

Student-Centered Learning in Islamic Religious Education: A Literature Review of Implementation Strategies and Their Alignment with Islamic Educational Philosophy

Novia Ballianie¹, Zainal Berlian², Mardeli³, M. Robbani⁴, Mutia Dewi⁵, Sabina Rahmawati⁶

¹⁻⁶ Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang, Sumatera Selatan, Indonesia

Email: noviaballianie_uin@radenfatah.ac.id¹, zainalberlian68@radenfatah.ac.id², mardeli_uin@radenfatah.ac.id³, m.robhani_uin@radefatah.ac.id⁴, mutiadewi_uin@radenfatah.ac.id⁵, sabinrahma6@gmail.com⁶

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tentang Strategi Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam berbasis student-centered learning. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode *library research* untuk menganalisis dan mensintesis literatur mengenai strategi pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam berbasis *Student-Centered Learning*. Data diperoleh dari jurnal, buku, dan dokumen ilmiah, dianalisis menggunakan *content analysis* melalui identifikasi, seleksi, interpretasi, dan sintesis dengan menjaga validitas melalui triangulasi sumber. Berdasarkan hasil dan pembahasan bahwa *Student-Centered Learning* (SCL) merupakan pendekatan pembelajaran yang relevan untuk meningkatkan kualitas Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) karena menempatkan peserta didik sebagai subjek aktif dalam membangun pengetahuan, keterampilan, dan karakter Islami. Implementasi berbagai strategi seperti *Problem-Based Learning*, *Project-Based Learning*, *Inquiry Learning*, *Discovery Learning*, *Contextual Teaching and Learning*, pembelajaran kooperatif, *experiential learning*, serta asesmen autentik terbukti mampu meningkatkan motivasi belajar, berpikir kritis, kreativitas, komunikasi, kolaborasi, dan kemampuan pemecahan masalah. Pendekatan ini juga memperkuat internalisasi nilai-nilai Islam melalui pengalaman belajar yang bermakna. Keberhasilan penerapan SCL dipengaruhi oleh kompetensi guru, kesiapan peserta didik, dukungan kurikulum, sarana prasarana, budaya sekolah, dan integrasi teknologi digital. Oleh karena itu, SCL menjadi strategi efektif dalam mewujudkan pembelajaran PAI yang inovatif, kontekstual, dan responsif terhadap tuntutan pendidikan abad ke-21.

Kata Kunci: Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam, Strategi Pembelajaran, Student-Centered Learning

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the strategies of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning based on Student-Centered Learning (SCL). The research employed a qualitative approach using the library research method to analyze and synthesize the literature related to SCL-based Islamic Religious Education learning strategies. The data were collected from scholarly journals, books, and academic documents and analyzed using content analysis through the stages of identification, selection, interpretation, and synthesis, while ensuring validity through source triangulation. The findings indicate that Student-Centered Learning is a relevant instructional approach for improving the quality of Islamic Religious Education, as it positions students as active participants in constructing knowledge, developing skills, and fostering Islamic character. The implementation of various instructional strategies, including Problem-Based Learning, Project-Based Learning, Inquiry Learning, Discovery Learning, Contextual Teaching and Learning, cooperative learning, experiential learning, and authentic assessment, has been shown to enhance learning motivation, critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills. This approach also strengthens the internalization of Islamic values through meaningful learning experiences. The successful implementation of SCL is influenced by teachers' competencies, students' readiness, curriculum support, learning facilities and infrastructure, school culture, and the integration of digital technology. Therefore, SCL serves as an effective strategy for developing innovative, contextual, and responsive Islamic Religious Education learning that meets the demands of twenty-first-century education.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education Learning, Learning Strategies, Student-Centered Learning

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI) is a strategic component of the national education system that functions to develop students' potential so that they possess faith, piety, noble character, and the ability to practice Islamic teachings in daily life. PAI is oriented not only toward the transfer of religious knowledge but also toward the internalization of values (transfer of values) and the formation of Islamic character (character building).

Learning in Islamic Religious Education is oriented not only toward the mastery of knowledge but also toward shaping students' Islamic character (Suwartin et al., 2026). This process of internalizing Islamic values generally unfolds in stages beginning with cognitive understanding of values, moving through their application in social interaction, and eventually becoming an inseparable part of students' everyday attitudes and behavior (Abdullah, 2025). Accordingly, the success of PAI learning cannot be measured solely by students' ability to memorize Islamic concepts, but must also be measured by the extent to which these values have genuinely been internalized into attitudes and behavior. This condition demands a learning strategy capable of integrating cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in a balanced way.

