Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam, VOL: 15/No: 03 **P-ISSN: 2252-8970**
DOI: 10.30868/ei.v15i03.10814 **E-ISSN: 2581-1754**

Date Received	**:**	**July 2026**
Date Revised	**:**	**October 2026**
Date Accepted	**:**	**October 2026**
Date Published	**:**	**October 2026**

INTEGRATING KI HAJAR DEWANTARA'S AMONG SYSTEM INTO THE ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY AT SMK YANINDO JAKARTA

Muammar Qadafi[1]
STAI-PTDII Jakarta, Indonesia (qadaf95@gmail.com)

Suriani
Islamic University of Jakarta, Indonesia (surianirani.@gmail.com)

Sutardjo Atmowidjoyo
Islamic University of Jakarta, Indonesia (sutardjo.atmowidjoyo@gmail.com)

Kata Kunci:
Sistem Among; Pendidikan Agama Isalm; Ki Hajar Dewantara; Kurikulum PAI

ABSTRAK

Dominasi pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) yang masih berpusat pada guru dan bersifat ceramah membatasi ruang pengembangan kemandirian, kesadaran diri, dan pembentukan karakter siswa secara holistik. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana prinsip-prinsip sistem Among Ki Hajar Dewantara, yaitu Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha, Ing Madya Mangun Karsa, dan Tut Wuri Handayani, tercermin dalam praktik PAI, serta mengidentifikasi titik temu konseptual dan praktis antara sistem Among dan Pendidikan Agama Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif di SMK Yanindo Jakarta, melibatkan satu guru PAI, satu kepala sekolah, dan 80 siswa kelas 11 dari empat program keahlian, yang dipilih melalui teknik purposive sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipan selama tiga bulan, wawancara mendalam terstruktur, dua kali focus group discussion, dan studi dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman dengan triangulasi metode. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan kesesuaian konseptual dan pedagogis yang kuat antara sistem Among dan PAI dalam praktik: guru PAI secara konsisten menunjukkan keteladanan religius dalam pembelajaran di kelas maupun kegiatan keagamaan, interaksi di kelas mencerminkan pendekatan dialogis dan bukan satu arah, serta siswa diberi kepercayaan mengelola kepanitiaan Pesantren Kilat Ramadhan sebagai bentuk kemandirian yang dibimbing. Di sisi lain, penelitian ini juga mengidentifikasi kendala struktural, yaitu alokasi waktu belajar PAI yang terbatas (3 x 45 menit per minggu), struktur penilaian yang masih berorientasi kognitif, serta kesenjangan antara kompetensi ritual siswa dan internalisasi nilai keagamaan dalam perilaku sehari-hari. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi berupa studi kasus terapan berbasis lapangan yang menerjemahkan keselarasan konseptual antara sistem Among dan PAI menjadi model integrasi praktis dan rekomendasi kebijakan bagi pendidikan vokasi.

[1] Correspondence author

Keywords:

Among System; Islamic Religious Education; Ki Hajar Dewantara; PAI Curriculum

ABSTRACTS

The persistent predominance of teacher-centered, lecture-based instruction in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) limits space for developing students' autonomy, self-awareness, and holistic character. This study examines how the principles of Ki Hajar Dewantara's Among system, Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha, Ing Madya Mangun Karsa, and Tut Wuri Handayani, are reflected in PAI practice and identifies the conceptual and practical meeting points between the Among system and Islamic Religious Education. A qualitative case study approach was employed at SMK Yanindo Jakarta, involving one PAI teacher, one school principal, and 80 eleventh-grade students from four study programs, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through three months of participant observation, structured in-depth interviews, two focus group discussions, and documentation studies, and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model with methodological triangulation. The findings show substantial convergence between the Among system and PAI in practice: the PAI teacher consistently modeled religious conduct during classroom instruction and religious activities, classroom interaction reflected a dialogical rather than one-directional approach, and students were entrusted with organizing responsibility during the Ramadan study camp as a form of guided independence. At the same time, structural constraints were identified, including a limited weekly teaching allocation of three sessions of forty-five minutes, an assessment structure still weighted toward cognitive mastery, and a gap between students' ritual competence and the internalization of religious values in daily behavior. This study contributes an applied, field-based case study that translates the conceptual alignment between the Among system and PAI into a practical integration model and policy recommendations for vocational education.

A. INTRODUCTION

The curriculum can be interpreted as the heart of education (Ermawati & Bachtiar, 2024). The curriculum is a key component of the framework for implementing education, because it functions as a guide for setting achievement targets, teaching materials, learning techniques, and evaluation mechanisms in schools. As stipulated in Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, the curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements concerning learning objectives, content, and materials, as well as the methods used to guide learning activities in order to achieve educational goals (Indonesia, 2022).

Alice Miel, in her book Changing the Curriculum, explained that the curriculum, in its broadest sense, encompasses the condition of the school building and environment, as well as the goals, beliefs, expertise, and attitudes of those who work for and are served by the school, including students, the community, teachers, and staff such as custodians and administrative personnel who interact with students (Nurhayati et al., 2022). Viewed from this broader and more comprehensive perspective, the curriculum can therefore be understood as encompassing all aspects that support the learning process. These aspects include learning preparation, covering intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities. The curriculum also includes supporting elements that play a role in the overall learning process, such as facilities and infrastructure, including classrooms, sports fields, libraries, and school security.

The curriculum for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) serves a highly strategic purpose as an instrument of character formation, internalization of faith values, and the strengthening of students' morals. The PAI curriculum in general education units is currently structured around five essential components: Qur'an and Hadith (Qurdis), strengthening the aspects of faith (Akidah), instilling noble character values (Akhlakul Karimah), introducing normative aspects through Fiqh, and historical studies integrated within the subject of the History of Islamic Civilization. This structure supports the formation of a student profile that is religious, has integrity, and is capable of navigating the challenges of life in an Islamic and contextual manner (Islam, 2024). Through these materials, PAI aims to develop students who not only believe in and fear Allah, but also display commendable morals in their lives. Furthermore, PAI helps students develop moral qualities in line with the Pancasila Student Profile (P5), namely individuals who are religious, uphold universal virtues, are inclusive amid diversity, and are competent in facing global challenges (Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan dan Perbukuan, 2020).

The concept of Islamic teachings that emphasizes full submission in religious life is reflected in the statements of Allah SWT in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:208) of the Qur'an:

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا ادْخُلُوْا فِى السِّلْمِ كَاۤفَّةً ۖوَّلَا تَتَّبِعُوْا خُطُوٰتِ الشَّيْطٰنِ ۗاِنَّهٗ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ

Meaning: O believers, be fully committed to practicing the teachings of Islam and do not follow the path or persuasion of Satan, because Satan is a real enemy for humans.

This verse emphasizes the importance of appreciating and applying Islamic teachings comprehensively in life, a principle that should also be reflected in the design of the PAI curriculum. Ideally, the curriculum is intended to equip students not only with conceptual understanding, but also with integrative practical skills, so that they can apply the principles of Islamic teachings in daily life consistently and meaningfully.

Islamic religious education aims to shape a complete personality encompassing knowledge, attitudes, and skills, as stipulated in Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 55 of 2007 concerning Religious Education and Religious Instruction,

Chapter 1, Articles 1 and 2. Article 1 states that religious education is education that imparts knowledge while shaping students' attitudes, personalities, and ability to practice their religious teachings, and that it is provided at minimum through subjects across all educational pathways, levels, and types. Article 2 stipulates that every educational unit is obliged to provide religious instruction in accordance with the faith adopted by its students. Religious education aims to produce Indonesians who have faith, fear God Almighty, possess noble character, and are able to maintain harmony and peace among religious communities. There are three types of religious education: formal, non-formal, and informal (Keagaaman, 2007).

In general, the two articles emphasize that religious instruction is an essential component of the country's educational system which has a strategic role in shaping the faith, piety, noble morals, and character of students. In addition to serving as a way to transmit religious information, religious education also serves as a process of moral and spiritual development so that students are able to practice religious values in everyday existence. Additionally, the purpose of religious education is to foster tolerance and respect for one another, as well as harmonious coexistence in the midst of the diversity of Indonesian society. Thus, in keeping with Pancasila values and national education objectives, religious education is intended to produce a generation that is not only academically capable, but also morally upright, socially conscious, and rational.

However, the implementation of the PAI curriculum in educational institutions, particularly at the Vocational High School (SMK) level, still faces several complex challenges. One of the primary challenges is the restricted allocation of PAI learning time, limited to 3 x 45 minutes per week, which is considered inadequate for discussing in depth such broad material as the history of Islamic civilization, the Qur'an and Hadith, faith and morality, and fiqh. This limited time often causes the learning process to be oriented more toward delivering material and meeting curriculum targets than toward strengthening values and forming students' religious character. As a result, PAI learning tends to remain theoretical and has not been able to fully integrate Islamic principles into students' everyday lives. This is reflected in the gap between students' academic performance in PAI subjects and their practice of religious values in behavior, particularly in the aspects of discipline, responsibility, social ethics, and awareness of worship.

