

# A CRITIQUE OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LEARNING AT SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS (Case study at MAN 1 Ciamis and SMA Plus Darussalam Ciamis, Cijungjing District, Ciamis Regency)

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**Abstract.** This study aims to explore the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in MAN 1 Ciamis and SMA Plus Darussalam Ciamis, two institutions integrated with pesantren education under the auspices of the Darussalam Ciamis Islamic Boarding School. The research method used a qualitative approach with structured interview techniques to the principal, curriculum vice-secretary, PAI teachers, and related school parties. Direct observation was conducted with students to get an overview of their perceptions of PAI learning. The results showed that the integration of formal education and pesantren in MAN 1 Ciamis and SMA Plus Darussalam Ciamis created a holistic and value-oriented learning environment. Students respond positively to this approach, although faced with the challenge of adjusting to two different educational patterns. PAI teaching in the classroom is well received by students, while pesantren activities provide an additional dimension in the understanding of Islamic values. The challenges identified involve students' adjustment difficulties, lack of resources, and managerial constraints. Therefore, solutions were proposed through improved curriculum management, adequate resource allocation, and training for teachers. In conclusion, the integration between formal education and Islamic boarding schools in PAI learning has great potential to shape a generation that has a deep understanding of Islam, a strong character, and a balance between academic knowledge and religious practice. With the full support of schools, boarding schools, and the government, efforts can continue to be made to improve the effectiveness of PAI learning in an educational environment integrated with Islamic boarding schools.

**Keywords:** Islamic religious education, learning; effectiveness

## I. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the fundamental pillars in character building and individual competence in society. In Indonesia, religious education, especially Islamic Religious Education (PAI), plays a central role in the national education curriculum [1]. Islamic religious education is not only a science, but Islamic religious education is more than knowledge, namely the science of application in everyday life [2]. Cijungjing sub-district in Ciamis Regency shows a strong commitment to providing comprehensive access to education for its people, with educational institutions spread from elementary / MI to university levels (Disdik Ciamis, 2023). In addition to the growth of religious education in Ciamis Regency which is growing, the geographical location also indicates coolness for the community because it is still maintained by beautiful shady trees.

Cijungjing sub-district, as one of the sub-districts that has complete educational institutions, complete here, namely religious education from primary to tertiary levels has sprung up in Ciamis Regency, this is so interesting to study,

especially related to the implementation and effectiveness of PAI learning. With the existence of Islamic boarding schools that implement an integrated approach, there is a potential synergy that can be established between formal educational institutions and traditional educational approaches in teaching PAI.

The focus of the problems that can be identified, among others: a) How is the effectiveness of PAI learning at the high school level or upper secondary level in Cijungjing District b) to find out the synergy between PAI learning methods with an integrated approach applied in local boarding schools c) to find out how students' responses and perceptions of PAI learning they receive at various levels of education.

The objectives of this research are: 1) To identify and evaluate the effectiveness of PAI learning at various levels of education in Dewasari Village. 2) Examine the potential synergy between formal education institutions and Islamic boarding schools in the implementation of PAI learning. 3) To understand students' perceptions and responses to the curriculum and methods of PAI learning provided.

This study is expected to provide insights for educational institutions in Cijeungjing District regarding the effectiveness of PAI learning methods applied. Recommendations for educational institutions in other sub-districts or districts that want to integrate formal education approaches with traditional approaches from Islamic boarding schools in teaching PAI and a contribution to further research related to religious education in Indonesia.

## II. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses descriptive qualitative research methods. Researchers reviewed and described the research data through narratives that were described comprehensively and accurately. Researchers reviewed and collected data through documentation techniques, namely literature studies and searches of books, articles, papers and scientific journals published or not related to the topic raised [3]. With qualitative methods, researchers can study and analyze data. Data analysis techniques are carried out by reducing data and verifying data regarding this research.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Effectiveness of PAI Learning in MAN 1 Ciamis and SMA Plus Darussalam Ciamis*

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a crucial role in shaping students' character and instilling deep religious values. In order to explore the effectiveness of PAI learning in an educational environment integrated with pesantren, this study focuses on two main research sites: MAN 1 Ciamis and SMA Plus Darussalam Ciamis, both of which are under the auspices of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Ciamis. The holistic and integrated approach in the PAI curriculum in these two institutions is the main highlight, with the application of the motto "Moderate Muslim, Democratic believer, and Muhsin Diplomat" as the foundation of education. Through a series of interviews with the principal, curriculum vice-secretary, PAI teachers, and related school parties, this article attempts to illustrate how these values are internalized and become a strong foundation in strengthening students' character. By detailing the views of various stakeholders, this article aims to provide an understanding of how the effectiveness of PAI learning becomes the core of students' spiritual and moral development in the two selected research sites.

