



Educational Paradigm in the Evaluation of Islamic Religious Education: Efforts to Balance Intellectual, Emotional, and Spiritual Intelligence

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Abstract

The primary essence of Islamic Religious Education lies in the holistic formation of individuals, encompassing not only intellectual capacities but also emotional and spiritual dimensions. However, empirical realities in educational practice often reveal an imbalance, in which academic (cognitive) assessment overwhelmingly dominates, while the evaluation of attitudes and skills is frequently neglected. This study aims to examine how State Senior High School 1 Tawangsari implements the evaluation of Islamic Religious Education based on a holistic education paradigm, to identify the challenges faced by educators in assessing the three domains of competence, and to formulate evaluation strategies that are more objective and sustainable. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers and school management and were analyzed descriptively. The findings indicate that although there is an emerging commitment to the implementation of holistic evaluation, cognitive assessment remains highly dominant. This condition is largely attributed to technical constraints such as limited instructional time, large student-teacher ratios, and the absence of standardized non-cognitive assessment instruments. This study concludes by recommending the development of standardized affective and psychomotor assessment instruments so that the evaluation of Islamic Religious Education can transform from merely a tool for measuring academic achievement into a comprehensive instrument for fostering holistic Islamic character formation.

Keywords: Assessment, Evaluation, Cognitive, Affective, Psychomotor.

INTRODUCTION

The educational process should not merely pursue intellectual targets, but must also be oriented toward the development of mature character and personality. The holistic education paradigm emerges as an antithesis to partial education by viewing learners as integrated and whole beings who embody intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. Within the framework of Islamic education, this perspective is particularly crucial, as the ultimate goal of Islamic Religious Education is to produce individuals who are not only theoretically knowledgeable, but also possess noble character and are able to manifest divine values in their daily lives. Ideally, indicators of success in Islamic Religious Education should go beyond academic scores and be reflected in tangible

religious behavior. However, the reality of educational practice often presents a different picture. Learning evaluation in schools remains largely confined within the hegemony of the cognitive domain. Assessment practices are predominantly focused on students' ability to memorize content and understand concepts, while the internalization of values (affective domain) and the practice of worship (*ibādah*) (psychomotor domain) have yet to receive proportional evaluative attention. National data indicate that more than 60% of assessment instruments at the secondary level are still paper-based (written tests), thereby marginalizing continuous assessment of attitudes and skills. This phenomenon risks reducing the substantive meaning of Islamic Religious Education, which should serve as a foundational pillar for moral and character development.

A similar gap is identified at State Senior High School 1 Tawangsari. Based on preliminary observations, the evaluation pattern of Islamic Religious Education at this institution remains strongly cognitive-centered. Assessment of students' behavior and religious practice skills tends to be conducted incidentally and without standardized instruments. Yet adolescence represents a critical phase for the internalization of religious values, and failure to implement holistic evaluation may hinder the development of students' emotional and spiritual intelligence.

Previous literature, such as the works of Muhammin (2015) and Nata (2019), has emphasized the urgency of balancing the three domains within Islamic education. Hidayat and Asyafah (2020) likewise found that holistic approaches are effective in character formation, although evaluation often constitutes a weak point. According to Kunandar (2015) and Mulyasa (2018), the dominance of cognitive assessment arises from its relative ease of measurement and documentation. Conversely, Sudijono (2017) argues that the complexity of assessing attitudes poses a distinct challenge for teachers in maintaining consistency and objectivity. Grounded in these empirical and theoretical issues, this study is therefore urgent in examining the practices, challenges, and solutions related to holistic evaluation at State Senior High School 1 Tawangsari.

RESEARCH METHODS

The primary focus of this study is to examine in depth how State Senior High School 1 Tawangsari implements an evaluation system for Islamic Religious Education that is grounded in the paradigm of holistic education. The urgency of this research lies in its effort to assess the extent to which the development of students' potential is harmonized, encompassing a balanced integration of intellectual intelligence, emotional maturity, and spiritual depth. Beyond merely portraying the implementation of evaluation practices, this study also seeks to identify and inventory the various obstacles encountered by educators

in assessing these three domains of competence. Through this analysis, the study aims to formulate strategic recommendations for an evaluation model of Islamic Religious Education that is more objective, comprehensive, and sustainable. Accordingly, the evaluation of Islamic Religious Education is expected to move beyond its role as a mere administrative instrument for measuring academic achievement and instead transform into a vital means of character development and the holistic internalization of Islamic values among students, offering tangible contributions both theoretically and practically.

