

Holistic Education in the Perspective of Islamic Education: Integration of Spiritual, Intellectual, and Social Values

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Received: 2025-05-22

Revised: 2025-07-24

Accepted: 2025-07-25

Published: Accepted: 2025-07-30

Abstract

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia remains challenged by fragmented approaches that prioritize cognitive aspects while overlooking affective and psychomotor domains. This study explores the effectiveness of a holistic education model in bridging religious values with practical life applications. Using a qualitative literature review, the research analyzes Qur'anic texts, classical and contemporary Islamic educational thought, and the model's application in schools and modern pesantren. The findings show that holistic education enhances students' conceptual understanding, critical thinking, social engagement, and motivation. Field data indicate increases in personal piety (40%), critical thinking (35%), and social participation (50%). These outcomes underscore the need for contextual curriculum reform in PAI that integrates spiritual, intellectual, social, and physical development. Rooted in QS. Al-Baqarah: 30–33 and aligned with national education goals, holistic education is not only a pedagogical innovation but a strategic paradigm for nurturing well-rounded and transformative Muslim learners in contemporary society.

Abstrak

Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) di Indonesia masih menghadapi masalah fragmentasi pendekatan, dengan penekanan pada aspek kognitif yang mengabaikan dimensi afektif dan psikomotorik. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji efektivitas model pendidikan holistik dalam PAI untuk menjembatani nilai dan praktik keagamaan secara menyeluruh. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui studi literatur, penelitian ini menganalisis ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an, pemikiran tokoh pendidikan Islam klasik dan kontemporer, serta penerapan model ini di lembaga pendidikan formal dan pesantren. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendidikan holistik meningkatkan pemahaman konseptual, keterampilan sosial, dan motivasi belajar siswa. Data lapangan menunjukkan peningkatan kesalehan individu (40%), kemampuan berpikir kritis (35%), dan partisipasi sosial (50%). Temuan ini menunjukkan pentingnya reformasi kurikulum PAI yang mengintegrasikan aspek spiritual, intelektual, sosial, dan fisik. Pendidikan holistik menjadi paradigma strategis yang sejalan dengan QS. Al-Baqarah: 30–33 dan kerangka pendidikan nasional, serta fondasi untuk membentuk generasi muslim yang transformatif.

Keywords:

Holistic education,
Islamic education,
Islamic thought

Kata Kunci

pendidikan agama
Islam, pendidikan
holistik,
pemikiran Islam

Introduction

Recent studies highlight the challenges faced by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia's education system. While PAI aims to shape character and morals, it often fails to meet students' needs and lacks relevance to their daily lives (Lintang Alifia et al., 2024; Muhlas Amali et al., 2025). The curriculum struggles to integrate religious values with 21st-century skills and respond to socio-cultural dynamics (Bunga Pariama et al., 2024; Lintang Alifia et al., 2024). Implementation challenges include limited instructional time, low student interest, and disconnection between religious and general education (Muhammad Syauqi Mubarak & Muhammad Ridwan Fauzi, 2024). Researchers suggest reforming PAI through innovative teaching strategies, increased family support, and teacher professional development (Muhammad Syauqi Mubarak & Muhammad Ridwan Fauzi, 2024). Recommendations also include strengthening the integration of local and global values, involving the community in curriculum formulation, and improving teacher competence to teach PAI contextually (Lintang Alifia et al., 2024; Muhlas Amali et al., 2025).

The Islamic educational paradigm, as exemplified in the story of Prophet Adam, offers a holistic approach to learning that integrates cognitive, moral, and social aspects (Cahaya Satria Prayoga Bakti et al., 2024; Mikdar Rusdi et al., 2020). This comprehensive model encompasses various teaching methods, including storytelling, direct instruction, questioning, and demonstration, which remain relevant in modern education (Cahaya Satria Prayoga Bakti et al., 2024). The Quranic approach to education emphasizes the integration of Islamic values, participatory methods, and comprehensive evaluations covering cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Siti Hanifah Parawansah & Ainur Rofiq Sofa, 2024). This holistic framework is further illustrated in Surah Luqman, which highlights the importance of tauhid, moral, worship, social, mental, and exemplary education (N. Fitri & Mahsyar Idris, 2019). By adopting these principles, contemporary Islamic education can balance spiritual, intellectual, and social dimensions, producing virtuous, knowledgeable, and socially contributive individuals (Siti Hanifah Parawansah & Ainur Rofiq Sofa, 2024).

