

Islamic Religious Education Within The Framework Of Nationhood And Educational Policy

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Abstract

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) plays a significant role in shaping moral values, national identity, and civic responsibility in Indonesia's diverse society. This study examines the function of IRE within the context of nationalism and educational policy, focusing on its integration into the national education system and its contribution to character development. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, the research relies on document analysis of primary sources such as government regulations, curriculum frameworks, and official educational policy documents, as well as secondary sources including books, academic journals, and scholarly articles related to Islamic education and nation-building. The data are analyzed thematically to identify how Islamic educational principles align with national objectives, promote social cohesion, and address challenges in policy implementation. The findings reveal that IRE not only fosters religious and moral values but also reinforces a sense of national unity and civic awareness, bridging spiritual development with citizenship education. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of educational policies in supporting the effective implementation of IRE, emphasizing the need for curricula that harmonize religious teachings with national ideals. This research contributes to the theoretical understanding of religion and education while providing practical insights for policymakers and educators aiming to strengthen national identity through Islamic education.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education, Nationalism, Educational Policy



INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI) holds a strategic position within Indonesia's national education system as a primary instrument for shaping character, religious identity, and national awareness (Hooglund 2013). In the context of Indonesia as a nation founded upon Pancasila and characterized by cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity, PAI functions not only as a means of transmitting religious values but also as a medium for social integration and the strengthening of national cohesion. This aligns with the view that religious education serves a social function in fostering harmony and stability within a multicultural society.

Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System explicitly affirms that the goal of national education is to develop learners' potential so that they become individuals who are faithful, pious, and possess noble character. This indicates that the religious dimension is an integral part of the holistic development of Indonesian citizens. In this context, PAI carries both epistemological and axiological mandates not only to shape individuals who are observant in ritual practices but also to cultivate strong national awareness (Spring 2012). This perspective is reinforced by Muhaimin, who emphasizes that religious education should function as a means of forming a complete personality while also serving as a vehicle for the internalization of social and national values.

However, globalization, technological advancement, and socio political dynamics present new challenges for PAI. On the one hand, there is a growing tendency toward religious conservatism; on the other hand, the demands of modernity call for the integration of Islamic values with national principles. This phenomenon indicates that religious education operates within a dialectical space between tradition and modernity, requiring adaptive and contextual approaches (Edres 2021).

From a philosophical perspective, Islamic education is oriented toward the formation of *insan kamil* (the complete human being), characterized by a balance between spiritual, intellectual, and social dimensions. This concept underscores that education functions not merely as the transfer of knowledge but also as a transformation of values aimed at character and civilizational development. Therefore, PAI bears a broader responsibility in shaping individuals who are not only religious but also committed to national values (Setiawan 2026).

Furthermore, within the framework of national education, PAI must be understood as part of an educational system oriented toward the development of 21st century competencies. Tilaar asserts that modern education must integrate cultural, religious, and scientific values into a unified whole. Accordingly, PAI should not be exclusive but must remain open to the advancement



of science and technology (Nasrul et al. 2025).

In addition, character-based education has become increasingly important in addressing moral and social crises within society. Lickona argues that character education is a systematic process of helping learners understand, feel, and practice ethical values. In this regard, PAI contributes significantly to building a nation characterized by integrity and noble character (Anjani, Pramatty, and Sukmawati 2025).

In the context of educational policy, the dynamics of PAI in Indonesia demonstrate the need for policy reforms that are more adaptive and responsive to global changes. This aligns with the view that educational policy must be capable of addressing contemporary challenges without losing the fundamental values that define national identity (Ubaidah et al. 2025).

In conclusion, Islamic Religious Education occupies a strategic position while simultaneously facing complex challenges within the context of nationhood and educational policy. Therefore, comprehensive studies are required to analyze how PAI can function optimally in strengthening national identity through adaptive educational policies, as well as how its reconstruction can address global challenges without compromising its fundamental values (Halimah and Fitriani 2025).

OVERVIEW OF CONNECTIVISM

Connectivism, as a contemporary learning theory developed by George Siemens and Stephen Downes, offers a relevant and adaptive framework for understanding Islamic Religious Education (IRE) within the broader context of nationhood and educational policy. In an era characterized by rapid technological advancement, globalization, and the expansion of digital knowledge networks, connectivism shifts the focus of learning from individual cognition to the ability to build, navigate, and sustain networks of information, values, and social relationships (Ulya and Abidin 2023). This perspective is particularly significant for IRE, which not only aims to transmit religious knowledge but also to shape ethical character, social responsibility, and national identity.

Within the framework of nationhood, IRE plays a strategic role in fostering unity, tolerance, and civic awareness in a pluralistic society. Connectivism supports this role by emphasizing interconnectedness both intellectually and socially (Budianti and Lubis 2022). Learning is seen as a process of linking diverse sources of knowledge, including religious texts, cultural traditions, civic values, and contemporary global perspectives. Through this networked approach, learners are encouraged to understand Islam not as an isolated body of knowledge, but as a dynamic system



that interacts with national values, public life, and global realities. This aligns with the goal of developing individuals who are not only religiously literate but also socially and nationally conscious (Arifin 2025).