The development of science, information technology, and 21st-century societal dynamics has brought fundamental changes to educational paradigms. Learning is no longer teacher-centered but has shifted toward student-centered learning (SCL). This paradigm shift is driven by the need to produce graduates who possess critical, creative, communicative, and collaborative thinking skills, as well as the ability to independently solve various life problems. In the context of national education, this transformation is also aligned with the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which positions students as active subjects in the learning process through meaningful, contextual learning experiences oriented toward competency development.

Nevertheless, the implementation of PAI learning in various educational institutions still faces numerous challenges. Various research findings indicate that PAI learning practices are still dominated by lecture methods, rote memorization, and one-directional delivery of material. Teachers still act as the main source of information, while students play a more passive role as recipients of information. This learning pattern results in low student engagement in the learning process, limited opportunities to develop critical thinking skills, and the internalization of Islamic values not occurring optimally.

On the other hand, the characteristics of Islamic Religious Education are actually very well suited to being developed through a student-centered learning approach. Islamic values teach the importance of reflection (tafakkur), contemplation (tadabbur), dialogue (musyawarah), and the pursuit of knowledge (thalabul 'ilmi). One principle relevant to strengthening students' sense of responsibility and independence in this context is humanity's position as steward and guardian of the earth (khalifah fil ardh), which in practice can be translated into attitudes of trustworthiness, responsibility, and concern for the environment and for others (Rahman et al., 2025). Such a principle positions students as active individuals who construct knowledge through learning experiences, reflection, discussion, and direct practice so that a student-centered learning strategy actually becomes a means of more authentically strengthening the formation of Islamic character, rather than contradicting it.

The SCL approach provides students with the opportunity to actively participate in discovering, understanding, and constructing knowledge through various learning activities. Teachers no longer act as the sole providers of information but function as facilitators, motivators, mediators, and guides who create a conducive learning environment. In PAI learning, this approach can be realized through various strategies such as problem-based learning, project-based learning, inquiry learning, collaborative learning, group discussion, case studies, religious reflection, and experiential learning.

In addition to increasing student engagement, SCL also contributes to the development of 21st-century competencies critical thinking in analyzing contemporary religious issues, creativity in problem-solving, collaboration, effective communication, and the responsible use of digital technology. These competencies are important given that the current generation lives in a digital era marked by an abundance of information, rapid social change, and the complexity of moral and religious challenges.

Research on student-centered learning in Islamic Religious Education has developed with a wide range of foci from strengthening Islamic character through SCL (Suwartin et al., 2026), to integrating the concept of khalifah fil ardh as a foundation for environmental ethics in PAI learning (Rahman et al., 2025), to the application of project-based learning and contextual teaching and learning models across various educational levels. However, these findings remain scattered across different thematic foci character, ecological-spiritual awareness, learning motivation, and cognitive learning outcomes — without a synthesis that systematically compares which SCL strategies are most effective for each dimension of PAI learning outcomes. A literature review integrating these various findings into a single conceptual framework is still lacking, leaving teachers and PAI curriculum developers without a structured map of SCL strategies to adopt according to different desired learning outcomes.

Through a literature review approach, this article aims to comprehensively answer these four questions, thereby contributing conceptually to theory development, learning practice, and further research in the field of Islamic Religious Education.

METHODE

This study employs a qualitative approach using library research, aiming to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize various scientific literature concerning Student-Centered Learning (SCL)-based learning strategies in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) (Snyder, 2019). The literature review approach was chosen because it enables the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of the development of concepts, implementation, and effectiveness of SCL learning strategies in Islamic religious education based on prior research findings. Library research is a systematic method for identifying, examining, organizing, and integrating various scientific sources so as to produce a conceptual synthesis that can serve as a basis for theoretical development as well as educational practice (Snyder, 2019).

The research data sources consist of primary and secondary data (Sugiyono, 2023). Primary data were obtained from scientific articles published in accredited national journals and reputable international journals discussing PAI learning, Student-Centered Learning, learning strategies, and 21st-century learning innovations. Secondary data were obtained from academic books, proceedings, educational policy documents, and other scientific references relevant to the research focus.

