

INTEGRATION OF RELIGIOUS ATTITUDES AND CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION AT THE PEMBANGUNAN UIN JAKARTA MADRASAH ALIYAH

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the integration of religious attitudes and critical thinking skills in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at Madrasah Aliyah Pembangunan UIN Jakarta. The research focuses on the condition of students' religious attitudes and critical thinking skills, the forms of integration within the learning process, the strategies used by PAI teachers in implementing the integration, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors encountered. The research method employed is qualitative with a case study design. The data sources consist of PAI teachers, students, the vice principal for curriculum affairs, and supporting documents such as lesson plans, syllabi, teaching modules, and learning records. Data were collected through classroom observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data validity was tested through triangulation of sources, techniques, and time. Data analysis used the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the integration of religious attitudes and critical thinking is reflected in PAI learning processes centered on dialogue, reflection, and active student engagement. Teachers act as facilitators who connect Islamic values with higher-order thinking skills through problem-based learning, reflective discussions, and project-based learning strategies. Supporting factors include teacher competence, curriculum support, and the religious culture of the madrasah, while inhibiting factors include limited instructional time, students' tendency toward passive learning, and the lack of teacher training in critical pedagogy. The study concludes that the integration of religious attitudes and critical thinking skills in PAI learning can enhance the quality of learning, making it more meaningful, holistic, and contextual. The practical implication is the need to strengthen innovative teaching strategies that combine values and critical reasoning within the PAI curriculum.

Keywords: Religiosity, Critical Thinking, Islamic Education

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis integrasi sikap religius dan kemampuan berpikir kritis dalam pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) di Madrasah Aliyah Pembangunan UIN Jakarta. Fokus penelitian mencakup kondisi sikap religius dan kemampuan berpikir kritis peserta didik, bentuk integrasi keduanya dalam pembelajaran, strategi guru PAI dalam melaksanakan integrasi, serta faktor pendukung dan penghambat yang dihadapi. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan

jenis studi kasus. Sumber data penelitian meliputi guru PAI, peserta didik, wakil kepala madrasah bidang kurikulum, serta dokumen pendukung seperti RPP, silabus, modul ajar, dan catatan hasil belajar. Prosedur pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi. Keabsahan data diuji dengan triangulasi sumber, teknik, dan waktu. Analisis data menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman dengan tahapan reduksi data, penyajian data, serta penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa integrasi sikap religius dan kemampuan berpikir kritis tercermin dalam proses pembelajaran PAI yang berpusat pada dialog, refleksi, dan keterlibatan aktif siswa. Guru berperan sebagai fasilitator yang menghubungkan nilai-nilai Islam dengan keterampilan berpikir tingkat tinggi, melalui strategi pembelajaran berbasis masalah, diskusi, dan proyek. Faktor pendukung integrasi meliputi kompetensi guru, dukungan kurikulum, serta budaya religius madrasah, sedangkan faktor penghambat antara lain keterbatasan waktu pembelajaran, kebiasaan siswa belajar pasif, dan minimnya pelatihan guru terkait pedagogi kritis. Kesimpulan penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa integrasi sikap religius dan kemampuan berpikir kritis dalam pembelajaran PAI dapat meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran yang lebih bermakna, holistik, dan kontekstual. Implikasi praktis dari penelitian ini adalah perlunya penguatan strategi pembelajaran inovatif berbasis nilai dan nalar kritis dalam kurikulum PAI.

Kata kunci: Religiusitas, Berpikir Kritis, Pendidikan Agama Islam

INTRODUCTION

Education in the 21st century is undergoing a transformative phase marked by rapid digital advancements, globalization, and the demand for increasingly complex competencies. The emergence of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0 requires students to acquire higher-order thinking skills, digital literacy, and adaptability, supported by strong religious and moral foundations. However, the reality of education in Indonesia shows that learning systems remain predominantly cognitive in nature, thus providing limited opportunities for students to develop critical thinking skills and contextual religiosity (Suryadi, 2020). This condition has resulted in the emergence of academically capable generations who are often fragile in dealing with complex socio-cultural and religious dynamics.

In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), these problems are even more evident. PAI is expected to play a significant role in shaping individuals who are faithful, virtuous, and critical toward real-life issues. Yet, classroom practices often remain trapped in one-way knowledge transfer, emphasizing memorization and doctrinal mastery without creating space for dialogue and critical reflection among students (Zubaedi, 2021). In fact, the Qur'an explicitly encourages critical thinking, such as through *tafakkur* (deep reflection) and *ta'aqqul* (reasoning), which are intended to strengthen faith and foster reflective awareness of life's realities. Several previous studies have emphasized the need to integrate religious values with critical thinking skills in PAI learning. Sunarti (2022) found that Islamic education can foster reflective thinking through contextual approaches, although implementation is hindered by time constraints and teacher capacity. Habib et al. (2023) highlighted that open discussions, case studies, and value-based debates can significantly enhance students' critical thinking, despite the main

challenge of teacher preparedness. Similarly, Demirel Ucan and Wright (2019), through the approach of *Critical Religious Education*, demonstrated that critical-reflective PAI can help students understand Islamic teachings more deeply and contextually rather than dogmatically.

