Reconstruction of Integrative Methods in *Merdeka* Curriculum for Islamic Education Subjects

*Mardiah Astuti[1], Fajri Ismail[2]

[1,2]Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Raden Fatah Palembang, Jl. Prof. K. H. Zainal Abidin Fikri No.Km.3, Palembang, South Sumatra, Indonesia

*mardiahastuti_uin@radenfatah.ac.id

ABSTRACT: *Islamic Education learning is required to be able to adapt to the values of independence, critical thinking, and contextual as the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum. This study aims to explore and reconstruct the integrative learning method within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum in the subject of Islamic Education. This type of research is qualitative with a descriptive approach. Data collection was carried out through interviews, observations, and documentation. Furthermore, the data was analyzed by data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions. The results of the study show that the integrative method in Islamic Education learning in the Merdeka Curriculum provides a comprehensive approach that combines holistic methods, technology integration, use of reflective journals, project-based learning, guest speakers/field visits, and community service-based learning. This method is able to improve the understanding of Islamic teachings, character development, and social involvement of students, in line with the overall goals of Islamic education. This study is limited to certain levels of education and has not tested the effectiveness of the method quantitatively. Further research is recommended using a quantitative approach or experiments at different levels to assess the impact of the integrative method in a more measurable manner.*

Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam dituntut mampu menyesuaikan diri dengan nilai-nilai kemandirian, berpikir kritis, dan kontekstual sebagaimana prinsip Kurikulum Merdeka. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi dan merekonstruksi metode pembelajaran integratif dalam kerangka Kurikulum Merdeka pada mata pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI). Jenis penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Selanjutnya data dianalisis dengan reduksi data, penyajian data, dan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa metode integratif dalam pembelajaran PAI pada Kurikulum Merdeka memberikan pendekatan komprehensif yang menggabungkan metode holistik, integrasi teknologi, penggunaan jurnal reflektif, pembelajaran berbasis projek, pembicara tamu/kunjungan lapangan, dan pembelajaran berbasis layanan masyarakat. Metode ini mampu meningkatkan pemahaman ajaran Islam, pengembangan karakter, serta keterlibatan sosial peserta didik, sejalan dengan tujuan

[1] ⓘ orcid id: http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6073-0687

[2] ⓘ orcid id: http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4401-9937

pendidikan Islam secara menyeluruh. Penelitian ini terbatas pada jenjang pendidikan tertentu dan belum menguji efektivitas metode secara kuantitatif. Penelitian lanjutan disarankan menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif atau eksperimen pada jenjang berbeda untuk menilai dampak metode integratif secara lebih terukur.

Keywords: *Integrative Reconstruction Methods, Merdeka Curriculum, Islamic Education.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is an important means to instil Islamic values as a guide to life, shape a better future, and build a sustainable human civilization (Ilham, 2020). In the current global context and digital era, Islamic education is not only required to maintain Islamic values but also to adapt to the development of the times through the transformation of relevant and effective learning methods. The goal of Islamic Education is to form students who are faithful, pious, and have noble morals in their personal and social lives (Putra, 2022).

Empirically, various findings in the field show that the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum in Indonesia still faces challenges in its comprehensive application, especially in Islamic Education learning. One of the main problems is the suboptimal use of integrative and contextual learning methods. Based on the results of observations and literature studies, it was found that many teachers still tend to use conventional methods such as lectures and memorization. At the same time, students' interest in learning Islamic Education material is relatively low, which is characterized by a lack of learning independence, lack of self-confidence, and minimal motivation (Yulia et al., 2020). On the other hand, the needs of students in this digital era demand a learning model that is interactive, flexible and can accommodate various learning styles (Oktavia & Khotimah, 2023).

Theoretically, the gap that emerges is the lack of integration of diverse learning methods with the structure and philosophy of the *Merdeka* Curriculum. Although the *Merdeka* Curriculum encourages student-centred, independent learning and develops critical thinking, in practice, there has not been much research that specifically formulates an integrative Islamic Education method model that is appropriate to the characteristics of students and the local context of Indonesia.

Reconstruction of integrative methods in Islamic Education learning in the context of the *Merdeka* Curriculum refers to systematic efforts to reconstruct learning approaches that not only combine various methods but also adapt to Islamic values, technological developments, and the diverse needs of students. This integration includes synergy between cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning methods, emphasizing applicable spiritual and social values.

Several literatures have discussed aspects of the *Merdeka* Curriculum such as the implementation of brain-based learning (Diana & Rofiki, 2020), principles of curriculum development (Ashaari et al., 2012), and curriculum development strategies for continuing education (Rozi, 2021; Sufirmansyah, 2023). However, these studies have not specifically described how the integrative method model in Islamic Education learning can be built and implemented effectively in accordance with the principles of

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the *Merdeka* Curriculum. This gap indicates the need for more in-depth research related to integrative methods in the context of Islamic Education learning. Theoretical facts support this urgency, where the learning methods applied by teachers have been proven to influence student learning outcomes greatly, so they need to be designed carefully and adaptively (Sabio & Sabio, 2024). In addition, the need for a variety of methods is also triggered by the technological revolution, changes in student characteristics, and ever-evolving social dynamics (Romadanti, 2023). On the other hand, learning independence is also an important factor that influences academic achievement because independent students tend to show better learning outcomes (Saefuddin et al., 2022). Therefore, an integrative approach in Islamic Education learning is relevant to be developed in order to be able to answer the challenges of the *Merdeka* Curriculum while improving the quality and independence of student learning.