At the vocational school level, the challenges of implementing the PAI curriculum are becoming increasingly complex because the educational orientation is more directed towards mastering vocational competencies and students' job readiness. This condition causes religious education to often not receive optimal attention compared to vocational productive subjects. In addition, the implementation of PAI learning still faces various obstacles, such as limited educator resources, insufficient use of innovative learning methods and media, and the underuse of exemplary teaching approaches. PAI learning is still dominated by lecture and memorization methods, so that students lack contextual, reflective, and applicative learning experiences (Amaliyah & Saepul Hamdani, 2026), a pattern also found specifically at the vocational school level, where PAI is frequently reduced to the fulfillment of cognitive targets alone, leaving its character-building and soft-skill dimensions underdeveloped (Pratiwi et al., 2026). In addition, technological developments and globalization trends also provide new challenges to the formation of students' religious character. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the implementation of the PAI curriculum through a more holistic,

humanist, and contextual approach so that religious education has the power to mold students' personalities, values, and character in addition to imparting information.

Several previous studies have examined the relevance of Ki Hajar Dewantara's Among system to education, including its theoretical alignment with Islamic educational values (Anshori & Ibrahim, 2024), its emphasis on freedom of learning without coercion (Noventari, 2020), its direct theoretical relevance to Islamic education (Rofiah & Muharom, 2025), its relevance to character education in the digital era (Triyaswati, 2024), and its humanistic orientation within the Merdeka Belajar curriculum (Wiryanto, 2021). These studies remain predominantly conceptual and literature-based, relying on library research rather than direct engagement with classroom practice. Consequently, empirical evidence on how the Among system's principles are actually implemented within Islamic Religious Education in a real school setting, particularly at the vocational school level, remains limited. This gap forms the basis for the present study, which examines the integration of the Among system and PAI not merely as a theoretical proposition, but as an applied case observed directly in the field.

This is reflected in the results of a preliminary survey of 120 students at SMK Yanindo Jakarta from various study programs, which found that 84% of students showed adequate ability in reciting and understanding Qur'anic tajwid, 80.4% were able to perform ablution correctly, and 75.6% were able to perform the obligatory prayers completely and correctly. This indicates that although most students have mastered the basic aspects of worship, some groups still require intensive guidance, and their level of participation in religious activities at school could also be improved.

In this context, Ki Hajar Dewantara, whose educational concepts made him a central figure in shaping the direction and philosophy of national education, offers an important critical perspective for analyzing the implementation of the PAI curriculum. According to him, education is the process of directing children's innate strengths so that they may attain the highest possible level of safety and happiness, both as individuals and as members of society. This view emphasizes that education is not merely an academic process, but also a means of forming character and personality (Darmawan & Sujoko, 2019; Oktana, 2025).

The idea of Ki Hajar Dewantara's Among system consists of three principles: Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha, which calls on educators to set an example for others; Ing Madya Mangun Karsa, which encourages the empowerment of oneself and others; and Tut Wuri Handayani, which emphasizes offering support and guidance from behind. This concept underscores the importance of moral leadership, self-development, and collaboration in achieving meaningful educational goals (Triyaswati, 2024). According to Ki Hajar Dewantara, ideal education must be able to support students' full potential, foster spiritual awareness, and guide them to become religious individuals capable of contributing to community life.

Ki Hajar Dewantara emphasized that education must guide the full range of children's potential, namely *cipta* (creativity), *rasa* (feeling), and *karsa* (will), so that they may develop harmoniously into independent individuals who are able to govern themselves, act responsibly, and contribute meaningfully to their community (Direktorat Sejarah Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2017).

Thus, the evaluation of the PAI curriculum needs to consider the extent to which

these dimensions have been integrated into the development of educational resources, instructional strategies, and the practice of habituating religious values. This approach is expected to produce a more contextual, spiritual, and liberating form of education, in keeping with Islamic principles and the spirit of national education.

These educational principles, developed by Ki Hajar Dewantara as a central figure in Indonesian national education, show a close alignment with the fundamental values of Islamic teachings. His thinking emphasizes producing students who are intelligent and pious, possess both outer and inner independence, are socially skilled, and are physically and spiritually healthy (Wiryanto, 2021). This orientation aligns with the objectives of Islamic education, which center on developing a complete individual of noble character (*makārim al-akhlāq*). This shows that the Among system, as a legacy of Ki Hajar Dewantara's thought, holds great potential for integration into the PAI curriculum, in order to create a learning process that prioritizes moral, spiritual, and social growth alongside cognitive development.

Given these conditions, a critical study is needed on the adoption of the PAI curriculum in public schools from the standpoint of Ki Hajar Dewantara's thought. This study aims to evaluate the extent to which the PAI curriculum has shaped students' religious character, and to formulate a strategy for strengthening the curriculum's implementation so that it becomes more contextual, humanistic, and liberating, in keeping with the Pancasila-based national education philosophy, the National Education System Law, and the fundamental principles of Islamic teachings, which emphasize the formation of noble character, the holistic development of human potential, and service to the community.

Based on this background, the present study addresses the following research questions: (1) how are the principles of Ki Hajar Dewantara's Among system reflected in the practice of Islamic Religious Education at SMK Yanindo Jakarta; (2) what conceptual and practical meeting points exist between the Among system and the goals of Islamic Religious Education; and (3) what curriculum strategy can be formulated to integrate the Among system into PAI learning in a way that is applicable to the vocational school context. The novelty of this study lies in its applied, field-based case study approach, which combines curriculum document analysis, direct observation of classroom and religious activities, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions at a single vocational school site, distinguishing it from prior literature-based studies on the same subject.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

That study employs a qualitative methodology. Considering correspondence theory as a theory of scientific truth, qualitative research is a highly specialized research model, both in procedure and methodology. Qualitative research also values the diversity of field data without the tendency to generalize. Analyzing the process of deductive reasoning or general to specific, i.e. from theory to data and inductive or special to general, i.e. from data to theory and the dynamics of the relationship between events that can be reviewed using scientific logic is a key component of qualitative research (Raihan, 2017).

This qualitative approach involves subjectively evaluating beliefs, actions, and attitudes (Triyono & Mahdiana, 2024), giving researchers the opportunity to explore in depth the meaning, values, and real-life context of Islamic Religious Education

curriculum policy in public schools. This focus of this approach is not on data quantification, but on the interpretation of social and educational phenomena, especially how curriculum policies are translated in learning practices, as well as how Ki Hajar Dewantara's thinking provides alternatives or value solutions to the problems mentioned above.

This study uses a type of applied research, according to (Raihan, 2017) In his book "Research Methodology", it is explained that applied research is a meticulous and systematic, consistent study of a problem that aims to be used for a specific purpose. This applied research is used to analyze the gap between the applicable PAI curriculum as well as principles from Ki Hajar Dewantara's thinking, especially the Between system, as well as formulate recommendations and curriculum development models that can be applied directly by schools, teachers, and policy makers.

The case study method used in this study, according to Robert Kuo-zuir Yin in the book (Rosyada, 2020) The case study method is a type of research that focuses on specific events happening in real life today, with in-depth analysis and a wide range of disciplines. In the context of this study, the phenomenon studied is the implementation of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum from the viewpoint of Ki Hajar Dewantara,especially through this application of the Among system at SMK Yanindo Jakarta. The case study approach is particularly relevant because it allows researchers to comprehensively describe, understand, and analyze curriculum practices according to the social and cultural context of the school. This study was conducted at SMK Yanindo Jakarta, focusing on eleventh-grade students from four different study programs: Accounting and Financial Institutions (AKL), Office Administration (OTKP), Business and Marketing (BDP), and Software Engineering (RPL). Fieldwork observations were carried out over a period of three months.

The participants of this study consisted of one Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher, Mr. Ust. H. Mas'ud Zubair, S.Pd.I, who has 20 years of teaching experience; one school principal, Mr. Sam Ani, S.Pd.I; and 80 eleventh-grade students drawn evenly from the four study programs mentioned above, with 20 students representing each program. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, based on the consideration that the PAI teacher and school principal possess direct, long-term involvement in the implementation of Islamic Religious Education at the school, while student participants were selected to represent the diversity of study programs at SMK Yanindo Jakarta.

Participant observation was conducted over a period of three months. Observations focused on classroom-based PAI learning activities, the routine Friday morning religious study (*pengajian*), and commemorative Islamic events (*Peringatan Hari Besar Islam/PHBI*), including Maulid Nabi, Islamic New Year (*Tahun Baru Islam*), Isra Mi'raj, and the Ramadan study camp (*pesantren kilat*). Field notes were recorded using an observation sheet to document teaching practices, student engagement, and the values reflected during these activities.

