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Integration of Philosophical and Theoretical Paradigms in Developing an Adaptive Islamic Education Curriculum for the Modern Era

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze issues related to the integration of philosophical and theoretical paradigms in the development of an adaptive Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in the modern era. It employs a library research approach by collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing data from relevant literature, including books, journals, and policy documents. The analysis is conducted descriptively-analytically through content analysis to examine themes, concepts, and patterns concerning the integration of philosophy and theory in PAI curriculum development. The findings and discussion affirm that the integration of Islamic philosophical paradigms and modern educational theories in the development of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum constitutes a strategic foundation for curriculum renewal that is responsive to contemporary demands. The novelty of this study lies in the formulation of an integrative conceptual framework that positions Islamic philosophy grounded in the Qur'an and Hadith as the normative foundation for the formation of insan kamil, while synthesizing essentialism, progressivism, constructivism, and humanism as operational pedagogical approaches. Theoretically, this study advances PAI curriculum theory by shifting its orientation from a normative-ritualistic focus toward an adaptive, holistic, contextual, and transformative curriculum that emphasizes the strengthening of spiritual, moral, and social values, as well as 21st-century skills (4C). The main conceptual outcome of this research is an integrative-adaptive PAI curriculum model that requires alignment of institutional vision, reflective teacher competence, sustainable policy support, and the implementation of innovative, meaningful, and effective learning strategies for learners.

Keywords: *Adaptive; Integratio; Modern Era; PAI Curriculum Development.*

Intoduction

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in schools holds a strategic position in shaping students' personalities so that they are not only intellectually intelligent but also faithful, pious, and morally upright. Along with the progress of time, the challenges of education have become increasingly complex socially, culturally, and technologically. Therefore, the PAI curriculum should not be static; it must be developed adaptively by integrating philosophical and theoretical paradigms as its conceptual foundation.

Philosophically, the development of the PAI curriculum is based on the goal of Islamic education, namely to form *insan kamil* a complete human being who can integrate faith (*iman*), knowledge (*ilmu*), and action (*amal*) in daily life (Al-Attas, 1993). The philosophy of Islamic education does not only emphasize cognitive aspects but also harmony among spiritual, moral, social, and intellectual dimensions. This aligns with the objectives of national education as stated in the Indonesian National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003, which aims to enlighten the life of the nation and to develop Indonesian people who are faithful, pious, and noble in character.

The desired educational goals must include knowledge, attitudes, and skills that lead to behavioral changes as the result of learning activities (Abdurrahmansyah et al., 2017). Learning must encompass these three domains; thus, the philosophy of Islamic education serves as a normative foundation for the direction of PAI curriculum development.

In addition to philosophical foundations, educational theories also play an important role in formulating a PAI curriculum that is relevant to contemporary needs. Essentialism emphasizes the importance of mastering the core teachings of religion as the essence of the curriculum (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). However, in the context of the modern era, progressivism and constructivism theories also need to be integrated so that PAI does not merely focus on rote memorization of materials but encourages students to be active, critical, and capable of connecting religious teachings with real-life situations (Dewey, 1938). Thus, the integration of theory and philosophy produces a balanced curriculum between the ideal values of religion and the realities of modern society.

The adaptive Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum must be able to respond to the challenges of globalization, modernization, and the development of information technology. The digital era has brought about significant changes in the mindset and behavior of the younger generation; therefore, a curriculum approach that focuses solely on the transfer of knowledge is no longer sufficient (Tilaar, 2004). PAI needs to be presented as a contextual, responsive, and relevant curriculum for real life without losing the essence of Islamic values. Hence, the integration of philosophical and theoretical paradigms becomes the key to developing a PAI curriculum that not only shapes religious character but also equips students with 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and digital literacy (Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

Furthermore, the development of an integrative PAI curriculum also supports the realization of religious moderation. In a multicultural society like Indonesia, religious education must not be exclusive; rather, it should instill attitudes of tolerance, openness, and respect for diversity (Azra, 2019). The universal philosophy of Islam and inclusive modern educational theories can be combined to create a PAI curriculum that fosters both spiritual awareness and social competence in community life.

