



Active Learning as a Strategy for Internalizing Islamic Values in PAI Learning at High Schools

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Abstract : This study aims to analyze the integration of the *active learning* method in strengthening Islamic values within Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMA PGRI Padang Cermin, in response to the gap between students' cognitive understanding and the practical implementation of religious values. The research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the PAI teacher and students, classroom participatory observations, and document analysis of syllabi, lesson plans, and students' reflective journals. The participants consisted of one PAI teacher and 32 tenth-grade students. Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings revealed four major themes: the expansion of dialogical participation, the internalization of values through authentic experiences, the integration of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, and supporting and inhibiting factors in implementation. Discussion-based learning, simulations, and collaborative projects were found to facilitate moral reflection and the enactment of Islamic values such as honesty, responsibility, empathy, and cooperation. This study reinforces the constructivist perspective in value education and offers practical implications for instructional design and character-based assessment policies. Future longitudinal research is recommended to examine the sustainability of value internalization over time.

Keywords : Active Learning, Islamic Values, Islamic Religious Education Learning.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) occupies a strategic position in Indonesia's national education system because it not only serves as a means of conveying religious knowledge but also as a vehicle for character formation and the internalization of religious moral values among students. In the development of global education marked by the currents of globalization and the acceleration of digital transformation, the orientation of learning in various educational institutions tends to emphasize academic achievement and mastery of cognitive competencies. These conditions often result in the affective dimension and character formation receiving inadequate attention in the educational process. As a result, a gap emerges between students' conceptual understanding of religious teachings and the practice of Islamic values in daily life

(Mulias & Amaluddin, 2025). This phenomenon shows that religious education should not only focus on mastery of the material but also be able to shape moral awareness and genuine religious behavior.

Nationally, various reports and empirical findings indicate a tendency toward a decline in moral quality among students. These indicators can be seen in the low level of academic honesty, weak social responsibility, and the declining attitude of empathy and concern among students. This condition indicates that the process of internalizing religious values in formal education has not yet been fully optimal (Basith et al., 2025). In the context of Islamic education, this condition poses an important challenge because the main goal of PAI is not only to transmit religious knowledge but also to shape the character of students with noble morals. Therefore, an educational approach that can integrate cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions in the learning process is needed. The reality of learning in the field shows that PAI learning practices in many schools are still dominated by a teacher-centered approach that places the teacher as the main source of information. Lecture and memorization methods are still the most frequently used strategies in the learning process. Such an approach tends to limit students' participation in the learning process and provides fewer opportunities for students to engage in deep value reflection.

As a result, religious education often tends to be normative and less contextual with the students' life experiences. Amaly et al. (2023) assert that the implementation of PAI learning in schools has not yet fully addressed the need for contextual character development. This point is also supported by the findings of Aripin et al. (2025), which state that the reformulation of PAI learning in the modern era still faces various challenges, including the limitations of pedagogical innovation, teachers' readiness to implement more interactive learning approaches, and an evaluation system that is still solely oriented toward cognitive aspects. These conditions indicate the need for the development of more participatory and transformative learning approaches so that the learning process can bridge the gap between religious knowledge and the practice of values in students' lives. In recent years, the active learning approach has begun to be viewed as one of the potential pedagogical strategies for improving the quality of PAI (Islamic education) learning.

Active learning emphasizes the active involvement of students in the learning process through activities such as discussions, problem-solving, simulations, and collaborative tasks. This approach provides students with the opportunity to construct their understanding independently through meaningful learning experiences. Research by Saputri et al. (2025)

shows that the implementation of collaborative discussions and problem-based learning in PAI education can enhance student participation while also strengthening the appreciation of Islamic values. Hidayati (2024) also reported that the application of active learning methods contributes to the improvement of critical thinking skills and significantly increases student engagement in the learning process. Furthermore, Hanum (2024) emphasizes that interactive learning in religious education can enhance learning motivation while also encouraging deeper value reflection. These findings are reinforced by Rahardi et al. (2025), who state that systematically designed active learning strategies can strengthen the understanding of Islamic values through authentic and contextual learning experiences.

In addition to pedagogical approaches, studies on value internalization also emphasize the importance of direct experiences in the process of forming religious character. The process of value internalization does not only occur through the delivery of concepts but also through social experiences, behavioral habituation, and continuous moral reflection. Research by Amin et al. (2024) shows that religious habituation activities and social interactions can foster religious character traits such as trustworthiness, patience, and compassion. In line with this, Djuaini (2025) emphasizes that the internalization of values will be more effective when integrated contextually into the daily learning process. This perspective aligns with constructivist theory, which views that knowledge and values are built through active interaction between individuals and their social environment. In this framework, the learning process is understood as a space for learners to develop understanding and values through reflective and participatory learning experiences.