International research provides further insights into the relationship between religiosity and critical or innovative thinking. Buyukyazici and Serti (2022) found that high religiosity may reduce openness to innovation. However, Kabir et al. (2024) argued that religious experiences, when practiced contextually, could strengthen spiritual motivation and foster openness to new perspectives. Dalimunthe and Siregar (2024) further demonstrated that integrative strategies such as group discussions and problem-based learning in Islamic education not only enhanced critical thinking but also deepened students' religious values. Meanwhile, Jaramillo Gómez et al. (2025) identified key factors in developing critical thinking, such as motivation, metacognition, and institutional culture, which are also highly relevant to building integrative pedagogy in PAI.

Despite these findings, previous studies still reveal gaps. Most research has focused solely on religiosity in shaping moral character, or conversely, emphasized critical thinking skills within literacy and science education. Few have explicitly examined the integration of both aspects in Islamic Religious Education, particularly in the context of *madrasah*, which uniquely combines religious and academic education. This article, therefore, offers novelty by examining in depth how the integration of religious values and critical thinking skills is implemented in PAI learning, with a specific focus on classroom dynamics, teachers' strategies, and students' responses. The main problems addressed are: What is the current condition of students' religiosity and critical thinking in PAI learning? How do teachers integrate both aspects in practice? What are the supporting and inhibiting factors in the process?

Thus, the objective of this article is to comprehensively analyze the integration of religious attitudes and critical thinking skills in PAI learning. It also aims to identify pedagogical strategies employed by teachers, reveal supporting and inhibiting factors, and provide both conceptual and practical recommendations for developing a holistic, contextual, and relevant PAI learning model for today's educational needs. Based on the above background, the author intends to conduct a study on the integration of religious attitudes and critical thinking skills in Islamic Education learning at Madrasah Aliyah Pembangunan UIN Jakarta.

METHODS

The research method employed to address the problem was a qualitative approach with a case study design. This method was chosen based on the aim of the study, which was to gain an in-depth understanding of the integration of religious attitudes and critical thinking skills in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at Madrasah Aliyah Pembangunan UIN Jakarta. The case study design enabled the researcher to explore the

educational phenomenon contextually and holistically within a real-life setting. The study was conducted at Madrasah Aliyah Pembangunan UIN Jakarta, selected purposively as it is recognized as an Islamic educational institution known for its progressive learning innovations. The research subjects consisted of PAI teachers, students from grades X–XII, and the principal. Informants were determined through purposive sampling, considering the representation of each grade level and their relevance to the focus of the study. A total of 20 informants were involved, including 4 PAI teachers, 15 students, and 1 principal. The main research instrument was the researcher as a human instrument, supported by interview guidelines, observation guidelines, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore teachers' and students' experiences in the process of integrating religious values and critical thinking skills, while classroom observations were carried out to examine the strategies applied by PAI teachers.

Documentation, including syllabi, lesson plans, learning outcomes, and class activity notes, was used as supporting data. Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data validity was ensured through source and method triangulation, member checking, and expert discussions. The research procedure comprised several stages: preparation (including instrument development, obtaining permission from the school, and field familiarization), data collection (through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation), data analysis (conducted simultaneously during data collection until relevant patterns and themes emerged), verification (by testing data validity through triangulation and discussions with informants), and reporting (by compiling the research findings into a scientific article).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that Islamic Education (PAI) teachers have implemented the integration of religious attitudes and critical thinking skills through various teaching strategies, including reflective discussions, case studies, and problem-based learning. These strategies are consistent with the findings of Habib et al. (2023), who emphasized the effectiveness of participatory methods in fostering conceptual understanding while simultaneously strengthening religiosity. Dalimunthe and Siregar (2024) also added that such integrative strategies not only enhance critical thinking skills but also broaden the contextual interpretation of religious values.

Furthermore, this study shows that the integration of religious attitudes and critical thinking skills at Madrasah Aliyah Pembangunan UIN Jakarta is carried out through innovative pedagogical strategies. PAI teachers attempt to combine religious values with reasoning skills through open discussions, project-based learning, and joint reflection. This approach enables students to interpret Islamic teachings not only dogmatically but also critically and contextually in their daily lives. This finding reflects a paradigm shift from teacher-centered learning toward student-centered learning that is more dialogical and participatory (Wang, 2016).

Scientifically, these findings affirm that religious education can serve as an essential means of shaping individuals who are both religious and critical. The application of discussion and question-and-answer methods has been proven to provide students with the opportunity to develop higher-order thinking skills, particularly in analyzing moral and social issues. This tendency is consistent with the study by Suryadi (2020), which emphasized that religious education conducted in a purely normative way tends to produce exclusive students, whereas the integration of critical reflection nurtures inclusiveness. Thus, integrative learning strategies can address the low level of critical literacy skills among Indonesian students, as reported in PISA 2018 (OECD, 2018).