The dichotomy between religious and general knowledge in Islamic education poses significant challenges (AhmadMa'ruf1 et al., 2024). To address this, scholars propose integrating Islamic and general sciences to produce competent educators fluent in Islamic teachings (AhmadMa'ruf1 et al., 2024). Al-Attas introduced the concept of ta'dib, emphasizing the importance of preparing students to understand their position in relation to Allah and the cosmos (Komaruddin Sassi, 2018). This approach aims to cultivate good manners and noble character (Komaruddin Sassi, 2018). Muslim scholars argue for creating a third system that integrates traditional and modern education systems to end the dichotomy (Muhamad Parhan et al., 2022). The implementation of ta'dib values in Islamic education has the potential to create civilized individuals capable of addressing societal issues, although challenges in implementation remain (Hanif Najmi et al., 2025). Overcoming these challenges requires systematic efforts and a comprehensive understanding of Islamic education concepts (Hanif Najmi et al., 2025).

In this context, the urgency of holistic education is growing, especially in responding to the demands of the era of disruption and complexity of the 21st century. This era demands not only mastery of knowledge, but also life skills that include critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. Education must be able to address social, ecological, and spiritual challenges

simultaneously. The Islamic holistic education model, which integrates intellectual, emotional, spiritual, social, and physical dimensions, is an alternative that is not only relevant but also urgent to be implemented systematically. In Indonesia, institutions such as the Modern Gontor Islamic Boarding School have demonstrated that integrating IMTAQ, IPTEK, and life skills within a single curriculum framework can produce graduates who are not only intelligent but also have strong character and social awareness.

Thus, holistic education in the Islamic perspective is not merely intellectual romanticism, but a strategic necessity in responding to the challenges of the times. Education is no longer merely the transmission of knowledge but must be understood as a process of humanisation of the whole human being. The relevance of this approach becomes even stronger when we realise that Islamic education, by its very nature, already possesses a solid historical and epistemological foundation to support the transformation of education towards a more comprehensive direction. Our task today is to actualise this wealth of knowledge into concrete, contextual, and transformative educational practices within modern classrooms.

Method

Using a qualitative approach through literature review, this article will explore relevant verses of the Qur'an related to the concept of holistic education, evaluate the thoughts of Islamic education figures such as Al-Ghazali through *Ihya Ulumuddin* and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas through his ideas on *ta'dib*, and compare models of holistic education implementation in several modern Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. It is hoped that the findings of this study will lead to the formulation of a conceptual and operational framework that is applicable in the development of Islamic Education (PAI) that not only enhances intellectual intelligence but also nurtures the character and spirituality of students in a comprehensive manner.

Results and Discussion

Holistic Education in the Perspective of the Qur'an and Hadith

This study places the Qur'an and Hadith as the main theological foundations in formulating a holistic educational framework in Islam. Through a thematic analysis of QS. Al-Baqarah: 30–33, it was found that these verses not only describe the creation of humans but also contain a comprehensive conceptual framework for education. Verse 30 affirms humanity's mission as vicegerents on Earth, encompassing a multidimensional responsibility: spiritual, social, and ecological. Meanwhile, verse 31, which mentions that Allah taught Adam "the names of all things," indicates the principle of integral education that encompasses all aspects of knowledge, both worldly and otherworldly. Allah's assessment of Adam's ability to mention the names (verse 33) also implies the need for comprehensive evaluation, not only based on memorisation, but also on understanding and application of values.

In a famous hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, "*thalabul ilmi faridhatun ala kulli muslimin* (HR Ibnu majah)," it is said that a Muslim is obliged to seek knowledge from birth until death. This illustrates the concept of lifelong learning that touches all phases and aspects of human life. This shows that in Islam, education is not only about mastering material, but also the process of forming the whole human being. Nata states that "education in Islam must touch all dimensions

of humanity, as taught in the story of the creation of Adam," (Nata, 2020). which reinforces the importance of a comprehensive approach to Islamic education today.

Holistic Education in the Thought of Classical and Contemporary Islamic Thinkers

Imam Al-Ghazali's thinking is one of the main pillars in the discussion of holistic education in Islam. In *Ihya Ulumuddin*, he states that knowledge and action must go hand in hand: "Knowledge without action is madness, and action without knowledge is futility. (Al-Ghazali, 2010). Education, according to Al-Ghazali, encompasses four main dimensions: mastery of knowledge (cognitive), application of knowledge (psychomotor), formation of sincere intentions (affective), and refinement of character (spiritual-social). Thus, the educational model he proposed represents a holistic educational structure as understood today. He emphasises the balance between the outward and inward aspects, between intellectuality and spirituality, which form the foundation for cultivating the perfect human being.

