

# OBSTACLES TO EVALUATION OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LEARNING IN STUDENTS WITH RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND RELIGIOUS

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## Abstrak

Education plays a significant role in shaping students' character, including fostering an understanding of diversity and religious tolerance. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at the elementary school (SD/MI) level serves as an essential instrument for instilling the values of tolerance from an early age. However, PAI learning has often focused more on ritual practices and theological aspects than on the implementation of social, humanitarian, and multicultural values. Consequently, students' understanding of tolerance tends to remain limited and may lead to exclusive attitudes and misconceptions about religious truth.

This study employs a literature review method by examining various academic sources related to the evaluation of Islamic Religious Education learning in the context of student diversity. The findings reveal that the current evaluation system still has several weaknesses, particularly in establishing fair assessment standards for students from diverse backgrounds and in promoting inclusive learning practices. These limitations may hinder students' understanding of diversity and tolerance.

To address these challenges, more inclusive evaluation strategies, such as project-based learning and collaborative group discussions, are recommended to encourage contextual understanding and appreciation of diversity. Furthermore, the PAI curriculum should place greater emphasis on tolerance, respect, and harmonious coexistence. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education should function not only as a means of religious instruction but also as an effective medium for developing students' character, promoting openness, mutual respect, and tolerance in a pluralistic society.

**Keywords:** Islamic Religious Education, Learning Evaluation, Diverse Religious Backgrounds.

## **Introduction**

Education is an essential instrument for shaping students' moral, spiritual, and social character. In Indonesia's multicultural society, schools are expected not only to develop students' academic competence but also to foster attitudes of tolerance, mutual respect, and harmonious coexistence among individuals from different religious backgrounds. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a strategic role in achieving these goals because it serves as a medium for instilling Islamic values while promoting peaceful interactions in a pluralistic society. As stated by Maragustam in Tobroni (2012), tolerance and peace are rooted in genuine religious spirituality.

However, the implementation of PAI learning still faces significant challenges. Many learning practices continue to emphasize ritual worship and doctrinal understanding while giving less attention to the development of inclusive attitudes, religious moderation, and appreciation of diversity. This condition may encourage exclusive perspectives and truth claims that are inconsistent with the realities of Indonesia's multicultural society (Zulyadain, 2018). Consequently, students may possess adequate religious knowledge but lack the ability to apply the values of tolerance in their daily lives.

These challenges become more apparent in the evaluation process. Evaluation in PAI should assess not only cognitive achievement but also affective and psychomotor domains, including students' attitudes toward diversity, respect for others, and implementation of Islamic values. In practice, however, evaluation remains largely focused on written examinations that measure knowledge rather than students' character development. Furthermore, differences in students' religious backgrounds, learning experiences, and cultural environments make it difficult to apply fair and comprehensive evaluation standards.

This issue provides a strong rationale for selecting the present research topic. Despite the growing number of studies discussing Islamic Religious Education and religious tolerance, limited attention has been given to the obstacles encountered in evaluating PAI learning among students with diverse religious backgrounds. Most previous studies emphasize curriculum content and teaching strategies, whereas evaluation practices remain underexplored. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the obstacles to evaluating Islamic Religious Education learning in the context of religious diversity and to propose more inclusive evaluation approaches that support the development of tolerant, moderate, and socially responsible students.

## **Methodology**

This study uses a literature review method, which is carried out by collecting and analyzing various academic sources, such as journals, books, and research reports that discuss the evaluation of Islamic Religious Education learning in the context of student diversity. Literature sources were obtained through searches in academic databases such as Google Scholar, Science Direct, and university repositories

with the keywords "evaluation of Islamic Religious Education learning", "Islamic religious education", "student diversity", and "evaluation strategy."

This study uses a literature review method to analyze the obstacles in evaluating Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning for students with diverse religious backgrounds. This method aims to collect, analyze, and synthesize various previous studies in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the topic being studied. The data sources used in this study come from various scientific literature, including accredited national and international journals, academic books discussing PAI learning evaluation, proceedings of scientific conferences related to Islamic religious education, and relevant research reports and theses in the last five years (2020–2025). (A'yuni, 2024; Syahriyah, 2023).

