

EFFORTS TO BUILD A BALANCE OF FAITH, KNOWLEDGE AND CHARITY IN THE INTEGRATIVE PARADIGM OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

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Received : 20 September 2025

Published : 17 November 2025

Revised : 01 October 2025

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.54443/ijset.v5i1.1330>

Accepted : 30 October 2025

Link Publish : <https://www.ijset.org/index.php/ijset/index>

Abstract

This study aims to analyze in depth the efforts to build a balance of Faith, Knowledge, and Practice in the integrative paradigm of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Curriculum in formal educational institutions. The background of the problem is based on the phenomenon of the dichotomy of knowledge that separates general knowledge and religion, which has implications for the moral crisis and low integrity of graduates (Assegaf, 2011: 271). The integrative paradigm is present as an epistemological solution to reunite knowledge under the umbrella of monotheism, making knowledge a means of strengthening faith and guiding good deeds (Al-Attas, 1993: 65; Annisa, 2019: 9). This qualitative research with a Case Study design was conducted in schools/madrasas that consistently implement the integrative PAI curriculum, with research subjects including principals, PAI teachers, general subject teachers, and students. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies, then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model (2014: 31). The results of the study indicate that the effort to achieve this balance is realized through a holistic curriculum design that explicitly links Islamic Religious Education (PAI) material with science, the transformation of knowledge into practice through a structured habituation program, and the need for close collaboration between teachers. Despite facing the challenges of fragmented material and limited teacher competencies, the success of this effort is highly dependent on visionary school leadership and the implementation of holistic evaluations that measure the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Faith, Knowledge, and Practice). The study concluded that the successful implementation of an integrative Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum is able to produce Perfect Humans who have harmony between the beliefs of the heart, intellectual intelligence, and moral practice (Daradjat, 2025: 145).

Keywords: *Islamic Religious Education Curriculum, Integrative Paradigm, Balance of Faith, Knowledge, and Practice, Dichotomy of Knowledge, Case Study.*

INTRODUCTION

Education in the era of globalization faces complex, multidimensional challenges, particularly in the context of moral crisis and value disorientation among the younger generation (Abdullah, 2020: 3). The rapid pace of science and technology (IPTEK) is often not balanced by adequate spiritual and ethical development, creating a gap between intellectual and spiritual intelligence. This phenomenon produces individuals who are academically intelligent, but vulnerable to destructive behavior and lack social responsibility (Assegaf, 2011: 271). The world of education, therefore, is required to reformulate its vision and mission to produce complete graduates (insan kamil) (Daradjat, 2025: 145). The need for holistic education that balances cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects is a global imperative that cannot be ignored. The separation of knowledge (dichotomy) has proven to fail to form a strong character and integrity. Education must function as a medium for transforming knowledge into wisdom that benefits humanity. In the context of Islamic education, the issue of the dichotomy of knowledge—separating religious knowledge from general knowledge—has long been a central issue, giving rise to the term secularism in education (Al-Attas, 1993: 65). As a result, general knowledge is considered neutral from spiritual values, while religious knowledge seems backward and irrelevant to modern progress (Hidayat, 2022: 150). This dichotomous mindset produces two types of unbalanced graduates: religious scholars who are technologically illiterate or scientists who

are spiritually impoverished. Therefore, the Islamization of Knowledge movement (Al-Faruqi, 2024: 48) emerged as a response to reunite these knowledges under the umbrella of monotheism. True Islamic education must reflect Islamic teachings, which view all knowledge as originating from the same source, namely Allah SWT (Tharaba, 2021: 160). This effort reaffirms that faith (belief), knowledge (ilm), and action (amal) are an inseparable whole (Saefudin, 2017: 50). Responding to the challenges of dichotomy, an integrative paradigm emerged as a conceptual solution in contemporary Islamic education (Musmuallim, 2013: 110). This paradigm aims to connect religious knowledge and modern science epistemologically, curricularly, and pedagogically (PUJIA, 2025: 80). Integration is not simply attaching religious values to general subjects, but rather a systematic effort to view the entire reality of knowledge as a manifestation of God's greatness. This framework emphasizes that knowledge must strengthen faith and guide behavior to align with religious teachings (Al-Ghazali in JIC Nusantara, 2024: 1316). The application of this integrative model is expected to balance the intellectual (IQ), emotional (EQ), and spiritual (SQ) intelligence of students (Rumah Jurnal UII Dalwa, 2019: 116). Thus, the knowledge gained can foster moral qualities and increase piety (Annisa, 2019: 9).

