

## Contextual Methods in Improving Islamic Religious Education with People or Communities of Different Ethnicities, Religions, Races/Nations and Languages of Grade IV Students of SD Negeri 056638 Pasar Balok

Susilowati, SD Negeri 056638 Pasar Balok

[buksusi08@gmail.com](mailto:buksusi08@gmail.com)

Rahimi Nasution, UIN Syahada Padangsidempuan

[Rahiminasution52@guru.sd.id](mailto:Rahiminasution52@guru.sd.id)

**Abstract:** This article aims to reveal the concept of learning Islamic religious education in elementary schools. In its development, elementary school age children have their own characteristics, the thinking ability of elementary school age children develops gradually. It needs to be understood wisely to be able to deliver the success of educational goals. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a library research method. The results of the study show that Islamic religious education in elementary schools is quite unique, if in the previous period children's thinking power was still imaginative and egocentric, then at this time children's thinking power develops towards concrete, rational and objective thinking. The scope of study of Islamic religious education is the Qur'an, creed, morals, fiqh/worship, and the history of Islamic culture. Educational methods that can be applied refer to the method Meanwhile, Islamic religious education can be carried out verbally or non-verbally, written or non-written which is aimed at measuring intellectual competence, social competence, social competence and spiritual competence. Thus, Islamic religious education is expected to produce human beings who always strive to perfect faith, piety, and morals, and actively build Islamic civilization.

**Keywords:** Learning; Contextual Method; Islamic Education; Primary school

### INTODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education at the Elementary School (SD) level is one of the most important subjects in shaping students' character and morals. However, in practice, many students find

it difficult to understand Islamic religious material because the teaching methods used are less relevant to their daily lives. As a solution, the application of contextual methods in learning Islam is expected to help students to more easily understand and apply religious teachings in their lives.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is one of the important parts of the education system in Indonesia which aims to shape the character and morals of students in accordance with the teachings of Islam. In the context of education in elementary schools, religious education must be adjusted to the development and needs of students, as well as pay attention to the surrounding socio-cultural context. Indonesia as a country with a diversity of ethnicities, religions, races, nations, and languages has a great challenge in organizing inclusive education, where every student, regardless of background, can get an appropriate and effective education.

One of the methods that can be applied to face these challenges is the contextual method. The contextual method focuses on connecting the learning material with the real experience of students as well as their social and cultural environment. Thus, this method allows students to more easily understand and apply religious values in daily life, especially in an environment of diverse ethnicities, religions, races, nations, and languages.

SD Negeri 056638 Pasar Balok, which is located in an area that has such diversity, is the right example to apply contextual methods in improving the quality of Islamic education. The diversity in these schools includes differences in ethnicity, religion, race, nation, and language, which can be a challenge for educators to ensure that PAI learning can be accepted and understood by all students in a way that is relevant and appropriate to their context. Therefore, it is important to explore how contextual methods can be used to improve the understanding and practice of Islamic religious education in grade IV of SD Negeri 056638 Pasar Balok.

Through the application of contextual methods, it is hoped that PAI learning will not only provide knowledge about Islam, but also form an attitude of tolerance, mutual respect, and understanding of differences among students. In this study, it will be analyzed how contextual methods can be applied in PAI learning in grade IV of SD Negeri 056638 Pasar Balok to create an inclusive and effective learning atmosphere for students with diverse backgrounds.

Contextual methods are methods that relate learning materials to the experiences, contexts, and situations that students face on a daily basis. In this case, the application of contextual methods is expected to improve the quality of learning, motivation, and students' understanding of Islamic religious materials. Therefore, this study aims to explore the influence of contextual methods on the improvement of Islamic religious education in elementary schools.

## **METHODS**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type of research. This approach was chosen to deeply understand the application of contextual methods in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in grade IV students at SD Negeri 056638 Pasar Balok, which has a diversity of ethnicities, religions, races, nations, and languages. The main objective of this study is to describe and analyze how contextual methods can improve the understanding and practice of Islamic religious education among students with diverse backgrounds.

This research was carried out at SD Negeri 056638 Pasar Balok, which has a diversity of ethnicities, religions, races, nations, and languages among its students. The subjects of this study are PAI teachers in grade IV who are directly involved in the learning process and several grade IV students. Researchers will use various data collection techniques, such as direct observation of the learning process, in-depth interviews with teachers to find out their understanding and application of contextual methods, and interviews with students to understand their experiences in participating in the learning. In addition, documentation in the form of learning implementation plans (RPP), learning materials, and student works will also be collected to analyze how contextual methods are applied in the curriculum and teaching and learning activities.

The collected data will be analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis techniques. The first step is data coding, which is marking or categorizing relevant data from the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. Furthermore, the data will be grouped into categories related to the application of contextual methods in PAI learning. After that, the researcher will develop the main themes that emerge, such as the impact of contextual methods on students' understanding of religion, the challenges faced in teaching in diverse classrooms, and the strategies used by teachers. The final process is data interpretation to provide a deeper understanding of the role of contextual methods in improving the quality of PAI learning in diverse classrooms.