In-depth interviews were conducted with 22 informants: the school principal, the PAI teacher, and 20 students. Each interview lasted approximately 35 minutes on average and followed a structured interview guide developed in accordance with the research focus.

Two focus group discussions (FGD) were conducted. The first FGD involved the school principal and the PAI teacher, while the second FGD involved 20 students. Both

discussions centered on the synergy between Ki Hajar Dewantara's Among system and the Islamic Religious Education curriculum.

Documentation studies were carried out on the school curriculum and records of religious activities to complement the data obtained through observation, interviews, and focus group discussions.

Data analysis followed the interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Coding was performed manually, and themes were developed through an inductive thematic analysis of the raw data.

To ensure the credibility of the findings, this study applied methodological triangulation, cross-checking data obtained from observation, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and documentation studies.

The preliminary survey of 120 students referred to in the introduction constituted the initial phase of data collection in this study, conducted prior to the qualitative case study phase. It was administered to map the general condition of students' religious practice competencies across SMK Yanindo Jakarta, and its results were used to sharpen the focus of the subsequent qualitative data collection described above.

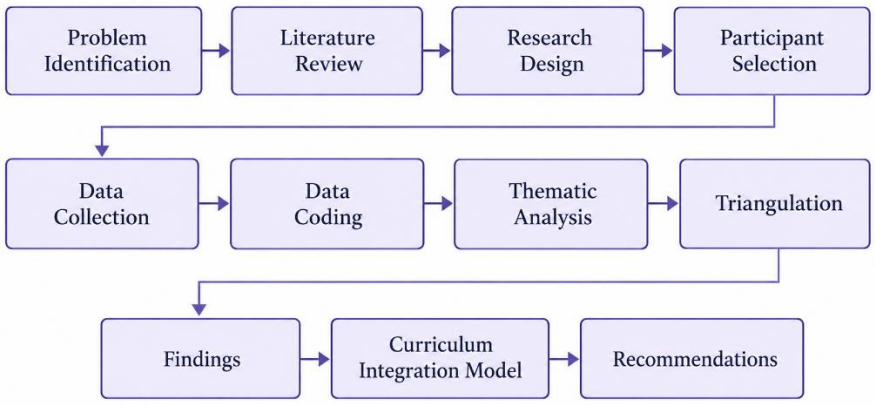

Figure 1. Research Flow

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The development of a curriculum and the application of education that incorporates Islamic Religious Education (PAI) idealswith the thinking from Ki Hajar Dewantara can encourage the creation of an educational process that is contextual, student-oriented, and in harmony with local social and cultural realities. Through this approach, PAI learning not only prioritizes normative-doctrinal aspects, but it serves as a tactical tool for forming a person's characters and building the nation's civilization as a whole.

The following explains the concrete synergy between Islamic Religious Education and Thoughts of Ki Hajar Dewantara:

1. The Synergy of PAI Goals and Ki Hajar Dewantara's Thoughts

Theoretical Discussion

According to classical scholars, the goal of Islamic religious education is teleological, holistic, and normative-spiritual in nature (Iddian, 2026). The educational

motto formulated by Ki Hajar Dewantara, *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha*, *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*, and *Tut Wuri Handayani*, reflects the Among system's emphasis on the importance of example, active involvement, and wise motivation for students. These principles closely align with those of Islamic Religious Education, which similarly emphasizes example (*uswah hasanah*), wise mentoring, and compassion in the process of guidance. This harmony is reflected in the educational method exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH in guiding his companions, whose noble behavior and ethics served as a living model for those around him (Nahwiyah et al., 2025).

Thus, in both Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational approach and Islamic Religious Education, teachers are positioned not merely as deliverers of subject matter, but as educators who bear great responsibility for guiding, directing, motivating, and serving as role models for students in shaping their spiritual, moral, and social lives. From Ki Hajar Dewantara's perspective, teachers are guided by the philosophy of *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha*, *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*, and *Tut Wuri Handayani* in supporting students' growth and development in accordance with their nature and their times. This principle holds that a teacher must be able to set an example in front, build enthusiasm from within the group, and encourage and support students from behind so that they can grow into autonomous and responsible individuals. This concept closely aligns with the principles of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), which likewise emphasizes the importance of *uswah hasanah* (good example), a wisdom-based approach, wise counsel, and education grounded in compassion and gentleness. In Islam, mastery of subject matter alone does not determine educational success; the quality of an educator's morals and everyday example matters just as much.

Teachers in Islamic Religious Education are responsible for more than simply imparting information; they play the role of murabbi, mu'allim, and muaddib who foster students' faith, piety, and morality as a whole. PAI teachers are expected to create a humanistic, dialogical, and exemplary learning atmosphere so that Islamic values can be deeply internalized by students. This is consistent with the educational method exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH in guiding his companions, where he prioritized example, habituation, dialogue, and contextual, wisdom-based mentoring over coercion. The Prophet Muhammad PBUH conveyed the teachings of Islam not only through speech, but also through behavior and conduct marked by compassion, patience, honesty, and social concern. The synergy between Ki Hajar Dewantara's thought and Islamic Religious Education therefore shows that ideal education is one that humanizes, builds character, and fosters students' spiritual and moral awareness through a process of exemplification, guidance, and an approach grounded in human values.

Empirical Findings

Field data from this study support this conceptual alignment. Classroom observation records show that Mr. Ust. H. Mas'ud Zubair, S.Pd.I, the PAI teacher at SMK Yanindo Jakarta, consistently demonstrated uswah hasanah in practice rather than merely delivering theoretical material, through habits such as greeting students warmly, arriving punctually before class, and leading the opening prayer with visible solemnity. During the weekly Friday morning religious gathering and PHBI commemorations (Maulid Nabi, Islamic New Year, Isra Mi'raj, and the Ramadan study camp), he consistently stood at the front of the congregation, led tawasul and dzikir, and displayed discipline and proper Islamic dress, serving as a concrete role model observed by the 80

student participants across the four study programs.

2. Principles of Education as an Effort to Develop Humanity

Theoretical Discussion

According to Ki Hajar Dewantara, education is fundamentally a process that develops the human potential of students so that they grow in harmony with the nature and context of the times. Ki Hajar Dewantara created the Among system, a child-centered teaching methodology, with the aim of forming individuals who are independent in heart, mind, and action (Anshori & Ibrahim, 2024). This principle is based on the belief that each student has unique potential that needs to be developed through a compassionate approach, habituation of example, and ongoing empowerment. This approach reflects humanistic values that are highly relevant and needed in contemporary educational practice.

This idea is consistent with the perspective of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), which holds that the goal of Islamic education is to form a complete personality that fulfills the dual function of human beings, namely as caliphs entrusted with the welfare of the earth and as faithful servants of their Creator. Islamic education is therefore seen as an effective means for forming the Ummah (Farabi, 2021). From an Islamic perspective, every human being is regarded as a creature endowed with inherent dignity and honor from the moment of creation. This is as affirmed in the words of Allah SWT:

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِيْٓ اٰدَمَ وَحَمَلْنٰهُمْ فِى الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنٰهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ وَفَضَّلْنٰهُمْ عَلٰى كَثِيْرٍ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيْلًا

"Indeed, we have brought Adam's descendants both on land and in the water, and we have exalted them., We have given them food from kind folks, as well as We have made them more abundant than most of the creatures We have created." (QS. Al-Isra: 70)

In light of this verse, education in Islam aims to holistically optimize all aspects of human potential through a formative process encompassing spiritual, moral, and intellectual dimensions. Its main objective is to shape a complete human figure (insan kamil), namely individuals of strong faith, broad knowledge, and noble character, who are able to contribute actively and positively to community life.

Thus, in both the educational system developed by Ki Hajar Dewantara and Islamic Religious Education (PAI), education is not understood merely as the transfer of knowledge from teacher to student, but as a formative process that touches every aspect of human life, including the intellectual, spiritual, emotional, social, and moral dimensions. The educational process is directed toward producing individuals with self-awareness, an understanding of their own potential, and a sense of responsibility toward themselves, society, the nation, and God. From this perspective, education functions as a means of humanization, enabling students to develop into morally upright individuals capable of living meaningful and dignified lives.

This concept illustrates a strong meeting point between Ki Hajar Dewantara's thinking and the principles of Islamic Religious Education. According to Ki Hajar Dewantara, education is a process of guiding children's natural growth and development so as to maximize their safety and wellbeing. Islamic Religious Education, meanwhile, views education as a deliberate effort to guide students toward becoming people of faith, piety, knowledge, and good character. Both concepts emphasize that students are not passive recipients of instruction, but educational subjects possessing inherent potential (fitrah) that must be developed gradually through a humanistic,

exemplary approach.

