Challenges in evaluating Islamic education learning in schools: Implications for educational objectives

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Abstract
This research was driven by numerous issues identified in the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam, hereinafter PAI) in schools, which diverge from the intended goals of Islamic education, particularly in fostering moral development and student skills. The primary objective of this study was to analyze the challenges in evaluating PAI learning in schools and to understand its implications for the overarching goals of Islamic education. Employing a qualitative approach, this study utilizes a descriptive-analytical method through library research. The data validity was established through the examination of various relevant sources, including journals, scholarly articles, books, and documents pertinent to the evaluation of PAI learning. The findings reveal significant problems, particularly in the neglect of affective and psychomotor domains, with an overemphasis on cognitive assessment. The assessment methods often fail to reflect the intrinsic values or spirituality, are inconsistent, and tend to be subjective. These issues manifest in the form of assessments that do not adequately capture the moral and ethical dimensions that are central to Islamic education. Consequently, these shortcomings hinder the achievement of the primary goals of Islamic education, which include the cultivation of exemplary moral character and the recognition of diverse student skills and abilities. Furthermore, the inconsistency and subjectivity in assessment practices undermine the reliability and effectiveness of the educational outcomes. Addressing these issues is crucial for aligning the evaluation methods with the holistic objectives of Islamic education, thereby ensuring a more comprehensive development of students' intellectual, moral, and practical competencies.

Keywords: Educational outcomes, evaluation challenges, Islamic religious education (PAI), moral development


Introduction
The term "problematic" originates from the word "problem," signifying an issue that disrupts meaningful activities and remains unresolved (Anas & Umam, 2020, p. 2). In various domains of life, including education, problems are inevitable and often pose significant challenges. One critical area facing persistent issues is PAI in schools.

Liberal education, as discussed by Arfani (2022, p. 155), underscores the importance of a curriculum focused on logical development and intellectual growth. This perspective emphasizes the necessity of a reflective educational mission, offering students valuable opportunities to engage critically with their learning. However, the curriculum, comprising
objectives, content, methods, teaching and learning processes, and evaluation (Sukmawati, 2021, p. 62), often encounters problems in practical application, particularly in the evaluation component.

Evaluation in education is a crucial process used to assess the effectiveness of programs and the extent to which educational objectives are met (Riadi, 2017, p. 3). In the context of learning, evaluation involves assessing the teaching and learning processes to inform decisions regarding instructional approaches, methods, or techniques. Effective evaluation supports educational success (Yahya, 2019, p. 601). Without proper evaluation, issues related to student performance and the achievement of educational goals arise, affecting cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.

The cognitive domain pertains to intellectual abilities such as thinking, knowing, and problem-solving. The affective domain relates to attitudes and values, emphasizing the importance of traits like discipline and the rejection of negative behaviors. The psychomotor domain involves skills and actions performed following learning experiences. Comprehensive evaluation allows educators to gauge student success and refine educational programs, improving curriculum quality (Solichin & Fujirahayu, 2018, p. 89).

In PAI subjects, evaluation plays a pivotal role in developing human potential by instilling Islamic values, aiming to create well-rounded individuals (Anas & Umam, 2020, p. 1). PAI education involves a process of maturation through teaching and research, grounded in belief in God and adherence to Islamic teachings as propagated by the Prophet Muhammad (Jumiarti & Daulay, 2019, p. 141).

However, in practice, the evaluation of PAI learning often falls short, leading to various problems. These issues are not aligned with the principles of valid, objective, fair, integrated, open, comprehensive, systematic, criteria-based, and accountable evaluation (Riadi, 2017, p. 4-5). Consequently, these problems hinder the attainment of Islamic education's objectives, which prioritize the development of good character and the practical application of Islamic teachings.

Previous studies have addressed global learning evaluation issues, including challenges in evaluating PAI learning in different educational contexts (Mujianto et al., 2018; Riadi, 2017; Salamun et al., 2023; Muammar et al., 2022; Dhomiri et al., 2023). Despite this body of research, there remains a gap concerning the implications of these evaluation problems on the goals of Islamic education. Therefore, further research is essential to identify the specific challenges in PAI learning evaluation and understand their impact on achieving the educational objectives of Islamic education.

**Method**

This research employs a qualitative approach utilizing a descriptive-analysis method, specifically focusing on library research. The goal is to thoroughly analyze the challenges in evaluating Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in schools and to understand their implications for educational objectives. The qualitative nature of this study allows for an in-depth exploration of existing literature, providing comprehensive insights into the issues at hand.