From the perspective of educational policy, connectivism provides a foundation for designing more flexible, inclusive, and technology-integrated learning systems. Policies that support digital literacy, open access to information, and collaborative learning environments are essential in implementing a connectivist approach (Nuha and Barkah 2025). In the context of IRE, this means incorporating digital platforms, online learning communities, and interactive media to facilitate the exchange of ideas and the co-construction of knowledge. Such an approach allows learners to engage with diverse interpretations of Islamic teachings, while also critically evaluating information within the framework of national values and educational standards (Mut'mainna 2025).

Moreover, connectivism highlights the importance of critical thinking and decision-making in the learning process. As learners are exposed to vast and often conflicting sources of information especially in religious and ideological domains they must develop the ability to assess credibility, relevance, and ethical implications. In IRE, this competence is crucial for preventing misinterpretation, radicalization, and intolerance. Instead, learners are guided to develop a balanced understanding of Islam that is compatible with the principles of nationhood, such as unity, diversity, and social harmony (Saleh and Arbain 2023).

The role of educators in a connectivist framework also undergoes transformation. Teachers of Islamic Religious Education are no longer seen merely as transmitters of knowledge, but as facilitators who guide students in building meaningful learning networks. They help learners connect religious teachings with real-life contexts, national issues, and global challenges. This pedagogical shift supports lifelong learning and encourages students to remain engaged with both their religious identity and their responsibilities as citizens (Saleh and Arbain 2023).

In conclusion, connectivism offers a powerful and relevant lens for understanding and developing Islamic Religious Education within the framework of nationhood and educational policy. By emphasizing networks, digital engagement, and continuous learning, it enables IRE to respond effectively to contemporary challenges while maintaining its core mission of fostering faith, character, and national commitment (Erliana and Aripin 2026). As such, the integration of connectivist principles into educational policy and practice can significantly enhance the relevance and impact of Islamic Religious Education in the modern era.



SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

Social Learning Theory, pioneered by Albert Bandura, provides a compelling framework for understanding how Islamic Religious Education (IRE) can effectively contribute to the development of individuals within the context of nationhood and educational policy (Safitri 2025). At its core, this theory posits that learning occurs through observation, imitation, and modeling within a social environment. Individuals acquire knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors not only through direct instruction but also by observing others particularly role models such as teachers, parents, peers, and public figures.

In the context of IRE, Social Learning Theory highlights the importance of exemplary behavior (*uswah hasanah*) in the teaching and internalization of Islamic values. Educators are not merely conveyors of religious knowledge; they are living models whose actions significantly influence students' moral and spiritual development (Meilinda et al. 2025). When teachers demonstrate integrity, tolerance, discipline, and civic responsibility, students are more likely to internalize these values and reproduce them in their own lives. This aligns closely with the broader goals of IRE, which extend beyond cognitive understanding to include the formation of character and ethical conduct (Wassalwa, Surur, and ... 2025).

Within the framework of nationhood, Social Learning Theory underscores the role of social interaction in shaping national identity and cohesion. Indonesia, as a pluralistic society, requires citizens who can navigate diversity while maintaining a shared sense of belonging. Through observation and interaction, students learn how to practice religious values in ways that promote social harmony, respect for differences, and commitment to national principles. For example, when inclusive attitudes and interfaith respect are consistently modeled in educational settings, learners are more likely to adopt these behaviors as part of their identity as both Muslims and citizens (Septia, Bedi, and Fitri 2024).

From the perspective of educational policy, Social Learning Theory supports the integration of character education and value-based learning into the curriculum. Policies that encourage collaborative learning, community engagement, and participatory activities create environments where social learning can thrive. In IRE, this may involve group discussions, community service programs, and real life simulations that allow students to observe and practice ethical behavior in social contexts. Such approaches ensure that religious education is not limited to theoretical instruction but becomes a lived experience (Wiranata et al. 2025).

Furthermore, Social Learning Theory emphasizes the concept of reciprocal determinism, where behavior, personal factors, and environmental influences interact dynamically. In IRE, this



means that students' religious understanding and national awareness are shaped not only by formal instruction but also by their social environment, including family, media, and peer groups. Therefore, effective educational policy must consider these broader influences and create supportive ecosystems that reinforce positive values both inside and outside the classroom (Ramdhan 2025).

Another key concept in Social Learning Theory is self efficacy the belief in one's ability to perform certain behaviors successfully. In the context of IRE, fostering students' self-efficacy is essential for encouraging them to practice religious teachings and contribute positively to society. When students feel confident in their ability to act ethically, engage in civic life, and uphold national values, they are more likely to become active and responsible citizens (Wikowati, Effendy, and ... 2025).

In conclusion, Social Learning Theory offers a robust and practical framework for enhancing Islamic Religious Education within the context of nationhood and educational policy. By emphasizing the role of modeling, social interaction, and environmental influence, it provides valuable insights into how religious and national values can be effectively internalized (Shalehah, Ihsan, and ... 2025). Integrating these principles into educational practice and policy can strengthen the capacity of IRE to produce individuals who are not only knowledgeable in their faith but also committed to the well-being and unity of their nation.

THEORETICAL INSIGHT

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) occupies a significant and strategic position at the intersection of religious formation, civic identity, and public policy. From a theoretical perspective, IRE can be understood as a multidimensional construct that integrates theological, pedagogical, sociological, and political dimensions. Its primary objective is not only the transmission of Islamic knowledge but also the cultivation of individuals who embody moral integrity, social responsibility, and a strong sense of national belonging (Sen 2022). Within the framework of nationhood and educational policy, IRE operates as both a cultural institution and a transformative process that contributes to the development of a cohesive and ethically grounded society.