II. METHOD

This type of research is qualitative descriptive with a case study approach. The research locations are MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok, Bangka Belitung; MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat, Bangka Belitung; and MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang, South Sumatra. The subjects of this study were 9 Islamic Education teachers in the three schools. The selection of subjects was carried out by purposive sampling based on the following criteria: Islamic Education teachers who have had at least three years of teaching experience. Schools that have implemented the *Merdeka* Curriculum (Stanley, 2023).

The data collection method was carried out through 1) surveys and interviews. Surveys were conducted with teachers and students at various Islamic Education institutions throughout Indonesia to gather insights into current teaching methods and their perceptions. In-depth interviews with educators and experts in the field were also conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities; 2) Focus Groups. Focus groups were conducted with students and teachers to discuss the effectiveness of current methods and propose new integrative approaches; and 3) Literature Review, which is a comprehensive review of existing literature on Islamic Education curriculum, educational theory, and best practices in religious education to identify current trends and gaps. The research data that has been collected is analyzed using qualitative analysis, starting from data collection and data verification to the stage of conclusion so that in-depth findings are obtained using the integrative method in Islamic Education learning (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Current Condition of Islamic Education Curriculum

The majority of Islamic Education curriculum in madrasahs still focuses on delivering theory, such as memorizing verses of the Qur'an, hadith, and textual understanding of Islamic concepts, without adequate practical application. This has an impact on the low practice of Islamic values in students' lives. At MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok, students are able to answer religious questions but have not reflected their values in social behaviour and discipline. At MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat, Islamic Education learning classically takes place and is separate from the reality of students, without discussion or simulation of the application of Islamic teachings contextually. Meanwhile, at MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang, there is no integration between the Islamic

Education curriculum and other subjects such as social sciences or science. This curriculum, which lacks an interdisciplinary approach, narrows the holistic understanding of Islam and hinders the formation of student character that is relevant to the challenges of the times.

Overall, the lack of integration of theory and practice in Islamic Education learning and the absence of a cross-disciplinary approach are major challenges in realizing contextual religious education that has an impact on the formation of students' morals and spirituality. Therefore, curriculum innovation and learning methodology are needed that are able to bridge cognitive understanding and practical implementation of Islamic teachings in students' real lives. Traditional teaching methods often result in low student engagement and high dropout rates. In this case, the following gaps were identified:

1. Inadequate use of technology in Islamic Education teaching

The use of technology in teaching Islamic Education in madrasas is still low and has not been optimized, both in terms of media, methods, and interactive approaches. The results of observations at MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok, MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat, and MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang show that lectures and printed textbooks still dominate learning without adequate digital support. Technologies such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), interactive multimedia, digital religious applications, and educational social media have not been utilized optimally due to limited teacher training and infrastructure.

The minimal use of technology makes Islamic Education learning less attractive to students who are accustomed to visual and interactive content. This also hinders the contextual approach in conveying Islamic teachings which should be adaptive to the dynamics of the times. Therefore, it is important to carry out teacher training, provide digital facilities, and design a curriculum that supports effective technology integration in Islamic Education learning in madrasas.

2. Limited opportunities for critical thinking and problem-solving

One significant gap in Islamic Education learning at the madrasah level is the limited opportunities for students to think critically and solve problems. Based on observations at MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok, MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat, and MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang, the learning methods applied still focus on memorizing and understanding texts without involving students in open discussions, analyzing religious cases, or solving real problems that are relevant to their lives. As a result, students tend to be passive, only receiving information without developing reflective and argumentative skills that are important in understanding Islamic values in depth and contextually. The absence of a problem-based learning approach in the Islamic Education curriculum also narrows the space for students to relate religious teachings to the social challenges around them. In fact, critical thinking and problem-solving skills are very important for forming an adaptive and solution-oriented Islamic character.

3. Inadequate assessment methods that do not reflect real-world applications

Assessment methods in Islamic Education learning in various madrasahs are still inadequate and often do not reflect the application of Islamic teachings in real life. Assessments generally focus on cognitive aspects through written tests, multiple choice, and memorization of materials such as the pillars of faith, short letters, or definitions of religious terms. For example, at MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat, students are assessed

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based on the results of the final semester exam without considering the extent to which they apply the values of honesty, responsibility, or empathy in everyday life. Likewise, at MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang, assessment of worship practices is still ceremonial, such as listening to prayer readings without evaluating the consistency of their implementation at home or in the social environment. To be more contextual, assessment methods should include behavioural observations, social projects based on Islamic values, reflective journals, and authentic assessments that show student involvement in applying religious teachings in real life.