In this context, teachers are no longer positioned as the sole source of knowledge or as authoritarian figures in the classroom. Rather, they are understood as educators who bear a moral responsibility to accompany, guide, and set an example for their students. The teacher's role emphasizes character development, the strengthening of values, and the creation of a classroom environment that supports students' individual growth. Teachers are tasked with helping students discover their identity, develop critical thinking skills, and build spiritual and social awareness in daily life.

This principle is consistent with the philosophy of Ki Hajar Dewantara's Among system, which positions educators as pamong. A teacher does not force, pressure, or dominate students, but is present to provide direction and support in accordance with each child's developmental needs. This is reflected in Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational motto, Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha, Ing Madya Mangun Karsa, Tut Wuri Handayani, which holds that teachers must be able to set an example for others, build enthusiasm from within the group, and provide encouragement from behind so that students can grow into independent and responsible individuals. These ideals also align with Islamic educational principles that emphasize example (uswah hasanah), compassion, wisdom, and habituation in the educational process

Furthermore, both Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational system and Islamic Religious Education emphasize the importance of building social responsibility. Education is directed not only toward academic achievement, but also toward students' capacity to live harmoniously with others, respect fellow human beings, demonstrate social concern, and contribute positively to society. Students are encouraged to achieve a balance between intellectual intelligence and moral maturity, so that they become not only academically capable, but also wise in their attitudes and actions.

Thus, the integration of Islamic Religious Education with Ki Hajar Dewantara's ideas demonstrates that ideal education places human beings at the center of value and character development. Education should be able to embody a learning approach that liberates, humanizes, and guides students toward full personal maturity. Through this approach, it is hoped that a generation will emerge that is not only exceptionally knowledgeable, but also socially responsible, spiritually grounded, morally upright, and independent.

Empirical Findings

This principle was reflected in classroom observation and the second focus group discussion involving 20 students. Rather than relying on a rigid, one-directional lecture method, the PAI teacher opened space for dialogue and interactive discussion. Students were given the freedom to raise questions and share views on how religious teachings apply to daily life within the vocational school environment. In this setting, the teacher functioned as a pamong, listening to and valuing student perspectives while guiding them toward understanding through an inductive process.

3. The Concept of the Among System and the Example of the Prophet

Theoretical Discussion

Ki Hajar Dewantara developed the Among system, a teaching methodology grounded in compassion, respect for children's natural talents, and the granting of freedom and responsibility. The system rests on three guiding principles: first, Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha, in which the pamong leads by example; second, Ing Madya

Mangun Karsa, in which the pamong, alongside setting an example, provides encouragement, enthusiasm for learning, and the spirit of doing good; and third, Tut Wuri Handayani, in which the pamong supports from behind, remaining attentive to the talents and potential that emerge in students (Ruth et al., 2023). These three principles illustrate the ideal function of an educator as a fully engaged partner in children's education, not as a force imposing its will, but as a facilitator who encourages cooperative development.

The principle of exemplary conduct in Islamic Religious Education corresponds closely to the ideals of the Among system. According to Allah SWT, the Prophet Muhammad PBUH is the primary role model for humanity in every area of life.

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيْ رَسُوْلِ اللهِ اُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْاٰخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللهَ كَثِيْرًا

Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example for anyone who hopes for Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah often. (QS. Al-Ahzab: 21)

This passage highlights the Prophet Muhammad PBUH as the perfect model for all who seek Allah's pleasure and the afterlife. In the educational context, the Prophet PBUH not only conveyed knowledge but also guided his companions through a compassionate approach (rahmah), wisdom, empowerment, and the opening of space for dialogue and deliberation. His educational method was grounded in noble character rather than coercion, expressed through example in worship, social relations (muamalah), and leadership. This approach is consistent with the tenets of Ki Hajar Dewantara's Among system, which likewise emphasizes character development through example, empowerment, and compassionate support.

Affection-based education, as reflected in the Prophet's (saw) sunnah, offers a model for raising a generation marked by honor, knowledge, and social sensitivity. This concept remains relevant for continued development within the modern education system, so that the learning process becomes more humane, transformative, and consistent with Islamic values that are rahmatan lil 'alamin (Darnanengsih et al., 2025). His educational strategy centered on concrete examples of conduct, encompassing noble morals, the practice of worship, social relations (muamalah), and leadership. The Prophet did not educate through a repressive or coercive approach, but through habituation and an understanding of principles made evident in everyday interaction.

Both the Among system developed by Ki Hajar Dewantara and the educational method exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH position educators as central figures in shaping students' character. In both concepts, educators are tasked not only with conveying knowledge, but also with serving as guides, directors, motivators, and role models who significantly influence students' moral, spiritual, and personal development. The Among system holds that education must be carried out through a process of guidance rather than pressure or force, allowing students to grow naturally according to their potential and nature. This principle is consistent with the educational method of the Prophet PBUH, which prioritized compassion, gentleness, and example in educating his companions, cultivating confidence, responsibility, and spiritual awareness through humanistic and wise relationships.

In this setting, PAI teachers play a strategic role in internalizing the values of the Among system through educational approaches that place students as the primary subject of learning. Beyond imparting religious knowledge, educators also serve as moral mentors who provide real examples through daily conduct. The uswah hasanah, or exemplary method, is one of the most effective means of instilling the principles of

faith, self-control, integrity, accountability, and social responsibility in students. PAI teachers can also apply a personal guidance approach marked by empathy and attentiveness to students' emotional and spiritual growth, so that the educational process extends beyond formal classroom instruction to touch character formation more deeply.

Providing liberating spiritual motivation, as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad SAW, is also an important part of building students' awareness in learning. The Prophet PBUH educated his companions by awakening their awareness and will from within, rather than relying solely on pressure and punishment. He created space for dialogue, valued individual potential, and encouraged reflection and responsibility for one's own life choices. This method is consistent with Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational concept, which emphasizes the value of freedom in learning. The integration of the Among system's principles with Islamic Religious Education can therefore serve as a foundation for PAI learning that is more humanistic, contextual, and oriented toward character formation, enabling students not only to understand Islamic teachings in theory, but to live and practice them consciously, independently, and responsibly in daily life.

Empirical Findings

These three principles were observable in concrete practice at SMK Yanindo Jakarta. Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha was evident during the Friday morning religious gathering and PHBI commemorations, where the PAI teacher and the school principal, Mr. Sam Ani, S.Pd.I, personally led worship activities and modeled discipline in religious rituals. Ing Madya Mangun Karsa appeared in classroom learning and the second focus group discussion, where the teacher engaged directly with the 20 student representatives, facilitated group discussion, and encouraged them to practice Islamic values within school life. Tut Wuri Handayani was reflected in the Ramadan study camp and PHBI commemorations, where students were entrusted with full responsibility for organizing the events as committee members, while the teacher and principal supported from behind and offered appreciation.

4. Freedom and Independence in Learning

Theoretical Discussion

Ki Hajar Dewantara held that education must respect the nature of children as unique and independent individuals. The concept of independent learning he introduced emphasizes that students should not be pressured, forced, or rigidly directed, but instead given space to develop according to their potential and interests. He proposed an educational approach that supports children's natural disposition, guided not by command and coercion, but by direction that allows their body and mind to develop safely and productively (Noventari, 2020)s.

This thinking closely aligns with the principles of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), which recognizes that every human being is endowed with the right to know God and the freedom to choose their own path in life. This is stated in the Qur'an:

لَآ اِكْرَاهَ فِى الدِّيْنِۗ ....

"There is no coercion in religion" (QS. Al-Baqarah: 256)

This verse emphasizes the importance of awareness and freedom in accepting the truth. Islamic education similarly emphasizes the importance of fostering students' independence, both in understanding religious teachings, performing acts of worship,

and making responsible moral decisions.

Thus, the concept of freedom in learning should not be understood as freedom without limits or direction, but as freedom that remains grounded in values, morals, and responsibility. In Ki Hajar Dewantara's perspective, freedom in learning aims to guide students to develop according to their potential and nature as human beings, enabling them to grow into independent, principled, and socially conscious individuals capable of thinking critically and creatively, and of taking responsibility for their decisions. From the perspective of Islamic education, freedom in learning is similarly directed toward forming human beings who are aware of their duties and responsibilities as servants of Allah and caliphs on earth. The educational process, therefore, aims not only to develop intellectual abilities, but also to instill the values of faith, piety, noble morals, and spiritual awareness in students' lives.

Empirical Findings

This non-coercive approach was observed directly at SMK Yanindo Jakarta. During collective worship activities and the Ramadan study camp, guidance was carried out through persuasive mentoring (tarbiyah/pamong). Students whose Qur'anic recitation or worship practice were still developing, as indicated by the evaluation data, were not subjected to punitive or demeaning correction. Instead, they received intensive, gradual, and independent guidance until religious awareness grew from within, consistent with the principle that there is no compulsion in religion.