From a philosophical standpoint, IRE is rooted in the concept of holistic human development, often articulated in Islamic thought as the formation of *insan kamil* (the complete human being). This concept emphasizes the integration of spiritual, intellectual, and social dimensions of human life (Gozali and Ibrahim 2022). Education, therefore, is not merely an instrument for cognitive development but a process of value transformation that shapes character



and worldview. In the context of nationhood, this holistic approach aligns with the need to produce citizens who are not only devout in their religious practices but also committed to the principles of unity, justice, and social harmony (Silaban, Ahmad, and ... 2025).

Sociologically, IRE functions as a mechanism for socialization and value internalization. It plays a critical role in transmitting shared norms, beliefs, and cultural practices that sustain collective identity. In pluralistic societies, this function becomes even more crucial, as education must balance the affirmation of religious identity with the promotion of tolerance and coexistence. IRE, therefore, must be framed within an inclusive paradigm that encourages dialogue, mutual respect, and an appreciation of diversity (Sen 2017). This aligns with broader theories of social integration, which view education as a key instrument in maintaining social cohesion and preventing fragmentation.

From a pedagogical perspective, contemporary theories such as constructivism, social learning, and connectivism provide valuable insights into how IRE can be effectively delivered. These approaches emphasize active learning, collaboration, and the role of social and digital environments in shaping knowledge (Jaffe-Walter 2016). Learners are seen as active agents who construct meaning through interaction with others and engagement with diverse sources of information. In this regard, IRE must move beyond traditional didactic methods and adopt more participatory and context-sensitive approaches that reflect the realities of modern learners.

In terms of educational policy, IRE is embedded within a broader regulatory and institutional framework that shapes its objectives, content, and implementation. Educational policies serve as instruments for aligning religious education with national goals, including the promotion of civic values, social stability, and economic development (Sahin 2018). A key theoretical consideration here is the balance between standardization and contextualization. While national policies provide a unified direction, they must also allow for flexibility to accommodate local cultural and social contexts. This ensures that IRE remains relevant and responsive to the needs of diverse communities.

Furthermore, the influence of globalization and technological advancement introduces new dimensions to the theoretical understanding of IRE (Husaeni 2023). The rapid flow of information and the rise of digital platforms have transformed the way knowledge is accessed and disseminated. This creates both opportunities and challenges, as learners are exposed to a wide range of interpretations and perspectives. Consequently, IRE must incorporate critical thinking, digital literacy, and ethical reasoning as core components of its curriculum. These competencies are essential for enabling learners to navigate complex information landscapes while maintaining



a grounded and balanced understanding of their religious and national identity (Coulson 2004). In conclusion, the theoretical insight into Islamic Religious Education within the framework of nationhood and educational policy reveals its complex and dynamic nature. It is not merely a subject within the curriculum but a foundational element in the formation of individuals and societies. By integrating philosophical, sociological, pedagogical, and policy-oriented perspectives, IRE can serve as a powerful instrument for fostering religious commitment, civic responsibility, and national cohesion (Kaya 2016). Its continued development requires a nuanced and adaptive approach that responds to changing societal conditions while preserving its core values and objectives.

CULTURAL EVOLUTION AND PRIMARY EDUCATION

Cultural evolution and primary education are closely intertwined in shaping the direction and substance of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) within the broader framework of nationhood and educational policy. Cultural evolution refers to the dynamic process through which values, beliefs, norms, and practices are transmitted, adapted, and transformed across generations. In this context, primary education serves as a foundational stage where cultural and religious values are first systematically introduced and internalized (Putra, Saparudin, and Habiburrahman 2024). As such, IRE at the primary level plays a crucial role in ensuring the continuity of Islamic teachings while simultaneously adapting them to the evolving socio-cultural realities of a nation.

Within the framework of nationhood, primary education functions as a strategic platform for cultivating a shared identity among young learners. In pluralistic societies, where diversity in religion, ethnicity, and culture is a defining characteristic, IRE must contribute not only to the formation of religious identity but also to the development of inclusive national consciousness (Zainuddin and Habiburrahman 2024). Cultural evolution, in this sense, requires a balance between preservation and transformation. While core Islamic values such as faith, morality, and compassion remain constant, their expression and application must be contextualized to align with national ideals such as unity, tolerance, and social harmony.

At the primary education level, learners are in a critical phase of cognitive, emotional, and moral development. Theoretical perspectives in developmental psychology suggest that children at this stage learn best through concrete experiences, imitation, and meaningful interaction with their environment. Therefore, IRE must adopt pedagogical approaches that are age-appropriate, engaging, and contextually relevant. Storytelling, role-playing, and experiential learning become effective tools for conveying religious and cultural values in ways that are accessible and impactful



(Habiburrahman, Suriyandi, and Husaini 2025). Through these methods, students begin to understand not only religious doctrines but also their practical implications in everyday life.

Cultural evolution also influences the content and delivery of IRE in primary education. As societies become increasingly interconnected through globalization and digital technology, children are exposed to diverse cultural and ideological influences at an early age (Razzak et al. 2024). This reality necessitates a curriculum that is both rooted in authentic Islamic teachings and open to intercultural dialogue. Educational policy plays a vital role in guiding this balance by establishing standards that ensure the integrity of religious education while promoting adaptability and inclusivity. In this regard, IRE should encourage critical awareness, empathy, and respect for diversity as integral components of religious understanding (Supiarmono et al. 2025).