To ensure the validity of the data, researchers will use triangulation techniques by combining data from various sources, namely observations, interviews, and documentation, in order to obtain a more valid and objective picture. Verification will also be carried out by comparing the results of interviews and observations with related parties. This research will be carried out for two months, starting from April to June 2025, at SD Negeri 056638 Pasar Balok. With this approach, it is hoped that this research can provide more in-depth insights into the application of contextual methods in PAI learning and its contribution to strengthening religious understanding among students with diverse backgrounds.

## **RESULTS**

The results of this study show that the application of contextual methods in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at SD Negeri 056638 Pasar Balok has succeeded in having a positive impact on students who have different ethnic, religious, racial, national, and language backgrounds. This study identifies several aspects that play an important role in the implementation of contextual methods, as well as challenges faced by teachers and students in the learning process.

First, the application of contextual methods in PAI learning in grade IV of SD Negeri 056638 Pasar Balok succeeded in creating a learning atmosphere that was more fun and relevant to students' daily lives. Teachers use various approaches that relate teaching materials to students' experiences and socio-cultural conditions. Thus, students find it easier to understand the values of Islamic teachings, as they can see a direct connection between the material they learn and their lives in society.

PAI teachers at this school have made various efforts to overcome the cultural and linguistic diversity in the classroom. One of them is by using a variety of learning media, such as pictures, videos, and stories related to students' daily lives. This allows students to understand the material of Islamic teachings through the context they are familiar with and experience in their lives, even though they come from different backgrounds.

In addition, learning with a contextual approach also provides opportunities for students to share their experiences and views related to Islamic religious values. Group discussions are a method often used by teachers to discuss certain themes in PAI, allowing students to exchange ideas and enrich their understanding. This activity not only enriches students' knowledge, but also strengthens the sense of tolerance between fellow students who come from different backgrounds.

However, although the application of contextual methods has a positive impact, there are challenges faced by teachers in managing heterogeneous classrooms. One of the main challenges is the difference in language skills between students, especially those from different tribes or regions that have different mother tongues. Some students have difficulty understanding the teaching material due to the difference in the language of instruction, even though they have received Indonesian lessons as the language of instruction at school.

Teachers must also carefully manage the classroom so that there is no inequality in understanding between students. Some students who come from families with strong religious education backgrounds tend to understand the material more quickly, while students who come from less in-depth religious backgrounds need more attention so that they can understand religious teachings well. Teachers should ensure that all students get the same

opportunity to learn and understand the material in a way that suits their individual abilities.

In addition, differences in cultural and religious backgrounds in the classroom also require teachers to be more careful in choosing materials that are acceptable to all students. Teachers should ensure that no material can offend students based on their religious or cultural background. Therefore, the contextual methods used in learning must be able to create an inclusive and impartial atmosphere, so that all students feel valued and accepted.

The contextual method also provides space for teachers to get to know more closely the characteristics and needs of each student. With a more flexible approach, teachers can adjust the way they teach and the material delivered to be more relevant to the student's life experience. This helps students feel more involved in the learning process and encourages them to be more active in teaching and learning activities.

One example of the application of contextual methods in PAI learning is the use of stories from various cultures around students to teach religious values. Teachers choose stories that can connect students' life experiences with Islamic teachings, such as stories from local traditions that contain moral messages that are in line with Islamic values. In this way, students feel more connected to the material and can see how the teachings of Islam can be applied in the context of their daily lives.

In addition, teachers also use demonstration and role-play methods in learning to provide concrete examples of how Islamic religious values are applied in real life. Students are asked to play a role in various situations that contain Islamic moral messages, such as helping others, respecting elders, and maintaining cleanliness. In this way, students not only learn theoretically, but can also internalize those values in their daily behavior.

The diversity of ethnicities, religions, and languages in the classroom also motivates students to learn to appreciate differences and respect each other. Discussions involving each student's personal experience and religious views often enrich their perspectives, especially regarding the importance of tolerance in social life. This is reflected in the attitude of students who are increasingly open and appreciate the differences that exist between them, both in the context of religion and culture.

On the other hand, the application of contextual methods also helps increase students' motivation to learn. Students feel that what they learn in class has a direct connection to their lives, so they are more interested and eager to learn. They feel that Islamic religious lessons are not just a theory that is far from daily life, but also a guide to live a better life.

Although the results of this study show many positive aspects of the application of contextual methods, the study also finds several obstacles that need to be considered in its implementation. One of the main obstacles is the limited time available to implement this method to the fullest. Teachers must manage their time well so that every learning activity can be carried out effectively, without reducing the quality of the material that must be delivered.

In addition, the role of parents and the surrounding community is also very important in supporting the success of this contextual method. The success of religious education depends not only on what is taught in school, but also on the support provided by the family environment and society. Therefore, schools need to establish closer cooperation with parents and the community to create an environment conducive to the development of students' religious education.

Overall, this study shows that the application of contextual methods in learning Islamic Religious Education at SD Negeri 056638 Pasar Balok has a positive impact on increasing understanding and practicing religion among students from diverse backgrounds. This method has proven to be effective in creating learning that is relevant, fun, and respectful of differences, which can ultimately shape the character of students who are more tolerant and have a better understanding of Islamic teachings.