Data collection techniques are carried out through systematic searches using journal databases such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, ResearchGate, Sinta, and Garuda. Some of the keywords used in the literature search include: evaluation of Islamic Religious

Education learning, obstacles to Islamic Religious Education evaluation in diversity, strategies for evaluating Islamic religious education, and religious moderation in Islamic Religious Education learning. In selecting relevant literature, several inclusion criteria were determined, namely articles or sources published in the last five years (2020–2025), studies discussing the evaluation of Islamic Religious Education learning in the context of students' religious diversity, and publications available in Indonesian or English. Meanwhile, exclusion criteria included articles that did not specifically discuss the evaluation of Islamic Religious Education learning, studies that did not have full access to the full text, and articles that did not have a clear methodology (Dangka Bulawan, 2019).

The data obtained were analyzed using the thematic analysis method, which consists of several stages. First, data reduction, namely identifying and selecting literature that is in accordance with the research criteria. Second, categorization, namely grouping findings based on main themes such as evaluation constraints and their resolution strategies. Third, data synthesis, where findings from various sources are compiled in a summary form that presents patterns and gaps in previous research. Finally, interpretation of the results is carried out, namely the preparation of conclusions based on patterns of findings obtained from various literature sources (Rohim, 2021). With this approach, research is expected to contribute to understanding the obstacles faced in evaluating PAI learning for students with diverse religious backgrounds and strategies that can be applied to overcome them.

## **Findings and Discussion**

This study aims to analyze the obstacles encountered in evaluating Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning among students with diverse religious backgrounds and to identify evaluation strategies that are more inclusive and appropriate for multicultural learning environments. Based on the analysis of various national and international literature, the findings indicate that the challenges of evaluating PAI learning are not limited to technical assessment procedures but are also closely related to differences in students' religious experiences, learning environments, and educational practices.

## 1. Differences in Students' Religious Backgrounds as an Obstacle to Evaluation

The literature consistently shows that one of the most significant challenges in evaluating Islamic Religious Education is the diversity of students' religious backgrounds and experiences. Although students may formally study the same subject, they often come from different family traditions, Islamic organizations, schools of thought, and social environments. These differences influence their understanding of Islamic teachings, religious practices, and responses to learning materials.

Hidayat (2013) explains that students frequently compare classroom instruction with religious teachings received from their families or communities. When these perspectives differ, students may experience confusion or become less receptive to classroom learning. Rahmat (2022) also found that differences in religious traditions may reduce students' participation during classroom discussions and influence their performance during evaluations.

These findings indicate that evaluation cannot rely on uniform standards without considering students' different learning experiences. Assessment should measure students' understanding objectively while respecting the diversity of religious interpretations that remain within accepted Islamic principles. Therefore, teachers are expected to design evaluation instruments that assess students' reasoning, understanding, and application of Islamic values instead of focusing solely on conformity with one particular religious perspective.

## 2. The Dominance of Cognitive Assessment in Islamic Religious Education

Another major finding of this study is that evaluation practices in PAI continue to emphasize cognitive achievement. Most assessments are conducted through written examinations, multiple-choice tests, short-answer questions, and memorization of Qur'anic verses and Hadith. While these methods effectively measure students' knowledge, they do not adequately evaluate attitudes, values, or behavioral changes.

Yusuf (2020) argues that excessive dependence on written examinations limits teachers' ability to determine whether students have internalized Islamic values

such as honesty, responsibility, respect, tolerance, and compassion. Similarly, Aziz (2019) emphasizes that evaluation should assess cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains simultaneously because Islamic education aims to develop complete human beings rather than merely producing students with theoretical knowledge.

This finding demonstrates that there remains a considerable gap between the objectives of Islamic Religious Education and the evaluation methods commonly applied in schools. Although curriculum objectives emphasize character formation and moral development, assessment practices continue to prioritize academic achievement.

### 3. Limitations of Teachers and Assessment Instruments

The literature also identifies practical constraints experienced by teachers in conducting comprehensive evaluations. Many teachers face limited instructional time, large class sizes, administrative workloads, and insufficient assessment instruments. Consequently, they tend to use written tests because they are easier to administer and score.