The proposed integration of philosophical and theoretical paradigms in the development of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum is able to advance the conceptual foundations of Islamic education curriculum theory in a systematic and contextual manner. Islamic philosophy, grounded in the Qur'an and Hadith, is positioned as the normative and teleological framework for the formation of *insan kamil*, while modern educational theories—such as essentialism, progressivism, constructivism, and humanism are integrated as operational pedagogical approaches. This integration transcends the dichotomous separation between normativity and praxis by offering an adaptive, holistic, and transformative PAI curriculum model. Theoretically, this approach enriches the

conceptualization of the PAI curriculum by emphasizing the dynamic relationship between Islamic values, learners' needs, and the socio-cultural challenges of the modern era.

Thus, the integration of philosophical and theoretical paradigms in PAI curriculum development is an urgent necessity in the modern era. A curriculum that relies solely on one paradigm will lose its relevance both normatively and practically. The development of an adaptive, contextual, and comprehensive PAI curriculum is the solution to ensure that PAI remains relevant and plays a significant role in shaping a generation of Muslims who are noble in character, intelligent, and resilient in facing the dynamics of change.

Research Methods

This study employed a library research approach, which focuses on the collection, analysis, and synthesis of data from various literature sources relevant to the research topic (Annur, 2018; Ibrahim et al., 2022; Sugiyono, 2019). The library research method was chosen because the issue of integrating philosophical and theoretical paradigms in the development of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum is a conceptual matter that requires an in-depth examination of its normative and theoretical foundations (Zed, 2008).

The data sources were obtained from reference books, national and international journal articles, educational policy documents, as well as previous studies related to PAI curriculum development, Islamic educational philosophy, and modern educational theories. The selection of sources was carried out by considering their recency, credibility, and relevance to the research focus (Mestika, 2002).

Data analysis was conducted using content analysis, which involves examining the contents of the literature to identify themes, concepts, and patterns related to the integration of philosophy and theory in curriculum development. This analytical process was carried out in a descriptive-analytical manner, by describing data from the literature and then analyzing it critically to construct a comprehensive argumentation (Krippendorff, 2013). The analytical process in this study was conducted through several systematic stages. First, concept categorization was carried out by grouping key themes related to Islamic philosophy, educational objectives, curriculum theory, and modern pedagogical approaches in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Second, paradigm synthesis was undertaken by examining the conceptual interconnections between the normative foundations of the Qur'an and Hadith and the theories of essentialism, progressivism, constructivism, and humanism to construct an integrative framework. Third, theoretical validity was ensured through source triangulation, consistency of argumentation, and critical comparison with established theories and findings from previous studies to ensure conceptual coherence and relevance.

The results of this literature study are expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of an adaptive PAI curriculum in the modern era by emphasizing the integration of philosophical and theoretical paradigms as its conceptual foundation.

Research Findings

Aspect of Islamic Educational Philosophy

The research findings indicate that the philosophy of Islamic education serves as a normative and conceptual foundation in developing the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum. This philosophy emphasizes that the Qur'an and Hadith are the primary sources of knowledge as well as

guides for life in determining educational goals, content, and teaching methods. The ultimate aim of education is the formation of *insan kamil*—a complete human being who embodies a balance between faith (*iman*), knowledge (*ilm*), and good deeds (*amal*).

Recent studies show that the hermeneutical integration of Qur'anic verses and Hadiths into curriculum design strengthens the relevance of religious learning to modern life. Students' learning outcomes have improved, particularly in affective domains such as tolerance, social awareness, and digital ethics, when Islamic values are explicitly integrated into syllabi and classroom activities (Ismail, 2020);(Haikal & Anwar, 2024).

Other research confirms that reinforcing religious moderation through the PAI curriculum effectively reduces tendencies toward intolerance when accompanied by participatory and interreligious dialogue-based learning approaches (Mukhibat et al., 2024). Therefore, Islamic educational philosophy provides a strong foundation for constructing a PAI curriculum that is adaptive, character-oriented, and focused on nurturing noble morals.