Furthermore, the role of teachers and educational institutions is central in mediating cultural evolution within primary education. Teachers act as cultural transmitters and interpreters who bridge traditional values with contemporary contexts. Their ability to model ethical behavior, foster inclusive attitudes, and create supportive learning environments significantly influences how students perceive and internalize both religious and national values. Consequently, educational policy must prioritize teacher training and professional development to equip educators with the competencies required to navigate cultural complexities (Efendi and Lien 2021).

Another important aspect of cultural evolution in primary education is the involvement of family and community. Learning does not occur in isolation within the classroom; it is reinforced through social interactions in the home and community. A collaborative approach that integrates school, family, and community values can strengthen the effectiveness of IRE in shaping well-rounded individuals (Hanif, Syarifudin, and ... 2025). This synergy ensures that the values taught in schools are consistently practiced and reinforced in everyday life, contributing to the development of a cohesive cultural and national identity.

In conclusion, cultural evolution and primary education are fundamental to understanding the role of Islamic Religious Education within the framework of nationhood and educational policy (Istiyani and Wibowo 2020). IRE at the primary level serves as a critical foundation for instilling religious values, shaping character, and fostering a sense of belonging within a diverse society. By balancing the preservation of core Islamic teachings with responsiveness to cultural change, and by aligning pedagogical practices with developmental needs, IRE can effectively contribute to the formation of individuals who are both religiously grounded and socially responsible. This dynamic integration ultimately supports the broader goals of national unity, cultural continuity, and



educational development in an ever-changing world (Hefner 2007).

HIGHER EDUCATION SHIFT

The transformation of higher education in the 21st century has significantly influenced the orientation, content, and delivery of Islamic Religious Education (IRE). This shift is characterized by the integration of digital technologies, the globalization of knowledge, interdisciplinary approaches, and an increased emphasis on critical thinking and innovation (Gelovani 2011). Within the framework of nationhood and educational policy, these developments require IRE to evolve from a traditionally normative and text-centered discipline into a dynamic field that engages with contemporary societal challenges while maintaining its foundational values (Milligan 2020).

One of the most notable aspects of the higher education shift is the transition from knowledge transmission to knowledge construction and application. Universities are no longer seen merely as institutions for disseminating established knowledge but as spaces for inquiry, dialogue, and the production of new insights. In this context, IRE must encourage students to critically engage with Islamic sources, interpret them in light of current realities, and apply their understanding to issues such as social justice, pluralism, environmental sustainability, and national development. This approach aligns with the broader goal of higher education to produce graduates who are not only knowledgeable but also capable of contributing meaningfully to society (Bilal 2025).

Globalization has also played a crucial role in reshaping higher education. The increased flow of ideas, cultures, and academic perspectives across borders has created opportunities for intellectual exchange as well as challenges related to identity and value preservation. For IRE, this means navigating a complex landscape where diverse interpretations of Islam coexist. Within the framework of nationhood, higher education institutions must ensure that students develop a balanced perspective one that is rooted in authentic Islamic teachings while also being open to global discourses (Saleem 2017). Educational policy, therefore, must support curricula that integrate local wisdom with global knowledge, fostering a sense of national identity alongside global citizenship.

Another important dimension of the higher education shift is the growing emphasis on digitalization and technological integration. The use of online learning platforms, digital libraries, and virtual collaboration tools has transformed how students access and engage with knowledge. In IRE, this opens new possibilities for interactive learning, cross-cultural dialogue, and access to



a wide range of scholarly resources (Bakar, Firmansyah, and ... 2024). However, it also requires the development of digital literacy and ethical awareness to ensure that information is used responsibly. Educational policies must address these needs by promoting the effective and ethical use of technology in religious education.

Interdisciplinarity is also a defining feature of contemporary higher education. Complex global issues often require insights from multiple fields of study, and IRE is no exception. Integrating perspectives from sociology, political science, education, and cultural studies can enrich the understanding of Islamic teachings and their relevance to modern life (Vafa 1957). This interdisciplinary approach enables students to see the connections between religion and broader societal dynamics, reinforcing the role of IRE in supporting national cohesion and policy development (Ozgen and Hassan 2021).

Furthermore, the higher education shift places greater emphasis on learner autonomy and lifelong learning. Students are encouraged to take an active role in their educational journey, developing the skills needed to adapt to changing circumstances. In the context of IRE, this means fostering independent thinking, reflective practice, and a commitment to continuous learning. These competencies are essential for navigating the complexities of modern life while maintaining a strong moral and spiritual foundation (Jamilah 2021).

From a policy perspective, the transformation of higher education necessitates reforms that are both adaptive and forward-looking. Educational policies must provide a framework that supports innovation while preserving the core values of religious education. This includes curriculum development, quality assurance, faculty training, and the integration of technology (Satibi et al. 2022). At the same time, policies must ensure that IRE continues to contribute to the broader goals of nationhood, including social cohesion, ethical governance, and cultural continuity.

In conclusion, the shift in higher education presents both opportunities and challenges for Islamic Religious Education within the framework of nationhood and educational policy. By embracing innovation, fostering critical and interdisciplinary thinking, and integrating technological advancements, IRE can remain relevant in a rapidly changing world. At the same time, it must uphold its foundational mission of nurturing faith, character, and social responsibility (Hans 1958). Through a balanced and adaptive approach, IRE in higher education can play a vital role in shaping individuals who are intellectually, ethically grounded, and committed to the well-being of their nation.

SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY - ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVE

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Social Learning Theory, systematically developed by Albert Bandura, offers a robust analytical lens for examining how Islamic Religious Education (IRE) operates within the intersecting domains of nationhood and educational policy. From an academic standpoint, this theory posits that learning is a socially mediated process in which individuals acquire knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors through observation, imitation, and interaction within specific environmental contexts (Zia 2017). Central to this framework are the concepts of observational learning, modeling, reciprocal determinism, and self-efficacy, all of which provide critical insights into how religious and civic values are internalized in formal educational settings.

In the context of IRE, Social Learning Theory underscores the significance of modeling as a primary mechanism of value transmission. Teachers, institutional leaders, and even peers function as influential models whose behaviors embody both religious principles and national ideals. The integration of these dual value systems Islamic ethics and civic responsibility requires consistency between what is taught and what is demonstrated (Pohl 2011). From an academic perspective, this reflects the alignment between the cognitive domain (knowledge acquisition), the affective domain (value internalization), and the behavioral domain (practice), thereby reinforcing the holistic objectives of religious education.

Furthermore, the principle of reciprocal determinism—where personal factors, behavior, and environmental influences interact dynamically—provides a nuanced understanding of how IRE contributes to nation-building. Students' religious understanding and national consciousness are not shaped solely by curriculum content but are influenced by broader socio-cultural and political environments (Thachil 2009). Educational institutions, therefore, serve as microcosms of society where national values such as pluralism, tolerance, and unity are enacted and observed. In this regard, educational policy plays a pivotal role in structuring environments that promote positive social interactions and discourage exclusivist or intolerant tendencies.

From a policy-oriented academic perspective, Social Learning Theory supports the integration of character education into the national curriculum. Policies that emphasize collaborative learning, participatory engagement, and community-based activities create fertile ground for social learning processes. In IRE, this translates into pedagogical strategies such as group discussions, peer mentoring, service learning, and experiential activities that allow students to observe and practice ethical behavior in real-life contexts (Joseph 2017). Such approaches move beyond rote memorization and encourage the application of religious teachings in ways that support social cohesion and national stability.

Another critical dimension is the concept of self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's



belief in their capacity to perform actions that achieve desired outcomes. In the framework of IRE, fostering self-efficacy is essential for empowering students to practice Islamic values while actively participating in civic life. When learners develop confidence in their ability to contribute positively to society, they are more likely to engage in behaviors that reflect both religious commitment and national responsibility (Kosim 2020). This aligns with broader educational goals of producing autonomous, ethical, and socially engaged citizens.

Additionally, Social Learning Theory provides a foundation for addressing contemporary challenges such as radicalization, misinformation, and social fragmentation. In an era marked by the proliferation of digital media, students are exposed to a wide range of influences beyond the classroom. An academic application of this theory suggests that positive modeling, critical media literacy, and supportive learning environments are essential for guiding students toward balanced and constructive interpretations of religious teachings. Educational policies must therefore incorporate safeguards and frameworks that promote responsible engagement with information and encourage dialogue across differences (Leirvik* 2004).

In conclusion, Social Learning Theory offers a comprehensive academic framework for understanding the role of Islamic Religious Education within the context of nationhood and educational policy. By emphasizing the interplay between individual cognition, social interaction, and environmental factors, it provides valuable insights into how religious and national values are learned, practiced, and sustained (Husna and Thohir 2020). The integration of this theoretical perspective into educational practice and policy can enhance the effectiveness of IRE in fostering individuals who are not only knowledgeable in their faith but also committed to the principles of unity, tolerance, and civic responsibility in a diverse society.

CONNECTIVISM'S IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Connectivism, as articulated by George Siemens and Stephen Downes, provides a compelling framework for rethinking teaching and learning in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) within the broader context of nationhood and educational policy. Grounded in the realities of the digital age, connectivism posits that knowledge is distributed across networks of people, technologies, and information systems, and that learning consists of the ability to navigate, construct, and sustain these networks (Langohr 2000). This perspective has significant implications for how IRE is designed, delivered, and experienced in contemporary educational settings.

One of the primary implications of connectivism is the shift from teacher-centered to



learner-centered pedagogy. In traditional models, educators are seen as the primary source of authoritative knowledge, particularly in religious education. However, within a connectivist framework, teachers assume the role of facilitators who guide learners in accessing diverse sources of information, including classical Islamic texts, contemporary scholarship, digital platforms, and global discussions (Kaplan 2005). This transformation encourages students to actively engage with knowledge, fostering autonomy, inquiry, and critical reflection. In the context of nationhood, such an approach enables learners to explore the relationship between Islamic teachings and civic values in a more dynamic and meaningful way.

Another important implication is the integration of digital technologies into the teaching and learning process. Online platforms, virtual classrooms, social media, and digital libraries expand the boundaries of the classroom and create opportunities for collaborative learning across geographical and cultural contexts. For IRE, this means that students can engage with a wide range of perspectives, enhancing their understanding of Islam as a global and diverse tradition (Rahman 2022). At the same time, educational policy must ensure that the use of technology is guided by ethical principles and aligned with national values, promoting responsible digital citizenship and preventing the spread of misinformation or extremist ideologies.