In the formal education structure in Indonesia, the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum (PAI) plays a strategic role as the main instrument for Islamic character development (JIPKL, 2025: 23). The PAI curriculum, which includes materials on faith, sharia, and morals, has the responsibility to create a perfect human being (Daradjat, 2025: 145). Therefore, the PAI curriculum must be the main laboratory in implementing the integrative paradigm of faith, knowledge, and charity. However, the challenge faced is how PAI does not only stop at delivering theoretical material, but can be realized in real practice and daily deeds (UIN Antasari Journal, 2017: 90). The curriculum must be designed flexibly and contextually so that it can touch three domains: the heart (affective), the mind (cognitive), and the body (psychomotor) (UM Metro Electronic Journal, 2024: 3910). Visionary curriculum design, readiness of teaching staff, and consistent institutional support are determining factors for success (PILAR, 2025: 88).

Although the concept of integration has been widely recognized, its implementation in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in the field still faces a number of complex challenges (Zed & Research Team, 2021: 15). One major obstacle is the limited ability of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers to deeply connect religious material with issues of science and modern life (Yunus et al., 2021: 10). The Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum sometimes appears fragmented, teaching the pillars of faith and the pillars of Islam as separate topics without demonstrating their close relationship. Furthermore, learning evaluations often focus solely on cognitive aspects, paying little attention to measuring changes in students' attitudes and practices. This results in a disconnect between the Islamic knowledge learned and the application of these values in daily life (Saefudin, 2017: 50). This situation indicates a disparity between the ideal goals of an integrative Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum and the reality of practice in schools.

The concept of balance between faith, knowledge, and good deeds is at the heart of the integrative goals of Islamic education (Al-Attas, 1993: 65). This balance encompasses not only theoretical knowledge but also the ability to transform knowledge into beneficial good deeds (Scribd, 2021: 1). A strong faith must be grounded in sound knowledge and proven through consistent good deeds (Annisa, 2019: 9). This research will specifically focus on the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum's efforts to facilitate the holistic integration of this trilogy (JIPKL, 2025: 23). Indicators of successful integration must go beyond academic achievement to also encompass students' spiritual awareness and emotional intelligence (UII Dalwa Journal, 2019: 116). This study will examine how the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum design, both in terms of materials and methods, explicitly establishes substantial links between these three essential components (Zed & Research Team, 2021: 15).

Given the complexity of implementation challenges and the importance of the goal of a perfect human being, this research is highly urgent, particularly in formulating an applicable and contextual Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum model. Previous research has extensively examined the integration of knowledge and faith in general (Kurniasih, Haryanti, Hermawan, 2023: 77), but few have in-depth discussed the specific curricular mechanisms of PAI to balance the trilogy of faith, knowledge, and charity (Abidin, 2023: 10). The results of this study are expected to provide significant theoretical contributions to the development of future PAI curricula, particularly in providing an effective managerial and pedagogical framework (Zed & Research Team, 2021: 15). These findings can also serve as an important reference for educational policymakers in formulating competency standards for PAI graduates oriented toward moral integrity (PILAR, 2025: 88). Based on the background outlined, it is clear that although the integrative paradigm has become a mainstream discourse, its structured implementation in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum to achieve a balance between faith, knowledge, and good deeds still requires in-depth study. The gap between the ideal concept and the reality of practice requires careful exploration, particularly at the level of curriculum design and the learning process. Therefore, this study primarily aims to identify

