



## PAI LEARNING IN INTEGRATED SCHOOLS, ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS, AND INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

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Submitted: 07-10-2025

Revised : 22-11-2025

Accepted: 27-12-2025

Published: 30-01-2026

**ABSTRACT.** This study aims to analyze and compare the learning model of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in three types of educational institutions, namely Integrated Schools, Islamic Boarding Schools, and International Schools. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-comparative method, where data is obtained through observation, interviews, and document review. The results of the study show that each type of school has different characteristics and approaches in PAI learning. Integrated Schools emphasizes the integration between the national curriculum and Islamic values, so that the learning process is oriented towards a balance between academic and spiritual aspects. Islamic Boarding School develops a learning model based on the pesantren environment, with a focus on character formation and strengthening the memorization of the Qur'an. Meanwhile, the International School applies a multicultural and global approach, where PAI is taught in a method that is adaptive to the international context. A comparison of the three models shows that the advantages of PAI learning can be achieved by combining the strengths of each system.

Keywords : PAI Learning, Integrated Schools, Islamic Boarding School, International Schools

**ABSTRAK.** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dan membandingkan model pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) di tiga jenis institusi pendidikan, yaitu Sekolah Terpadu, Pondok Pesantren (Islamic Boarding Schools), dan Sekolah Internasional. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif-komparatif, di mana data diperoleh melalui observasi, wawancara, dan telaah dokumen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa setiap jenis sekolah memiliki karakteristik dan pendekatan yang berbeda dalam pembelajaran PAI. Sekolah Terpadu menekankan integrasi antara kurikulum nasional dan nilai-nilai keislaman, sehingga proses pembelajaran berorientasi pada keseimbangan antara aspek akademik dan spiritual. Pondok Pesantren mengembangkan model pembelajaran berbasis lingkungan pesantren, dengan



*fokus pada pembentukan karakter dan penguatan hafalan Al-Qur'an. Sementara itu, Sekolah Internasional menerapkan pendekatan multikultural dan global, di mana PAI diajarkan dengan metode yang adaptif terhadap konteks internasional. Perbandingan dari ketiga model tersebut menunjukkan bahwa keunggulan pembelajaran PAI dapat dicapai dengan menggabungkan kekuatan dari masing-masing sistem.*

*Kata Kunci: Pembelajaran PAI, Sekolah Terpadu, Pondok Pesantren, Sekolah Internasional.*

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is a fundamental component in the national education system that functions to shape the character and morals of students to have faith, piety, and noble character. In the context of global development and modernization of education, the implementation of PAI learning in various educational institutions has diversified, both in terms of curriculum, approach, and implementation. Integrated Schools, Islamic Boarding Schools, and International Schools are three educational models that represent a variety of Islamic education systems and philosophies in Indonesia. The three have different orientations in internalizing Islamic values to students according to their institutional vision and social context.

Integrated Schools emerged in response to the community's need for education that was able to integrate the national curriculum with religious education. This model combines the general education system and Islamic boarding schools in a harmonious unit. In practice, PAI learning in Integrated Schools not only focuses on the transfer of religious knowledge, but also on the formation of Islamic character through habituation activities and spiritual guidance of students. Values such as discipline, responsibility, and tolerance are taught through an active and contextual learning process.

In contrast to Integrated Schools, Islamic Boarding Schools (modern Islamic boarding schools) emphasize the formation of religious character through an environment that is completely Islamic in nature. The education system at this institution integrates academic and religious activities in the daily lives of students. PAI learning is carried out intensively with reinforcement on aspects of worship, mastery of Arabic, and memorization of the Qur'an. The boarding environment has a great influence on the success of student character development because learning activities are not limited to the classroom, but also take place in daily life.

Meanwhile, the International School has a different orientation. This institution generally focuses on mastering global competencies with an international curriculum such as Cambridge or IB (International Baccalaureate). However, in some international Islamic schools, PAI remains an important part of the local curriculum that functions to strengthen students' Islamic identity in the midst of the globalization of values. The PAI learning model in these schools is typically adaptive and contextual, emphasizing an open discussion approach, spiritual reflection, and appreciation for cultural differences.