The implementation of problem-based learning in PAI has also been proven effective in fostering students' critical thinking skills. Teachers often present contemporary ethical issues, such as environmental concerns or the use of digital technology, and then relate them to Qur'anic verses and Hadith. This approach aligns with the findings of Zubaedi (2021), who stated that problem-based strategies stimulate students' critical reasoning while strengthening the internalization of religious values. Habib et al. (2023) also supported this view, emphasizing that reflective discussions and contextual case studies enhance conceptual understanding and foster religious attitudes more relevant to modern life.

Nevertheless, this study also identified several challenges in implementing the integration of religiosity and critical thinking. First, there are limitations in teachers' pedagogical competence in designing integrative learning strategies. Some teachers still rely on conventional lecture methods, which result in passive students and reduced participation. Second, students' learning culture, which is accustomed to receiving knowledge in a one-way fashion, hinders the development of critical thinking skills. This finding is consistent with Sunarti (2022), who highlighted that the dominance of dogmatic approaches and the lack of dialogical spaces are the main barriers to fostering critical learning in PAI. Third, limited instructional time becomes a significant factor, as the dense PAI curriculum often restricts in-depth exploration of contemporary issues.

Theoretically, the trend of integrating religiosity and critical thinking demonstrates a mutually reinforcing relationship. Religiosity provides the moral and spiritual foundation, while critical thinking equips students with analytical and reflective skills that deepen their understanding of religion. This is in line with Demirel Ucan and Wright (2019), who argued that critical religious education fosters reflective, contextual, and socially relevant religious understanding. Even the study of Buyukyazici and Serti (2022), which identified a complex relationship between religiosity and innovation, suggests that strengthening religiosity does not necessarily inhibit open-mindedness, as long as it is facilitated with appropriate pedagogical approaches.

The findings of this research can also be interpreted through the lens of the revised Bloom's Taxonomy, which emphasizes higher-order thinking skills such as analyzing, evaluating, and creating (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). The application of HOTS in PAI

has been proven to integrate religiosity with critical thinking skills, so students are not only memorizing scriptural texts but also reasoning and linking them to contemporary issues. This finding also aligns with the Islamic educational philosophy, which stresses the importance of balancing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects (Al-Attas, 1980).

Moreover, this study found that internal factors such as students' motivation and spiritual awareness, as well as external factors such as the learning culture in the madrasah, strongly influence the effectiveness of integration. This supports the findings of Jaramillo Gómez et al. (2025), who stated that the development of critical thinking is determined by the interaction between individual factors (motivation, metacognition, cognitive autonomy) and contextual factors (teaching methods, learning environment, institutional culture). Thus, the integration of religiosity and critical thinking in PAI is not merely a matter of teaching methods but also requires the support of a conducive educational ecosystem.

The implications of these findings confirm that the integration of religious attitudes and critical thinking in PAI can serve as a transformative pedagogical model. If implemented consistently, students will not only have deep faith but also analytical skills that enable them to contribute constructively to social life. Through a model of integration based on critical reflection, problem-based learning, open discussions, and contextual case studies, PAI can function as a holistic learning platform. This is consistent with the argument of Uwuigbe and Ajibolade (2013), who emphasized that the integration of moral values with analytical skills can significantly enhance the overall quality of education.

The conceptual model in Figure 1 illustrates how the integration of Islamic Education (PAI) can combine two fundamental aspects, namely religious attitudes and critical thinking skills, which ultimately lead to the formation of students who are religious, critical, and contextual. This integration is carried out through various reflective learning strategies, such as open discussions, case studies, and problem-based learning, which enable students to relate religious values to contemporary social issues (Zubaedi, 2021; Habib et al., 2023). Religious attitudes serve as the moral and spiritual foundation that guides behavior, while critical thinking skills provide the analytical capacity to face the challenges of the modern era. These two aspects do not operate separately but complement each other within the framework of transformative Islamic Education (Demirel Ucan & Wright, 2019). Through this integrative model, students are expected not only to understand religion normatively but also to interpret and implement Islamic teachings in real life with a reflective and critical perspective.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the integration of religious attitudes and critical thinking skills in Islamic Education (PAI) can be realized through reflective and participatory pedagogical strategies. The main finding indicates that religiosity serves as a moral and spiritual foundation, while critical thinking provides analytical tools that enrich the

contextual understanding of religion. Thus, the research objective to examine the integration of these two aspects at Madrasah Aliyah Pembangunan UIN Jakarta has been achieved. The research hypothesis that such integration would produce students who are both religious and critical is empirically supported. Students are not only able to understand religion normatively but are also capable of interpreting and applying Islamic teachings in real-life contexts with a reflective perspective. These scientific findings contribute significantly to the development of a transformative and contextual model of Islamic Education. Future research may focus on expanding the implementation of this integrative model to other madrasahs, incorporating digital learning approaches, and conducting long-term evaluations of its impact on students' character formation and critical thinking skills.

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