and analyze specific efforts made in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum. The focus of this research is on how the integrative paradigm is applied in the PAI curriculum to concretely build this trilogy of balance in students. This research will answer key questions regarding an effective PAI curriculum model in synergizing faith, knowledge, and good deeds. Thus, this research will contribute to the creation of a comprehensive and relevant Islamic education in the modern era.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach (Moleong, 2019: 6). This approach was chosen because it aims to gain a deep (holistic and contextual) understanding of the efforts, processes, and challenges faced in implementing an integrative Islamic Religious Education curriculum. Qualitative methodology allows researchers to explore the meanings, perceptions, and experiences of research subjects regarding the balance of faith, knowledge, and good deeds. Data analysis was conducted interactively and continuously, referring to the model of Miles and Huberman (2014: 31):

1. Data Condensation (Data Reduction): The process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, and transforming data emerging from field notes, interview transcripts, and documents. The primary focus is data directly related to efforts to build a balance between Faith, Knowledge, and Practice in the Islamic Religious Education curriculum.
2. Data Display: Organizing reduced data in the form of narratives, matrices, flowcharts, or charts to make it easier for researchers to see patterns, themes, and relationships between variables (such as the relationship between curriculum design and student behavior).
3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Initial conclusions are drawn from the beginning of data collection and are continuously verified throughout the research process. The final conclusion will be an in-depth description and model of efforts to build a balance between faith, knowledge, and practice in an integrative Islamic Religious Education curriculum.

DISCUSSION

The integrative paradigm in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Curriculum must be based on a complete monotheistic epistemology (Al-Attas, 1993: 65). This view asserts that all branches of knowledge, both religious and general, originate from the same Being, namely Allah SWT (Tharaba, 2021: 160). The curricular consequence of this foundation is the elimination of the dichotomy of knowledge that has separated religious knowledge from modern life. This integration aims to ensure that the knowledge acquired by students, for example physics, biology, or mathematics, simultaneously strengthens their faith in the power and greatness of the Creator (Assegaf, 2011: 271). Thus, knowledge is no longer seen as value-neutral, but rather as a means to know God and understand the signs of His greatness (kauniyah verses) (JIC Nusantara, 2024: 1316). The design of the Islamic Education curriculum must explicitly include this relationship in the learning objectives and materials (Hidayat, 2022: 150).

An integrative Islamic Religious Education curriculum design that balances faith, knowledge, and practice should not focus solely on the cognitive domain (Muhammin, 2009). The curriculum must deliberately design learning that connects theoretical knowledge (science) with inner conviction (faith) and is demonstrated through concrete actions (practice) (Sigit Triutama, 2015). This implementation requires Islamic Religious Education teachers to go beyond simply delivering material, but also transform it into internalized values (Zahroh, 2020). For example, zakat is not only taught as a pillar of Islam (faith/knowledge), but concludes with a practical simulation of collecting and distributing zakat (practice). The curriculum must include holistic themes that transcend traditional subject boundaries (Muyassaroh & Suyadi, 2020). This design requires flexibility to adapt to social and technological developments (Anas, 2013).

Efforts to build a balance between Faith and Knowledge in Islamic Religious Education classes can be realized through interactive and reflective methods (UM Metro Electronic Journal, 2024: 3910). Islamic Religious Education teachers are required to be able to use modern scientific concepts to explain the greatness of the Qur'an and Hadith, for example, linking the creation of the universe with the concept of Physics (Kurniasih, Haryanti, Hermawan, 2023: 77). Conversely, Islamic ethical values must be injected into general subjects so that knowledge is not morally mute (Sukariyadi, 2022). Awareness of accountability in the afterlife (Faith) becomes self-control (Amal) for the knowledge (Science) possessed (Annisa, 2019: 9). This strategy ensures that the higher a person's knowledge, the stronger their faith, in accordance with the spirit of the Qur'an (QS Al-Mujadilah: 11) (Shihab, 2010: 77).