The synergy between Ki Hajar Dewantara's concept of independent learning and awareness-based education in Islam demonstrates that the learning process must stand on the side of students' humanity and value the potential and uniqueness of each individual. Students are seen not as passive recipients of knowledge, but as active educational subjects with the freedom to think and construct their own understanding through meaningful learning experiences. In this context, teachers act as guides and facilitators who help students develop intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual abilities in a balanced manner, underscoring the importance of dialogical, humanistic, and contextual education. This concept of freedom, oriented toward spiritual and humanistic values, is highly relevant for application in Islamic Religious Education in schools. PAI learning cannot be limited to memorizing material or achieving academic scores; it must also encourage students to understand the meaning of Islamic teachings in depth and to apply them in daily life. Through an independent approach, students are given space to engage in dialogue, think critically, reflect on their experiences, and build religious awareness on their own, free from authoritarian pressure. Education, in this way, produces not only intellectually capable students, but also individuals of moral integrity, social concern, and spiritual responsibility, consistent with the core objectives of both national education and Islamic education.

5. Inculcation of National and Cultural Values

Theoretical Discussion

Ki Hajar Dewantara laid the foundation that national education must be rooted in the nation's own culture, reflecting his broader educational thinking, which is deeply infused with local cultural nuance (Ferary, 2021). In his view, good education is one that remains rooted in a nation's culture, language, and noble values. He rejected the colonial education system, which distanced students from their Indonesian identity and replaced it with a hegemonic foreign culture. A civilized Indonesian society, he argued,

is shaped in large part by education; through education, human values can be developed, refined, and passed down from generation to generation as the foundation of social life (Baidowi, 2025).

This idea aligns with the tenets of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) as a key vehicle for developing students' morals and character, functioning as a strategic medium within education that imparts moral principles, social responsibility, and faith in an integrated manner (Puspitasari et al., 2022). While Islamic religious education can provide a thorough understanding of Islam's principles and values, developing strong character requires more than understanding alone; internalizing these principles is essential for applying them in daily life (Yaqin & Nurfuadi, 2024). PAI therefore plays a significant role in shaping students who are devout, of noble character, tolerant, and attentive to their surrounding social and cultural environment.

Islamic religious education, therefore, is not oriented solely toward strengthening faith and ritual worship, but also emphasizes the internalization of social and cultural values in harmony with Islamic teachings. The Qur'an affirms that Islam values social and cultural diversity as part of the sunnatullah, as Allah SWT says:

يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنَّا خَلَقْنٰكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ وَّاُنْثٰى وَجَعَلْنٰكُمْ شُعُوْبًا وَّقَبَاۤىِٕلَ لِتَعَارَفُوْا....

(QS. al-Ḥujurāt [49]: 13) "We created you from male and female and made you into nations and tribes so that you could know each other, mankind."

This passage demonstrates that cultural diversity is not something to be rejected, but rather a means through which social relationships grounded in piety and human values can be built.

Thus, the synergy between national values in Ki Hajar Dewantara's thought and the values of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) can serve as an important foundation for forming a generation that is both religious and strongly nationalistic. Ki Hajar Dewantara viewed education as a means of building national awareness, love for the homeland, and respect for national culture and identity, aimed not only at intellectually educating the nation, but also at cultivating a sense of responsibility toward society, nation, and state. This view aligns with the objectives of Islamic Religious Education, which emphasize forming people of faith, piety, and honorable character who are able to live harmoniously amid social diversity. In Islam, love for the homeland, unity, and the maintenance of social peace are among the moral values that every individual is obliged to uphold.

Through the combination of these two concepts, students are expected to develop not only a strong religious understanding but also a high degree of national awareness. They are expected to be firm in practicing religious teachings and upholding spiritual values, while also showing concern for national unity, social tolerance, and the preservation of national culture. The collaboration between Islamic Religious Education and Ki Hajar Dewantara's ideas can help produce a generation capable of balancing Islamic identity with the spirit of nationhood. This is especially important given that students live within a pluralistic Indonesian society, which requires an education that fosters a reasonable mindset, respect for difference, and a genuine commitment to unity and diversity.

Empirical Findings

Observation of PHBI activities at SMK Yanindo Jakarta confirmed this integration in practice. During the Maulid Nabi and Islamic New Year commemorations, the events were not limited to religious sermons but incorporated

local and national cultural elements, including shalawat recitations themed around national unity, cross-program collaboration (*gotong royong*) among students from the AKL, OTKP, BDP, and RPL programs in organizing the events, and explicit emphasis on tolerance, civic brotherhood (ukhuwah wathaniyah), and religious moderation within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

The cultivation of nationalism and cultural values in education is also an important part of character education grounded in spirituality and love for the homeland. Education functions not only to develop students' academic abilities, but also to build moral and social awareness so that they can become responsible citizens. In this respect, educators play a crucial role in instilling national values through example, habituation, and the integration of both national and local cultural values into the educational process. Education that combines Islamic and national values can thus produce a generation with both religious integrity and intellectual capability, marked by love for the nation, social concern, and a commitment to preserving the unity and integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

6. PAI Curriculum Meeting Point with the Among System

This section discusses the conceptual meeting point between the realities of PAI curriculum implementation in public schools and the thinking of Ki Hajar Dewantara, particularly through the Among system, as a basis for formulating solutions to the problems identified in the field. This meeting point serves as a theoretical bridge that synergizes the values of Islamic education with Ki Hajar Dewantara's humanistic, liberating, and character-oriented educational approach. The general points of these two concepts are explained as follows:

Empirical Findings

a. The Condition of the PAI Curriculum in Public Schools

The reality in the field shows that the implementation of the PAI curriculum faces several obstacles, including:

1) Limited study time (3 x 45 minutes/week).

The study's findings demonstrate that the use of the PAI curriculum in public schools still faces a number of structural and pedagogical limitations. One of the main obstacles is the limited allocation of study time, which is confirmed at three times forty-five minutes per week based on the school curriculum document and corroborated by the school principal and the PAI teacher during structured interviews and the first focus group discussion. This relatively short time makes it difficult for PAI teachers to develop deep, reflective, and oriented learning to shape students' religious attitudes and behaviors. As a result, learning tends to be focused on the delivery of subject matter so that all learning outcomes can be fulfilled in accordance with the demands of the curriculum.

2) The learning approach is still cognitive.

Classroom observation using a structured observation sheet confirmed that the PAI learning approach remains dominated by the cognitive aspect, with assessment concentrated on concept mastery, memorization, and written

testing, while affective and psychomotor dimensions, such as daily habituation of practice, have not yet been formally accommodated within the curriculum structure.

3) Limitations of internalizing students' religious values and practices.

The preliminary survey of 120 students found that 84% were able to read and understand Qur'anic tajwid, 80.4% were able to perform ablution (wudhu) correctly, and 75.6% were able to perform the obligatory prayers completely and correctly. While these figures indicate that most students have mastered basic ritual skills, they also reveal that between 16% and 24.4% of students still require intensive guidance, pointing to a gap between the achievement of academic and ritual competence and the internalization of religious values in students' daily social behavior, a pattern also observed in comparative studies on how religious education shapes student behavior across different school settings (Coman et al., 2024). Thus, the PAI curriculum faces challenges in bridging the gap between religious knowledge and the practical practice of Islamic values.

Theoretical Discussion

b. Thoughts of Ki Hajar Dewantara (Among System)

Ki Hajar Dewantara's thinking, expressed through the Among system, offers a relevant alternative approach for addressing the various limitations of the PAI curriculum in public schools. The Among system positions students as educational subjects to be guided according to their nature and the nature of their times, rather than forced or suppressed, a principle consistent with PAI's aim of developing Muslim morals and personality as a whole. The Among system offers a liberating and humanizing educational approach through the following principles:

1) Ing ngarsa sung tuladha (in front of giving an example)

The concept of *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha* affirms the role of educators as the primary role model in learning. In the context of PAI, teachers not only convey religious teachings but also demonstrate religious attitudes, honesty, discipline, and noble character in daily life. This example is an effective means of instilling religious values in students, particularly given the limited formal learning time available, consistent with findings that structured role-modelling programmes are an effective vehicle for character formation in Islamic educational contexts more broadly (Osman, 2024).

2) Ing madya mangun karsa (in the midst of building enthusiasm)

The principle of *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa* emphasizes the role of educators as motivators who foster students' enthusiasm for learning. PAI teachers are expected to create a participatory, dialogical, and meaningful learning atmosphere that encourages students to understand and practice religious teachings consciously. This approach helps strengthen the affective and psychomotor dimensions that have thus far received insufficient attention.