Connectivism also emphasizes the importance of developing key competencies such as digital literacy, critical thinking, and the ability to evaluate information. In a networked learning environment, students are constantly exposed to vast amounts of data, including differing interpretations of religious teachings (Rahman 2022). Therefore, IRE must equip learners with the skills to assess the credibility, relevance, and context of information sources. This is particularly important in maintaining a balanced understanding of Islam that supports social harmony and national cohesion. Educational policies should, therefore, incorporate these competencies as core learning outcomes.

Furthermore, connectivism highlights the significance of learning as a continuous and lifelong process. Knowledge is not static; it evolves in response to new information and changing contexts. In IRE, this perspective encourages learners to remain engaged with their religious and civic responsibilities beyond formal education (Sirozi* 2004). By fostering a mindset of continuous learning, IRE contributes to the development of individuals who can adapt to societal changes while maintaining a strong ethical and spiritual foundation.

From a pedagogical standpoint, connectivism supports collaborative and network-based learning strategies. Group discussions, online forums, peer-to-peer interaction, and community-based projects allow students to co-construct knowledge and share insights. These practices not



only enhance understanding but also promote values such as cooperation, mutual respect, and social responsibility key components of both Islamic ethics and national identity (Frimayanti 2026). In this way, the learning process itself becomes a reflection of the values it seeks to instill.

Finally, the implications of connectivism extend to educational policy, which must evolve to support innovative and flexible learning environments. Policies should encourage the integration of technology, support professional development for educators, and ensure equitable access to digital resources. At the same time, they must safeguard the integrity of Islamic teachings and align educational practices with the broader goals of nationhood, including unity, inclusivity, and cultural continuity (Fahimah, Zakiruddin, and ... 2024).

In conclusion, connectivism offers transformative implications for teaching and learning in Islamic Religious Education within the framework of nationhood and educational policy. By embracing networked learning, digital engagement, and learner autonomy, IRE can become more responsive to the demands of the modern world while remaining rooted in its core values (Abdurrohim et al. 2024). This balanced approach enables the formation of individuals who are not only knowledgeable and reflective but also capable of contributing positively to both their religious communities and their nation.

CONSTRUCTIVISM'S IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

1. Learner-Centered Approach

Constructivism shifts the focus from teacher-centered instruction to learner-centered learning, where students actively construct their own understanding.

2. Active Learning Process

Learning is viewed as an active process in which students engage in exploration, inquiry, and problem-solving rather than passive reception of information.

3. Prior Knowledge Integration

Students build new knowledge based on their existing experiences and prior understanding, making learning more meaningful and contextual.

4. Role of the Teacher as Facilitator

Teachers act as guides or facilitators who support, scaffold, and encourage students' learning rather than simply delivering content.

5. Collaborative Learning Environment

Constructivism promotes group work, discussion, and interaction, allowing learners to share perspectives and co-construct knowledge.



6. Contextual and Real-World Learning

Learning activities should be connected to real-life situations, helping students apply knowledge in practical and relevant contexts.

7. Emphasis on Critical Thinking

Students are encouraged to analyze, evaluate, and reflect on information, fostering higher-order thinking skills.

8. Flexible and Adaptive Instruction

Teaching strategies should be adaptable to individual learners' needs, learning styles, and developmental levels.

9. Assessment as a Continuous Process

Assessment is not limited to final tests but includes ongoing evaluation such as observations, reflections, and project-based outcomes.

10. Encouragement of Learner Autonomy

Constructivism supports the development of independent learners who take responsibility for their own learning process.

DISCUSSION

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) occupies a complex and strategic position within the broader architecture of national education, particularly in societies characterized by cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity. Within the framework of nationhood and educational policy, IRE is not merely an academic subject but a value-laden domain that shapes identity, morality, and civic consciousness (Bayar 2009). This discussion critically examines the dynamic interplay between religious education, national identity formation, and policy direction, highlighting both opportunities and challenges in aligning these domains in a coherent and sustainable manner.

At the conceptual level, IRE serves as a vehicle for the transmission of religious values, ethical norms, and spiritual awareness. However, within the context of nationhood, its function extends beyond personal piety to include the cultivation of responsible citizenship. This dual mandate creates a delicate balance between maintaining the authenticity of Islamic teachings and promoting inclusive national values such as unity, tolerance, and social cohesion. In pluralistic societies, this balance becomes particularly significant, as religious education must avoid exclusivist tendencies that could potentially undermine national integration (Kosim et al. 2023). Instead, it should foster an understanding of Islam that is both rooted in its doctrinal foundations and responsive to the socio-political realities of the nation-state.



Educational policy plays a critical role in shaping how IRE is conceptualized and implemented. Policies determine curriculum content, pedagogical approaches, teacher qualifications, and assessment frameworks. In this regard, the alignment between religious education and national goals is largely mediated through policy instruments (Mueller 2012). A well-designed policy framework can ensure that IRE contributes positively to nation-building by integrating civic education, ethical reasoning, and intercultural understanding. Conversely, policy gaps or inconsistencies may lead to fragmented implementation, where religious education operates in isolation from broader educational objectives.

One of the central challenges in integrating IRE within the framework of nationhood is the tension between tradition and modernity. On the one hand, IRE is deeply rooted in classical Islamic scholarship and long-standing pedagogical traditions. On the other hand, contemporary educational demands require adaptability, critical thinking, and engagement with global knowledge systems (Solechan, Zuhdi, and Syauqillah 2024). This tension is further intensified by the rapid advancement of technology and the increasing accessibility of diverse sources of information. Learners today are exposed to multiple interpretations of religious teachings, some of which may not align with national values or educational standards. Therefore, IRE must evolve to incorporate critical literacy and interpretive skills that enable students to navigate this complex informational landscape responsibly (Anto, Rahmawati, and ... 2023).