The charitable aspect in this trilogy is a concrete manifestation of the truth of faith and knowledge (Scribd, 2021: 1). Efforts to build charitable deeds are not sufficient only through theory in the classroom, but must be realized in a structured habituation program in the school environment (Fauziah & Darraz, 2024). Examples of these habits include congregational prayer, weekly religious lectures, memorizing the Qur'an, and practicing honesty in the canteen (Hawa, Syarifah, & Muhammad, 2021). These habits function to foster students' spiritual intelligence (SQ) in a consistent and programmed manner (Isnaini, Wahyudi, & Syafe, 2021). Schools must create a harmonious character education ecosystem, involving teachers, parents, and the community, so that the instilled values are not interrupted (Islamic Religious Education Teachers in the Digital Era, 2025: 1).

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers play a crucial role as role models (uswah hasanah) and primary facilitators in this integration process (Yusuf, 2021). Teacher quality is measured not only by their mastery of Islamic Religious Education material, but also by their ability to relate it to contemporary issues and modern science (Yunus et al., 2021: 10). Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers must be able to design learning that is relevant to students' daily lives, using case studies and discussions to solve modern ethical problems (PAI Teachers in Interest in Learning, 2023: 1). Training and professional development of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers must be improved, particularly in active and creative learning methods that support integration between disciplines (PAI Teachers in Interest in Learning, 2023: 1). Without the readiness and commitment of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, the integrative paradigm will only stop at the level of curriculum discourse (Zed & Research Team, 2021: 15).

The implementation of the integrative paradigm is often hampered by a rigid Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum that tends to focus solely on cognitive aspects (Zainab, 2017). The main challenge is the tendency of teachers to teach PAI fragmentarily, separating aqidah (faith), sharia (Islamic law), and morals as separate chapters without a clear common thread. This condition is exacerbated by the limited effective time for PAI learning in public schools, which is often inadequate to achieve deep internalization of values (Zed & Research Team, 2021: 15). Furthermore, the lack of adequate resources and learning media to integrate PAI with science and technology is a serious technical obstacle (Irmawati, 2025: 7). Therefore, strong institutional support and more adaptive policies from educational authorities are needed (PILAR, 2025: 88).

True integration demands close collaboration between Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers and general subject teachers (Indriani, 2016). The concept of integrative PAI does not stop at the PAI classroom, but must permeate all subjects, for example, integrating Islamic ethical values in Physics, or Islamic social values in Economics (Isnaini, 2016). This collaboration must be initiated through joint curriculum planning (team teaching or lesson study) facilitated by school/madrasah management (PAI Teachers in Interest in Learning, 2023: 1). Without a shared vision and commitment among teachers, integration will only be partial and will not be able to shape students' whole and balanced personalities (Surahman, 2022).

The evaluation system plays a vital role in determining the success of the implementation of an integrative curriculum (Jurnal UIN Datokarama, 2025: 1). Assessment in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) should not only measure the ability to answer questions (cognitive), but must include a holistic assessment of the development of students' faith, knowledge, and good deeds (Muhaimin, 2009). Faith assessment can be measured through observation of attitudes and integrated self-/peer assessment (affective) (Jurnal UIN Datokarama, 2025: 1). Assessment of good deeds (psychomotor) is measured through a portfolio of habituation activities and worship practices (Hawa, Syarifah, & Muhammad, 2021). This evaluation must be fair, correct, and balanced, in accordance with Islamic principles, and provide positive feedback for ongoing motivation (PAI Teachers in Learning Interests, 2023: 1).