3) Tut wuri handayani (on the back gives a boost)

The principle of *Tut Wuri Handayani* positions educators as supporters and companions from behind. In the context of PAI, this principle encourages teachers to give students responsible freedom to develop their religious practice, including worship, social concern, and moral reflection, supporting a process of value internalization that is natural and sustained.

c. Conceptual Meeting and Synergy between PAI and Among System

The common ground between the PAI curriculum and the Among system lies in their shared orientation toward forming human beings who are faithful, of noble character, independent, and socially responsible. Islamic religious education rests on a normative-transcendental foundation drawn from the Qur'an and Sunnah, aimed at forming individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also spiritually and morally aware. The Among system developed by Ki Hajar Dewantara, meanwhile, offers a humanistic, contextual pedagogical approach oriented toward the holistic development of students' potential, viewing students as individuals whose nature and potential must be guided through a liberating educational process rather than suppressed or forced. This shared vision shows that both PAI and the Among system regard education as a means of forming character and complete humanity, and their synergy can produce an educational approach that is not only normative and theoretical but also applicable and relevant to students' everyday lives

Integrating the values of Islamic Religious Education with the Among system allows for a paradigm shift in learning, from a cognitive-instructional model toward one that guides, liberates, and builds students' awareness. PAI learning in schools has so far tended to focus on memorizing material and achieving academic scores, leaving the internalization of religious values falling short of its potential. Through the Among approach, PAI learning can be directed toward a more humanistic and participatory formative process, in which students are given space to think, engage in dialogue, reflect, and develop religious understanding contextually. In this approach, teachers serve not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as figures who provide example, motivation, and moral guidance, consistent with the Islamic concept of teachers as murabbi and muaddib responsible for fostering morals and shaping students' character through example and the habituation of values.

The limited allocation of PAI learning time in public schools can also be addressed by embedding Among system ideals into students' daily lives and school culture. Religious principles can be internalized not only in the classroom but also through teachers' example, habits of worship, social interaction, religious extracurricular activities, and the cultivation of a religious, humanistic school environment. In this way, religious education extends beyond imparting information to become a process of character formation grounded in real experience and daily practice. The Among approach strengthens this internalization process because students learn through meaningful experience, appreciation, and

social relationships, allowing values such as discipline, responsibility, tolerance, cooperation, and social concern to develop naturally within a school culture that supports religious character formation.

The synergy between the Among system and the PAI curriculum is also relevant to the demands of twenty-first century education, which emphasizes character development, creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. Religious education can no longer be oriented solely toward the theoretical mastery of religious concepts; it must also equip students with the ability to face the challenges of modern life wisely and with moral grounding. The Among approach creates space for students to grow into independent, confident individuals with strong spiritual and social awareness, making PAI learning more relevant to the needs of today's students amid rapid technological development, globalization, and social change.

Thus, the conceptual meeting point between Islamic Religious Education and the Among system provides an important basis for formulating integrative and transformative curricular solutions. The Among system can serve as a pedagogical approach within the PAI curriculum to foster learning that is more humanistic, reflective, and focused on the holistic development of students' character. This synergy not only enriches learning practices in schools, but also strengthens the role of the PAI curriculum as a vehicle for forming individuals of faith, noble character, and the capacity to live harmoniously within their communities. In other words, integrating Among system values into PAI learning represents a deliberate step toward realizing Ki Hajar Dewantara's ideas and the principles of Islamic education within the framework of contemporary national education.

To facilitate understanding of how PAI values and the Among system connect, this integration is presented in the following table:

Table. Integration of PAI Values and System Among

Curriculum Aspects	Education The Religion of Islam	The System Among Ki Hajar Dewantara	Meeting Point	Field Evidence
Example	Uswah Nabi SAW	Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuludha	Model of Exemplary Teacher	The PAI teacher consistently served as prayer leader, led the Friday morning religious gathering, and modeled courteous speech in the classroom.
Participatory	Practice of Worship Together	Ing Madya Mangun Karsa	Collective Spiritual Activities	Collective worship, the Friday morning religious gathering, and PHBI activities, during which the teacher engaged directly with students throughout the activity.
Liberation	Morality and Spirituality	Tut Wuri Handayani	Learning Independence	Students were given full trust and independence to manage the Ramadan study camp committee and to lead group discussions in PAI learning.

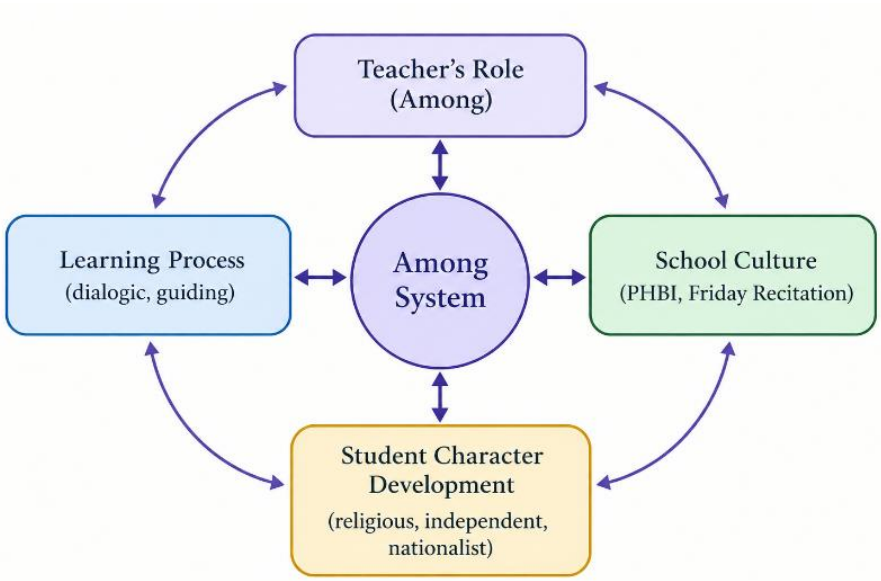

Figure 2. Conceptual Model for Integrating the Among System and Islamic Education

Discussion and Synthesis

The integration table between PAI and Ki Hajar Dewantara's Among system illustrates a strong conceptual meeting point between Islamic values and a philosophy of national education oriented toward humanity. This integration rests on the view that students are creatures of Allah SWT endowed with dignity, potential, and nature that must be developed through a meaningful, liberating, and civilized educational process. Islamic Religious Education regards individuals as bearing responsibility to serve Allah and act as caliphs on earth, with education aimed at forming people of faith, noble character, knowledge, and social responsibility. The Among system, meanwhile, holds that education must guide students to develop according to their nature and the nature of their times without losing sight of human values. The integration between PAI and the Among system thus shows that ideal education is oriented not only toward academic achievement, but also toward the holistic formation of students' character, morals, and spiritual awareness.

The theological foundation for the glorification of human beings and the importance of education that humanizes them can be found in the words of Allah SWT in QS. Al-Isra (17:70), which affirms that humans are created in a noble state, granted numerous advantages, and endowed with potential unmatched by other creatures. This verse provides the theological basis for the principle that education, including the PAI curriculum, must respect the dignity of students as human beings. Education should not suppress, diminish, or stifle students' potential, but must foster their self-awareness, moral responsibility, noble character, and social capability. Teachers must therefore understand that each student possesses different characteristics, talents, and stages of development, requiring an educational process carried out with wisdom, humanity, and compassion, a principle closely compatible with the philosophy of the Among system, which places students as the primary subject of education rather than merely as objects receiving knowledge.

The concept of guiding within the Among system represents a concrete expression of the recognition of human dignity affirmed in QS. Al-Isra (17:70). Ki Hajar Dewantara held that the task of educators is not to force or control students in an authoritarian manner, but to guide them toward development according to their potential and nature, an approach consistent with the principles of Islamic education, which emphasize the gradual, wise, and personality-oriented process of tarbiyah. The common ground between PAI and the Among system thus lies in their shared orientation toward humanizing education through respect for students' freedom, potential, and dignity, viewing education as a formative process that fosters spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and social awareness in a balanced way, so that students become individuals responsible to themselves, society, and God.

QS. Al-Ahzab (33:21) further emphasizes the importance of example as the primary method in Islamic education, positioning the Prophet PBUH as the best

uswah hasanah, or model, in every facet of life. This principle directly corresponds to the notion of Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha within the Among system, which holds that educators must set a genuine example for students. In Islamic Religious Education, teachers function not only as conveyors of religious material but also as exemplary figures who embody Islamic values in their daily attitudes, speech, behavior, and social interactions. This example is a crucial factor in helping students absorb religious ideas effectively, since students tend to learn through the concrete examples they witness and experience firsthand. The integration of exemplary values in PAI and the Among system can therefore strengthen and deepen the process of shaping students' religious character.