The Islamic Education curriculum in madrasas is still predominantly theoretical, focusing on memorizing verses, hadiths, and religious concepts without strengthening the implementation of values in everyday life. This can be seen in MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok and MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat, where students are able to answer religious questions but have not reflected Islamic values in their social behaviour. The curriculum has also not integrated PAI with other subjects, such as science or social studies. Hence, students' understanding of Islam is narrow and less relevant to the challenges of the times. According to Sambaga (2024), one of the main challenges is the lack of integration between Islamic Education materials and the general curriculum. Often, Islamic Education is considered an additional subject that does not receive the same attention as core subjects such as mathematics and science. This results in Islamic Education materials being delivered separately from the context of students' daily lives, reducing the relevance and effectiveness of learning. Students may feel that religious teachings are not directly related to their lives, reducing their interest and understanding of the material.

As a reconstruction of the Islamic Education curriculum, Mansir (2020) suggests that the integration of Islamic Education and General subjects can be done in two ways, including: a) Through basic or conceptual searches, in general learning theories including science taken from the Quran and hadith and also the opinions of several scholars and experts, there are only Islamic values or given a basis from the Quran and hadith because to legitimize general knowledge; and b) Studying general learning concepts and theories then combined with Islamic Education curriculum learning.

Islamic Education learning still relies on lectures and textbooks, with minimal use of technology such as digital media or online learning platforms. Students who are accustomed to visual content feel less interested, so their engagement decreases. According to Yusri et al. (2024), The main problems faced by Islamic Education are the lack of adaptation of the curriculum to technological developments or the minimal use of technology in learning. In addition, students are not given space to think critically or solve contextual religious problems. Learning methods do not involve discussions or case studies, which should be an important means of forming a solution-oriented and adaptive Islamic character. According to Erviani (2024), traditional learning that is oriented towards mastering material often lacks real experiences that are relevant to everyday life. This has an impact on the low ability of students to solve real-life problems because the knowledge gained is not directly connected to the practical context they face.

The assessment method also does not reflect the real application of Islamic values. The assessment still focuses on cognitive aspects such as written tests or memorization, without considering the affective and behavioral aspects of students. In the observed madrasah, the evaluation of religious practices was formal and did not touch on daily

elements. In fact, religious education should ideally assess the extent to which students apply the values of honesty, responsibility, and empathy. For this reason, authentic assessments such as social projects, reflective journals, and behavioural observations are needed so that Islamic Education learning truly has an impact on the formation of noble morals. According to Kusnadi et al. (2018), the implementation of authentic assessment affects the current evaluation, which focuses solely on assessing student knowledge, while other aspects receive less attention.

Based on the findings above, the reconstruction of the Islamic Education curriculum in the *Merdeka* Curriculum needs to be directed at integrating cognitive, affective, and psychomotor understanding as a whole and adapting it to the real-life context of students (Maryamah et al., 2023; Sileuw, 2023). The Islamic Education curriculum is not sufficient to just consist of memorizing religious texts. Still, it must be designed to shape the character, spirituality, and critical thinking skills of students in facing the challenges of the times (Samsiah et al., 2024).

Some relevant reconstruction steps include:

1. Strengthening contextualization and interdisciplinarity. Islamic Education materials must be linked to social, scientific, technological, and cultural realities so that students see Islam as a living and relevant religion in various aspects of life. The thematic-integrative approach in accordance with the spirit of the *Merdeka* Curriculum can be used to link Islamic Education with other subjects (Samsiah et al., 2024).

2. Transformation of learning methods. Learning must be interactive and experience-based. Methods such as project-based learning, problem-based learning, religious case discussions, and simulations of worship practices need to be applied so that students not only understand the theory but are also able to implement it in everyday life (Buairi et al., 2025).

3. Integration of educational technology. The use of digital media, Islamic educational applications, and LMS platforms must be part of the learning strategy. This is in line with the characteristics of the digital generation and can increase student interest and engagement (Salsabila et al., 2024).

4. Improvement of the assessment system. PAI assessment must reflect changes in behaviour and the practice of Islamic values, not just memorization. Authentic assessments such as value projects, portfolios, attitude observations, and personal reflections can replace traditional evaluation models that only measure cognitive aspects (Azizah & Mufidah, 2023).

5. Improving teacher competency. Teachers need to be given intensive training to be able to apply the *Merdeka* Curriculum approach creatively and transformatively, including in the use of technology and contextual and cross-disciplinary learning design (Bayhaqi et al., 2024).

With this kind of reconstruction, the PAI curriculum within the framework of the *Merdeka* Curriculum can be an effective means of forming students who are not only spiritually and intellectually intelligent but also adaptive, critical, and have strong character according to Islamic values.

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Types of Integrative Methods Relevant to Islamic Education Subjects in the *Merdeka* Curriculum

The results of the study through a literature review produced various integrative methods that can be applied to Islamic Education learning in the *Merdeka* Curriculum, and are relevant to educational units in Indonesia. The integrative methods are as follows:

Holistic Method

The application of holistic methods to Islamic education involves the integration of spiritual, intellectual, and practical aspects of faith. This method encourages students to understand Islamic principles as a cohesive whole rather than isolating them into separate subjects. In the practice of Islamic Education learning, it is done by combining activities such as prayer, reading the Qur'an, and community service; students can develop a deeper relationship with their faith and integrate Islamic Education with various other disciplines. For example, in the practice of Islamic Education learning, namely:

1. Prayer and Reflection

At MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok, a daily prayer reflection method is implemented through personal journals and group discussions every Friday. Students are invited to reflect on the quality of prayer and relate it to everyday life. RM (2024) stated, "The children are not only more disciplined in praying, but also begin to show changes in attitude, such as being more polite to teachers and more responsible for schoolwork." YE (2024) added that values such as sincerity, patience, and solemnity begin to be connected to the challenges of students' lives, making worship a process of character building and social ethics.