Mappanganro (2003) explains that authentic assessment methods, including classroom observation, interviews, reflective journals, portfolios, and performance assessments, require more preparation and time than conventional written examinations. In many schools, these methods are rarely implemented because teachers lack adequate training and institutional support.

As a result, evaluation often measures only students' academic performance while overlooking important aspects such as character development, religious attitudes, social interaction, and practical implementation of Islamic teachings in everyday life.

### 4. The Need for Inclusive Evaluation in Multicultural Classrooms

Another important finding concerns the limited implementation of inclusive evaluation approaches. Indonesia is characterized by cultural and religious diversity, requiring educational practices that promote tolerance, respect, and harmonious coexistence. However, many evaluation systems still emphasize uniformity without adequately accommodating differences in students' backgrounds.

Studies conducted in Malaysia and Canada demonstrate that authentic assessment methods, such as project-based learning, collaborative assignments, reflective writing, and portfolio assessment, encourage students to understand religious diversity more deeply while strengthening critical thinking, empathy, and cooperation. Compared with conventional written examinations, these approaches provide a more comprehensive picture of students' cognitive, affective, and social development.

These international experiences suggest that evaluation in Islamic Religious Education should move beyond measuring factual knowledge and instead assess how students apply Islamic values within diverse social contexts. Such approaches are more consistent with the objectives of Islamic education, which emphasize the integration of knowledge, faith, morality, and social responsibility.

## 5. Strategies for Improving the Evaluation of Islamic Religious Education

Based on the findings above, several strategies can be implemented to improve the evaluation of Islamic Religious Education learning. First, teachers should employ authentic assessment methods that evaluate students' knowledge, attitudes, and behavior simultaneously. Portfolio assessment, reflective journals, classroom observation, project-based learning, and performance assessment provide richer information regarding students' overall development than written examinations alone.

Second, collaborative learning activities should be integrated into the evaluation process. Group discussions, presentations, and problem-solving activities encourage students to appreciate different perspectives while practicing communication, cooperation, and tolerance.

Third, professional development programs should strengthen teachers' competence in designing inclusive evaluation instruments. Teachers need training in authentic assessment, multicultural education, and character-based evaluation to ensure that assessment reflects the objectives of Islamic Religious Education.

Finally, curriculum developers should reinforce the integration of religious moderation, tolerance, and multicultural values throughout both learning activities and assessment systems. Evaluation should measure not only what students know about Islam but also how they demonstrate Islamic values in their interactions with others.

Overall, these findings answer the objectives of this study by demonstrating that the major obstacles to evaluating Islamic Religious Education include differences in students' religious backgrounds, the dominance of cognitive assessment, limited teacher capacity and assessment resources, and the lack of inclusive evaluation practices. Therefore, transforming evaluation into a more authentic, holistic, and inclusive process is essential for improving the quality of Islamic Religious Education and preparing students to live harmoniously in Indonesia's multicultural society.

## Conclusion

This study aimed to analyze the obstacles to the evaluation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning among students with diverse religious backgrounds and to identify more inclusive evaluation strategies through a literature review. The findings indicate that the major obstacles include differences in students' religious understanding and experiences, the dominance of cognitive-oriented assessment, limited teacher **competence** and assessment resources, and the lack of evaluation methods that accommodate diversity. These factors reduce the effectiveness of PAI evaluation in measuring not only students' knowledge but also their attitudes, character development, and implementation of Islamic values in everyday life.

Furthermore, the study finds that inclusive evaluation strategies are essential to improve the quality of PAI learning in multicultural classrooms. Authentic assessment methods, such as project-based learning, reflective journals, portfolios, classroom observations, and collaborative group discussions, provide more comprehensive information about students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development. These approaches also encourage students to develop tolerance, empathy, mutual respect, and religious moderation while appreciating differences in religious backgrounds.

Therefore, the evaluation of Islamic Religious Education should move beyond conventional written examinations toward a holistic, authentic, and inclusive assessment system. Such an approach is expected to improve the effectiveness of PAI learning while supporting the development of students who possess strong religious understanding, positive character, and the ability to live harmoniously in Indonesia's diverse and multicultural society.

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