The philosophy of Islamic education serves as the normative and conceptual foundation in developing the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum. This philosophy places the Qur'an and Hadith as the primary sources of knowledge and life guidance, which serve as the basis for formulating the objectives, content, and methods of instruction. Its ultimate goal is to shape *insan kamil* a complete human being who embodies a balance between faith (*iman*), knowledge (*ilm*), and action (*amal*).

The hermeneutical approach to integrating Qur'anic verses and Hadiths into the curriculum has been proven to enhance the relevance of religious learning in addressing modern life challenges. Research indicates that students show improvement in affective domains such as tolerance, social empathy, and ethical use of technology when Islamic values are explicitly embedded in the syllabus and learning activities. Strengthening religious moderation within the PAI curriculum can also reduce tendencies toward intolerance, especially when implemented through participatory methods and interfaith dialogue-based learning. Thus, the philosophy of Islamic education stands as a crucial pillar for realizing a PAI curriculum that is adaptive, character-oriented, and focused on cultivating noble morals.

Aspect of Educational Theory

Research in the field of educational theory indicates that the implementation of four main philosophical streams essentialism, progressivism, constructivism, and humanism can complement one another in shaping a holistic Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum.

1. Essentialism has been proven to preserve the core of Islamic teachings such as the Qur'an, Hadith, creed (*aqidah*), and basic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), ensuring that these remain the foundation of religious learning (Aminuddin, 2025).
2. Progressivism fosters relevance through learning strategies based on real-life experiences and social projects that enhance student engagement (Anisa & Suwendi, 2024).
3. Constructivism facilitates students to actively build their religious understanding through dialogue, text interpretation, and problem-based learning (Permatasari et al., 2024).
4. Humanism contributes to developing empathy, moral responsibility, and spiritual maturity among students (Kartikasari et al., 2023).

Research findings demonstrate that the integration of these four theoretical perspectives enriches and strengthens the development of a comprehensive and holistic PAI curriculum. Essentialism serves to maintain the purity of Islamic fundamentals such as the Qur'an, Hadith, *aqidah*, and *fiqh* as the central foundation of learning. Meanwhile, progressivism emphasizes the relevance of education to real life through experiential, project-based, and problem-solving approaches, thereby enhancing student engagement and independence.

Constructivism, on the other hand, encourages learners to actively construct their religious knowledge through dialogue, critical reflection, and interpretive interaction with sacred texts, as well as through the application of problem-based learning models. Humanism focuses on shaping the whole person by fostering empathy, moral responsibility, and spiritual maturity within students.

Empirically, the integration of these four theories not only enriches pedagogical approaches but also strengthens students' critical thinking, tolerance, and religious character. Consequently, Islamic Religious Education becomes more relevant to the demands of the modern era, which requires a balance between intellectuality, spirituality, and humanity.

Aspects of Curriculum Adaptability in the Modern Era

Research confirms that adaptability is a crucial element in ensuring that the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum remains relevant amidst technological advances and cultural pluralism. A study conducted at MTs Negeri 1 Prabumulih (Ersi et al., 2025) highlights the importance of multidimensional literacy including digital, civic, and social literacy in PAI learning to face the demands of Society 5.0. Furthermore, Seituni and Isriyah's findings demonstrate that integrating digital literacy into PAI lessons enhances student participation and raises awareness of digital ethics (Seituni & Isriyah, 2025).

Studies by Yusuf & Sodik and Sa'idi indicate that the implementation of 21st-century skills (the 4Cs: Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, Communication) strengthens students' reflective, innovative, and communicative abilities (Yusuf & Sodik, 2025);(Sa'idi, 2023). Additionally, Mariani et al. affirm that a social transformation approach within a multicultural curriculum fosters values of tolerance, justice, and social responsibility through concrete actions (Mariani et al., 2024).

Adaptability is the key to maintaining the relevance of the PAI curriculum against the backdrop of technological progress and cultural diversity in the modern era. By enabling the curriculum to respond to social changes and 21st-century learning demands, adaptability preserves the core Islamic values. Multidimensional literacy, especially digital literacy, equips students for Society 5.0, where technology and humanity coexist harmoniously. The integration of 21st-century skills develops students' critical and creative thinking as well as collaboration and communication competencies. The multicultural curriculum further instills tolerance, justice, and social responsibility, making PAI a vehicle for adaptive and humanistic character development.