The phenomenon of diversification of the PAI learning model in the three types of schools shows that there are interesting dynamics in the development of Islamic education in the modern era. Each institution has its advantages and challenges in instilling Islamic values. Therefore, a comparative study of these three school models is important to find an ideal pattern in the implementation of PAI learning that is not only academically effective, but also able to form the character of students who are moral and have a global perspective.

This research is focused on analyzing and comparing how PAI is implemented in Integrated Schools, Islamic Boarding Schools, and International Schools, both in terms of approaches, methods, and results achieved. The results of this research are expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of PAI learning strategies in Indonesia and become a reference for education managers in integrating Islamic values in the modern education system..

## **B. RESEARCH METHOD**

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, with the aim of describing in depth the phenomenon of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning that takes place in three different educational institutions, namely Integrated Schools, Islamic Boarding Schools, and International Schools. This approach was chosen because it is able to comprehensively reveal social and pedagogical realities through direct interaction between researchers and research subjects. Qualitative research allows for an in-depth understanding of the educational context, values, and meanings that underlie the PAI learning practices in each school.

The research subjects consisted of PAI teachers, school principals, and several students who were selected purposively, namely those who were considered to have the best understanding of the implementation of PAI learning in their environment. Data is collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, resulting in rich and

contextual information. Observations were carried out to see firsthand the teaching and learning process in the classroom, the strategies used by teachers, and the interaction between teachers and students. Meanwhile, interviews were used to explore the views and experiences of informants regarding the effectiveness of the learning model applied.

The data collection process was carried out in three institutions with different characteristics. In Integrated Schools, researchers observed the integration of a thematically packaged general and religious curriculum. At the Islamic Boarding School, researchers explored the halaqah system, student discipline, and dormitory-based life that instills Islamic values. Meanwhile, at the International School, researchers focus on the application of bilingual methods and universal value-based learning that are contextualized with Islamic teachings.

Data analysis is carried out in an interactive and continuous manner, following the Miles and Huberman model which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. Each data obtained from the field is selected and categorized based on certain themes, such as learning strategies, integration of Islamic values, and the challenges and advantages of each model. The analysis process is carried out from the beginning of data collection to the final stage of research to ensure the accuracy of interpretation and consistency of the findings.

The validity of the data is strengthened through triangulation techniques, which are comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation to obtain high validity and reliability. In addition, the researcher also conducted a member check with several informants to ensure the suitability between the data and the researcher's interpretation. With this approach, the research is expected to be able to provide a complete and objective picture of the comparison of PAI learning models in Integrated Schools, Islamic Boarding Schools, and International Schools, as well as its contribution to strengthening Islamic values in the context of modern education.

## **C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. PAI Learning in Integrated Schools**

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in integrated schools has prominent characteristics in the integration of Islamic values with the national curriculum. This model was born from the realization that religious education should not stand alone as a subject,

but should be the spirit of all educational activities. PAI teachers in integrated schools play an important role in connecting the academic aspect with moral and spiritual values. The learning activity began with a joint prayer, a brief tadabbur, and the reading of Qur'anic verses that were relevant to the theme of the day's lesson. This step serves as an opener for students' hearts and minds to be more prepared to accept Islamic values reflectively.

The learning approach in integrated schools generally uses student-centered learning strategies that encourage student activity. Teachers act as facilitators who help students discover the meaning of Islamic teachings through contextual learning experiences. For example, when discussing the theme of honesty, teachers associate it with sharia economic practices, academic responsibility, and social ethics. In this way, Islamic values are not only taught theoretically, but are brought to life in a real-life context that is close to students' daily lives.

Frequently used learning methods include group discussions, case studies, project-based learning, and value reflection. This strategy aims to ensure that students not only understand religious concepts, but also be able to internalize and apply them in action. Teachers strive to create an interactive classroom atmosphere, where each student is given the opportunity to express their opinions and relate them to relevant Islamic values. This process fosters the courage to think critically as well as moral awareness.