From a pedagogical perspective, contemporary learning theories such as constructivism, social learning, and connectivism offer valuable insights for enhancing the effectiveness of IRE. These approaches emphasize active learning, social interaction, and the use of digital networks, which are particularly relevant in modern educational contexts. By adopting these frameworks, IRE can move beyond rote memorization toward a more engaging and reflective learning process. For instance, collaborative learning activities can foster dialogue and mutual understanding among students from diverse backgrounds, while digital platforms can expand access to scholarly resources and facilitate global perspectives on Islamic thought (Habibah et al. 2023).

Another important dimension of this discussion is the role of educators. Teachers of IRE are not only responsible for delivering content but also for modeling ethical behavior and fostering inclusive attitudes. Their professional competence, pedagogical skills, and personal integrity significantly influence the effectiveness of religious education. Consequently, educational policy must prioritize teacher training and professional development, ensuring that educators are equipped to address contemporary challenges while maintaining the integrity of Islamic teachings (Barr and Govindasamy 2010). This includes the ability to integrate technology, manage diverse



classrooms, and promote critical and reflective thinking.

Furthermore, the integration of IRE within national education systems must consider the broader socio-cultural environment. Learning does not occur in isolation; it is influenced by family, community, media, and socio-political dynamics. In this context, IRE should be seen as part of a larger ecosystem that includes both formal and informal educational processes. Collaboration between schools, families, and communities can reinforce the values taught in the classroom and ensure their practical application in everyday life (Nugraha et al. 2026). This holistic approach is essential for achieving the broader goals of nationhood, including social stability and cultural continuity.

The issue of inclusivity also warrants critical attention. In diverse societies, IRE must be designed in a way that respects religious differences while promoting shared national values. This requires a careful and nuanced approach to curriculum development, ensuring that religious teachings are presented in a manner that encourages dialogue and mutual respect. Educational policies should support this objective by promoting intercultural education and preventing discriminatory practices (Maarif and Rofiq 2018). In doing so, IRE can contribute to the creation of a more harmonious and cohesive society.

In addition, globalization presents both opportunities and challenges for IRE. The increased flow of ideas and cultural exchange can enrich religious education by introducing new perspectives and fostering intellectual growth. However, it also raises concerns about the preservation of local values and national identity. Educational policy must therefore strike a balance between openness and preservation, ensuring that IRE remains relevant in a globalized world while maintaining its core principles (Azhar, Putri, and Asbari 2022). This involves integrating global competencies such as critical thinking, communication, and digital literacy into the curriculum.

Finally, the effectiveness of IRE within the framework of nationhood and educational policy depends on continuous evaluation and reform. Educational systems must be responsive to changing societal needs and emerging challenges. This requires ongoing research, policy analysis, and stakeholder engagement to ensure that religious education remains aligned with national objectives. Evidence-based approaches to policy development can help identify best practices and areas for improvement, thereby enhancing the overall quality and impact of IRE.

In conclusion, Islamic Religious Education within the framework of nationhood and educational policy represents a dynamic and multifaceted domain that requires careful consideration and strategic alignment (Juergensmeyer 1996). Its role in shaping individual



character and national identity underscores its significance within the education system. By addressing the challenges of integration, adaptability, inclusivity, and policy coherence, IRE can serve as a powerful instrument for fostering a society that is both religiously grounded and nationally unified.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) occupies a pivotal and multidimensional role within the broader framework of nationhood and educational policy. It is not merely a curricular component designed to impart religious knowledge, but a transformative process that contributes to the holistic development of individuals and the cultivation of a cohesive national identity. By integrating spiritual, moral, intellectual, and social dimensions, IRE serves as a foundational instrument for shaping citizens who are both religiously grounded and socially responsible.

The discussion of IRE within the context of nationhood highlights its strategic function in fostering unity, tolerance, and civic awareness in pluralistic societies. As nations increasingly confront the challenges of diversity, globalization, and socio-political complexity, the role of religious education becomes more significant in maintaining social harmony. IRE, when properly aligned with national values and principles, has the capacity to bridge differences and promote a shared sense of belonging. It encourages learners to internalize ethical values that support peaceful coexistence, mutual respect, and collective responsibility.

At the same time, educational policy plays a decisive role in shaping the direction, content, and implementation of IRE. Effective policy frameworks ensure that religious education is not isolated from broader educational goals but is integrated into the national vision of human development. Policies that emphasize inclusivity, adaptability, and quality assurance can enhance the relevance and effectiveness of IRE in addressing contemporary challenges. In this regard, the alignment between religious education and national objectives must be carefully maintained to ensure coherence and sustainability.

Moreover, the evolving landscape of education—marked by technological advancement, the proliferation of information, and the demands of the 21st century—necessitates a reorientation of IRE. Traditional approaches that rely heavily on rote learning and doctrinal transmission must be complemented by innovative pedagogical strategies that promote critical thinking, digital literacy, and active engagement. The incorporation of contemporary learning theories, such as constructivism, social learning, and connectivism, offers valuable pathways for



enhancing the teaching and learning of IRE in a manner that is both relevant and impactful.