In contrast, at MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat, prayer reflection has not been implemented and is still focused on technical aspects. "We focus on the correct prayer movements and readings, but have not reached the stage of personal reflection or daily journals," said the EF (2024). At MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang, the habit of praying is followed by a moral discussion after the congregational Dzuhur prayer, but it has not been systematically documented. "We have just started it, and not all teachers are used to assisting students in writing their reflections," explained the (NH, 2024).

Comparative analysis shows that the level of implementation of the prayer reflection method in the three madrasahs is different. MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok is the most advanced with a structured approach through journals and routine discussions, which has a positive impact on student discipline and character. In contrast, MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat still focuses on the technical aspects of prayer without reflection, so that character formation is not optimal. MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang has begun to integrate reflection through discussions after congregational prayers, but its implementation has not been documented and is not comprehensive. This difference reflects the variation in the readiness and internal support of madrasahs in developing meaningful and contextual Islamic Education learning. In general, the application of the prayer reflection method that supports character formation and the development of students' cognitive-social aspects is still limited and uneven. Synergy is needed between Islamic Education teachers, homeroom teachers, and education personnel so that this method becomes an integral part of transformative learning in all madrasahs.

2. Studying Islamic History and Culture

At MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang, students learn Islamic history and culture in an integrated manner with other historical periods through the Pancasila Student Profile and *Rahmatan Lil Alamin* activities in the *Merdeka* Curriculum. This activity, which has been running for two semesters and focuses on the celebration of Islamic holidays such as Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, and the Prophet's Birthday, has shown positive results. The IM (2024) stated, "We have seen a significant increase in students' understanding of religion and worship practices, which are not only limited to theoretical aspects but also involve social and spiritual awareness." YA (2024) also added that religious celebrations help strengthen solidarity between students and the community. EW (2024) said, "We not only teach Islamic history cognitively, but also relate it to their daily lives." This approach fosters a love for Islam and an understanding that its teachings are relevant to social life and the development of world civilization.

A comparison between the three madrasahs shows that MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang is most prominent in integrating Islamic history and culture learning into the context of students' real lives through the Pancasila Student Profile and *Rahmatan Lil Alamin* activities. This approach not only improves religious understanding, but also strengthens students' social and spiritual solidarity. In contrast, at MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat, Islamic history learning is still conventional and has not been explicitly linked to character building or Islam's contribution to world civilization. Meanwhile, at MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok, the approach to Islamic history tends to focus more on normative and ritual aspects, without strengthening cross-disciplinary thematic activities. Thus, MTs Ar-Rahman is superior in implementing a contextual and collaborative approach, while the other two madrasahs still need to develop the integration of Islamic values into history learning in a more applicable and reflective manner.

3. Science and Islam

At MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat, the integration of science and Islam in Islamic Education learning is an important innovation to broaden scientific insight and strengthen Islamic values. The MS (2024) explained, "We apply this method to make students better understand the relationship between science and religion, especially Islam, with a focus on the contributions of Muslim scholars in the fields of science such as mathematics, astronomy, and medicine." The MT (2024) added, "Students not only learn theory, but are also invited to explore the history of the contribution of Muslim scientists to science." This method increases enthusiasm for learning and understanding the relationship between religion and science, and is part of the Pancasila and *Rahmatan Lil Alamin* Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5RA).

Meanwhile, MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang has begun integrating Islamic Education themes with environmental and technological issues. MG (2024) stated, "We have begun to link the theme of human responsibility as caliphs on earth with the use of environmentally friendly technology." However, HZ (2024) assessed, "We still do not have clear indicators regarding the success of this integration," so evaluation and strengthening of teacher capacity are still very much needed.

Comparative analysis between the three madrasahs shows that MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat is the most advanced in systematically integrating science and Islam in Islamic Education learning. This approach not only strengthens religious understanding but also increases scientific literacy and pride in Islamic intellectual heritage, supported by data on improving student learning outcomes. On the other hand, MTs Ar-Rahman

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Palembang has just started a similar initiative by linking technology and environmental issues with Islamic values, but its implementation is still in the development stage and does not yet have structured evaluation indicators. Meanwhile, MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok has not explicitly implemented an integrative approach between science and religion, the focus of its learning is still conventional. This shows that innovation in scientific integration in Islamic education is not evenly distributed, and it is still necessary to strengthen teacher capacity and an evaluation system so that its implementation can be optimal in all madrasahs.