Library research was chosen for its ability to provide a broad and comprehensive understanding of the existing body of knowledge on PAI learning evaluation. This method allows researchers to access a vast array of information, facilitating a thorough analysis of the literature. The descriptive-analysis approach ensures that the study not only identifies and describes the challenges but also critically examines their implications for educational practice.
By utilizing a rigorous library research method, this study aims to contribute valuable insights into the evaluation of Islamic Religious Education, highlighting areas for improvement and offering recommendations to better align evaluation practices with the educational goals of fostering moral and intellectual development in students.

**Data Collection**

The data for this study were gathered from a wide range of relevant literature, including peer-reviewed journals, scientific articles, books, and official documents related to the evaluation of PAI learning. The selection of these sources was guided by their relevance and credibility in the field of Islamic education and evaluation methods.

**Research Procedure**

The first step involved an extensive review of the existing literature on PAI learning evaluation. This included identifying and selecting relevant studies, articles, books, and other scholarly sources that provide insights into the evaluation challenges and practices in Islamic education.

The selected literature was then systematically compiled. Key themes and issues were identified, focusing on the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of learning evaluation in PAI. Notes were taken to capture essential points, arguments, and findings from each source.

The compiled data were analyzed descriptively to identify common patterns, themes, and gaps in the existing evaluation practices of PAI learning. This method allowed for a detailed examination of how current evaluation approaches align or misalign with the educational objectives of Islamic education.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, cross-referencing was conducted with multiple sources. This involved comparing findings from different studies and literature to confirm the consistency and accuracy of the information.

The final step involved synthesizing the analyzed data to draw conclusions about the challenges in evaluating PAI learning and their implications for achieving the goals of Islamic education. This synthesis provided a comprehensive understanding of the issues and informed the recommendations for improving evaluation practices.

**Data Sources**

The sources of data included scholarly articles that provide empirical research findings and theoretical discussions on PAI learning evaluation. Besides, the data also was taken from authoritative texts on educational evaluation, Islamic education principles, and teaching methodologies. Further, policy documents, curriculum guides, and evaluation frameworks from educational authorities and institutions were also used.

**Result and Discussion**

**Challenges in PAI Evaluation in Schools**

Evaluating PAI in schools faces significant challenges that can impact the effectiveness and quality of education provided. Through an in-depth literature review, this study identifies several major issues in PAI evaluation, including difficulties in assessing the affective domain, a tendency to focus on the cognitive domain, neglect of the psychomotor domain, assessment forms that do not align with values and spirituality, and inconsistent and subjective evaluation principles. Understanding these issues is crucial for formulating improvement strategies that can enhance the achievement of Islamic education goals.
**Table 1**
The Summary of Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Problematic Aspects</th>
<th>Information and literature sources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Affective Domain</td>
<td>Affective evaluation was ruled out because it was felt that the preparation of the instrument was more difficult (Dhomiri, et al: 2023, 114-115). Not a few teachers are reluctant to make a grid and its format before carrying out an affective evaluation because it has been suggested that evaluation in this domain is quite difficult because it has to be made in the form of a description. Especially in report cards, where each student has a different description according to their attitude or behavior and when filling out the report card the teacher experiences difficulties when making it. One of the factors is when teachers who are technologically clueless (don't know much about technology) remember that K13 report cards are filled in via the application and in the end, they assign someone else to do it by just depositing the grades. Even though the other people assigned do not necessarily know the students' daily behavior or attitudes (Akbar, et al: 2022, 6-8). The affective domain is closely related to determining whether a student's grades are good or not. Moreover, PAI learning needs to be based on the formation of human beings with an Islamic personality. In relation to theory, the term personality is divided into three. Those that are related to learning are the results of the formation of internal (genetic-biological) and external (experience, environmental, social) factors. Therefore, the formation of humans related to Islamic thinking and Islamic mental attitudes is a mandatory task in PAI. In practice, this affective domain has raised many issues because the instruments used are considered more difficult than the cognitive domain, even though educational experts are intensively formulating attitude measurement scales. Not only that, assessing the affective domain requires a sense of patience whether the learning that has been given is in accordance with what is felt and can also be assessed from aspects of the student's attitude and mentality. This is because changes in students' mental attitudes can change and are dynamic. Meanwhile, another problem, based on previous research, stated that PAI teachers in evaluating students' effectiveness with just 1-2 indicators have not even reached the point of implementing a student's personality. One of the reasons why PAI teachers do this is because they do not know how to assess the affective domain correctly and appropriately (Akbar, et al: 2022, 6).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Cognitive Domain</td>
<td>Evaluation of PAI learning which places more emphasis on cognitive (Salamun, Sauri: 2023, 233). in its assessment it is not objective and the final result only relies on cognitive aspects (Tasurun Amma: 2018, 72). Based on these findings, the evaluation process cannot be said to be perfect considering that there are still teachers who only assess 1 aspect. This issue is because teachers are lazy in making skills or attitude instruments. And the cognitive aspect seems to be the final result of student learning. We often find students who have good morals, are diligent in worship, have low grades in discipline and vice versa. Because it looks more cognitively at the theoretical tasks given rather than everyday attitudes. The emphasis on the cognitive domain can also be seen from the report cards which seem to be equated with general subjects which refer more to the cognitive domain and this is indicated by the form of instruments (oral, written and homework tests). In fact, the aim of Islamic learning is not merely to know the material or theory, but rather how students can implement the teachings of PAI.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Form of assessment</td>
<td>The form of assessment does not refer to the value and spiritual content which has a functional basis for everyday life. This is shown by various questions or forms of evaluation that focus more on cognitive aspects. Even though there is practice in the learning, it is still cognitive that is measured and that is also included in the final grade. This is proven when students cannot...</td>
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read the Koran, but in the end, they get high marks. Students who are lazy and forced to take part in the PAI learning process often get higher grades than students who diligently participate in learning activities. If this problem continues, many students will emerge who are full of cognition but do not have good morals (Anas, Umam: 2022, 6).