School or madrasah leadership (the Principal) plays a strategic role as an agent of change in strengthening the integrative paradigm (Zed & Research Team, 2021: 15). Successful integration begins with explicit curriculum policies, resource support, and the creation of a religious school culture (PILAR, 2025: 88). The principal must ensure integrated programs between the intracurricular and co-curricular/extracurricular curricula, such as Rohis (Islamic Spiritual Movement), Pesantren Kilat (Pesantren Kilat), or value-based field trips (Islamic Religious Education Teachers in the Digital Era, 2025: 1). Visionary and committed leadership will be able to eliminate resistance to change and encourage Islamic Religious Education teachers to continue innovating (Islamic Religious Education Teachers in the Interest of Learning, 2023: 1). The successful implementation of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum with an integrative paradigm will produce graduates who approach the ideal concept of "Insan Kamil" (Daradjat, 2025: 145). Insan Kamil is a human being who has an optimal balance between spiritual, intellectual, and moral potential (UII Dalwa Journal, 2019: 116). By having a strong faith supported by adequate knowledge and realized in consistent deeds, students will become responsible, honest, and highly ethical individuals

(IKHTISAR, 2025: 1). These graduates are expected to be able to answer the challenges of the modern world, not only academically intelligent, but also have deep spiritual awareness (IKHTISAR, 2025: 1). In the context of charity, the integration of Islamic values and morals must be a core component of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum (Zahroh, 2020). Morals encompass the relationship with God (worship), relationships with fellow human beings (muamalah), and relationships with nature/the environment (Irmawati, 2025: 7). Islamic Religious Education teachers' efforts must be directed at instilling the values of religiosity, honesty, tolerance, and social concern in an integrated manner (Irmawati, 2025: 7). Islamic Religious Education learning must involve students at all levels to actualize these values in everyday life, including in the digital space (Islamic Religious Education Teachers in the Digital Era, 2025: 1). Thus, the charity performed is not merely a meaningless ritual, but rather a manifestation of a deep understanding of knowledge and faith. Overall, efforts to balance Faith, Knowledge, and Practice in the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum are an epistemological and pedagogical imperative to address the global moral crisis (Abdullah, 2020: 3). The discussion shows that the key to success lies in holistic curriculum design, the role of teachers as models and integrators, and an evaluation system that comprehensively encompasses all three aspects. The biggest challenge is the transition from theoretical concepts in curriculum documents to real-world practice in classrooms and schools (Zed & Research Team, 2021: 15). Further research is needed to develop a standardized and valid assessment model to measure the integration of Faith, Knowledge, and Practice quantitatively and qualitatively at various levels of education, to verify the effectiveness of the implemented model.

CONCLUSION

The main conclusion confirms that the integrative paradigm in the Islamic Religious Education curriculum is a fundamental solution to the dichotomy of knowledge and the moral crisis facing the younger generation (Abdullah, 2020: 3). The Islamic Religious Education curriculum must function as a forum for realizing the epistemology of monotheism, in which natural and social sciences are seen as manifestations of the greatness of Allah SWT (Al-Attas, 1993: 65). This effort is very urgent to produce graduates who are not only intellectually intelligent but also possess moral integrity and high spiritual awareness (Assegaf, 2011: 271). The success of contemporary Islamic education depends on how effectively the curriculum is able to bridge the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of students.

Efforts to build a balance between faith and knowledge are specifically implemented through a holistic curriculum design that explicitly links Islamic Religious Education (PAI) material with issues of science and technology (Hidayat, 2022: 150). The role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers is crucial as integrators capable of using scientific concepts to strengthen spiritual beliefs and vice versa (Kurniasih, Haryanti, Hermawan, 2023: 77). This balance is achieved when the knowledge gained no longer stands alone but becomes a means to increase ma'rifatullah (knowing God) (JIC Nusantara, 2024: 1316). Successful integration will eliminate the view that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is a separate subject irrelevant to worldly progress (Tharaba, 2021: 160). The balance between knowledge and practice is achieved through the transformation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) theoretical knowledge into concrete practices (good deeds) in daily life (Scribd, 2021: 1). This implementation requires schools/madrasas to design structured habituation programs, such as routine religious activities and the instilling of ethical values outside the classroom (Fauziah & Darraz, 2024). The practices measured are not limited to worship rituals but also include noble morals in social interactions and protecting the environment (Irmawati, 2025: 7). Thus, the knowledge learned by students becomes evidence and guidance for their behavior and morals, in accordance with Islamic demands (Annisa, 2019: 9).

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