Data collection was conducted through systematic literature searches using scientific databases (Snyder, 2019), such as Google Scholar, Scopus, ERIC, and Garuda, using the keywords Islamic Religious Education, Student-Centered Learning, Islamic Religious Education, active learning, and learning strategies. The selected literature met criteria of thematic relevance, sound academic quality (indexed/accredited journals), and publication within the 2018–2026 range to ensure the currency of the review.

Data analysis employed content analysis techniques carried out through several phases: preparation, organizing, and reporting, which encompass literature identification, selection based on inclusion criteria, thematic grouping, data reduction, interpretation, and synthesis construction (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The analysis results were subsequently compared to identify patterns, similarities, differences, and tendencies in effective SCL-based PAI learning strategies. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, evaluation of reference credibility, and comparison across literature, thereby producing findings that are objective, systematic, and scientifically accountable.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Student-Centered Learning in the Perspective of Islamic Religious Education

Student-Centered Learning (SCL) is a learning paradigm that positions students at the center of the entire learning process. This approach starts from the view that learning is not merely a process of receiving information from the teacher, but an active process of constructing knowledge, developing skills, and shaping attitudes through meaningful learning experiences (Kadafi & Ulpah, 2023). Within the SCL paradigm, students are given the opportunity to explore knowledge, ask questions, solve problems, discuss, collaborate, and reflect on their learning experiences. Meanwhile, the teacher is no longer positioned as the sole source of information but transforms into a facilitator, mediator, motivator, and guide who creates a conducive learning environment so that students can develop their full potential optimally.

Learning effectiveness is an urgent topic to discuss, as it affects the success and quality of learning (Khotimah & Abdan, 2025); the development of the learning paradigm shows a shift from teacher-centered learning toward student-centered learning. In the teacher-centered approach, the learning process is dominated by one-directional delivery of material. The teacher becomes the main actor who determines the content, methods, and course of learning, while students mostly listen, take notes, and memorize information. This model is indeed effective for delivering large amounts of material, but often provides insufficient room for students to think critically, express opinions, and develop problem-solving abilities. In contrast, the SCL paradigm holds that knowledge becomes more meaningful when acquired through students' active involvement in the learning process. Therefore, learning is designed to encourage students to seek information, analyze various issues, connect concepts with real experiences, and produce understanding constructed both independently and collaboratively.

Philosophically, Student-Centered Learning is closely linked to constructivist philosophy, which holds that knowledge cannot simply be transferred from teacher to student. Knowledge is constructed through the interaction between new experiences and pre-existing knowledge structures. From this perspective, each student has a different background, ability, learning style, and experience, so the learning process must give them the opportunity to

construct meaning according to their own context.

Indeed, an enlightening teacher is one who is able to carry out a transfer of value — passing on a value system to students (Anggraini & Sukardi, 2011). The teacher's role is to provide rich learning experiences, facilitate dialogue, give feedback, and guide students in discovering concepts independently. Thus, learning success is measured not only by how much material the teacher has delivered, but by the extent to which students are able to understand, apply, and reflect on the knowledge they have acquired.

Psychologically, SCL is supported by humanistic learning theory and cognitive development theory, which position students as individuals with the potential to develop optimally when provided with a supportive learning environment. This approach respects differences in individual characteristics, interests, talents, motivation, and learning needs. Learning is designed to spark curiosity, increase intrinsic motivation, and provide a learning experience that is both challenging and enjoyable. In the context of Islamic Religious Education, this psychological approach is highly important because the learning objectives aim not only to shape intellectual aspects but also to develop students' spiritual, emotional, social, and moral awareness in a balanced way. Therefore, learning strategies must be able to create conditions that allow students to understand Islamic teachings through experience, internalization, and real practice in daily life.

The pedagogical foundation of Student-Centered Learning emphasizes the importance of active learning, collaborative learning, contextual learning, reflective learning, and experiential learning. In PAI learning, these principles can be realized through various activities such as group discussions, case studies, project-based learning, problem-based learning, simulations, worship practice, presentations, and religious reflection activities. Through these activities, students not only gain conceptual understanding of Islamic teachings but also have the opportunity to develop critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and decision-making skills grounded in Islamic values. Learning becomes more meaningful because students directly connect religious concepts with the issues they face in daily life.