The integration between PAI and the Among system also contributes to a more humanistic, dialogical, and contextual approach to learning, one no longer centered solely on the teacher but that gives students space to think actively, engage in dialogue, reflect, and develop their potential independently, with teachers assuming the role of mentors who motivate and support students' self-development. This approach is highly relevant to PAI learning in public schools, which has often been oriented primarily toward memorization and cognitive mastery. By integrating the values of the Among system, PAI learning can be directed toward character formation and the more tangible internalization of values through school culture, religious habits, social interaction, and students' everyday experiences.

Thus, the integration table between Islamic Religious Education and the Among Ki Hajar Dewantara System not only shows the similarity of values conceptually, but also provides a philosophical and pedagogical foundation for the development of education that is more liberating, humanizing, and oriented towards character formation. This synergy shows that Islamic values and Ki Hajar Dewantara's thoughts have strong relevance in answering the challenges of modern education, especially in building a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also has strong spirituality, morals, and social awareness in the life of society and the nation.

7. Recommendations for the PAI Curriculum Based on the Among System

Discussion: Strategic Recommendations

Building on the findings of the critical analysis of PAI curriculum implementation in public schools, particularly at SMK Yanindo Jakarta, this section presents strategic recommendations for strengthening Among system values within the curriculum and learning practices. Ki Hajar Dewantara's pedagogical principles, which emphasize example, empowerment, and mentoring, are considered pertinent to addressing issues of spiritual and character education in the context of today's vocational education.

These recommendations center on three main focuses: learning design based on the Among philosophy, policy strengthening through the role of the Ministry of Education, and the development of contextual, culture-based strategies for improving PAI quality. Together, these recommendations aim to realize religious education oriented not only toward the mastery of religious understanding, but also toward the development

of a humanist, reflective, and religious personality.

a. Learning Design That Leads, Not Suppresses

The design of the PAI curriculum should be grounded in pedagogical principles that guide, inspire, and liberate students' potential, rather than merely demanding formal compliance or memorization of material. This approach draws on Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational theory, which views education as a process of directing students' growth and development in accordance with their nature and their times. In this concept, the teacher acts as a pamong, an educator who fulfills this role fully through the motto Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha, Ing Madya Mangun Karsa, Tut Wuri Handayani: setting an example in front, fostering enthusiasm and inspiration from within the group, and providing support and encouragement from behind, so that students may grow into autonomous and responsible individuals. The learning process is thus no longer authoritarian and oppressive, but instead emphasizes fostering awareness, strengthening character, and developing students' potential in a humane manner.

A guided learning strategy is highly applicable in the context of Islamic Religious Education, since PAI's primary goal extends beyond disseminating religious information to forming students' morals, spirituality, and moral awareness. PAI teachers are therefore no longer positioned as the sole authoritative source of knowledge, but as facilitators, guides, and role models who provide emotional, moral, and spiritual support throughout students' self-development. Teachers need to cultivate a learning atmosphere that is dialogical, humanistic, and respectful of the diversity of students' potential. Learning that relies on punishment, pressure, or rote memorization without understanding can diminish students' interest in religious education and make learning feel rigid and meaningless, whereas a guiding and empowering approach helps students understand Islamic values more deeply and apply them in daily life.

Guided PAI learning design must also begin with mapping students' actual needs across spiritual, social, emotional, and psychological dimensions. Since students come from differing religious backgrounds and experiences, the learning process needs to be adapted to their individual conditions and needs. For example, implementing a local-content Qur'an literacy program for entry-level students can serve as a fundamental step in building basic religious skills, not only improving students' ability to read the Qur'an, but also fostering confidence, love for Islamic teachings, and emotional closeness to religious values. This foundation better prepares students to engage with other Islamic subjects, such as faith, morals, fiqh, and Islamic history, in a more in-depth and contextual manner.

Guided PAI learning also needs to prioritize active, reflective, and contextual learning experiences, enabling students to absorb religious ideas in their everyday lives rather than gaining theoretical understanding alone. Teachers can employ creative, participatory methods such as discussion, reflection, worship habituation, case studies, project-based learning, and real-world classroom applications. Through these methods, students can actively participate in their own education, sharpen their critical thinking, and organically develop their spiritual and social awareness. Religious education is thus understood not merely as a subject emphasizing cognitive mastery, but as a comprehensive process of character and personality formation.

This guided learning approach also reflects respect for students' dignity as

human beings with potential, freedom, and the right to develop. Students are treated not as passive recipients of instruction, but as active learning subjects who think, feel, and act. Within an inclusive and humanistic learning atmosphere, students feel valued, heard, and given space to develop themselves fully. A learning design grounded in guidance, therefore, is focused on developing religious character alongside academic achievement, independence, responsibility, and students' ability to face life's challenges wisely and with dignity.

b. Policy Recommendations to the Ministry of Education

For PAI learning in public schools, particularly Vocational High Schools (SMK), to remain relevant to contemporary developments and responsive to students' needs, policy intervention from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (Kemendikdasmen) is needed. This intervention should address not only administrative matters, but also engage more deeply and transformatively with the substance and philosophy of education. The following policy recommendations are proposed:

1) Review of the Allocation of PAI Learning Time in Vocational Schools

The current allocation of PAI teaching hours in vocational schools is not fully proportional to the breadth of material coverage or the complexity of spiritual and character development goals. The Ministry of Education therefore needs to evaluate and readjust the PAI teaching load to reflect the needs of vocational school students, who generally face a demanding vocational curriculum while still needing to strengthen the values of faith, morals, and spirituality in their lives.

2) Development of National Teaching Modules Based on the Among System

A government initiative is needed to develop a national PAI teaching module that integrates the principles of Ki Hajar Dewantara's Among system. The module should be structured thematically and contextually, with an approach emphasizing character building, universal virtues, and reflective learning, so that students move beyond a purely normative-doctrinal understanding of religious teachings toward a more meaningful internalization of Islamic values in daily life.

3) Strengthening the Capacity of PAI Teachers through National Training System Among

To ensure the optimal implementation of Among system values in the learning process, the Ministry of Education is advised to organize a national PAI teacher training program focused on applying Among pedagogical practices. This training should go beyond technical-methodological training to strengthen teachers' philosophical understanding of guided, humanistic, and liberating approaches to developing students' potential, ensuring that Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy becomes real classroom practice rather than a purely theoretical reference in policy documents.

4) Collaboration with the Industrial World and Religious Partners

Given the close relationship between vocational schools and the world of work, synergy is needed among schools, industry, and religious institutions to strengthen spiritual and moral values within the vocational education environment. Strategies such as religious mentoring within industry placements, the involvement of religious leaders in school activities, and the integration of ethical values into vocational practice can help extend character development into the realities of working life.

Together, these recommendations aim to make the policy direction of Islamic religious education in public schools more inclusive, relevant, and consistent with the principles of national education, which position students as active subjects developing fully across cognitive, affective, spiritual, and social dimensions.

c. Culture and Spirituality-Based PAI Quality Improvement Strategy

Islamic religious education must form part of character and cultural education, not remain confined to the normative realm alone. Accordingly, PAI's quality improvement strategy includes:

1) Development of teaching modules based on local culture and contemporary socio-religious challenges.
2) Reinforcement of collaborative and reflective learning, such as religious projects, social tasks, or value discussions.
3) Integration of informal religious activities (tadarus, Islamic mentoring, worship practices) into school routines, as a form of learning contextual and grounded values.
4) Emphasis on teacher example and moral building, not just the imparting of religious knowledge.

Empirical Basis for Recommendations

These recommendations emerged not only from the researcher's analysis but also from concrete input gathered through structured interviews and both focus group discussions. The school principal, Mr. Sam Ani, S.Pd.I, proposed policy adjustments to PAI teaching hours and the integration of co-curricular religious activities into formal assessment, along with the need for a government-recognized, character-based PAI teaching module. The PAI teacher, Mr. Ust. H. Mas'ud Zubair, S.Pd.I, recommended capacity-building training for PAI teachers focused on pamong-based, humanistic teaching methods, and the development of a Qur'an literacy (BTQ) module as local content for vocational school students. Student representatives from the second focus group discussion suggested that PAI learning incorporate more interactive discussion, religious-based social projects, and engaging learning media rather than relying primarily on lecture and memorization.