Another critical aspect is the role of educators and institutions in mediating the relationship between religious values and national identity. Teachers serve not only as knowledge transmitters but also as role models who embody the integration of faith and civic responsibility. Their capacity to create inclusive, reflective, and dialogical learning environments significantly influences the effectiveness of IRE. Therefore, continuous professional development and institutional support are essential to ensure that educators are equipped to navigate the complexities of modern education.

Furthermore, the success of IRE cannot be separated from the broader socio-cultural context in which it operates. Collaboration between schools, families, and communities is crucial in reinforcing the values taught within formal education. This holistic approach ensures that learning extends beyond the classroom and becomes embedded in everyday social practices. In this way, IRE contributes not only to individual development but also to the preservation and evolution of cultural and national identity.

However, it is also important to acknowledge the challenges that accompany the integration of IRE within the framework of nationhood and educational policy. Issues such as ideological polarization, the influence of global media, and disparities in educational quality require careful and strategic responses. Addressing these challenges demands a balanced approach that preserves the authenticity of Islamic teachings while embracing openness, dialogue, and innovation. Educational policies must remain flexible and responsive, allowing for continuous refinement and improvement.

Ultimately, Islamic Religious Education stands as a vital pillar in the construction of a morally grounded and socially cohesive society. Its effectiveness depends on the synergy between philosophical foundations, pedagogical practices, and policy frameworks. By fostering individuals who are intellectually capable, ethically responsible, and nationally committed, IRE contributes significantly to the realization of a harmonious and progressive nation. Therefore, sustained efforts in research, policy development, and educational practice are essential to ensure that IRE continues to fulfill its role in an ever-changing global landscape.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Looking ahead, the development of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) within the framework of nationhood and educational policy requires a forward-looking, adaptive, and research-informed approach. As societies continue to evolve under the influence of globalization,



technological advancement, and shifting socio-political dynamics, IRE must reposition itself to remain relevant while preserving its foundational values. Future directions should therefore focus on innovation, inclusivity, and strategic alignment with national and global educational priorities.

One of the most critical directions is the integration of digital transformation into IRE. The rapid expansion of digital technologies has reshaped how knowledge is accessed, shared, and constructed. Future IRE must move beyond conventional classroom boundaries by incorporating online learning platforms, digital resources, and interactive media. This shift not only enhances accessibility but also enables learners to engage with diverse perspectives on Islamic thought. However, such integration must be accompanied by the development of digital literacy and ethical awareness to ensure that learners can critically evaluate information and navigate online environments responsibly. Educational policies should provide clear guidelines and infrastructure support to facilitate this transformation.

Another important direction involves strengthening the interdisciplinary nature of IRE. Contemporary challenges—such as environmental sustainability, social justice, and global citizenship—require knowledge that transcends disciplinary boundaries. Future IRE should integrate insights from fields such as sociology, political science, philosophy, and technology studies to provide a more comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings in relation to real-world issues. This interdisciplinary approach will enable learners to see the relevance of religion in addressing modern societal challenges while reinforcing their sense of national responsibility.

Curriculum reform also stands as a key priority for future development. IRE curricula must be continuously updated to reflect both the enduring principles of Islam and the changing needs of society. This includes the incorporation of themes such as pluralism, tolerance, peacebuilding, and civic engagement. A balanced curriculum should emphasize not only doctrinal knowledge but also the application of ethical values in diverse social contexts. Educational policy must ensure that curriculum development processes are participatory, involving scholars, educators, policymakers, and community stakeholders to achieve both academic rigor and social relevance.

Furthermore, the professional development of educators will play a decisive role in shaping the future of IRE. Teachers must be equipped with advanced pedagogical skills, technological competence, and a deep understanding of both religious content and national values. Continuous training programs, research opportunities, and collaborative networks should be established to support educators in adapting to new educational paradigms. In addition, teachers should be encouraged to adopt reflective practices that enable them to respond effectively to the diverse needs of learners.



The promotion of inclusive and dialogical learning environments is another essential direction. In increasingly diverse societies, IRE must foster open dialogue, mutual respect, and intercultural understanding. Future educational practices should encourage students to engage in constructive discussions about differences, thereby reducing prejudice and strengthening social cohesion. Policies that support inclusive education and protect against discrimination are crucial in ensuring that IRE contributes positively to nation-building.

Research and evidence-based policy development must also be prioritized. There is a need for ongoing empirical studies that examine the effectiveness of IRE in achieving its educational and societal objectives. Such research can inform policy decisions, identify best practices, and address gaps in implementation. Collaboration between universities, research institutions, and government agencies can enhance the quality and impact of these efforts.

In addition, the role of community and family engagement should be strengthened in future IRE initiatives. Education is a shared responsibility that extends beyond formal institutions. Programs that involve parents, religious leaders, and community organizations can reinforce the values taught in schools and ensure their application in everyday life. This collaborative approach supports the creation of a consistent and supportive environment for learners.

Finally, future directions must consider the global dimension of Islamic education. As interactions between cultures and nations become more frequent, IRE should prepare learners to participate in a globalized world while maintaining a strong sense of national identity. This involves fostering global competencies such as communication, critical thinking, and cultural awareness, alongside a deep commitment to Islamic ethics and national values.

In conclusion, the future of Islamic Religious Education within the framework of nationhood and educational policy lies in its ability to adapt, innovate, and remain grounded in its core principles. By embracing digital transformation, interdisciplinary approaches, inclusive practices, and evidence-based policies, IRE can continue to play a vital role in shaping individuals who are intellectually capable, ethically responsible, and committed to the well-being of their nation.

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