

## Integrative Approaches: A Paradigmatic and Implementative Review in PAI Learning

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### ABSTRACT

The integrative approach in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Learning is a paradigmatic response to the challenges of disintegration of knowledge, educational dualism, and the reduction of spirituality that are still emerging in modern educational practices. This research aims to comprehensively examine the philosophical, conceptual, and implementive foundations of the integrative approach in PAI learning, as well as formulate operational models that are relevant to the needs of 21st century learning. This research uses a literature method with themetical-critical analysis of various classical and contemporary Islamic literature, national education policies, and empirical research related to the integration of knowledge. The results of the study show that the integrative paradigm rests on the epistemology of monotheism which views religious science and general science as a complementary unit, not a dichotom. The implementation of an integrative approach in PAI learning results in three main forms: concept integration, value integration, and pedagogical action integration. All three have been proven to increase the relevance of learning, depth of understanding, and internalization of Islamic values through contextual and holistic learning. This study concludes that an integrative approach is not just a methodological choice, but a strategic need to build an adaptive, moderate, and spiritual character strengthening Islamic education ecosystem.

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## INTRODUCTION

The issue of the dichotomy of science between religion and science is an epistemological problem that is still inherited from the colonial period to the present day in the Indonesian education system. Some people view the sciences of religion as sacred territory that should not be "contaminated" by modern sciences, while others place religion only as a moral system with no relevance to the development of science and technology. This dichotomy ultimately gives birth to knowledge fragmentation, spiritual aridity, and the weak relevance of PAI learning to the needs of 21st century students. Islam itself has never separated religious knowledge from world knowledge. Allah says in Q.S. al-'Alaq/96:1-5 which affirms that the process of reading (iqra') encompasses the whole of reality, both revelation and the universe (kauniyah).

The integrative paradigm exists as an effort to rebuild this epistemological coherence. This approach emphasizes the interconnectedness between the text and the context, between the values of monotheism and the development of science, and between spirituality and 21st-century competence. Integrative PAI learning is believed to be able to bridge the gap between the demands of religiosity and the needs of contemporary skills, thereby producing students who are moral,

knowledgeable, and adaptive to global changes. (Mahara & Hafidz, 2025)

In Indonesia, various Islamic universities, such as UIN, IAIN, and STAIN, have encouraged the integration-interconnection paradigm in various models. (Hefner, 2009) This shows that the integrative approach has a strong paradigmatic and implementive urgency in the context of modern Islamic education. However, the implementation of integrative approaches at the school level, especially in PAI learning, is not fully systematic and still requires a comprehensive framework.

This research is here to strengthen the framework through an in-depth study of the concept and its application in PAI learning, as well as providing a critical analysis of the actualization of the integrative paradigm in facing modern educational challenges. This research uses a qualitative approach with the library research method. (Syarifah & Misbah, 2025) This method was chosen because the focus of the research is on conceptual, paradigmatic, and implementive studies related to integrative approaches in PAI learning. Literature studies allow researchers to conduct a critical review of relevant primary and secondary sources, both from classical Islamic literature, contemporary educational thought, and empirical research related to the integration of knowledge in Islamic education

Research data were collected from various categories of sources: (1) works of classical scholars who discuss Islamic epistemology, such as al-Ghazālī and Ibn Khaldūn; (2) the works of modern Islamic education thinkers such as Azyumardi Azra, al-Attas, and Fazlur Rahman and others (3) books on PAI learning methodology; (4) articles of national journals accredited by SINTA; (5) official documents of the Independent Curriculum and education regulations. Other sources include the writing of the Rector of IAIN and also the chest of writings from IAIN lecturer Datuk Laksemana Bengkalis Riau, used as enrichment material for analysis.

The urgency of this research departs from the still strong learning practice of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) which is normative-textual and separate from the social reality, scientific development, and cultural context of students. (Amalia & others, 2025) This condition has an impact on the low relevance of PAI learning in responding to 21st century educational challenges, such as character crises, technological disruptions, and the complexity of social problems. The integrative approach is an urgent need because it not only functions as a pedagogical strategy, but also as an epistemological paradigm that is able to bridge the dichotomy of religion and science, strengthen the internalization of Islamic values, and build PAI learning that is contextual, holistic, and oriented towards the formation of students' spiritual and social character. The novelty of this research lies in the presentation of an integrative approach in PAI learning which is not only discussed at the conceptual level, but is analyzed comprehensively through the synthesis of monotheistic paradigms, the integration of religion-science, religion-social life, and local religion-culture in one implementive framework.

## METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with the library research method. This method was chosen because the focus of the research is on conceptual, paradigmatic, and implementive studies related to integrative approaches in PAI learning. Literature studies allow researchers to conduct a critical study of relevant primary and secondary sources, both from classical Islamic literature, contemporary educational thought, and empirical research related to the integration of knowledge in Islamic education. (Ahmadi, Haris, & Akbal, 2020)

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formulations and implementive implications of contextual and applicative integrative approaches in PAI learning. (Rohmad, 2017)

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that an integrative approach in learning Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is built through three main findings that are interrelated, namely the integration of religion with science, the integration of religion with social life, and the integration of religion with local culture. (Zarkasyi, 2018) These three findings reflect the PAI learning pattern that is no longer dichotomous, but holistic and contextual. Integration of religion–science,

These three dimensions form a strong epistemological framework for the PAI learning model that not only focuses on spiritual aspects, but also strengthens students' intellectual, social, and cultural competencies in an integrated manner. This approach departs from a critique of the dichotomy of science that has long divided between *ulumuddin* and modern science, a colonial legacy and an old educational tradition that creates a separation between religion and reality. (Hashim, 2007)

The integrative paradigm emphatically rejects this dichotomy. As stated by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, knowledge in Islam is *sprinkler* or unity of knowledge. Revelation, reason, and empirical reality are not stand-alone entities, but three complementary sources of knowledge in the process of shaping knowledge and human personality. (Al-Attas, 1991) The concept of al-Attas emphasizes that every discipline is essentially rooted in the values of monotheism, so that the development of science cannot be separated from the aspects of spirituality and manners.

The findings of this research are also strengthened by the author Haris Riadi, who places PAI learning in the framework of *Humanization* and *Social Empowerment*. That Islamic education must be able to connect normative teachings with social dynamics, technology, and the development of science critically so that students not only master the text, but also be able to solve problems of contemporary life. (Riadi, 2021) Thus, the integration of religion–science and religion–social life is not only a pedagogical need, but is the conceptual foundation of Islamic education in the modern era.

On the other hand, Dr. Abu Anuar emphasized that successful Islamic education is an education that is able to bring divine values into the social life of students. He emphasized that the learning process must combine normative understanding with strengthening social capacity so that students are able to contribute to the public benefit. (Muliawarman & Fadriati, 2025) This confirms that the integration between religion and social life is an important part of the formation of Islamic character.

The integrative approach in PAI is an epistemological as well as a pedagogical answer to the challenges of 21st century education. PAI must not stop at the transfer of textual teachings, but must be an instrument of personality and social transformation. By connecting revelation, reason, and socio-cultural reality, an integrative approach builds a complete Islamic worldview, so that PAI learning becomes more relevant, applicative, and transformative for students.

### 1. Integration of Religion and Science

The findings of the study show that the integration of religion and science is an urgent need in PAI learning. Many teachers still teach PAI normatively, so it is difficult for students to understand the relevance of Quranic values to modern scientific phenomena such as digital technology, biotechnology, or climate change issues. (Tafsir, 2013) The strategy for implementing religious-science integration can be carried out through a *kauniah* verse approach, inquiry-based learning, and analysis of scientific phenomena based on Islamic ethical values. (Tan, 2014) This is in line with the view of Haris Riadi who emphasized that scientific integration must be a space for creative dialogue between religious texts and the development of contemporary science as an actualization of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*. (Shihab, 2002). The integration of science and religion does not mean mixing the methodologies of the two, but harmonizing the underlying goals, directions, and values. Thus, PAI becomes relevant, adaptive, and responsive to global challenges.

### 2. Integration of Religion and Social Life

The results of the study show that PAI learning has great potential to shape students' social awareness. However, in practice, the learning process in the classroom is often fragmented and less connected to the real problems faced by society. Many teachers are still stuck in

normative-textual teaching patterns, so that social values in Islam are not transformed into learning experiences that shape students' moral sensitivity and social concern. (Hidayat, 2020)

The learning model has been proven to be able to increase empathy, social awareness, and prosocial motivation of students, as explained by Riadi that Islamic education is not just a transmission of religious dogma, but an instrument of social empowerment. (Riadi, 2020) Islamic education that does not touch social reality has the potential to give birth to a dry and ungrounded religiosity. (Siradij, 2015)

Dr. Abu Anuar, Rector of IAIN, Datuk Laksemana Bengkalis emphasized that the core of modern Islamic education is *Forming people who are able to combine divine values with social responsibility*. (Anuar, 2022) According to him, the main task of Islamic education is to present transcendental values in the context of plural people's lives, so that students not only have a strong spirituality but also a "social capacity" to build public benefit (*public good*).

He stated that *Religion must not stop at the level of ritual, but must be the driving force for social change* through strengthening social literacy, problem-solving skills, and commitment to social justice. (Anuar, 2022) This thinking is very relevant to the integrative approach in PAI, because it requires teachers to connect religious teachings with the dynamics of a multicultural society in Indonesia. From the author's perspective, the integration of social values in PAI learning is a theological and pedagogical necessity. Islam places the social dimension as an integral part of religion. (Azra, 2019) Therefore, PAI learning must be a place for the formation of social character, not only as a space for memorizing religious norms. An integrative approach is not only academically relevant, but is a must in answering increasingly complex humanitarian and social challenges in the digital and global era. (Rofiah, Hutagalung, Kurniati, & Tomi, 2025)

The results of the study show that PAI learning has a huge potential in shaping students' social awareness. (Widyastuti, 2022) Teachers need to integrate PAI material with social issues such as poverty, bullying, social conflict, digital security, and the environment. The service learning approach, social case studies, and reflective discussions based on Quranic verses have been proven to increase students' social awareness. These findings reinforce Riadi's idea that Islamic education should function as a means of social empowerment, not just a doctrinal transmission.