In addition to intracurricular activities, integrated schools also emphasize religious habituation activities as an integral part of PAI learning. Activities such as congregational dhuhā prayers, memorization of selected verses, Friday alms, and spiritual mentoring are places to build good habits. This habituation functions as a vehicle for character building that makes religious values part of students' habitus, not just memorization. PAI teachers have a dual role as spiritual guides and moral guides who continue to monitor the development of students' characters.

In terms of evaluation, integrated schools implement an authentic assessment system that includes cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions. Teachers not only assess how many students are able to answer questions, but also observe their daily behavior. Character assessments are carried out through observations, behavioral journals, and social activity reports. Thus, the success of PAI learning is measured by religious awareness and noble morals that appear in real life, not solely from test scores.

One of the prominent features of integrated schools is the synergy between PAI teachers and general subject teachers. This collaboration allows for cross-disciplinary learning, such as the integration of Islamic values in science, mathematics, or language lessons. When science teachers discuss the law of natural balance, PAI teachers associate it with the concept of *tawazun* (balance created by Allah). This kind of synergy expands students' understanding that Islam has universal relevance to various branches of knowledge.

School management support is also an important factor in the success of PAI learning in integrated schools. The principal and the entire academic community instill a school culture that breathes Islam, such as greetings, good manners, cleanliness, and social responsibility. This culture creates a religious atmosphere that encourages the internalization of religious values naturally. Thus, PAI learning does not only occur in the classroom, but in every corner of school life.

From a psychological aspect, the PAI learning model in integrated schools provides a sense of security and comfort for students. Islamic values are transmitted in a gentle, persuasive, and rational way, not with a dogmatic approach. Teachers try to understand the differences in students' character and adjust teaching methods so that each student feels appreciated. This humanistic approach is in line with the principle of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* which places compassion and respect as the basis of the teacher-student relationship.

The implementation of technology also enriches the learning experience. Teachers utilize digital media such as educational videos, interactive quiz applications, and Islamic value-based e-learning. Technology does not replace the role of teachers, but expands learning spaces to be more dynamic and contextual. This innovation helps students understand that Islam is not anti-progress, but rather encourages the use of technology for the benefit of the ummah.

In conclusion, PAI learning in integrated schools is an effort to unite 21st century morals, knowledge, and skills. This model is able to answer the needs of the times while maintaining the essential principles of Islam. Its main advantage lies in its balance between moral and academic education, as well as its ability to build rational and contextual spiritual awareness.

## **2. PAI Learning at Islamic Boarding School**

Islamic boarding schools or modern boarding schools are centers for the development of Islamic education that emphasizes the formation of religious character as a whole. PAI in pesantren does not stand as a separate subject, but as a value system that colors all educational activities. From waking up in the morning to sleeping at night, all student activities are associated with religious values. This kind of educational pattern forms a deep and sustainable internalization of Islamic values.

PAI teaching and learning activities at boarding schools take place with an integrative approach, combining academic, moral, and spiritual aspects. The teacher teaches the Qur'an, hadith, creed, and fiqh theoretically in class, but the values are directly applied in daily life in the dormitory. Students learn through example (*uswah hasanah*) and habituation (*ta'dib*), not only through lectures. For example, moral lessons are directly applied through manners towards teachers, cleanliness of rooms, and responsibility towards fellow students.

Teaching methods at Islamic boarding schools vary, ranging from traditional lectures to modern discussions and interactive *halaqah*. In *halaqah*, *ustaz* guides students to read and understand the classic books (*turats*), then discuss them with the context of today's life. This fosters the ability to think critically while respecting the Islamic scientific tradition. This model forms a balance between the mastery of religious science and the formation of a solid morality.

Dormitory life became a social laboratory for students. They learn time discipline, shared responsibility, and helping in kindness. The boarding school environment instills the values of *ukhuwah*, simplicity, and leadership rooted in the principle of sincerity. These values are applied consistently in daily activities such as congregational prayers, hygiene pickets, deliberations, and mutual cooperation.