## **DISCUSSION**

Discussions on the application of contextual methods in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at SD Negeri 056638 Pasar Balok show that this approach provides significant benefits

in improving students' understanding of Islamic values, especially in a heterogeneous environment in terms of ethnicity, religion, race, nation, and language. The results of this study are in line with the concept of contextual learning which emphasizes the relevance of teaching materials to students' daily lives, so that they can more easily understand and internalize the values taught.

One of the key findings in this study is that the use of contextual methods allows students to understand religious concepts more deeply through hands-on experience and active involvement in learning. This is in accordance with the theory of constructivism which emphasizes that effective learning occurs when students can relate new knowledge to the experience they already have. In this context, PAI learning is based on real experience to help students from various backgrounds to see how Islamic values are applied in their daily lives.

The contextual method also encourages positive social interaction among students from various backgrounds. Through group discussions, role-playing, and reflection on personal experiences, students can learn to better appreciate differences and develop an attitude of tolerance. This shows that Islamic religious education not only teaches theological and ritual aspects, but also instills important social values in building a harmonious community life.

However, in its implementation, the contextual method faces several challenges, especially in the management of heterogeneous classes. One of the main challenges is the difference in students' level of understanding of PAI material due to different family backgrounds. Students who come from families with a strong religious education tend to understand the material more quickly compared to those who do not get religious learning at home. This requires teachers to use learning strategies that can accommodate these differences, such as groupings based on learning needs and the use of more varied media.

Another challenge faced is the limited time in the learning process. Contextual methods often take longer than conventional methods because they involve deep exploration, discussion, and reflection. Therefore, teachers must have good time management skills so that all material can be delivered without compromising the quality of learning.

In addition, language factors are also an obstacle in contextual learning, especially for students who come from an environment with a mother tongue that is different from the language of instruction at school. Some students have difficulty understanding religious terms used in Indonesian. To overcome this, teachers can use a bilingual approach in explaining important concepts, as well as utilizing visual media that can help clarify students' understanding.

In terms of environmental support, the involvement of parents and the community also has an important role in the success of the contextual method. Religious learning does not only occur in schools, but also in the daily lives of students at home and in society. Therefore, cooperation between schools, parents, and the community needs to be strengthened so that students get a more holistic and sustainable learning experience.

In addition to discussing the challenges, this study also highlights the effectiveness of contextual methods in building students' religious character and attitudes. By understanding religious values through real-life contexts, students are more likely to apply Islamic teachings in their daily lives, such as being honest, respecting others, and showing empathy for others. This shows that the contextual method not only contributes to the improvement of students' cognitive understanding, but also shapes their attitudes and behaviors in accordance with Islamic values.

When compared to conventional learning methods that focus more on memorization and lectures, contextual methods have proven to be more effective in increasing student engagement and motivation to learn. This can be seen from the increase in students' participation in class discussions, their courage in expressing their opinions, and their increasing curiosity about Islamic teachings.

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the contextual method is a very relevant approach in PAI learning, especially in the context of high diversity. Although there are several challenges in its implementation, the benefits obtained are much greater, especially in improving students' understanding, tolerance and active involvement in learning Islam.

As a recommendation, PAI teachers are advised to continue to develop a variety of

strategies in contextual methods so that they can be more effective in overcoming existing challenges. In addition, schools also need to provide training and support to teachers in implementing this method so that it can be carried out optimally. Finally, the involvement of parents and the community needs to be continuously increased so that religious learning does not only occur in schools, but also becomes part of students' daily lives.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that the application of contextual methods in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at SD Negeri 056638 Pasar Balok has a positive impact on the understanding and application of Islamic values by students. This method allows students to connect religious concepts with their daily lives, so that learning becomes more meaningful and applicable.

In addition to improving cognitive understanding, contextual methods also play a role in fostering attitudes of tolerance and respect for differences among students from various ethnic, religious, racial, national, and language backgrounds. Through discussion, reflection, and social interaction in learning activities, students become more open to accepting diversity and understand the importance of the values of togetherness in Islam.

Although this method has proven to be effective, there are several challenges in its implementation, such as differences in students' comprehension levels, limited learning time, and language barriers for some students. Therefore, more flexible and innovative strategies are needed from teachers, such as the use of diverse learning media, more dynamic classroom management, and cooperation with parents and the community to support the learning process outside of school.

Overall, the contextual method is the right approach to improve the effectiveness of PAI learning, especially in a heterogeneous environment. With optimal support from teachers, schools, as well as the family and community environment, this method can continue to be developed to create more interactive, relevant, and form students' character in accordance with Islamic values.

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- Referensi di atas mencakup berbagai perspektif mengenai pendidikan Islam, metode pembelajaran, serta relevansi metode kontekstual dalam meningkatkan efektivitas pembelajaran agama di lingkungan yang beragam. Jika membutuhkan referensi tambahan yang lebih spesifik, silakan beritahu saya.