To achieve these objectives, the research was designed using a qualitative approach. This approach is considered the most appropriate as it provides the flexibility necessary for the researcher to explore meanings, processes, and participants' experiences in a deep and contextual manner, in accordance with real conditions in the field. Within this methodological framework, data collection relied on semi-structured interviews. This technique was selected due to its capacity to elicit detailed information while still allowing informants the freedom to express perspectives beyond a rigid set of predetermined questions. Such flexibility is essential for obtaining a comprehensive understanding of evaluation dynamics across the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.

The primary subjects of this study include teachers of Islamic Religious Education as the frontline implementers of evaluation, as well as school curriculum policymakers. Through in-depth engagement with these informants, the researcher collected data related to assessment planning mechanisms, the variety of instruments employed, and tactical strategies used to address challenges in assessing attitudes and skills. All collected data were subsequently analyzed using descriptive analysis to present a comprehensive portrayal of Islamic Religious Education evaluation practices at State Senior High School 1 Tawangsari, in alignment with the established research objectives.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Integration of the Cognitive, Affective, and Psychomotor Domains in Islamic Religious Education Evaluation

Based on systematic classroom observations and in-depth interviews conducted at State Senior High School 1 Tawangsari, it was found that the school management and teachers of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) have demonstrated a growing commitment to adopting a holistic educational paradigm within their evaluation system. This paradigm reflects a shift from a narrowly academic orientation toward a more comprehensive understanding of student development. Evaluation practices are no longer exclusively confined to measuring students' mastery of textual knowledge and doctrinal understanding; rather, they have begun to encompass the monitoring of religious behavior, moral attitudes, and practical religious competencies.

This pedagogical awareness indicates an emerging recognition among educators that evaluation in Islamic Religious Education should ideally integrate the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains in a balanced and coherent manner. Such an integrative approach aligns with foundational theories of Islamic education, which emphasize the unity of reason ('aql), emotion (qalb), and action ('amal). Scholars such as Muhamimin (2015), Nata (2019), and Hidayat and Asyafah (2020) consistently argue that contemporary Islamic education must move beyond intellectualism alone and ensure that rational understanding, emotional internalization, and spiritual practice develop in harmony. From this perspective, assessment is not merely a technical mechanism for grading students but functions as a reflective tool that reveals the extent to which educational objectives are realized holistically. In Islamic Religious Education, the success of learning is ultimately measured not only by students' ability to recall or explain religious concepts, but also by their capacity to embody Islamic values in daily conduct and religious practice.

The Persistent Dominance of the Cognitive Domain in Evaluation Practices

Despite the visible emergence of a holistic vision, empirical findings from State Senior High School 1 Tawangsari reveal a persistent imbalance in the proportional emphasis of assessment domains. The cognitive domain continues to dominate formal evaluation reports, particularly in the form of written examinations, quizzes, and structured assignments. Learning outcomes are predominantly expressed through numerical scores that reflect students' conceptual understanding and memorization of religious materials, while affective and psychomotor dimensions remain underrepresented.

This dominance of cognitive assessment reinforces the arguments put forward by Kunandar (2015) and Mulyasa (2018), who note that teachers often prioritize knowledge-based assessment because it is perceived as more practical, measurable, and administratively manageable. Cognitive assessments are relatively easy to design, standardize, score, and document, especially within institutional systems that emphasize accountability and quantifiable outcomes. In contrast, affective and psychomotor assessments require sustained observation, nuanced judgment, and continuous documentation, which demand more time, pedagogical skill, and institutional support. As a result, although educators may conceptually acknowledge the importance of holistic evaluation, practical constraints often lead to an overreliance on cognitive indicators. This imbalance risks reducing Islamic Religious Education to a purely academic subject, detached from its broader mission of moral and spiritual formation.

Cognitive Assessment through Authentic and HOTS-Oriented Evaluation

Within the cognitive domain, evaluation practices at State Senior High School 1 Tawangsari are relatively well-structured and systematically implemented.

Teachers employ a range of assessment instruments, including formative assessments, summative tests, daily quizzes, and structured assignments. These instruments are designed not only to measure students' recall of religious concepts but also to assess their understanding and ability to relate theoretical knowledge to real-life contexts. Notably, cognitive evaluation has increasingly adopted the principles of authentic assessment, whereby students are required to demonstrate their understanding through tasks that reflect real-world religious and social situations. According to Arifin (2016) and Widoyoko (2017), authentic assessment allows learners to connect theoretical knowledge with practical application, thereby fostering meaningful learning experiences.

