning contained in religious science, but the abstract religious science is then concretized with the explanation of natural science. The learning material integrated with the interdisciplinary approach is material about the manners of prayer with science learning material with a sub chapter on the properties of light. In this material it is explained that people who are praying must be solemn and have sincere and straight intentions to Allah SWT, the same thing is found in the nature of light, namely light has the property of propagating straight.

The interdisciplinary approach through experiments conducted by researchers can be applied in learning Islamic Religious Education at the Basic Education level. In the 2013

curriculum there are several subjects that are combined in one learning theme, this makes learning more effective and easily understood by students. So in the application of interdisciplinary in learning PAI by combining science at the elementary school level is not new, and not a careless attitude of educators. This makes learning more meaningful not lazy educators explain twice, but the interdisciplinary approach is carried out as a solution to the problem of the dichotomy of religious science and general science in education, as well as a solution for educators and students to innovate more in the learning process to increase learning motivation for students who have very low interest in learning.

Experiments conducted by researchers to increase learning motivation can be said to be successful with a success rate of 75% because only half of the students are enthusiastic about learning. So that as an educator has the task of being more innovative and creative in presenting fun learning. It can be done by conducting a survey of what kind of learning desires are expected by students, so that no more students are passive in the learning process. So an active class will foster a high attitude and interest in learning, which will improve learning achievement. In an independent curriculum where educators are required to be more technologically literate in innovating and developing learning that is liked and enjoyable for students, this is not only a policy but a solution provided by the Ministry of Research and Technology so that Indonesia is no longer the country with the lowest interest in learning in the world, in its policy the Ministry of Education and Culture and Research does not only provide nonsense but also provides a platform for educators to easily access learning materials and media to teach students (Santoso, G., Damayanti, A., Murod, M., & Imawati, 2023). Student learning achievement and motivation are the responsibility of educators, so educators must be more creative and innovative in providing learning materials in the classroom.

## CONCLUSION

The application of the interdisciplinary approach in education, especially in elementary schools, is not a new thing. The lack of response given by students makes educators reluctant to apply it in learning. The results of the application of the interdisciplinary approach in class V SDI Insan Kamil concluded that not all students were enthusiastic about learning that applied the interdisciplinary approach. But some students who are enthusiastic, are the best achievers in their class. With their critical thinking skills, these students are more interested in interdisciplinary learning, so that the learning atmosphere that previously seemed monotonous became more fun.

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