Technology Integration

Technology has proven to be effective in enhancing the Islamic Education learning experience at MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok, MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat, and MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang. At MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok, RM (2024) explained, "We have integrated the use of e-learning platforms such as Google Classroom in Islamic Education learning." Students can access materials, watch video lectures, take quizzes, and discuss online. Meanwhile, YT (2024) at MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat stated, "We utilize various media such as YouTube, Quizizz, Kahoot, Zoom, and Muslim Pro .. which help students remind them to worship on time."

At MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang, students actively discuss after watching religious lectures. From YouTube. One student admitted, "Using this application helps me be more disciplined and makes it easier to learn anytime." MTs Halimatus Syaidiyah also utilizes virtual field trips to Islamic historical sites using Google Maps and YouTube Vlogs. IM (2024) added, "Virtual field trips allow students to see historical sites directly without having to go far." Technology not only enriches Islamic insight, but also significantly increases student motivation and engagement.

The three madrasahs—MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok, MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat, and MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang—have demonstrated effective use of technology in Islamic Education learning, albeit with different approaches and intensities. MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok stands out in its use of e-learning and virtual field trips that broaden the scope of learning Islamic history visually and interactively. MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat focuses on integrating media such as YouTube, Quizizz, Kahoot, Zoom, and Muslim Pro to combine learning and strengthening daily worship, creating a balance between cognitive and spiritual aspects. Meanwhile, MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang demonstrates the effectiveness of using digital media in facilitating discussions and deepening understanding of Islamic values in daily life. Although all madrasahs experienced an increase in student participation and interest, the implementation of technology at MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok appeared more systematic and comprehensive, while the other two madrasahs were still in the strengthening and development stage.

Use of Reflective Journals

The use of reflective journals in Islamic Education learning has been proven to increase students' spiritual awareness and responsibility towards Islamic values. At MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang, HZ (2024) said, "Every Monday and Friday, our students are asked to write their daily reflections," including prayer practices and honest attitudes at school. Observations showed that students were more active in discussions and behaved politely. Meanwhile, at MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok, reflections were carried out through journals and group discussions every Friday. YE (2024) stated, "We emphasize

not only writing, but also discussing together in class." This has a positive impact on students' social awareness and empathy.

In contrast, at MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat, the reflective journal is still in the trial stage. SM (2024) explained, "We are developing a more interesting and easily accessible journal format, perhaps in digital form." Students who were guided directly were more consistent in writing and showed an increase in responsibility. In general, the success of this method is highly dependent on the consistency of implementation, teacher support, and a learning approach that encourages introspection.

All three madrasahs showed significant efforts in implementing reflective journals for Islamic Education learning, but with different levels of implementation and effectiveness. MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang showed the most systematic implementation, with a routine schedule and focus on spiritual aspects and daily behavior, resulting in more active and disciplined students. MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok added a social dimension through group discussions, encouraging empathy and the ability to resolve conflicts in an Islamic way. Meanwhile, MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat is still in the pioneering stage, with the main obstacles being consistency, student engagement, and the evaluation system. The weaknesses in this madrasah highlight the importance of teacher mentoring and an attractive journal format. This comparison shows that the success of reflective journals is highly dependent on structural and pedagogical support. With strengthening the system and teacher training, this method can be optimized as a means of forming deep and sustainable Islamic character.

Guest Speakers and Field Trips

Involving guest speakers and field trips has proven to be effective in enriching students' understanding of Islamic values in everyday life. At MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok, Mr. MT (2024) said, "When we present ustaz who is also a social activist, students become more aware that Islamic values can be applied in humanitarian activities." Students are also enthusiastic about asking questions, especially related to Islamic issues in the digital era. Visits to the Baitur Ridho Mentok Grand Mosque and Islamic boarding schools are routinely carried out every semester. At MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat, visits to the tahfiz's house are accompanied by reflective reports. YD (2024) stated, "Students not only watch, but also discuss and write reflective reports."

At MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang, guest speakers and field trips are part of the *Merdeka* Curriculum. NH (2024) explained, "Each Islamic Education learning theme is closed with an external resource person such as a young preacher or zakat activist." Observations showed increased student participation in discussions after the session. Visits to the Great Mosque of Palembang, the Kiai Marogan Mosque, the Cheng Ho Mosque and Islamic social institutions were accompanied by project assignments to link PAI materials with real practices such as the Palembang City Baznas.

The three madrasahs demonstrated diversity in the application of learning methods through guest speakers and field visits, albeit with different approaches. MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok integrated guest speakers from social activists and alumni, providing insight into the application of Islamic values in human life, as well as visits to mosques and Islamic boarding schools that enriched students' understanding of religious practices. At MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat, structured field visits to various Islamic sites and da'wah centers, coupled with reflective sessions, strengthened students' understanding of Islamic heritage and social media ethics. MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang, through the *Merdeka* Curriculum, combined guest speakers with specific

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topics and field visits that focused on zakat and *sadaqah* practices, encouraging students to connect theory with real action. Although all three carried similar concepts, MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok stood out in its social approach, while MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat and MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang focused more on integrating knowledge with real life.