Meanwhile, Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas introduced the concept of *ta'dib* as the core of Islamic education. According to Al-Attas (1980), education must begin with an introduction (*ma'rifah*) to Allah, followed by the instilling of *adab* (*ta'dib*), and ending with devotion (*khidmah*). For him, education is not merely about conveying information, but a process of shaping character and behaviour that is fair towards God, humanity, and the universe. In his book *Islam and Secularism*, Al-Attas emphasises that "*ta'dib* is the instilling of *adab* in man," meaning a comprehensive process, not a partial one. This implies that education is not merely a means of intellectual enlightenment but also the simultaneous cultivation of spiritual awareness and social responsibility (Al-Attas, 1980).

Development of a Holistic Islamic Education Model

Based on the integration of religious texts and the thoughts of prominent figures, this study develops a holistic Islamic-based education model that encompasses four main dimensions: spiritual, intellectual, social, and physical. The spiritual dimension is supported by the concept of *khalifah* in QS. Al-Baqarah: 30–33 and Al-Attas' idea of *ta'dib*, which is implemented through the habit of worship and daily spiritual activities such as *mujahadah*. The intellectual dimension is strengthened by the principle of *iqra'* in QS. Al-'Alaq: 1–5 and Al-Ghazali's thoughts on the importance of the relationship between knowledge and action, reflected in analysis-based learning and critical discussions. The social dimension refers to the role of the best community in QS. Ali-'Imran: 110, as well as the concept of service in education, which is realised through social projects. Meanwhile, the physical aspect is linked to the Prophet's *sunnah* on the importance of physical activities, as well as the principle of physical-spiritual balance, which is also discussed in *Ihya*.

Field findings support the effectiveness of this approach. Studies in schools and Islamic boarding schools that implement a holistic model show an increase in student engagement of up to 40% in learning activities that integrate Islamic values. Data from the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs also shows that the relevance of PAI learning increases significantly when it is delivered in a contextual manner and touches on various aspects of students' lives (Kementerian Agama RI, 2022).

As stated by Ramayulis, "the Islamic holistic education model is not a new concept, but rather a revitalisation of the legacy of classical scholars that needs to be contextualised.(ramayulis, 2021). Therefore, holistic education in Islam is not merely a pedagogical method, but a philosophical foundation that describes Islam's vision of humans as complete beings who are rational, spiritual, and socially responsible.

Holistic Education Model in Islamic Education

A holistic approach to Islamic Religious Education (IRE) demonstrates significant effectiveness when implemented through curriculum integration that unites religious values with contemporary knowledge. A study conducted at MAN Insan Cendekia Serpong provides an interesting illustration of how the values of tauhid, fiqh, and akhlak can be contextually linked to science, social studies, and technology lessons. For example, the concept of creation in tauhid is directly linked to science projects that explore the wonders of nature, while lessons on thaharah are integrated with issues of public health and the environment. In moral education, hadith material is packaged alongside social media ethics practices. A survey of 120 students revealed that 78% of them reported a better understanding of religious teachings when presented in a context that intersects with other academic disciplines. A senior teacher stated that "curriculum integration helps students see Islam as a way of life, not just a subject to be memorised.(Tim Penelitian MAN Insan Cendekia, 2023).

The role of teachers in holistic education is no longer limited to teaching material but extends to becoming murabbi who guide students in various aspects of life. From the nine teachers observed, three main functions emerged that were carried out simultaneously: as spiritual guides who foster students' daily worship, academic facilitators who encourage critical thinking, and social mentors who accompany students in community activities. Effective teachers in this context not only understand the Qur'an but also master scientific language and are able to communicate in the language of young people. As observed in the learning process, "holistic teachers must master three languages: the language of the Qur'an, the language of science, and the language of young people. (Tim Penelitian MAN Insan Cendekia, 2023). This confirms that teachers are at the centre of the comprehensive learning transformation process.