This study's findings can be systematically situated within prior research on the Among system and character education. Anshori and Ibrahim (2024) conceptually mapped the three Among principles onto Islamic educational values through library research alone; the present study extends this by empirically confirming that all three principles are concretely observable in classroom and religious practice at SMK Yanindo Jakarta, moving the relationship from a claimed theoretical parallel to a documented field reality. Noventari (2020) similarly relied on

library research to argue that the Among system's freedom-in-learning principle rests on guidance without coercion; this study's field evidence, particularly the persuasive, non-punitive mentoring given to students with weaker worship competence, corroborates this principle in a live religious-education setting rather than as a textual interpretation alone. Triyaswati (2024) identified, through literature review, a broader gap between Indonesian character education and the ethical-cultural values it aims to instill in the digital era; the present study's findings of a cognitive-weighted assessment structure and a measurable internalization gap (16–24.4% of surveyed students) provide concrete, site-specific evidence of the very gap Triyaswati described in general terms. Wiryanto (2021) linked Ki Hajar Dewantara's humanistic education to the national Merdeka Belajar curriculum broadly; this study narrows that connection to the spe

cific case of PAI curriculum integration, showing how the same humanistic aims translate into a subject-specific, religiously grounded context. Beyond the Indonesian literature, Osman (2024) cautioned that role-modelling programmes in Islamic educational contexts risk losing effectiveness when the role model is perceived as too distant or unattainable; the present study's finding that the PAI teacher was experienced as an approachable, dialogical pamong rather than an authoritarian figure offers a possible explanation for why exemplary modeling appeared effective at SMK Yanindo Jakarta, consistent with Osman's condition for successful role-modelling. Finally, Coman et al. (2024) found, in a comparative study of Romanian schools, that religious schooling does not automatically translate into internalized behavior; the internalization gap identified in the present study's survey data lends further, cross-context support to this pattern, while extending it to the setting of Islamic religious education in an Indonesian vocational school. Taken together, this comparison shows that the present study does not merely echo prior conceptual claims but supplies the field-based evidence that most of this literature has so far lacked, while also surfacing new, context-specific nuances, such as the perceived approachability of the teacher, that earlier studies did not directly address.

CONCLUSION

This study finds that the principles of Ki Hajar Dewantara's Among system, namely Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha, Ing Madya Mangun Karsa, and Tut Wuri Handayani, are concretely reflected in the practice of Islamic Religious Education at SMK Yanindo Jakarta. Field evidence shows the PAI teacher consistently modeling religious conduct during classroom instruction, the Friday morning gathering, and PHBI commemorations; classroom observation and focus group discussions confirming a dialogical rather than one-directional teaching approach; and students being entrusted with organizing responsibility during the Ramadan study camp as a form of guided independence. At the same time, the study identifies structural constraints that limit fuller integration, namely the restricted PAI teaching allocation of three sessions of forty-five minutes per week, an assessment structure still weighted toward cognitive mastery, and a gap between students' ritual competence and the internalization of religious values in daily behavior, as indicated by the preliminary survey of 120 students. These findings indicate that while conceptual and practical alignment between the Among system and PAI exists and is observable in practice, its integration into the formal curriculum structure remains partial, pointing to the need for the curricular and policy strategies discussed in the preceding section.

REFERENCES

Amaliyah, I. N. F., & Saepul Hamdani, A. (2026). Pembelajaran PAI Berbasis Masalah dengan Pendekatan Deep Learning untuk Melatihkan Metakognitif. *Jurnal Ilmiah Profesi Pendidikan*, *11*(1), 335–345. https://doi.org/10.29303/jipp.v11i1.4395

Anshori, L. F., & Ibrahim, R. (2024). *Sistem Among Ki Hajar Dewantara dan Relevansinya dengan Pendidikan Islam*. *07*(01), 7482–7493.

Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan dan Perbukuan, K. P. dan K. R. I. (2020). *Kajian pengembangan profil pelajar Pancasila edisi 1*. Pusat Kurikulum dan Perbukuan.

Baidowi, A. (2025). *Konsep Sekolah Rakyat dalam Perspektif Ki Hajar Dewantara*. 1–22.

Coman, C., Neagoe, A., Onaga, F. M., Bularca, M. C., Otovescu, D., Otovescu, M. C., Talpă, N., & Popa, B. (2024). How religion shapes the behavior of students: a comparative analysis between Romanian confessional and non-confessional schools. *Frontiers in Education*, *9*. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1358429

Darmawan, I. P. A., & Sujoko, E. (2019). Understanding Ki Hadjar Dewantara's educational philosophy. *International Journal of Humanities and Innovation (IJHI)*, *2*(3), 65–68. https://doi.org/10.33750/ijhi.v2i3.42

Darnanengsih, Alwi, Z., & Ilyas, A. (2025). *Sekolah untuk Semua: Implementasi Kasih Sayang Dalam Dunia Pendidikan Perspektif Hadis*. *3*, 53–64.

Direktorat Sejarah Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, D. J. K. (2017). *Indeks beranotasi karya Ki Hadjar Dewantara*.

Ermawati, & Bachtiar, H. H. S. (2024). Model Pengembangan Kurikulum Pendidikan Islam. *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*, *8*(2), 31789–31798.

Farabi, M. A. (2021). *Profil Insan Kamil dalam Perspektif Pendidikan Islam*. *2*(1), 1–15.

Ferary, D. (2021). On Ki Hadjar Dewantara's philosophy of education. *Nordic Journal of Comparative and International Education (NJCIE)*, *5*(2), 65–78. https://doi.org/10.7577/njcie.4156

Iddian, S. (2026). *Analisis Filosofis Tujuan Pendidikan Agama Islam: Perspektif Ulama*

Klasik dan Kontemporer. *11*, 158–173.
Indonesia, M. P. K. R. dan T. R. (2022). *Salinan Keputusan Menteri Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset dan Teknologi Republik Indonesia Nomor 56/M/2022 tentang Pedoman Penerapan Kurikulum dalam Rangka Pemulihan Pembelajaran*.
Islam, D. J. P. (2024). *Keputusan Direktur Jenderal Pendidikan Islam* (Vol. 2).
Keagaaman, T. P. A. dan P. (2007). *PP RI No 55 Thn 2007*.
Nahwiyah, S., Husti, I., & Nurhadi. (2025). *Metode Pembelajaran yang diterapkan Rasulullah dalam Mendidik Sahabatnya*. *3*(1), 296–307.
Noventari, W. (2020). Konsepsi merdeka belajar dalam sistem among menurut pandangan Ki Hajar Dewantara. *PKn Progresif: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Penelitian Kewarganegaraan*, *15*(1), 83–91. https://doi.org/10.20961/pknp.v15i1.44902
Nurhayati, Movitaria, M. A., Amnillah, M., Humaeroh, E., Anirah, A., Iskandar, B. A., Apriani, Y., Rifai, A., Asriandi, Anjarsari, E., Tahir, M., & Sumantri, B. (2022). *Pengembangan Kurikulum*. Hamjah Diha Foundation.
Oktana, A. D. (2025). *Pendidikan Khas Kejogjaan Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Siswa*. *20*(September), 142–153.
Osman, Y. (2024). Understanding how to develop an effective role-modelling character education programme in Saudi Arabia. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, *24*(2), 447–462. https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2024.2330363
Pratiwi, S. Z., Fakhruddin, A., & Sumarna, E. (2026). Kontribusi Pembelajaran PAI dalam Membangun Adab dan Budaya Belajar Siswa: Studi Fenomenologi. *Nuris Journal of Education and Islamic Studies*, *6*(1), 62–76. https://doi.org/10.52620/jeis.v6i1.250
Puspitasari, N., R, L. R., & Yusuf, R. (2022). Peran Pendidikan Agama Islam terhadap Pembentukan Karakter Religius Peserta Didik. *Intheos: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Theologi*, *2*(3), 72–76. https://doi.org/10.56393/intheos.v2i3.1226
Raihan. (2017). *Metodologi Penelitian* (Edisi Pert). Universitas Islam Jakarta.
Rofiah, H. A., & Muharom, F. (2025). Ki Hajar Dewantara Among System and Its Relevance to Islamic Education. *Al-Afkar, Journal For Islamic Studies*, *8*(1), 348–359. https://doi.org/10.31943/afkarjournal.v8i1.1019
Rosyada, D. (2020). *Penelitian Kualitatif untuk Ilmu Pendidikan*. Kencana Prenadamedia Group.
Ruth, B., Novia, R., & Surhayati, H. (2023). *Perspektif Semboyan Pendidikan Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha, Ing Madya Mangun Karsa, Tut Wuri Handayani*. *6*, 3673–3678.
Triyaswati, H. (2024). *Analisis Pendidikan Karakter Era Digital melalui Perspektif Filosofi Pendidikan Ki Hajar Dewantara di Indonesia*. *30*(Sdg 4), 49–55.
Triyono, G., & Mahdiana, D. (2024). *Metodologi Penelitian*. Deepublish Digital.
Wiryanto. (2021). *Analisis Pendidikan Humanistik Ki Hajar Dewantara dalam Konsep Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar*. *15*(1), 33–45.
Yaqin, M. A., & Nurfuadi. (2024). Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Agama Islam Melalui Budaya Harmonisasi di SMP Nurusshibyan Paguyangan. *Raudhah Jurnal Tarbiyah Islamiyah*, *9*.