From the perspective of Islamic Religious Education, the application of Student-Centered Learning has a strong fit with the core values of Islamic education. The concept of *ta'lim* emphasizes the process of developing knowledge through learning activities that encourage students to seek, understand, and continuously develop knowledge. Islam places high value on the activities of learning, thinking, and seeking knowledge, as reflected in various verses of the Qur'an and hadith. Therefore, learning that gives students the opportunity to actively seek knowledge aligns with the spirit of *ta'lim* as a process of human intellectual empowerment.

Beyond *ta'lim*, the concept of *tarbiyah* provides the foundation that education is a process of nurturing and developing human potential gradually and continuously. Education aims not only to improve intellectual ability but also to shape students' personality, morals, spirituality, and social character (Yusuf & Ramli, 2021). The Student-Centered Learning approach supports this goal by giving students room to develop according to their potential, needs, and developmental stage. The teacher functions as a guide who directs students' growth process without eliminating their opportunity to learn independently.

The concept of *ta'dib* is also closely linked to the application of SCL in PAI. *Ta'dib* positions education as a process of forming *adab* — the ability to place things proportionally

based on Islamic values. Student-centered learning does not mean granting unlimited freedom, but rather developing responsibility, discipline, discussion ethics, mutual respect, and the ability to make decisions grounded in noble character. Thus, active learning activities remain within the corridor of Islamic values, so that freedom of thought proceeds hand in hand with character formation.

The principle of *musyawarah* (deliberation) is another value that strengthens the relevance of SCL in Islamic Religious Education. *Musyawarah* teaches the importance of dialogue, cooperation, respect for differing opinions, and collective decision-making. This value is reflected in various collaborative learning strategies, group discussions, and problem-solving activities that are hallmarks of Student-Centered Learning. Through these activities, students learn to express opinions politely, listen to others' views, build arguments based on evidence and reasoning, and find solutions that reflect the values of justice and togetherness.

The values of *tafakkur* (contemplative reflection) and *tadabbur* (deep contemplation of scripture) are also important foundations in the application of SCL. *Tafakkur* encourages students to think critically about natural, social, and religious phenomena as a form of appreciation for the greatness of Allah SWT, while *tadabbur* directs students to understand the meaning of Qur'anic verses deeply so they can implement them in life. Both concepts show that Islam highly values the process of thinking, reflection, analysis, and the search for meaning. Thus, learning that requires students to actively observe, analyze, evaluate, and reflect on various issues is in fact a real implementation of the values of Islamic education.

Based on these various foundations, it can be understood that Student-Centered Learning is not merely a modern pedagogical approach but also has a strong alignment with the philosophy of Islamic education. This approach supports the goal of Islamic Religious Education in shaping individuals who are faithful, pious, knowledgeable, and of noble character, and who are able to actualize Islamic teachings in both personal and social life. Therefore, the application of SCL is a relevant strategy for improving the quality of PAI learning, strengthening student engagement, developing 21st-century competencies, while integrating the mastery of knowledge with the formation of Islamic character in a complete and sustainable manner.

Student-Centered Learning Implementation Strategies in PAI Learning

The strategy of implementing Student-Centered Learning (SCL) in the teaching of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is an effort to shift the learning process from one oriented toward the delivery of material to one that positions students as the primary subject in acquiring learning experiences (Karimah et al., 2026). This approach gives students the opportunity to construct knowledge, develop thinking skills, and internalize Islamic values through activities that are active, collaborative, contextual, and reflective. In the context of PAI, the application of SCL aims not only to improve mastery of cognitive aspects but also to shape religious attitudes, noble character, and the ability to practice Islamic teachings in daily life. Therefore, SCL implementation strategies must be designed in accordance with the characteristics of PAI content, students' needs, and the demands of 21st-century competencies.

One widely applied strategy is Problem-Based Learning (PBL). This model places a real-world problem as the starting point of learning, prompting students to seek information, analyze causes, evaluate various alternative solutions, and formulate decisions based on Islamic

principles. In teaching aqidah and akhlak, for example, teachers can present phenomena such as social media misuse, bullying, intolerance, or a crisis of honesty as cases to be analyzed from an Islamic perspective. Implementation steps include problem orientation, organizing students into groups, independent or collaborative investigation, presenting analysis results, and reflecting on the problem-solving process. The strength of PBL lies in its ability to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and decision-making. However, this model requires a relatively long time, teacher readiness in designing authentic problems, and students' capacity for independent learning.