Aspects of Implementation in Schools

Research conducted in various schools confirms that the successful implementation of the integration of educational philosophy and theory depends on alignment between the school's vision and mission, teacher readiness, facility support, and a comprehensive evaluation system (Utami, 2020); (Sholahudin et al., 2025). Field findings show that schools with a clear vision of religious moderation and Islamic character have successfully designed contextual learning. They link Quranic verses with social issues and use measurable affective assessment instruments.

The implementation of educational philosophy and theory integration in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum heavily relies on coherence between school vision, teacher competence, facility support, and a thorough evaluation system. Schools with a strong vision for religious moderation and Islamic character formation prove to be more successful in creating contextual and meaningful learning experiences. They effectively connect Quranic verses and Hadiths with current social issues and implement more objective and measurable affective assessments.

Research by Abdurrahmansyah reveals significant challenges, including limited facilities, insufficient teacher competence in developing digital curricula, and weak non-cognitive evaluation systems (Abdurrahmansyah et al., 2022). These highlight implementation issues in many schools such as the lack of learning facilities, low teacher capacity in digital curriculum development, and weak affective and psychomotor evaluation systems. Institutional support, continuous teacher training, and policies promoting authentic evaluation are crucial to ensuring successful curriculum implementation. With good synergy among school vision, teacher readiness, and systemic support, the PAI curriculum can evolve into a transformative educational instrument oriented toward students' character development.

Discussion

Aspect of Islamic Educational Philosophy

The education offered must be capable of instilling and shaping the students' personalities based on values (Romli et al., 2023). Conceptually, the philosophy of Islamic education serves as the ideological foundation guiding the development of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum. The principle of *insan kamil* emphasizes the importance of balancing faith, knowledge, and practice in all dimensions of education.

Islamic Educational Philosophy is a critical ideological base for developing the PAI curriculum. It directs educational aims toward forming *insan kamil*—individuals who maintain a balance between faith, knowledge, and actions. This concept underscores that education should not only impart knowledge and skills but also cultivate noble character and strong spiritual values in learners.

Character education is vital in shaping individuals with quality traits, especially in the complexities of modern society. Integrasi nilai-nilai spiritual, moral, dan sosial dalam struktur kurikulum menjadi operationalisasi dari kedua landasan di atas (Ilmi et al., 2023). The curriculum must translate divine values into learning experiences that shape personality and noble character. This integration goes beyond normative levels to become an operational framework in determining objectives, content, methods, and evaluation.

The incorporation of spiritual, moral, and social values into the curriculum actualizes the philosophy by delivering learning experiences that are practical in character development. This approach ensures that divine values are consistently embedded in the goals, materials, methods, and assessments, thereby fostering an Islamic personality.

Hence, Islamic educational philosophy prioritizes character building as the core foundation so that graduates are not only intellectually smart but also possess deep moral and spiritual strengths to address modern life challenges comprehensively. This philosophy positions education as a holistic process uniting cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects within the framework of Islamic teachings.

Aspects of Educational Theory

Modern educational theories provide a vital methodological framework to make the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum more contextual, creative, and humanistic. Essentialism safeguards the core substance of Islam, ensuring that religious values remain strong and meaningful throughout the educational process. Progressivism emphasizes enlivening learning experiences that are relevant to students' real-life contexts, preventing education from becoming abstract or static.

Constructivism encourages learners to actively discover meaning and build knowledge through personal interaction and reflection. Humanism complements these by fostering empathy and moral responsibility, vital qualities in shaping noble character and social accountability. The integration of these four theories results in a balanced PAI learning process that not only transfers values and knowledge but also brings learning experiences to life while nurturing the character of students into responsible and morally upright individuals.

This approach is particularly relevant in the 21st century, which is characterized by complex challenges where character and adaptability are as important as intellectual knowledge. With this framework, the PAI curriculum can be comprehensively developed to bridge Islamic values with modern demands, thereby creating innovative and meaningful learning experiences for future generations.

