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**Factors and Impacts of Suboptimal
Islamic Religious Education Lessons in Indonesia**

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ABSTRACT

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is a crucial pillar in shaping the nation's character. However, in Indonesia, the implementation of IRE often falls short of expectations. This study aims to analyze the factors contributing to the suboptimal implementation of IRE and its impact on students. Using a qualitative-descriptive approach, the study identifies several key factors, including teacher quality, curriculum, facility support, and social environment. The consequences of these conditions include weak understanding of religious values, increased negative behavior among students, and limited student contributions to building a character-driven society. This study recommends strengthening policies, improving educator quality, and enhancing infrastructure as strategic measures.

ABSTRAK

Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) merupakan salah satu pilar penting dalam pembentukan karakter bangsa. Namun, di Indonesia, pelaksanaan pelajaran PAI sering kali kurang optimal. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi kurang optimalnya pelaksanaan PAI serta dampaknya terhadap peserta didik. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-deskriptif, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi beberapa faktor utama, seperti kualitas guru, kurikulum, dukungan fasilitas, serta lingkungan sosial. Dampak dari kondisi ini meliputi lemahnya pemahaman nilai-nilai keagamaan, meningkatnya perilaku negatif di kalangan pelajar, dan kurangnya kontribusi peserta didik dalam membangun masyarakat yang berkeadilan. Penelitian ini menyarankan penguatan kebijakan, peningkatan kualitas pendidik, serta perbaikan sarana dan prasarana sebagai langkah strategis.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has a strategic role in shaping the morals and character of students. However, survey results and reports show that the implementation of PAI in Indonesian schools is often less than optimal. This condition is of particular concern considering the importance of religious education in shaping the next generation of the nation who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have strong morals (Mubarok & Muslihah, 2022).

One indication of the suboptimal implementation of Islamic Religious Education is the low level of students' understanding of the religious values taught. Many students only understand the ritual aspects without delving into the meaning and spiritual values contained therein. This shows that Islamic Religious Education learning has not been able to provide a significant impact on the formation of students' character. In addition, the influence of the social environment also plays an important role.

In many cases, the family and community environment does not support the process of internalizing religious values taught in schools. As a result, students often experience dissonance

between what they learn in school and what they experience in their daily lives. The Islamic Religious Education curriculum is also a factor that is often debated. A curriculum that is too dense and focuses on cognitive aspects often ignores the application approach that is more relevant to students' lives. This strengthens the view that curriculum reform is an urgent need to improve the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education learning (Arafik, 2020).

The lack of support from educational facilities and infrastructure also hampers the learning process. For example, lack of access to quality reference books, digital learning media, and classrooms that support a conducive learning atmosphere. This condition not only affects students' interest in learning, but also limits teachers' creativity in delivering material.

This study attempts to provide a comprehensive picture of the various factors that cause the suboptimal PAI lessons in Indonesia, as well as their impact on students. Thus, it is hoped that this study can be a basis for stakeholders to formulate more effective policies in improving the quality of religious education in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative-descriptive approach to provide an in-depth description of the problems faced in learning Islamic Religious Education (Fenti Hikmawati, 2012). Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with various informants, such as PAI teachers, students, principals, and education observers. In addition, direct observation in schools was conducted to understand the real conditions of PAI implementation, including interactions between teachers and students, as well as support for learning facilities. Literature studies were also used to strengthen the findings with secondary data from previous studies.

Data analysis was conducted thematically, by identifying patterns and relationships between factors that influence the implementation of PAI. Data validation was conducted through triangulation of sources and methods to ensure the validity of the findings. With this approach, the study aims to produce recommendations that are evidence-based and relevant to field conditions (Charismana, *et.al.*, 2022).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in Indonesia is a complex topic and involves many interrelated factors. To provide a deeper understanding, this discussion will be organized into two main parts: factors that influence the less than optimal implementation of PAI and the impacts caused by these conditions. This analysis is based on empirical data and theoretical insights from various sources.