The next strategy is Project-Based Learning (PjBL), which emphasizes learning through the completion of a project. In PAI learning, a project can take the form of designing a digital campaign on religious moderation, producing an educational video on worship procedures, developing a school charity (sedekah) program, compiling an Islamic magazine, or documenting the history of a local mosque. PjBL implementation begins with determining a driving question, project planning, scheduling, carrying out activities, monitoring progress, presenting results, and evaluating both the product and the process. This model provides an authentic learning experience because students not only understand concepts but also produce tangible work with social benefit. Nevertheless, implementing PjBL requires good time management, resource support, and effective coordination between teachers and students.

Inquiry Learning is also a highly relevant strategy in PAI learning because it encourages students to discover knowledge through a scientific investigation process. The teacher's role is to present questions or phenomena that stimulate students' curiosity, then guide them in collecting data, analyzing information, formulating hypotheses, and drawing conclusions. In the study of Qur'an and Hadith, for instance, students can examine the meaning of verses on the environment, honesty, or brotherhood by comparing various interpretations (tafsir) and relating them to contemporary societal conditions. This strategy is able to enhance analytical thinking, information literacy, and a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings.

In line with this approach, Discovery Learning gives students the opportunity to discover concepts or principles themselves through a series of learning activities. Rather than providing answers directly, the teacher provides various learning resources that prompt students to explore, observe, categorize information, and draw conclusions. In fiqh learning, for example, students can compare various rulings on worship practices based on evidence from the Qur'an, hadith, and scholarly opinions, thereby gaining a more comprehensive understanding. This strategy fosters curiosity, learning independence, and logical thinking, though it requires teacher readiness in providing adequate learning resources.

Another strategy well-suited to SCL principles is cooperative learning. This approach emphasizes collaboration among students in small groups to achieve a common goal. Each group member bears responsibility for the group's success, creating positive interaction, effective communication, and mutual assistance in understanding the material. In the study of Islamic cultural history, for example, each group can examine a particular historical period and then present its findings to other groups. This model not only improves learning outcomes but also develops tolerance, responsibility, leadership, and cooperative skills consistent with the value of ukhuwah Islamiyah (Islamic brotherhood).

The application of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) is also highly relevant to

PAI learning. This approach connects course material with students' real experiences, making learning more meaningful. Teachers link Islamic concepts to social, cultural, economic, or environmental phenomena that students encounter in daily life. For example, teaching about zakat is linked to poverty alleviation efforts, while material on environmental stewardship is linked to humanity's responsibility as khalifah (steward) on earth. The contextual approach helps students understand that Islamic teachings are not merely normative but also have strong relevance to solving various life issues.

The strategies above are applied in student-centered learning by motivating and facilitating students so that they can innovate in acquiring knowledge and understanding that can then be applied in their lives (Rohim, 2016). In addition to these models, group discussion, case studies, reflection, and experiential learning are strategies that further strengthen SCL implementation in PAI. Group discussion gives students the opportunity to exchange opinions, build arguments based on religious evidence, and respect differing views. Case studies allow students to analyze real issues using an Islamic perspective, thereby optimally developing critical thinking and decision-making skills. Reflection is an important component because it helps students evaluate their learning experience, identify the values gained, and plan behavioral change as a form of implementing Islamic teachings. Meanwhile, experiential learning emphasizes learning through direct experience, such as worship practice, community service activities, visits to zakat institutions, mosque observation, or environmental care activities. Such experiences strengthen the connection between theory and practice, making learning more meaningful.

The success of Student-Centered Learning implementation is also supported by the use of digital technology and interactive learning media. Online learning platforms, Learning Management Systems (LMS), interactive quiz applications, instructional videos, digital simulations, Islamic podcasts, and collaborative media enable students to learn independently or in groups without being limited by space and time. Teachers can leverage technology to provide diverse learning resources, give rapid feedback, facilitate virtual discussions, and monitor students' learning progress. Technology integration also enhances digital literacy while accustoming students to using digital media wisely in accordance with Islamic ethics.