Aspects of Curriculum Adaptability in the Modern Era

Collaborative learning in the digital era at the elementary school level highlights that collaborative methods allow students to learn together, exchange ideas, and solve problems relevant to their context, making 4C skills a natural part of the learning process (Latifah & Kartika, 2023). Curriculum adaptability is the key response to the challenges of globalization and technological advancement. Adaptive Islamic Religious Education (PAI) combines traditional Islamic values with 21st-century skills and digital literacy. Through the 4C approach, students not only understand religious teachings but are also able to think critically, creatively, and collaborate across cultures.

Curriculum adaptability is a key factor in responding to globalization and the digital technology revolution, especially in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Collaborative learning methods in the digital era enable students to learn together, exchange ideas actively, and solve contextually relevant problems.

This approach naturally fosters 4C skills as critical competencies in the 21st century. An adaptive PAI curriculum integrates traditional Islamic values with modern skills and digital literacy, so students not only understand religious teachings but are also able to think critically, creatively, and collaborate across cultures.

Curriculum flexibility is essential to adjust to the dynamics of multicultural and diverse societies while embedding universal Islamic values such as tolerance and justice. The use of digital technology further enriches learning experiences through interactive multimedia, e-learning platforms, and mobile applications, making learning more engaging and contextual. However, this integration must be balanced with adequate teacher training to ensure technology use is effective and meaningful.

Therefore, an adaptive PAI curriculum in the modern era not only preserves the essence of religion but also prepares young generations to competently face changing times and global challenges. The curriculum's responsiveness to social and technological changes equips students with the necessary competencies to thrive in contemporary society without losing their religious identity.

Aspect of School Implementation

At the implementation level, the integration of educational philosophy and theory requires synergy among policies, teachers, and the school environment. Teachers act as reform agents who translate Islamic values into meaningful and relevant learning contexts. Structural support and the school's cultural environment are essential factors in promoting pedagogical innovation. Authentic evaluation that measures cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains serves as an important indicator of success in shaping the character of *insan kamil* (the ideal, holistic human being).

The implementation of the curriculum at the school level demands collaboration among policies, teachers, and the school environment. Teachers need to function as reformers capable of contextualizing Islamic values into relevant and contemporary learning experiences to make the learning process lively and meaningful. Structural and cultural support within the school plays a crucial role in fostering pedagogical innovation, ensuring the curriculum's effective execution. Authentic assessments that encompass the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains become vital indicators of success in forming the character of *insan kamil*.

The challenges that remain include limited facilities, resistance to change, and a lack of continuous professional development. Therefore, collaborative strategies and teacher-based participatory policies (bottom-up approaches) need to be optimized to ensure that curriculum implementation is truly transformative and sustainable.

These challenges can hinder innovation and the application of effective learning strategies. Hence, it is essential to develop collaborative strategies that actively involve teachers and stakeholders through a bottom-up approach. This approach allows policies and pedagogical innovations to emerge from the needs and experiences of teachers in the field, making them more practical and sustainable.

Furthermore, the involvement of parents and the community is crucial in creating a supportive learning ecosystem. With comprehensive support from all parties, the implementation of Islamic Education (PAI) curricula can yield significant positive impacts—such as enhancing religious understanding, fostering character development, and shaping students' religious behavior in elementary schools. This success will provide a solid foundation for nurturing a generation with strong moral integrity and academic competence.

Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion, the integration of philosophical and theoretical paradigms in the development of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum serves as a crucial foundation for creating adaptive religious education in the modern era. The Islamic philosophical foundation, derived from the Qur'an and Hadith, provides a normative direction in shaping the goal of *insan kamil* (the ideal human being), while modern educational theories such as essentialism, progressivism, constructivism, and humanism enrich pedagogical approaches to make them more relevant to contemporary needs. An adaptive PAI curriculum not only emphasizes mastery of normative and ritual knowledge but also integrates spiritual, moral, and social values along with 21st-century skills (4C: Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, and Communication). Thus, the curriculum functions as a bridge between Islamic tradition and global realities characterized by cultural pluralism, globalization, and digital technological advancement. Successful implementation requires

synergy among the school's vision and mission, teacher readiness, supportive policies, and innovative learning methods that are contextual and meaningful.

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