Based on the results of data obtained from the research locus at MAN 1 Ciamis and SMA Plus Darussalam Ciamis which became the sample of research conducted at the institution, there are several findings related to the effectiveness of PAI learning. At the high school level, Islamic education has its own complexity with discussions on contemporary issues in Islam.

Based on the results of an interview with Mr. Idan Nurdiana, M.Pd.I. as the Principal of MAN 1 Ciamis, in this interview, emphasized the seriousness and commitment of the school in improving the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. He stated that "the implementation of a curriculum that is integrated with pesantren education

under the auspices of the Darussalam Ciamis Islamic Boarding School is one of the key factors. In addition, the school's efforts in improving the quality of teaching staff, the use of innovative learning methods, and the application of technology in the teaching and learning process are recognized as concrete steps that support the effectiveness of Islamic Education learning. In line with the statement from the principal of SMA Plus Darussalam, it was stated that the management has a distinctive feature that is in line with the vision and mission of the pesantren, emphasizing the side of integration between the school's commitment in the synergy of the vision and mission of the school that supports the development of education through integrated education with pesantrenan values, explained Mr. Abdul Roji, M.Pd.I. [4].

In addition, the Deputy Head of Curriculum at MAN 1 Ciamis gave his views on the development of the PAI curriculum. According to him, a holistic and integrated curriculum approach is the main focus. The PAI curriculum is designed not only to teach the theoretical aspects of Islam, but also to integrate these values into students' daily lives. By combining theory and practice, the Wakasek Curriculum believes that students can internalize religious teachings more deeply. Of course, the integration of formal education and pesantren education is the main asset in creating spiritually and morally strong students.

In addition, the teachers focused on the importance of active interaction with students, using learning methods that are developmentally appropriate, and creating an inclusive learning atmosphere. From the perspective of PAI teachers, teamwork and student involvement in practical activities are the keys to the effectiveness of PAI learning, according to PAI teachers at MAN 1 Ciamis and SMA Plus Darussalam Ciamis.

Overall, the results of these interviews illustrate a holistic and integrated approach in improving the effectiveness of PAI learning at both research sites. Factors such as an integrated curriculum, the quality of teachers, innovative learning methods, and extracurricular activities become key elements in shaping students who are not only academically intelligent, but also have a solid character in Islamic teachings.

### *Synergy of Islamic Education Learning with Islamic Boarding Schools*

One of the highlights in this section is the synergy that exists between formal education institutions and Islamic boarding schools. Some of the synergy points identified include: Integrated Curriculum. The curriculum can be likened to the heart of an education without a curriculum, the goals to be achieved will not be sure of the direction, with the curriculum it can be step-by-step to achieve a goal individually and in groups, but if the school/madrasah implements a curriculum then the goal includes group goals. The curriculum according to Abdul Qadir Yusuf's view in his book *At Tarbiyah wal Mujtama'* defines the curriculum as:

المنهج في التربية الحديثة بأنه مجموعة خبرات وتجارب تعلم الأطفال تحت إشراف المدرسة

The curriculum is the amount of information and experience that is used as the basis for the teaching and learning process of students under the coordination of the school [5].

Not much different from what is expressed by the Ministry of Education in Bambang Sumintono, which is a set of plans and arrangements for the objectives to be achieved, teaching materials and those used as a reference for the implementation of teaching activities in educational units [6].

Based on the results of observations with the pesantren, the caregiver of Pesantren Darussalam Ciamis gave a very interesting description related to the internalization of educational values embodied in the pesantren motto, namely "Moderate Muslim, Democratic Believer, and Muhsin Diplomat". The caregiver emphasized that this motto is not just a series of words, but is the main foothold in shaping the character of students at MAN 1 Ciamis and SMA Plus Darussalam Ciamis.

During the conversation, Prof. Dr. K.H. Fadlil Munawwar Manshur MS. as the caregiver said that the concept of "Moderate Muslim" provides a foundation for students to develop a balanced understanding of religion, stay away from extremism, and live a religious life with tolerance and openness. "Mukmin Demokrat" is a guide in forming a participatory attitude and appreciating democratic values, so that students become individuals who contribute positively to society.

In addition, the Caretaker emphasizes the importance of the value of "Muhsin Diplomat" which encourages students to be individuals of noble character and able to live life with noble morals. The diplomatic aspect of the motto shows the importance of students having good communication skills, building harmonious relationships, and respecting different views.