Project Based Learning

Project-based learning has been implemented in MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok, MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat, and MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang as part of the *Merdeka* Curriculum, especially in P5RA activities. In MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok, the "*Sadaqah Jumat Barokah*" project not only accustoms students to sharing, but also increases empathy and understanding of *sadaqah* and caring in Islam. This activity involves students in fundraising, distribution, and reporting, and is equipped with a reflective journal (RM, 2024). In MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat, the mosque and environmental care project strengthens students' critical thinking skills and faith, with collaboration between students and across subjects supporting its success (MS, 2024).

At MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang, the Friday *Sadaqah* project has developed into a "Caring Class" program that encourages student initiative and leadership. Teachers stated that this activity is effective in building religious character, empathy, and social responsibility. Overall, the implementation of Islamic value-based project learning bridges theoretical and practical understanding, strengthens Islamic Education materials, and forms caring and active student characters. Strengthening documentation and evaluation is needed to develop this approach into a more sustainable learning model (JR, 2024).

The three madrasahs, MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok, MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat, and MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang, have implemented project-based learning with a focus on strengthening Islamic values through P5RA activities, but with different approaches. MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok emphasizes the "*Sadaqah Jumat Barokah*" project that involves students in fundraising, distribution, and reporting, accompanied by reflective journals to connect activities with *fiqh* and morals materials. MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat emphasizes cross-subject collaboration in social projects that include caring for mosques and the environment, strengthening students' critical thinking skills. Meanwhile, MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang developed the project into a "Caring Class" program that focuses on developing student initiative and leadership in social activities. Although all three have succeeded in integrating Islamic values into learning, MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat and MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang demonstrate a more systematic approach and are oriented towards student leadership.

Community Service Learning

At MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang, community service projects based on Islamic values, such as training and student service in distributing zakat fitrah during Ramadan, have become an important part of strengthening character and implementing Islamic values (HZ, 2024). This activity not only teaches the theory of zakat in the subjects of *fiqh* and *aqidah* and *akhlak*, but also involves students in collecting, managing, and distributing zakat to the community. Students learn to think critically, communicate effectively, and make decisions that have a social impact, as well as submit activity reports as a form of accountability (YE, 2024). Teachers stated that this activity strengthens the relationship between the madrasah and the community and makes students agents of change who bring Islamic values into everyday life. This project is effective as a transformative

learning medium and can be developed as a model of service-based education in other madrasahs (SM, 2024).

The three madrasahs, MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok, MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat, and MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang, have integrated Islamic values into learning through community service projects, but with different approaches. MTs Halimatussa'diyah Muntok focuses on social activities such as "*Sadaqah Jumat Barokah*," which teaches students to share through fundraising and distribution to those in need. At MTs Negeri 1 Bangka Barat, social projects are implemented more broadly by involving students in mosque and environmental care movements, which emphasize critical thinking skills and cross-subject collaboration. Meanwhile, MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang emphasizes community service through training and distribution of zakat fitrah during Ramadan, giving students firsthand experience in managing and distributing zakat. All of these activities develop leadership character, empathy, and social responsibility, but MTs Ar-Rahman Palembang shows a more systematic approach and focuses on real religious practices.

The findings of this study provide a clear picture of various effective methods in teaching Islamic Education in the *Merdeka* Curriculum in Indonesia, which focuses on a holistic and integrative approach. Based on these findings, we can reconstruct and develop a more comprehensive integrative method for PAI, by utilizing various elements that have been proven to increase student engagement, understanding, and character development. Here are some key components in the reconstruction of the integrative method of PAI in the *Merdeka* Curriculum:

1. Holistic Method

The integration of religious values with other disciplines, such as science and Islamic history, leads to the development of a curriculum that focuses not only on technical aspects, but also on character building and students' social understanding. In the context of the *Merdeka* Curriculum, this approach can be integrated into each learning theme, where students not only learn theological aspects but also the application of Islamic values in everyday life. The use of reflective journals and group discussions as part of this method strengthens spiritual awareness and connects theory with real practice.

The findings of this study indicate that the application of holistic methods in Islamic Education learning focuses on the integration of religion and science, as well as the development of student character. According to Dewey, it emphasizes the importance of learning that is relevant and connected to real life. The *Merdeka* Curriculum encourages contextual learning, linking subject matter to real situations faced by students in everyday life (Brutu et al., 2023). Meanwhile, Gardner, with his theory of multiple intelligences, emphasizes the importance of a learning approach that values the various dimensions of student intelligence, be it intellectual, emotional or spiritual (Nurrohmah et al., 2024; Wijaya et al., 2023).

2. Technology Integration

Technology can be a powerful tool in supporting Islamic Education learning, such as the use of e-learning platforms and applications to support daily worship and online discussions. With the *Merdeka* Curriculum emphasizing flexibility and project-based learning, technology can be used to expand students' learning space outside the classroom, for example by conducting virtual visits to Islamic historical sites. The application of this technology helps students to stay engaged in Islamic Education

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learning, enriches their learning experience, and deepens their understanding of Islamic values.

The rapid development of technology in recent decades has provided new opportunities to empower teachers, improve administrative efficiency, and enrich students' learning experiences in the context of Islamic education. With technology, teachers can access various educational resources quickly and easily (Rohmah, 2019). Learning materials, teaching materials, and references can be accessed through online platforms, e-books, or digital repositories, providing flexibility in the use of relevant and quality learning materials (Lubis et al., 2021). In addition, technology also provides sophisticated evaluation tools, in tracking student progress and providing more effective feedback (Sholeh & Efendi, 2023; Wulandari et al., 2021).