Although various studies have shown that active learning can enhance student participation and learning outcomes, most of these studies still focus on cognitive aspects and academic achievements. Studies that specifically examine how the active learning process facilitates the internalization of Islamic values in PAI (Islamic Religious Education) are still relatively limited. Thus, there is still a research gap that needs to be explored, particularly regarding how participatory learning experiences can shape students' moral awareness and the practice of religious values in real life.

Based on this background, this study aims to deeply analyze the integration of active learning methods in strengthening the internalization of Islamic values in Islamic Religious Education. This research focuses on the exploration of the learning implementation process, the experiences of teachers and students in classroom practices, as well as the factors that support and hinder the application of active learning in religious education. Theoretically, this research

is expected to enrich the study of value education from a constructivist perspective in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Practically, the results of this research are expected to provide recommendations for teachers in designing more participatory, reflective, and contextual learning. Additionally, in terms of policy, the findings of this research can serve as a reference in the development of curricula and learning evaluation systems that are more balanced between cognitive and affective dimensions. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to strengthening the efforts to develop the Islamic character of students through meaningful learning practices oriented toward authentic learning experiences.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design aimed at deeply exploring the integration of active learning methods in strengthening Islamic values in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. The case study approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand educational phenomena comprehensively in a real and specific context, namely the learning practices at SMA PGRI Padang Cermin, South Lampung, Indonesia. In addition, this design provides space to explore the experiences, meanings, and dynamics of interactions that occur in the value learning process in the classroom (Yin, 2021).

This approach is also relevant for examining participants' experiences contextually and in-depth in specific educational situations (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The research was conducted in the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year at SMA PGRI Padang Cermin. The research participants consisted of one Islamic Religious Education teacher and 32 tenth-grade students involved in the learning process. The selection of informants was carried out using purposive sampling techniques with specific criteria, namely teachers who actively implement active learning strategies in PAI lessons and students who actively participate in those learning activities. All participants gave their consent to be involved in the research, and their identities were anonymized to maintain data confidentiality.

Data collection was conducted using several techniques, namely semi-structured interviews, participatory observation during the learning process, and document analysis such as syllabi, Lesson Plan (RPP), student reflection journals, and learning project results. To ensure data credibility, this study employs source and method triangulation techniques, member checking, and the creation of an audit trail to systematically document the entire research process (Nowell et al., 2017). Data analysis was conducted using the interactive analysis model by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which includes three main stages: data reduction,

data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. The analysis process also involved thematic coding techniques to identify patterns, categories, and meanings that emerged from the data related to the internalization of Islamic values in active learning-based teaching practices.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study were obtained through in-depth interviews with teachers and students, participatory observations in the classroom, and documentation analysis (syllabus, lesson plans, student reflection journals, and project products). Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and cyclical conclusion drawing (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). From the analysis process, four main themes emerged: (1) the expansion of participation space and the meaning of learning, (2) the internalization of values through authentic experiences, (3) the integration of cognitive-affective-psychomotor domains, and (4) supporting and inhibiting factors for implementation. Interviews show that active learning (group discussions, case studies, simulations, collaborative projects) shifts the classroom dynamics from teacher dominance to dialogic participation. The PAI teacher emphasized, "When students discuss and solve cases, they do not just repeat the material, but start questioning and relating it to their own experiences." This statement marks a shift in learning orientation: from one-way delivery of material to learning that opens up space for negotiating meaning and forming shared understanding.

The strengthening of participation is also evident from the students' experiences. A student stated, "If it's just a lecture, I know the material, but I'm not necessarily sure how to apply it." During the simulation, I felt like I was really facing that situation. This quote shows that participation is not just a physical activity, but rather a cognitive and emotional involvement that creates a "sense of relevance" between PAI material and the realities of teenage life. In the social context of high school, such dialog spaces are important because students are in a phase of identity exploration and are sensitive to peer judgment; discussion and collaboration activities provide opportunities to learn to express opinions politely while also cultivating social responsibility in the classroom environment.