PAI learning in boarding schools not only prepares students to become pious individuals, but also social leaders. The community service program is an important part of the curriculum. Students go directly to the community to teach TPA, help with social activities, and preach. This experience reinforced the awareness that Islam must be present to bring social benefits, not just personal piety.

Kiai and *ustaz* play a key role as spiritual role models. They are not only teachers, but also role models whose behavior becomes a mirror for students. The relationship between

teachers and students at boarding schools is paternalistic, but full of love and respect. This relationship model forms a deep emotional bond, making each piece of advice have a strong moral meaning.

The evaluation of learning in boarding schools focuses more on the attitudes and behaviors of students. The assessment is carried out through observation, interviews, and daily supervision. Success is not only measured by cognitive ability, but also by discipline of worship, honesty, and responsibility. This evaluation system is in line with the spirit of Islam which assesses the sincerity of charity, not just academic results.

The integration of religious and general knowledge is also a characteristic of modern Islamic boarding schools. In addition to religious lessons, students are equipped with general knowledge, foreign languages, and life skills. This approach emphasizes that Islam does not reject modernity, but uses it for the advancement of the ummah. Thus, PAI learning in boarding schools is able to produce graduates who are religious, independent, and adaptive to changing times.

In terms of spirituality, the atmosphere of boarding schools creates a religious climate that is difficult to find in other institutions. Congregational dhikr, tafsir studies, and qiyamul lail are routine activities that deepen the relationship between students and Allah. This makes PAI not only a cognitive process, but an existential experience that forms the character of Islam as a whole.

Overall, PAI learning in Islamic boarding schools shows strength in the spiritual and moral dimensions. A system based on example and togetherness makes Islamic values appreciated, not just learned. This model is effective in forming the character of true Muslims who are not only knowledgeable, but also moral, socially minded, and ready to serve the community.

### **3. PAI Learning in International Schools**

International schools present unique challenges in the implementation of PAI due to the multicultural environment and global curriculum used. Religious learning here must be adaptive, dialogical, and respectful of diversity. PAI teachers have the responsibility to instill universal Islamic values in the midst of a heterogeneous community. Therefore, the learning approach used is more open and reflective, emphasizing understanding, not doctrine. Project-based learning and inquiry learning models are the main features. Students are

encouraged to research social issues with an Islamic perspective, such as social justice, environmental ethics, or humanitarian solidarity. This activity hones critical thinking skills and makes Islam relevant to global issues. For example, students are working on a project on "Islam and Ecological Responsibility" that links the concept of caliphate with environmental conservation efforts.

The learning media used is very varied, ranging from documentaries, digital platforms, to simulations of ethical debates. Teachers act as moderators of grades, helping students discover the relationship between Islamic teachings and modern life. This strategy makes learning more interesting and meaningful for the younger generation who live in the digital era and cultural plurality.

In international schools, PAI becomes a space for dialogue between Islamic values and global culture. Students from different backgrounds learn to understand Islam through universal principles such as honesty, justice, compassion, and social responsibility. Interfaith and cultural interaction in the learning process strengthens the spirit of tolerance and mutual respect. This is the concrete form of the application of Islam as *rahmatan lil 'alamin* in a global context.

PAI teachers in international schools are required to have high competence, both in terms of pedagogic, theological, and intercultural. They must be able to explain Islamic values in academic and rational language that can be accepted by all parties. Learning success is measured not by the amount of memorization, but by the depth of reflection and the practice of values in real life. The assessment of learning outcomes uses portfolios, reflection journals, and social projects. Students are asked to write down personal experiences in applying Islamic values, such as honesty, empathy, or environmental responsibility. This kind of evaluation fosters authentic spiritual awareness because students experience firsthand the process of internalizing values.

An open and dialogical learning environment makes students feel that Islam is not a rigid religion, but full of grace and wisdom. This approach minimizes misconceptions about Islam and forms a positive image among the international community. PAI is a means of value diplomacy that shows the peaceful and humanist face of Islam. International schools also provide opportunities for Muslim students to become ambassadors of Islamic values in a multicultural environment. They learn to convey Islamic views wisely in international

forums, debate competitions, or cross-cultural social activities. This experience fosters a sense of pride in Islamic identity while respecting human diversity.