4. Valuation Principles

Evaluation of PAI learning in practice is inconsistent and tends to be subjective (Muamar, Ruslan, Syarifuddin, Ahmad: 2022, 39-40). These problems can of course result in the evaluation results obtained being inaccurate and even students not understanding and not understanding the various abilities they have.

Evaluation of the affective domain in PAI is often overlooked due to the perceived difficulty in preparing appropriate assessment instruments (Dhomiri et al., 2023, pp. 114-115). Many teachers are reluctant to create proper formats for affective evaluations, especially for report cards that require individual descriptions based on each student's attitude and behavior. This challenge is exacerbated by teachers limited technological skills, leading them to delegate this task to others who may not fully understand the students' daily behaviors (Akbar et al., 2022, pp. 6-8). Consequently, the affective evaluation, essential for shaping students' Islamic personality, is neglected, even though attitude measurement is crucial for assessing dynamic mental attitude changes.

PAI learning evaluations tend to overemphasize the cognitive domain, often neglecting objectivity and relying solely on cognitive aspects for final results (Salamun & Sauri, 2023, p. 233; Tasurun Amma, 2018, p. 72). This issue arises because teachers are often reluctant to create instruments for assessing skills or attitudes. As a result, students with good morals and diligent worship habits may receive low grades if evaluated only on theoretical tasks rather than daily attitudes. This cognitive focus is evident in report cards, which resemble general subjects more closely aligned with the cognitive domain.

The psychomotor domain in PAI evaluations is frequently neglected, despite its importance in assessing students' practical skills (Ade Salamun & Sofyan Sauri, 2023, p. 233). Ignoring this domain leads to evaluations that do not reflect students' holistic abilities, including their capacity to apply Islamic teachings practically.

The forms of assessment in PAI often do not refer to values and spirituality essential for everyday life. Instead, they focus more on cognitive aspects, even though practical applications are included in learning (Anas & Umam, 2022, p. 6). For instance, students who cannot read the Quran might still receive high grades, or lazy students might score higher than diligent ones. If this issue persists, many students will emerge with high cognitive knowledge but poor moral character.

PAI learning evaluations are often inconsistent and tend to be subjective (Muamar, Ruslan, Syarifuddin, Ahmad, 2022, pp. 39-40). These inconsistencies lead to inaccurate evaluation results, hindering students' understanding of their abilities. The lack of consistency and objectivity in assessments negatively affects the comprehensive achievement of Islamic education goals.