In the context of Islamic education at MAN 1 Ciamis and SMA Plus Darussalam Ciamis, the caregiver explained that these values are not only taught in class, but also implemented in daily life through extracurricular activities, personality development, and spiritual guidance. This is done with the aim that students not only have strong religious knowledge, but are also able to apply it in their daily behavior.

From the results of this interview, it can be concluded that Pesantren Darussalam Ciamis, in its consistency in internalizing the educational values contained in its motto, is expected to create a strong foundation for the development of student character in both research loci. This internalization is expected to form a generation that is not only knowledgeable in Islam, but also becomes a moderate, democratic individual, and has muhsin and diplomatic personality qualities.

#### *Students' Perception of PAI Learning*

Through a series of interviews with students at MAN 1 Ciamis and SMA Plus Darussalam Ciamis, in general, students' perceptions of learning Islamic Religious Education (PAI) were satisfied with and accepted the integrated approach between formal education and pesantren at both research sites. The students showed awareness of the complexity of the two educational patterns, but overall, they expressed a positive response.

From a formal education perspective, many students expressed their satisfaction with the way PAI teachers teach in class. They highlighted the teacher's ability to deliver the material in an interesting and applicable way, which makes

learning PAI not only informative but also relatable to daily life. Some students mentioned that the inclusive learning atmosphere and open discussions made it easier for them to understand Islamic concepts. [7]

On the other hand, when talking about the pesantren experience, students emphasized the spiritual and moral values they gained through pesantren activities. They said that book studies, recitations, and amaliyah were valuable moments that helped them to deepen and apply religious teachings in their daily lives. Involvement in pesantren activities also provides a sense of togetherness and solidarity among students, which is considered a positive added value.

Despite recognizing the challenges of adjusting to two different educational patterns, students express their desire to continue engaging with and benefiting fully from this approach. They feel that the integration between formal education and pesantren provides a comprehensive perspective on Islam, helping them to form a balanced character and have a deep understanding of religious values.

The findings illustrate that students at MAN 1 Ciamis and SMA Plus Darussalam Ciamis consider learning PAI as a positive and fulfilling experience. They see the integration of the two approaches as a richness in the understanding of Islam, which not only strengthens their academics, but also shapes their character and spirituality holistically.

#### *Obstacles and Challenges*

In the context of combining formal education and pesantren in MAN 1 Ciamis and SMA Plus Darussalam Ciamis, several obstacles and challenges arise that can affect the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. One obstacle that is often faced is the difficulty in adjusting to two different educational patterns. Students, although responding positively to the integrated approach, sometimes feel the pressure to balance the burden of tasks and responsibilities from both educational environments.

Another obstacle can be found in the lack of resources and support, especially in terms of facilities and infrastructure that support PAI learning. Sometimes, inadequate infrastructure can limit the use of technology and innovative learning methods, thus affecting the effectiveness of delivering PAI materials. In addition, challenges also arise from managerial aspects, such as curriculum adjustments and teacher training, which may require a major shift in the educational paradigm.

From the students' point of view, the constraints related to understanding and accepting these two educational patterns become a challenge. Some students may take longer to fully understand and integrate pesantren values into their daily lives, especially if they have not had previous experience in a pesantren environment.

However, despite these obstacles and challenges, ongoing efforts to strengthen coordination between formal education and pesantren are expected to overcome some of these barriers. Full support from schools, boarding schools, and the government in providing adequate resources, training for teachers, and infrastructure that supports innovative learning will be key to improving the effectiveness of PAI learning in both research sites.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

Education (PAI) learning in MAN 1 Ciamis and SMA Plus Darussalam Ciamis, two institutions integrated with pesantren education under the auspices of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Ciamis. The results of interviews with various parties, including principals, teachers, and students, revealed that the integration between formal education and pesantren creates a rich and holistic learning environment. Students showed a positive response to this integrated approach, although they were faced with the challenge of adjusting to two different educational patterns. In their view, learning PAI became an enriching experience, combining Islamic religious values from the perspectives of formal education and pesantren, shaping character and spirituality in a balanced way. The challenges identified, such as adjustment constraints and lack of resources, imply the need for further support from the school, boarding school and government. Solutions could involve improving curriculum management, developing facilities and infrastructure, and increasing training for teachers. Thus, the conclusion of this study emphasizes that an integrated approach between formal education and pesantren in PAI learning has great potential to form a generation that has a deep understanding of Islam, a strong character, and a balance between academic knowledge and religious practice. Through cooperation and joint commitment, efforts can continue to be made to improve the effectiveness of PAI learning in an educational environment integrated with pesantren.

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