Factors Influencing Suboptimal Islamic Religious Education Lessons

The implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in Indonesia is influenced by a number of interrelated factors. The following is an in-depth analysis of several aspects that are the main obstacles: first, Teacher Quality. Many PAI teachers do not yet have adequate qualifications, both in terms of pedagogical competence and mastery of religious material. This results in the delivery of material that tends to be monotonous and less inspiring, making it difficult to attract students' interest.

Second, Curriculum. The Islamic Religious Education curriculum is often considered too dense but less relevant to the current context of students. As a result, students find it difficult to apply religious values in everyday life, because the focus of learning is more on theoretical aspects than practical. Third, Facilities and Learning Resources. The lack of supporting facilities, such as textbooks, interactive learning media, and conducive classrooms, also affect the effectiveness of learning. In many cases, teachers have difficulty obtaining teaching materials that suit the needs of students.

Third, Support from the Social and Family Environment. Family and social environments that do not support religious values often hinder the internalization of Islamic Religious Education materials. Many students do not receive reinforcement of religious values at home or in the community, so what is learned in school is difficult to implement (Sholihin et al., 2021). To

increase the effectiveness of PAI implementation, synergy is needed between various parties, starting from educators, policy makers, to the wider community.

Coordinated strategic steps will greatly assist in overcoming these obstacles and provide sustainable positive impacts: (a) Curriculum: The Islamic Religious Education curriculum is often considered too dense but less relevant to the current context of students. (b) Facilities and Learning Resources: The lack of supporting facilities, such as textbooks, learning media, and conducive classrooms, also affect the effectiveness of learning. (c) Support from the Social and Family Environment: Family and social environments that do not support religious values often hinder the internalization of Islamic Religious Education materials.

The Impact of Less-Than-Optimal Implementation of PAI

First, Shallow Understanding of Religion. The lack of optimization in the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) causes students to only focus on memorization aspects, without understanding the deep meaning of the religious teachings they are studying. This results in a shallow understanding of religious values, such as honesty, empathy, and justice, which are the core of religious education. The inability of students to apply these values in everyday life makes religious learning a mere formality.

Second, Negative Behavior Among Students. The lack of internalization of religious values increases the risk of negative behavior among students. Phenomena such as bullying, brawls, and drug abuse are becoming more frequent due to the lack of understanding of morals and ethics that should be instilled through Islamic Religious Education. When students do not understand the importance of religious values, they are more susceptible to being influenced by negative environments, both at school and outside the educational environment (Hamdan, 2021).

Third, the Lack of Social Role of Students. The less than optimal implementation of Islamic Religious Education also has an impact on the minimal contribution of students in building a harmonious society. Students who do not receive maximum religious education tend to have less understanding of their role as part of society. As a result, they are rarely involved in social activities, such as community service, fundraising for disaster relief, or religious activities in their environment.

Fourth, the Decline in the Quality of National Character. Lack of appreciation of religious values contributes to the weakening of the quality of character of the younger generation. PAI should be the foundation in forming individuals with noble morals and high integrity. When its implementation does not run optimally, these values are not internalized properly, thus potentially weakening the character of the nation.

Fifth, Increasing Inter-Individual Conflict. Without a deep understanding of religious teachings, students become less tolerant of differences, whether in terms of religion, culture, or opinion. This has the potential to increase inter-individual conflict in schools and in society. Optimal religious education should be able to instill the values of tolerance and respect for diversity.

Sixth, Low Student Learning Motivation. The implementation of PAI which is monotonous and irrelevant to students' lives often makes them lose interest in this subject. Low learning motivation not only impacts academic results but also hinders the process of character formation which should be the main goal of religious education.

Seventh, Lack of Integration of Religious Values in Daily Life. The less than optimal implementation of Islamic Religious Education often does not equip students with the ability to integrate religious values in daily life. As a result, religious teachings are only considered as theories that have no practical relevance. Students may be diligent in attending religious lessons, but values such as honesty, responsibility, and cooperation are not reflected in their daily behavior.