From its overall practice, PAI in international schools has shown success in bridging Islamic values with the global world. The biggest challenge lies indeed in maintaining a balance between adaptation and authenticity of teaching. However, this is precisely where it excels: Islam appears as a religion that is rational, inclusive, and always relevant to the development of the times.

#### **4. Comparative Analysis of PAI Learning Model**

A comparison between the three educational institutions, integrated schools, Islamic boarding schools, and international schools shows that PAI learning has similarities as well as common goals. The three strive to instill noble Islamic values, albeit with different approaches and environments. Integrated schools prioritize the integration of the national curriculum with Islamic values, Islamic boarding schools emphasize the formation of religious character through disciplined boarding life, while international schools adapt PAI in a global context by emphasizing intercultural dialogue. This difference shows the diversity of ways in which Islam is translated in the modern education system.

From a pedagogical perspective, integrated schools apply an active learning model with a strong academic orientation, while Islamic boarding schools focus on exemplary methods (*uswah*) and habituation of pious deeds in the daily lives of students. Meanwhile, international schools prioritize constructivist and reflective approaches by utilizing technology and multicultural contexts. All three display a form of education that balances cognitive, affective, and psychomotor, although with different levels according to the character of the institution.

In terms of curriculum, integrated schools and boarding schools are still strongly oriented towards the national curriculum with internal modifications, while international schools tend to use a global curriculum such as Cambridge or IB that is adapted to Islamic values. The adaptation requires PAI teachers to have pedagogic and global literacy skills to be able to bridge religious values with the challenges of the times. Thus, the difference in curriculum actually enriches the treasure of Islamic education because it shows Islam's ability to dialogue with various world education systems.

Socially and culturally, each model represents a different segment of Muslim society. Integrated schools are growing in the middle of an urban middle class that wants a balance

between religious education and general science. Islamic boarding schools thrive in a religious environment that emphasizes collective piety and student independence. While international schools operate in a global society that values pluralism and critical thinking. This variation shows that Islamic education is elastic and able to adapt to diverse social backgrounds without losing the substance of monotheistic values and morals.

In conclusion, this comparative analysis shows that there is no one model of PAI learning that is absolutely ideal. Each system has its own advantages and disadvantages. Instead, the strength of Islamic education lies in its ability to combine spiritual values, rationality, and social openness. The integration of these three models can form a new paradigm of Islamic education that is inclusive, contextual, and globally oriented

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the analysis and comparison of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning model in Integrated Schools, Islamic Boarding Schools, and International Schools, it can be concluded that each institution has its peculiarities in designing and implementing PAI learning in accordance with the vision, institutional culture, and needs of students. The Integrated School features a learning model that integrates the national curriculum with Islamic values, resulting in an educational process that is oriented towards a balance between academic mastery and the spiritual formation of students.

Islamic Boarding School, through its pesantren-based education system, shows excellence in fostering religious character, discipline, and strengthening the memorization of the Qur'an. The dormitory environment, intensive interaction between teachers and students, and a strong religious culture make PAI learning take place holistically, not only in the classroom but also in daily life. This strengthens the internalization of Islamic values in a deeper and more sustainable manner.

Meanwhile, the International School develops PAI learning in a multicultural and global framework, by adapting learning methods, languages, and approaches to be relevant to diverse learners' backgrounds. This model provides space for students to understand Islamic teachings in a contextual, tolerant, and open manner, so that PAI is not only understood as a doctrine, but also as a universal value that can dialogue with global reality.

Comparatively, this study shows that no one model is completely superior, but each model has its own advantages and limitations. Therefore, the development of ideal PAI learning can be carried out by integrating the strengths of the three models, namely the

integration of the Islamic curriculum and values of the Integrated School, the depth of religious formation from the Islamic Boarding School, and the flexibility and global insight of the International School. Thus, PAI learning can be more comprehensive, relevant, and effective in forming students who are faithful, knowledgeable, and globally minded.

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