**The Goals of Islamic Education and Their Evaluation**

Islamic education, as explained by Madkur and quoted by Arif (2022), aims to develop and enhance students' potential comprehensively—physically, intellectually, emotionally, and morally—in accordance with Sharia principles. This encompasses not only the development of affective, cognitive, and psychomotor abilities but also the nurturing of qualities such as faith, piety, morals, and social skills (Arif, 2022: 27-28).
General Goals of Islamic Education

Islamic education today seeks to guide individuals to understand and embrace Islamic teachings, equipping them with intellectual (IQ), emotional (EQ), and spiritual intelligence (SQ) as keys to success (Rohman, 2018: 22). The overarching goal is to cultivate students who possess religious competence, worship Allah, acquire knowledge, uphold good morals, and contribute to building an Islamic society. Islamic education distinguishes itself with its dual focus on worldly and hereafter interests.

Ibnu Qayim, as quoted by Arif (2022: 30), emphasizes three primary goals of Islamic education since the time of the Prophet: educating individuals about their Creator, forming integral student personalities, and contributing to society.

Specific Goals of Islamic Education

Beyond these general objectives, Islamic education includes various specific goals that educators aim to achieve through subjects, learning methods, media, and strategies. These goals encompass specific competencies, abilities, and skills that students should acquire to fulfill the broader educational objectives.

Moreover, Islamic education places a significant emphasis on moral education, which is considered the soul of Islamic education. While Islamic education values physical strength, reason, and scientific knowledge, it prioritizes moral education and the development of character, taste, and personality (Rusmin, 2017: 79).

Islamic education aims to nurture and develop human potential—heart, mind, and body—into pious individuals capable of practical application. This goal is operationalized through the cultivation of devotion, faith, knowledge, understanding, morals, perseverance (mujahada), practical skills, and social interactions. These learning objectives are often structured based on Bloom's taxonomy, encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Arif, 2022: 32).

Evaluation of Islamic Education

Evaluation in Islamic education serves to determine the extent to which educational goals are achieved. It provides insights into the success or failure of the education system in producing desired outcomes. Assessment and evaluation are critical tools to measure student learning outcomes and the effectiveness of the educational process.

In the context of Islamic education, evaluation must be conducted systematically and planned meticulously. It assesses educators' success in delivering Islamic education materials and identifies areas needing improvement. Evaluation in Islamic education adheres to several principles: validity, objectivity, fairness, integration, openness, comprehensiveness, continuity, systematic approach, criterion-based assessment, and accountability (Marzuki & Hakim, 2019: 78).

Valid assessment ensures that data accurately reflects student abilities, while objective assessment relies on clear criteria to minimize subjectivity. Fair assessment ensures equality regardless of personal characteristics, and integrated assessment serves as a basis for improving the learning process. Open assessment processes allow stakeholders to understand decision-making criteria, and comprehensive, continuous, and systematic evaluations monitor student progress. Criterion-based assessments measure specific competencies, and accountability ensures that assessment procedures, techniques, and results are transparent and justified (Riadi, 2017: 4-5).

Evaluation has various benefits, i.e., students can determine whether their evaluation results are satisfactory or unsatisfactory, and gauge their success in following lessons. Teachers can identify students who have mastered the lesson material, evaluate if the material and methods are appropriate, and provide feedback on school curriculum for future planning.
Schools can gain insights into their learning conditions and use year-over-year assessment results as a guide for meeting standards, reflecting the importance of evaluation in enhancing student learning, improving teaching methods, and ensuring quality education.

Problems in the Evaluation of Islamic Education and Their Implications for Educational Goals

Before delving into the problems of evaluation and their implications, it is crucial to explore the relationship between evaluation and educational goals.

Relationship between Goals, Teaching-Learning Process (KBM), and Evaluation

The teaching and learning activities (KBM) are designed to achieve specific educational objectives, as outlined in the teaching plan by educators. This relationship indicates that KBM should not only align with the objectives but also lead towards their achievement. Evaluation, on the other hand, serves as a means to collect data and measure the extent to which these goals have been met. The evaluation tools and methods should therefore be designed in accordance with the formulated objectives. Furthermore, the KBM evaluation must also be adjusted to the ongoing teaching and learning activities. For instance, if the emphasis during these activities is on skill development, the evaluation should similarly measure the students’ skill levels, rather than focusing solely on cognitive aspects.