In implementing SCL, the assessment system also needs to be adjusted through the use of authentic assessment. Assessment should not focus solely on written test results but should also include process assessment, performance, projects, portfolios, presentations, attitude observation, reflective journals, self-assessment, and peer assessment. Authentic assessment provides a more comprehensive picture of students' competency development in the aspects of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Thus, teachers can assess the extent to which students are able to understand, internalize, and implement Islamic values in daily life.

Based on these various strategies, it can be understood that the implementation of Student-Centered Learning in Islamic Religious Education requires systematic planning, selection of models suited to the characteristics of the content, use of learning technology, and application of authentic assessment oriented toward both process and outcome. Each strategy has its own strengths and limitations, so teachers need to select or combine various approaches according to learning objectives, student characteristics, and the context of the educational institution. Through appropriate implementation, PAI learning not only improves mastery of

religious concepts but also shapes students who are active, critical, creative, collaborative, of Islamic character, and able to practice Islamic teachings contextually in both personal and social life.

Implications of Applying Student-Centered Learning for the Quality of PAI Learning

The application of Student-Centered Learning (SCL) in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning has significant implications for improving the quality of both the learning process and its outcomes. Various studies show that this approach is able to transform learning patterns that were originally oriented toward the delivery of material into a learning process that is more active, participatory, collaborative, and centered on students' learning experiences. In the context of PAI, learning quality is measured not only by improvements in academic achievement but also by success in shaping religious character, strengthening spiritual attitudes, developing higher-order thinking skills, and improving students' ability to implement Islamic values in daily life. Therefore, the application of SCL is one relevant strategy for meeting the demands of 21st-century education, which integrates competence, character, and literacy in a balanced way.

One of the main implications of applying SCL is increased student learning motivation. In teacher-centered learning, students tend to become passive recipients of information, so learning motivation often depends on how the teacher delivers the material. In contrast, the SCL approach gives students the opportunity to choose their own learning strategies, explore various sources of information, discuss, complete projects, and solve problems related to real life (Suwartin et al., 2026).

This active engagement fosters a sense of ownership over the learning process, allowing intrinsic motivation to develop more optimally. In PAI learning, high motivation will drive students to study Islamic teachings not merely out of academic obligation, but as a need in shaping their personality and improving the quality of their religious life. According to Dzofir (2020), PAI learning must be developed toward a process of value internalization accompanied by cognitive aspects, so that a strong impulse arises to practice religious values.

The application of SCL also has implications for increased student activeness during the learning process. Students no longer merely listen to the teacher's explanations but actively ask questions, express opinions, discuss, conduct observations, search for references, prepare reports, present their work, and reflect on their learning experiences. These activities create a more dynamic and interactive learning atmosphere, making the learning process more meaningful. In PAI subjects, student activeness is very important because understanding Islamic teachings requires a process of dialogue, reflection, and internalization that cannot be achieved solely through memorization or lectures.

The next implication is the development of critical thinking skills. Through strategies such as Problem-Based Learning, Inquiry Learning, case studies, and group discussions, students are trained to identify problems, analyze information, evaluate various alternative solutions, and construct arguments based on evidence from the Qur'an, hadith, and scholarly opinions. Critical thinking skills are a highly important competency for addressing various contemporary religious issues, such as the use of digital technology, environmental concerns, religious moderation, tolerance, social media ethics, and scientific developments. Thus, PAI learning produces students who not only understand Islamic teachings textually but are also

capable of deep and contextual reasoning in responding to various life phenomena.

In addition to critical thinking, SCL also develops student creativity through various learning activities that give them room to generate innovative ideas, works, and solutions. In PAI learning, creativity can be realized through creating digital da'wah media, producing religious educational videos, developing social projects based on Islamic values, designing infographics of Qur'anic verses, or running digital campaigns on morals and social concern. This creativity shows that PAI learning can be developed adaptively without diminishing the substance of Islamic values. In fact, through a creative approach, PAI material becomes more engaging, easier to understand, and more relevant to the characteristics of the digital generation.

Communication and collaboration skills also improve through the application of SCL. Various cooperative learning models, group discussions, presentations, and project-based learning give students the opportunity to actively interact with peers and teachers. They learn to express opinions politely, respect differing perspectives, build arguments supported by evidence and facts, and work together to complete shared tasks. These values are closely related to the principles of musyawarah (deliberation), ukhuwah (brotherhood), and mutual respect taught in Islam. Thus, the application of SCL not only improves social skills but also strengthens the implementation of moral values in community life.