Furthermore, teachers have begun to incorporate Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) into their assessment design. By presenting socio-religious case studies, ethical dilemmas, and problem-solving scenarios, educators encourage students to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information rather than merely recall it. This approach promotes critical thinking, moral reasoning, and contextual awareness, which are essential competencies for students living in complex and pluralistic societies. The findings align with Rahayu (2022) and Susanto (2019), who emphasize that HOTS-oriented assessment enhances students' analytical depth and ethical sensitivity in Islamic education contexts. However, while cognitive assessment at this level demonstrates methodological sophistication, its dominance also highlights the unequal development of other learning domains, underscoring the need for a more balanced evaluation framework.

Challenges in Assessing the Affective Domain: Character and Value Internalization

Affective assessment in Islamic Religious Education at State Senior High School 1 Tawangsari primarily focuses on observing students' attitudes and behaviors, such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, respect for others, and participation in religious activities. These indicators are consistent with the view of Hakim (2018), who argues that the true measure of success in Islamic education lies in character transformation rather than mere intellectual achievement.

Despite its conceptual importance, affective assessment presents significant practical challenges. One of the main obstacles identified in this study is the difficulty of ensuring objectivity and consistency. Teachers often rely on informal observations without standardized instruments or clear rubrics, which increases the risk of subjectivity. Factors such as limited instructional time, large class sizes, and imbalanced teacher-student ratios further complicate continuous and systematic observation. Moreover, the absence of a sustainable documentation system means that affective assessment is often conducted incidentally rather than longitudinally. As a result, evaluations may fail to capture students' character development over time. These findings confirm the concerns raised by Sudijono (2017), as well as Sari and Maulana (2021), who

highlight the inherent complexity of standardizing affective assessment instruments and maintaining fairness in evaluating students' attitudes.

The Urgency of Standardizing Psychomotor Assessment in Religious Practice

Psychomotor evaluation in Islamic Religious Education is directed toward assessing students' practical religious skills, including the correct performance of prayer (*salāh*), recitation of the Qur'an, and participation in ritual practices. At State Senior High School 1 Tawangsari, teachers have employed direct observation as the primary method for evaluating these competencies, aiming to ensure alignment between theoretical understanding and practical execution. While direct observation is pedagogically appropriate for assessing psychomotor skills, its implementation remains largely conventional. The absence of standardized rubrics, detailed observation checklists, and clear performance indicators limits the reliability and validity of assessment outcomes. Consequently, evaluation results may vary depending on individual teacher judgment, thereby reducing their usefulness for instructional decision-making. This challenge resonates with the findings of Hamzah (2019) and Rahmawati (2020), who note that psychomotor assessment in Islamic education often lacks methodological rigor. Similarly, Lestari and Nurhayati (2022) emphasize that subjectivity remains a significant issue in evaluating worship-related skills, particularly when clear assessment criteria are not established.

Overall, the evaluation practices of Islamic Religious Education at State Senior High School 1 Tawangsari demonstrate a gradual movement toward a holistic educational orientation. The integration of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains is increasingly recognized as a pedagogical ideal. However, the implementation of this ideal remains partial and uneven, with cognitive assessment continuing to dominate evaluation systems. To achieve genuine harmony among intellectual, emotional, and spiritual development, a systematic restructuring of assessment practices is required. This includes the development of comprehensive and standardized instruments for affective and psychomotor evaluation, the establishment of continuous documentation mechanisms, and the provision of professional development for teachers in holistic assessment methodologies.

Such efforts are essential to ensure that evaluation in Islamic Religious Education transcends its administrative function and becomes a transformative tool for character formation. In line with the vision articulated by Muhamimin (2015) and Nata (2019), assessment should contribute to the formation of *insān kāmil*—individuals who embody intellectual competence, moral integrity, and spiritual depth. Through a truly holistic evaluation system, Islamic Religious Education can fulfill its foundational mission of nurturing students who not only understand religious texts, but also internalize and practice Islamic values critically, creatively, and responsibly in everyday life.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion of the research findings, it can be concluded that the implementation of the holistic education paradigm within the assessment system of Islamic Religious Education at State Senior High School 1 Tawangsarihas shown meaningful progress, although further refinement is still required. There is a growing collective awareness among educators and school management that the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education should not be measured solely through cognitive achievement, but rather through an integrative evaluation that also encompasses moral development (affective domain) and religious skills (psychomotor domain) in order to foster students' spiritual intelligence holistically. Cognitively, assessment practices are relatively well structured through various formats, including summative tests and contextual assignments that promote Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), indicating a shift away from rote memorization toward critical and reflective understanding of Islamic values. However, significant gaps remain in the assessment of affective and psychomotor domains, which are often conducted through incidental observation without standardized instruments, detailed rubrics, or systematic documentation. This condition results in assessments that tend to be subjective and less capable of capturing students' emotional and spiritual development accurately.

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