Problems Identified in the Evaluation of Islamic Education

Globally, assessments within Islamic education often emphasize the cognitive domain while neglecting the psychomotor and affective domains. Previous studies have indicated several reasons for this oversight. Firstly, the preparation of instruments for affective evaluation is deemed difficult and time-consuming, often resulting in evaluations with only 1-2 indicators that fail to capture the breadth of a student's personality. Moreover, there is a lack of awareness and knowledge regarding appropriate assessment methods, which often lead to these methods being used as the sole determinant of student learning outcomes. This approach does not align with the objectives of Islamic education, which emphasize the mastery of attitudes (affective and psychomotor), alongside cognitive aspects. These goals aim to gauge students’ abilities in various aspects, including their personal relationship with God, society, the natural environment, and self-perception as a servant of Allah and a member of society, as outlined in the Quran and Hadith, while adhering to principles of objectivity, continuity, and comprehensiveness (Rahayu, 2019: 111).

Furthermore, the assessment forms used in Islamic education often fail to reflect the values and spiritual content that are central to its goals. Islamic education aims to guide individuals to comprehend and practice Islamic teachings, fostering intellectual (IQ), emotional (EQ), and spiritual intelligence (SQ) as keys to success (Rohman, 2018: 22). SQ, in particular, plays a significant role in promoting success beyond that facilitated by IQ alone. The inclusion of spiritual content in education is vital for character building and moral development, with obedience to Allah being a crucial component.

Challenges in Maintaining Objectivity in Islamic Education Evaluation

Objectivity in evaluation is paramount to ensure that educational goals are effectively met. It requires assessments to be based on factual data, free from subjective influences by the evaluator. This principle of objectivity includes "as-shidqoh" (acting correctly and honestly) and "trustworthiness" (loyalty, sincerity, and dependability), as highlighted in the Quran (Surah At-Tawbah) and other sources (Surah An-Nisa).

Implications and Future Directions

Previous research has highlighted a tendency to neglect the psychomotor and affective domains in favor of cognitive assessments. This has led to a narrow evaluation that measures student performance in limited ways, such as written tests or homework, without considering
their overall moral and behavioral development. This approach fails to align with the broader goals of Islamic education, which emphasize the cultivation of perfect morals. Moreover, evaluations in Islamic education often lack consistency and can be subjective, resulting in inaccurate assessments and overlooking students' diverse abilities (Muamar, Ruslan, Syarifuddin, Ahmad: 2022, 39-40).

The evaluation of Islamic education must undergo reform to better align with its educational goals. This includes developing assessment methods that encompass cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, ensuring they reflect the spiritual and moral content of Islamic teachings. Additionally, efforts are needed to enhance the objectivity and consistency of assessments to accurately measure student outcomes and support their comprehensive development.

**Conclusion**

By utilizing a rigorous library research method, this study aimed to contribute valuable insights into the evaluation of Islamic Religious Education, highlighting areas for improvement and offering recommendations to better align evaluation practices with the educational goals of fostering moral and intellectual development in students.

The evaluation of Islamic education faces significant challenges, particularly in its tendency to overemphasize the cognitive domain while neglecting the psychomotor and affective domains. This imbalance undermines the comprehensive development of students as envisioned by Islamic education principles. The findings from this study suggest several recommendations for improving the evaluation of PAI learning:

To improve evaluation practices in Islamic education, it is recommended to develop a balanced evaluation framework that encompasses cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains aligned with the goals of fostering moral, intellectual, and spiritual development. Additionally, provide educators with training and capacity building on designing assessments that effectively measure affective and psychomotor skills, ensuring these assessments accurately reflect students' attitudes and behaviors. It's crucial to integrate values and spiritual content central to Islamic teachings into assessment forms and methods, moving beyond cognitive tasks to include practical applications and moral development. Strengthen objectivity in evaluation by using clear, consistent criteria based on factual data and free from subjective influences, adhering to principles of honesty and trustworthiness. Implement comprehensive and continuous assessment practices that monitor student progress across all domains of Islamic education, supported by regular feedback mechanisms. Finally, ensure that evaluation practices align with educational policies and curricula emphasizing the holistic development of students in accordance with Islamic principles.

In conclusion, addressing these recommendations can lead to more effective evaluation practices in Islamic education, better supporting the achievement of educational goals related to moral and intellectual development. This study contributes to the ongoing dialogue on enhancing the quality of Islamic education and ensuring that evaluation practices reflect the values and principles inherent in Islamic teachings. Further research is needed to explore the implementation and impact of these recommendations in diverse educational settings.

**Conflict of interests**

The author(s) declare that she has no conflict of interest.
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