3. Use of Reflective Journals

Reflective journals can be integrated more systematically into the *Merdeka* Curriculum to increase students' spiritual awareness. Each student can be asked to write a reflective journal about their worship practices, daily behavior, and experiences in social projects. In addition, this approach can be combined with group discussions that discuss certain themes related to Islamic ethics and morality, which also supports the goals of the *Merdeka* Curriculum to develop social skills and empathy.

Reflection journal is a place to write reflections (what is received, what is understood or not understood by students) from all learning activities carried out, to improve the next learning activities. Reflection journal is not just a description of the message at the end of learning but must contain important things, namely evaluation of the benefits by finding the weaknesses and strengths of a learning process, analysis of the causes of the weaknesses found and future plans for improving the next learning process. Writing a reflection journal is intended to provide a place for students to write reflections on the learning that has just been done (Alfiah et al., 2018; Susiloningsih, 2018). The use of reflective journals as a tool to help students find meaning after seeing some of the advantages of reflective journals, including research by (Al-Rawahi & Al-Balushi, 2015; San Fauziya & Suhara, 2015).

4. Guest Speakers and Field Trips

Guest speakers and field trips that focus on contemporary topics and the application of Islamic values in everyday life provide opportunities for students to learn from real-world experiences. Integrating these activities into the *Merdeka* Curriculum can involve visits to relevant places, such as mosques, Islamic boarding schools, and Islamic preaching centers. Guest speakers who have experience in social and humanitarian fields can relate Islamic values to real-life activities, providing clear examples of how Islamic teachings are applied in everyday life.

Teacher tactics in improving Islamic Education learning include various approaches aimed at increasing the effectiveness and attractiveness of Islamic Education learning for students, including the use of external resources, teachers can invite guest speakers, such as religious scholars, ulama, or community leaders, to provide additional perspectives on Islam. Visits to places of worship or religious events can also enrich students' experiences (Safitri et al., 2023; Susanti et al., 2025). Collaboration with local organizations and communities can enrich learning. Schools can work with other institutions to provide additional materials, guest speakers, and opportunities for hands-on involvement. These partnerships not only improve the quality of learning but also

strengthen the relationship between the school and the community in environmental conservation efforts (Humaidi & Nurhakim, 2021; Zaleha, 2024).

Furthermore, field trips are held to provide opportunities for students to make observations that are in accordance with the learning topic in real situations in the field. Field trips are student activities to special places for special purposes. The purpose is to observe the situation, observe activities or practices, or bring groups to meet someone, a group or an object that cannot be brought to class or a place. Furthermore, field trips are held to provide opportunities for students to make observations that are in accordance with the learning topic in real situations in the field. Field trips are student activities to special places for special purposes. The purpose is to observe the situation, observe activities or practices, or bring groups to meet someone, a group or an object that cannot be brought to a class or a place (Nugraha, 2015). Field trip activities can offer relevant and contextual learning experiences, which are sometimes difficult to achieve through traditional classroom teaching alone (Nabil & Rossidy, 2024; W. Yulia, 2017).

5. Project Based Learning

Project-based learning, as implemented in social projects and zakat activities, provides students with the opportunity to develop practical skills, such as leadership, communication, and collaboration. By emphasizing Islamic values, these projects encourage students to apply religious teachings in a broader social context. The *Merdeka* Curriculum can support the implementation of such projects by providing space for students to choose projects that suit their interests and talents, thereby increasing engagement and a sense of social responsibility.

In this project-based learning, students are given projects that are relevant to the religious material being studied, for example making presentations about Islamic figures or creating social campaigns based on Islamic values. Through this method, students not only develop academic skills, but also practical skills such as cooperation, time management, and creativity (Rafliyanto & Mukhlis, 2023). In addition, project-based learning provides students with the opportunity to explore PAI material in more depth in a more interesting way.

Project-Based Learning method is also one of the innovative approaches that are relevant to be applied in Islamic Education. In this method, students are given real projects that are relevant to religious material, such as social projects based on Islamic teachings. For example, students can be given the task of compiling a charity campaign or social activity based on Islamic values such as zakat, *sadaqah*, or concern for the environment. This approach not only enriches religious understanding, but also teaches practical skills such as time management, collaboration, and leadership (Efendi et al., 2022; Manah, 2024).

6. Community service-based learning

Community service-based learning that integrates Islamic values, such as zakat collection or other social activities, not only strengthens students' religious character, but also gives them direct experience in contributing to society. In the *Merdeka* Curriculum, this approach can be expanded by introducing larger and more structured service projects, allowing students to engage in various social activities that have a direct impact on the lives of the community.