Implementation in Educational Institutions

The implementation of holistic education is not limited to public schools but also takes place consistently in modern Islamic boarding schools such as Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Gontor. The pattern of activities in this boarding school reflects an integrative model that takes place 24 hours a day. Mornings are dedicated to cognitive learning in the classroom, evenings are filled with spiritual activities such as mujahadah, afternoons focus on sports and physical activities, and the remaining time is spent engaging in social activities. This model enables students to develop not only one aspect but all dimensions of their personality in an integrated manner. Attendance data shows that student participation in holistic activities has increased by 25% compared to the

previous conventional learning model (Arsip Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Gontor, 2022).

Holistic education aims to develop students' cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects, preparing them for global challenges (Puniman, 2023; Romadhan, 2023). This approach fosters integrity, empathy, and critical thinking skills (Puniman, 2023). However, implementing holistic education faces several challenges, including limited understanding of holistic concepts, resource constraints, and academic pressure (Puniman, 2023; Sankar, 2025). Other obstacles include inflexible curricula, time constraints, and difficulties balancing extracurricular activities with academic responsibilities (Prabha, 2025). To address these issues, collaboration among schools, teachers, parents, and the community is essential (Puniman, 2023). Solutions include developing interdisciplinary curricula, adopting experiential approaches, and implementing flexible assessment techniques (Sankar, 2025). Additionally, technology integration, stakeholder collaboration, and creative teaching strategies can promote holistic development (Prabha, 2025). Despite challenges, holistic education is viewed as a long-term solution for building a globally competitive, morally grounded, and socially contributive generation (Puniman, 2023).

The Impact of Holistic Education

The effectiveness of the holistic education model is reflected in changes in student behaviour and character development. One-year tracking results for 50 students showed significant improvements in several key indicators. Individual piety increased by 40%, as indicated by discipline in worship and concern for others. Critical thinking skills also increased by 35%, as seen in students' ability to relate religious texts to social phenomena. The most significant improvement was in social participation, which increased by 50%, as demonstrated by students' participation in community programmes and solidarity activities. These findings align with the statement of a parent during a focused group discussion (FGD), who remarked that “the school has become a miniature Islamic society where values are not only taught but also practiced” (Tim Penelitian MAN Insan Cendekia, 2023).

In addition to having a direct impact on students, this approach also demonstrates high relevance to national policy. This study found consistency with Government Regulation No. 57 of 2021 concerning National Education Standards. Article 2 emphasises the importance of developing spiritual and social competencies, while Article 5 emphasises the importance of integrated character education, and Article 8 requires the implementation of contextual learning (Kementerian Pendidikan, 2021). Thus, holistic education is not only an alternative approach, but also the main model that addresses the challenges of religious education in the modern era.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that holistic education in the context of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is not merely an alternative pedagogical approach but an urgent necessity in addressing the challenges of the modern era. This model has proven effective in improving the overall quality of student learning, both cognitively, effectively, and socially. Improvements in conceptual understanding, social skills, and learning motivation indicate that when PAI is delivered in a contextual and integrative manner, students not only gain academic knowledge but also become more reflective in their spiritual and social lives. The significant contributions of this model are reflected in a 40% increase in individual piety, a 35% improvement

in critical thinking skills, and a 50% rise in social participation, based on field data and qualitative observations.

Islam itself has conceptually provided a basic framework for holistic education through the tawhid approach, which emphasises the integration of faith, knowledge, and action. In QS. Al-Baqarah: 30–33, Allah describes the mission of humans as khalifah, who are given knowledge and responsibility to care for the earth, a mandate that requires spiritual, intellectual, and social preparedness. The thoughts of classical scholars such as Al-Ghazali, who emphasised the importance of tazkiyah al-nafs, as well as Ibn Khaldun's views on the role of adab in the educational process, reinforce that this approach is not new in Islamic tradition, but rather a reaffirmation of principles that have long existed but are often neglected in modern educational practices.

As emphasised by Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, "Holistic education is not merely a method, but a philosophy that restores the essence of humanity as servants and vicegerents of Allah." This is in line with the criticism raised by Azyumardi Azra and Nurcholish Madjid regarding the danger of reducing religious education to mere ritualism without ethical and social dimensions. Nata even firmly states that "without the integration of values, religious education will only produce ritualists who have lost their social mission."

Thus, holistic education in PAI is a strategic and ideological answer to creating a generation that is not only faithful, but also intelligent, caring, and capable of becoming agents of change in society. This model must be used as the basis for curriculum reform and learning strategies in PAI in Indonesia to achieve the true goal of national education: to create balanced and transformative individuals.

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