Another important implication is improved problem-solving ability. SCL-based PAI learning encourages students to face various real issues related to personal, family, school, and community life. They are guided to analyze the root causes of problems, seek information from various sources, consider both normative and contextual aspects, and then determine solutions based on the principles of Islamic teachings. This process helps students develop the ability to make decisions that are both rational and responsible, giving PAI learning a real impact on daily life.

One of the main goals of Islamic Religious Education is to internalize Islamic values into students' attitudes and behavior (Mariani et al., 2024). In this context, SCL makes a greater contribution than conventional approaches because students directly experience the learning process through practice, reflection, discussion, social projects, and real experience. Values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, tolerance, social concern, trustworthiness, cooperation, and love of the environment are not merely studied as concepts but practiced through various learning activities. This experience strengthens the process of value internalization, making it easier for students to implement Islamic teachings in daily life.

Despite offering various benefits, the implementation of Student-Centered Learning in PAI learning still faces a number of challenges. One factor that greatly determines the success of SCL implementation is teacher competence. Teachers are required to have the ability to design innovative learning, select models suited to the characteristics of the content, utilize digital technology, develop authentic assessments, and facilitate collaborative learning. The shift in role from information deliverer to facilitator requires improved pedagogical, professional, social, and digital competence through training and continuous professional development.

Another factor affecting SCL implementation is student readiness. Not all students are accustomed to learning independently, discussing, or expressing opinions. Some still have a

high dependence on teacher direction, requiring a gradual adaptation process. Therefore, teachers need to provide guidance, build a positive learning culture, and create a safe and inclusive environment so that every student has the opportunity to participate actively in the learning process.

Curriculum support, facilities and infrastructure, school culture, and technology integration are also supporting factors that cannot be ignored. The curriculum needs to provide flexibility for teachers to apply various active learning strategies and authentic assessments. The availability of classrooms that support discussion, internet access, digital devices, libraries, and interactive learning media will strengthen the effectiveness of SCL implementation.

On the other hand, a school culture that encourages collaboration, innovation, reflective learning, and the strengthening of religious character will create an educational ecosystem that supports the success of student-centered learning. The basic concept of innovation in Islamic religious education is an important foundation for pursuing quality, guaranteed education for every community that is seriously carrying out education (Putra et al., 2020).

Based on a synthesis of various research findings, the most effective strategy in PAI learning is not the use of a single learning model, but a combination of various Student-Centered Learning approaches tailored to the characteristics of the content, learning objectives, and student needs. Sapiudin and Ika (2025) state that PAI does not only serve as a means of transmitting religious knowledge but also as a deradicalization instrument in the digital era.

The integration of Problem-Based Learning, Project-Based Learning, Inquiry Learning, cooperative learning, Contextual Teaching and Learning, experiential learning, along with the use of digital technology and authentic assessment, has proven able to improve learning quality more comprehensively. This combination of strategies provides a learning experience that is active, contextual, collaborative, and reflective, so that students not only master Islamic concepts but also develop critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, problem-solving skills, and strong Islamic character.

As a subject included in the compulsory curriculum content at all levels of formal education, PAI has an important role in raising awareness of Islamic teachings (Dzofir, 2020). The development of SCL-based PAI learning is a strategic alternative for improving the quality of Islamic religious education in the 21st century. Going forward, SCL implementation needs to be supported through improved teacher competence, strengthened curriculum policy, adequate provision of learning facilities, optimization of educational technology, and the development of a school culture that encourages active learning and the strengthening of Islamic values. Through these steps, PAI learning is expected to produce graduates who not only have a good understanding of religion but are also able to think critically, collaborate, adapt to change, and consistently practice Islamic values in their personal, social, and professional lives.