Integration of Islamic values in daily educational practices can strengthen social bonds and prepare students to become more adaptive individuals and contribute positively to society. Islamic Education not only functions as a means of religious learning, but also as an effective instrument in the formation of essential social skills in community life. Islamic Education contributes greatly to forming students' social skills through teaching moral values such as respecting others, doing good, being honest, and being fair, cooperation such as deliberation (joint discussion) and *ta'awun* (mutual assistance) taught in Islamic Education helps improve social skills that focus on group interaction, joint decision-making, and the ability to appreciate different views, tolerance, respect for differences, and through practical activities such as socio-religious activities, charity, or community service. Through activities like this, students learn to communicate, cooperate, and interact with various people in a real environment that trains students to live harmoniously in society. By integrating religious education in daily life, students can become individuals who are more caring, empathetic, able to communicate well, and play an active role in creating a positive and inclusive social environment (Nurhaliza, 2024).

Reconstructing the integrative method in the *Merdeka* Curriculum for Islamic Education can create a richer and more relevant learning experience for students. A holistic approach involving technology, reflective journals, guest speakers, field trips, project-based learning, and community service can prepare students to become individuals who not only understand their religion theoretically, but are also able to apply it in everyday life. Through this method, the *Merdeka* Curriculum can strengthen students' character, social skills, and spiritual intelligence in facing the challenges of the modern world.

Through the Case Study analysis, it is known that programs that successfully implement this integrative method show a significant increase in student engagement and knowledge retention. This is relevant to learning in the *Merdeka* Curriculum in Indonesia. For example, the use of gamification in teaching Islamic history and combining environmental studies into Islamic ethics. Ultimately, the implementation of teaching and learning results in changes in students that can be assessed by how effective it is in changing students for the better. An effective learning process is realized through collaboration between teachers and students. The effectiveness of teachers in teaching is seen from their clear teaching methods, the learning methods used are varied, the media and teaching aids used are relevant, enthusiasm, empowering students, using contextual learning, asking questions that arouse students' enthusiasm. The effectiveness of student behavior, seen from learning motivation, seriousness, attention, diligence, discipline, curiosity, taking notes, asking questions, enjoying doing practice questions, and a positive learning attitude (Wote & Sabarua, 2020). Integrated learning of Islamic values is one strategy that can be applied to improve student learning outcomes (Purwati et al., 2018). Islamic values are instilled in students through Islamic Education subjects which are supported by cooperation from all parties, including their families, so that they gain insight and experience at school and also in their home environment which is relevant and mutually supportive (Ikhwan et al., 2019).

Reconstruction of integrative methods in Islamic Education learning in the *Merdeka* Curriculum in Indonesia is very important to increase student engagement and knowledge retention. Teachers can adopt innovative teaching methods that integrate technology, interdisciplinary studies, project-based learning, and service-based learning to create a more holistic and interactive learning environment that prepares them to face the challenges of the 21st century. This study contributes to the ongoing effort to

reformulate the Islamic Education curriculum in Indonesia, ensuring that Islamic education remains relevant and effective in shaping the next generation.
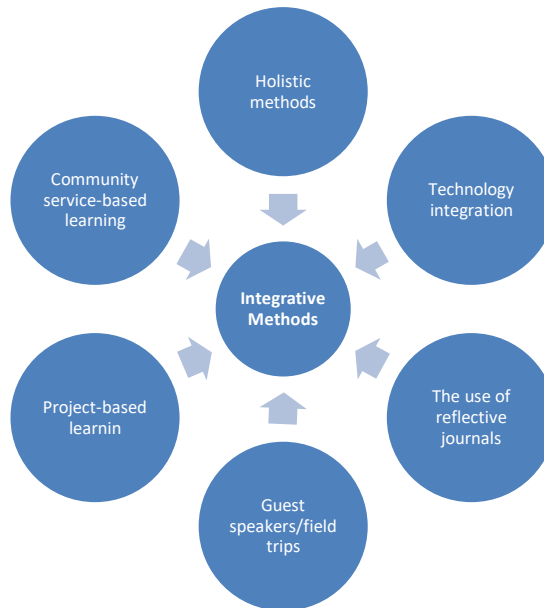
Figure 1. *Reconstruction of Islamic Education through interactive methods*

IV. CONCLUSION

The current Islamic Education curriculum faces significant challenges, such as minimal integration between theory and practice, overreliance on memorization and lectures, underutilization of technology, and assessments that focus only on cognitive aspects, thus hindering the goal of holistic education to shape students' character, spirituality, and social skills. To address this, curriculum innovation and the application of interactive, contextual, and integrative methods within the *Merdeka* Curriculum framework are essential. By combining holistic approaches, technology integration, reflective journals, project-based learning, guest speakers or field trips, and community service-based activities, teachers can create an engaging and meaningful learning environment that not only enhances students' knowledge but also builds moral character and active community participation, aligning with the broader goals of Islamic education to produce a generation of moral, reflective, and solution-oriented Muslims. Based on the above conclusions, it is recommended that madrasahs implement integrative learning methods in Islamic Education that are in line with the principles of the *Merdeka* Curriculum, by prioritizing contextual, interdisciplinary, and student-centered approaches. The application of project-based learning, utilization of technology, and authentic assessments can help connect Islamic teachings with the realities of students' lives directly. For this reason, continuous teacher training, strengthening of interdisciplinary curricula, and collaboration with the community are strategic steps to increase the effectiveness and relevance of Islamic Education learning in the modern era.

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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