The second theme relates to the internalization of Islamic values honesty, responsibility, empathy, and cooperation that emerge through authentic learning experiences. Classroom observations show that group discussions encourage students to appreciate different viewpoints,

while simulations (role play) facilitate moral decision-making based on Islamic principles. One student expressed, "When discussing the case of honesty, I started to rethink the habit of cheating because we were asked to evaluate it from a religious perspective and its impact." This quote illustrates how values do not stop at "normative knowledge," but become a subject of self-reflection directly related to daily practices at school.

Documentation of student reflection journals reinforces these findings. Several notes recorded a shift from declarative understanding to attitude commitment; for example, students wrote that social projects made them "more sensitive to friends' conditions" and "learned to be responsible for group tasks." This pattern indicates that authentic experiencesn especially those involving real social interactions become a medium for value internalization, as students experience the moral consequences of actions (such as fairness in task distribution, consistently fulfilling commitments, or maintaining communication ethics).

The third theme shows that active learning facilitates value education holistically through the integration of cognitive-affective-psychomotor domains. In the cognitive domain, students are trained to analyze cases and build arguments; in the affective domain, students learn to manage attitudes (appreciating opinions, empathy); in the psychomotor domain, students practice real actions (presentations, teamwork, project implementation). The teacher explained, "They don't just answer right or wrong, but consider the impact on others." This suggests that moral reasoning is guided by social considerations (consequences for others), which is important in character education.

Table 1. Mechanism of Integrating Active Learning and Islamic Values Development

Learning Strategy	Cognitive Processes	Affective Dimension	Psychomotor Dimension	Islamic Values Fostered
Small-group discussion	Concept analysis and argumentation	Respect for others' viewpoints; tolerance	Active participation	Tolerance; honesty
Simulation / role play	Case evaluation based on Islamic principles	Empathy; moral awareness	Behavioral enactment and decision-making	Empathy; justice
Collaborative project	Contextual problem solving	Social responsibility	Real teamwork and task completion	Trustworthiness (amanah); cooperation

Table 1 shows that active learning is not merely a variation of methods, but rather an "integrative medium" that connects conceptual understanding with the practice of attitudes and actions. This finding is important because PAI learning is often criticized for placing too much

emphasis on cognitive aspects; whereas in this study, value exercises occur simultaneously with thinking, feeling, and acting activities.

Data triangulation identifies the main supporting factors as the collaborative RPP design, the commitment of teachers as role models of values, and the school culture that supports religious habituation. However, obstacles also arise, particularly time constraints, the heterogeneity of student readiness, and the dominance of cognitive-based evaluations. The teacher stated, "Sometimes we want more reflection, but time is limited due to curriculum demands." These obstacles do not negate the effectiveness of active learning, but rather emphasize the need for systemic support so that value education is not reduced to "just an activity." To show the consistency of findings across sources, a triangulation summary is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Data Triangulation Matrix of Research Findings

Theme	Interview Evidence	Classroom Observation Evidence	Document Analysis Evidence	Triangulated Interpretation
Expanded student participation and meaning-making	Teacher reported that students began linking content to personal experiences and constructing meaning through dialogue	Students actively asked questions and argued during discussions/case work	Lesson plans (RPP) included discussions and case-based activities	Active learning shifted classroom interaction toward dialogical participation
Internalization of Islamic values through authentic experience	Students described reflecting on honesty/empathy through simulations and cases	Respectful interaction and empathy were observed during group work	Reflective journals recorded attitudinal commitment and moral reflection	Authentic learning experiences supported the internalization of Islamic values
Integration of cognitive–affective–psychomotor domains	Teacher emphasized that students considered moral consequences, not merely right/wrong answers	Presentations, role enactments, and teamwork were evident	Project products demonstrated collaboration and responsibility	Active learning enabled holistic value learning across three domains
Supporting and inhibiting factors	Teacher highlighted supportive lesson design but noted time constraints	Variability in students' readiness to participate was observed	Assessment practices remained largely cognitive-focused	Successful implementation depends on instructional design and systemic support

The findings of this research affirm the relevance of the constructivist perspective in PAI learning. Constructivism views knowledge and values as built through active interaction not passively transferred. The shift from lectures to dialogic participation identified in the first theme indicates an epistemological transformation: students "construct" the meaning of values through discussions, negotiation of opinions, and linking material to experiences. These findings are in line with Hanum (2024), who emphasizes that interactive methods enhance student motivation and reflective engagement, and are further supported by Saputri et al. (2025) and Hidayati (2024), who affirm the contribution of active learning to participation and critical thinking as prerequisites for value internalization.