### 3. Integration of Local Religions and Cultures

The findings show that local culture has a strategic role in making PAI learning more contextual, grounded, and easy to understand. (Zainuddin, 2021) This integration can be realized through the use of local wisdom values such as mutual cooperation as a representation *Squirt*, customary deliberation as a form of *sūra*, as well as the use of rhymes, poems, and local traditions as learning media. This research is further strengthened when it is associated with the idea that places Islamic education as a system that must be able to carry out *Epistemic Dialogue* between religious texts, social experiences, and cultural change. (Mulkhan, 2016) That the integrative approach in PAI not only aims to relate Islamic teachings to modern science, but also to connect religious values with the local socio-cultural context. (Huda & others, 2017)

The success of Islamic education is not measured by how much material students understand, but by how far education is able to shape *Religious Awareness* that are actual, adaptive, and problem-solving oriented in life. (Hakim & Haris, 2025) This perspective is in line with research findings that show that the integration of PAI in the classroom must establish a correlation between revelation–science–socio–cultural reality. We as PAI teacher practitioners in teaching experience, find students who are faster, easier and more fun to understand learning when it is watered with the culture and reality of their lives. (Halstead, 2004) The integrative approach becomes even more alive when teachers are able to be in a "meeting room" between Islam and local culture that is relevant to the learning material. PAI teachers, including us, have an epistemological responsibility in integrating learning with social life for social and religious competence.

### 4. Challenges of Implementing Integrative Approaches

**a. Curriculum That Has Not Supported,** The PAI curriculum in schools is still material-dense and content-oriented, so it does not provide room for integrative development (Muhaimin,

2018)

- b. Limited Teacher Competence,** Many PAI teachers are not epistemologically or methodologically ready to implement integrative learning. (Riadi, 2021)
- c. School Infrastructure and Ecosystem,** The school environment and learning culture that are still ritualistic are often obstacles in the implementation of integrative approaches. (Anuar, 2022)

The implications of this research are not intended as a repetition of results and discussions, but as an academic consequence of the research findings regarding the integrative approach in Islamic Religious Education learning. (Miladiyah & Jauhari, 2025) Theoretically, the integrative approach strengthens the scientific framework of PAI by emphasizing the integration of spiritual, intellectual, social, and cultural dimensions in one holistic Islamic education paradigm. These findings place PAI not only as a transmission of normative teachings, but as an educational discipline that has an epistemological and axiological basis that is relevant to the dynamics of science and social reality. (Lubis, Yunus, Diao, & Embi, 2010)

Practically, the integrative approach provides operational direction for PAI teachers in designing and implementing contextual learning. (Azra, 2015) Learning planning, method selection, and assessment are directed to relate Islamic values with students' real experiences, social issues, scientific developments, and local culture. This implication also demands the strengthening of PAI teachers' competencies, both in integrative pedagogic aspects, cross-disciplinary skills, and mastery of digital technology, so that PAI learning is more adaptive, reflective, and meaningful. (Sholihah & Misbah, 2025)

In the social and cultural context, an integrative approach has implications for the formation of PAI learning that is oriented towards strengthening inclusive and diversity-sensitive religious character. (Raymond, 2011) By connecting religious teachings with local culture, social issues, and digital reality, PAI has the potential to form students who are not only personally religious, but also have social awareness and commitment to the public welfare. Thus, the implications of this study confirm that the relevant integrative approach is applied in the context of a multicultural and dynamic Indonesian society.

## CONCLUSION

The integrative approach in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Learning is a paradigmatic response to the challenges of disintegration of knowledge, educational dualism, and the reduction of spirituality that are still emerging in modern educational practices. The implementation of an integrative approach in PAI learning results in three main forms: concept integration, value integration, and pedagogical action integration. All three have been proven to increase the relevance of learning, depth of understanding, and internalization of Islamic values through contextual and holistic learning. This study concludes that an integrative approach is not just a methodological choice, but a strategic need to build an adaptive Islamic education ecosystem based on strengthening ritual and social character

The findings of the study also show that the integrative approach does not only function as a pedagogical strategy, but as a paradigm of Islamic education that places revelation, reason, and social reality as an epistemological unit. The implementation of this approach encourages PAI learning to move from normative-textual patterns to contextual, reflective, and socially empowered religious character formation.

Based on these findings, this study recommends the need for further empirical research to test the effectiveness of integrative approaches in PAI learning practices at various levels of education. Further research also needs to explore the competency development of PAI teachers in applying an integrative approach, as well as examine the role of digital technology and local cultural contexts more specifically to strengthen the implementation of sustainable PAI learning.

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