The impact of the less than optimal implementation of PAI is very diverse and touches various aspects of students' lives, from religious understanding to social contribution. To

overcome this problem, improvements are needed in teaching methods, increased teacher competence, and support from the school and family environment so that PAI can achieve its main goal, namely to produce a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also morally and spiritually superior (Fauzi, 2023).

Solutions to Overcome Suboptimal Islamic Religious Education Lessons

First, Continuous Improvement of Islamic Religious Education Teacher Competence, (a) Technology-Based Training: The government needs to organize intensive training for Islamic Religious Education teachers, especially in the use of modern learning technology. Teachers must be able to use e-learning platforms, interactive applications, and other digital resources to improve the quality of teaching (Subandi et al., 2025). (b) Certification and Incentives: Islamic Religious Education teachers should be encouraged to participate in certification programs with incentives in the form of salary increases or professional awards, so that the quality of teaching can continue to improve.

Second, Transformation of Learning Methods, (a) Experiential Learning Method: Integrating experiential learning methods, such as case studies, simulations, or collaborative projects that are relevant to Islamic values, can help students understand the material more contextually. (b) Interdisciplinary Approach: Connecting Islamic Religious Education lessons with other sciences, such as science and technology, so that students can understand the relevance of religion in everyday life.

Third, Development of Special Facilities and Infrastructure. (a) Religious Laboratory: Building a special room for Islamic worship practices and studies, such as a school mosque equipped with a digital religious library. (b) Increasing Digital Access: Providing access to Islamic-based online learning platforms, such as learning videos, e-books, and interactive quiz applications.

Fourth, Revitalization of Islamic Religious Education Curriculum. (a) Curriculum Contextualization: The Islamic Religious Education Curriculum must be updated to be relevant to the challenges of the times, such as environmental issues, technology ethics, and cultural diversity. (b) Competency-Based Assessment: Developing an assessment system that not only measures cognitive aspects, but also internalization of religious values through behavioral observations and projects (Putri et al., 2024).

Fifth, Collaboration Between Schools, Families, and Communities. (a) Islamic Parenting Program: Involving parents in activities based on Islamic values, such as Islamic parenting seminars, to support learning at home. (b) Community-Based Religious Activities: Encouraging cooperation with local religious institutions to organize activities that support Islamic Religious Education lessons, such as short-term Islamic boarding schools or religious discussions.

Sixth, Measurable Monitoring and Evaluation. (a) Impact Measurement: The government and educational institutions must have a periodic evaluation system to measure the impact of the implementation of PAI lesson improvement programs. (b) Student Feedback: Using surveys or focus group discussions to understand student needs and evaluate the effectiveness of learning methods (HM, Manizar, 2022).

Strategic solutions for optimizing Islamic Religious Education lessons involve various aspects, starting from improving teacher competency, transforming learning methods, to revitalizing the curriculum that is relevant to the times. With collaboration between schools, families, and communities, Islamic Religious Education lessons can have a broad positive impact, creating a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also has a strong spiritual awareness and is able to face global challenges with solid Islamic values (Samsinar et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lessons in Indonesia still face various challenges that cause less than optimal implementation in schools. The main factors that influence this condition include low teacher quality, less relevant curriculum, minimal support for learning facilities, and less supportive social and family environments. As a result, students tend to have a shallow understanding of religion, increased negative behavior, minimal social roles, and a decline in the quality of the nation's character as a whole. To overcome this problem, strategic steps are needed such as continuous improvement of teacher competence, revitalization of a more contextual curriculum, development of learning facilities, and synergy between schools, families, and communities. With a comprehensive approach, PAI lessons can be an important pillar in forming a generation that excels intellectually, morally, and spiritually, and is able to contribute to the development of a society with character.

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