The contribution of this research compared to many studies that focus on learning outcomes lies in mapping the mechanisms of value internalization at the classroom practice level. Through discussions, simulations, and projects, the internalization of values moves from the stage of conceptual understanding to moral reflection and real practice. This gradual pattern is consistent with the findings of Nawi and Zakaria (2019) that value-based problem-based learning can enhance moral reflection; however, in the context of this research, reflection does not stop at discourse but continues into collaborative activities that test the consistency of values in action. To visualize the mechanism, this study formulates the conceptual flow as shown in Figure 1.

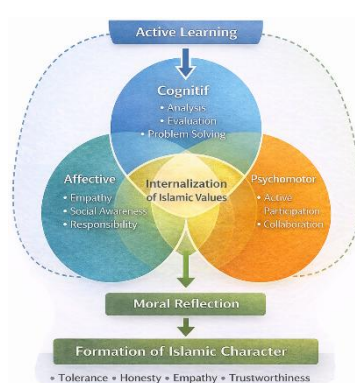


Figure 1. Conceptual Diagram of Active Learning Integration

The flow in Figure 1 shows that active learning triggers dialog and discussion; dialog prompts moral reflection; reflection encourages the practice of Islamic values; and practices repeated in the social context of the classroom contribute to character formation. From a socio-cultural perspective, these findings are relevant because high school teenagers are in an intense

social environment; values such as honesty, empathy, and trustworthiness are more likely to "settle" when tested in social relations (group tasks, debates, presentations) rather than merely understood as normative texts. Rohman et al. (2024) emphasize that social values in Islamic education must be realized in real actions; the results of this study show that service-based projects and teamwork facilitate this through authentic experiences.

However, this research also reveals structural tensions: the implementation of active learning faces time constraints and a predominantly cognitive evaluation system. These findings align with Saritepeci and Durak (2024) that pedagogical innovations require systemic design support to be sustainable. This means that when value-based learning requires space for reflection such as longer discussions, reflective journaling, feedback, the curriculum and assessment systems need to adjust so that the affective dimension does not become an "extra" that is easily sacrificed. In this context, the research findings offer a critical perspective: the effectiveness of active learning is not just about teaching techniques, but also about the ecosystem assessment policies, time allocation, school culture.

The practical implication is that PAI teachers need to design activities that combine reflection such as moral prompting questions, reflective journals and action such as collaborative projects and prepare operational affective assessment rubrics. Theoretically, this research adds to the understanding of value-based education based on constructivism by showing that active learning connects religious knowledge (cognitive) with character development (affective-behavioral), highlighting the importance of integrated PAI teaching for building character (Sulthon et al., 2025).

As for further research suggestions, longitudinal studies are needed to assess the sustainability of value internalization whether moral reflection and value practices persist after students transition to different classes/levels, or when the social context changes. Cross-school and cross-level comparative studies are also important to see how school culture, leadership style, and evaluation policies influence the success of active learning. Additionally, quasi-experimental designs can complement qualitative findings by testing the impact of active learning programs on specific behavioral indicators (such as academic honesty or cooperation) over a certain period, without losing the process understanding that is the strength of qualitative research.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that the integration of active learning in Islamic Religious Education at high schools strengthens the internalization of Islamic values through four key findings: the expansion of dialogic participation, authentic learning experiences, the integration of cognitive-affective-psychomotor domains, and the supporting and inhibiting factors of implementation. Discussion strategies, simulations, case studies, and collaborative projects encourage students to relate religious concepts to real-life situations, reflect on moral consequences, and practice the values of honesty, responsibility, empathy, tolerance, and trustworthiness. Presentations and teamwork foster moral courage and collective responsibility, while reflective journals show a shift from declarative understanding to attitudinal commitment. Theoretically, these findings affirm constructivism in value education: values are built through social interaction and meaningful experiences, not merely the transmission of content. The practical implication is that PAI teachers need to design experience-based and reflective activities, use attitude assessment rubrics, and extend tasks to authentic social contexts. The success of the implementation is supported by collaborative lesson plan designs, teacher role modeling, and a religious school culture, but hindered by time constraints, varying student readiness, and a dominant cognitive evaluation. At the policy level, adjustments in time allocation and reformulation of evaluations are needed to ensure that the affective dimension is more balanced with cognitive achievements. Given the limitations of location and duration of observation, further research is recommended to be longitudinal and comparative across levels/schools to test the sustainability of value internalization and the institutional conditions that support the implementation of active learning.

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