Synthesis of Research Findings

Based on an examination of the philosophical-theoretical foundations, implementation strategies, and implications of Student-Centered Learning (SCL) in Islamic Religious Education (PAI), it can be synthesized that the application of SCL in PAI is not merely a technical adoption of a modern pedagogical paradigm, but reflects a deep philosophical alignment with the core concepts of Islamic education. The principle of ta'lim, which

emphasizes the active development of knowledge; tarbiyah, which views education as a process of gradual growth; ta'dib, which directs learning toward the formation of adab (proper conduct); and the values of musyawarah, tafakkur, and tadabbur, which uphold dialogue and critical reflection, collectively demonstrate that SCL is in fact a re-articulation of pedagogical principles already inherent in the Islamic tradition, rather than an importation of a foreign paradigm (Kadafi & Ulpah, 2023).

Findings on implementation strategies reveal a variety of models Problem-Based Learning, Project-Based Learning, Inquiry Learning, Discovery Learning, Cooperative Learning, Contextual Teaching and Learning, and experiential learning — each with differing degrees of fit depending on the characteristics of the PAI content. Problem-Based Learning, for instance, is more relevant to aqidah-akhlak material requiring analysis of contemporary moral cases, while Discovery Learning is better suited to fiqh instruction emphasizing comparison of religious evidence. This pattern confirms that the most effective strategy in PAI learning is not the use of a single model, but a combination of various SCL approaches tailored to learning objectives, content characteristics, and student needs a conclusion that emerges consistently across the literature reviewed.

The implications of applying SCL to the quality of PAI learning are also shown to be multilayered, encompassing a cognitive dimension in the form of improved critical thinking and problem-solving ability, an affective dimension in the form of internalizing values such as honesty, responsibility, and tolerance, and a 21st-century skills dimension such as communication, collaboration, and creativity. However, this success is consistently portrayed as conditional rather than inherent — dependent on teacher competence in designing innovative instruction and authentic assessment, student readiness for independent learning, and systemic support in the form of curriculum flexibility, adequate facilities, and a conducive school culture. Accordingly, the claim that SCL improves the quality of PAI learning should be understood as effectiveness conditional on the fit between strategy and learning context, rather than as an unconditional generalization applicable to all learning situations.

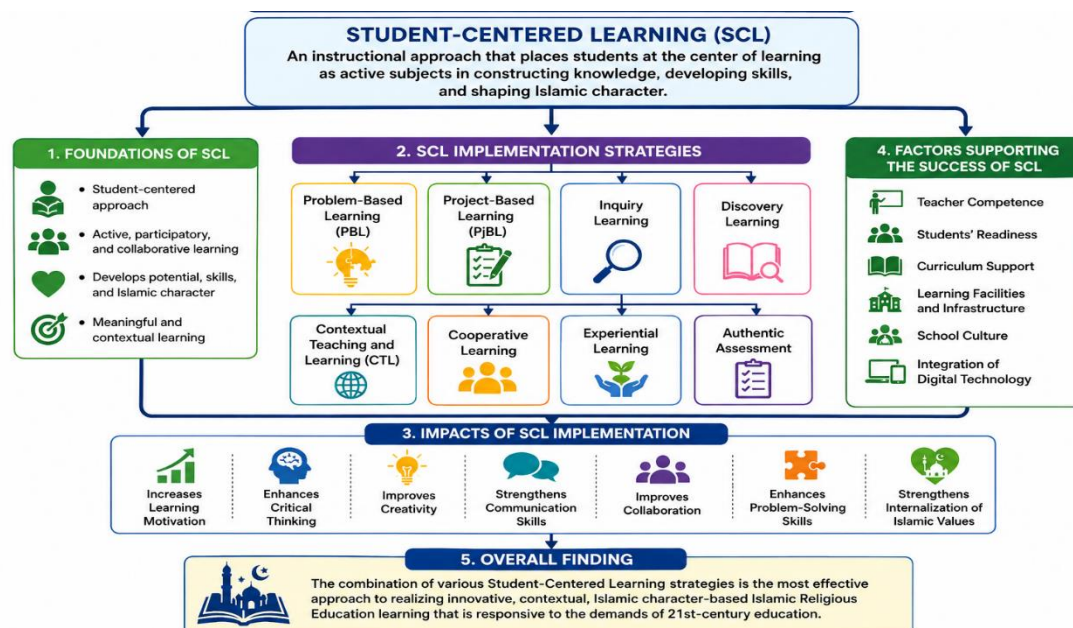


Figure 1. Diagram of Research Findings

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that Student-Centered Learning (SCL) is a relevant learning approach for improving the quality of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), as it positions students as active subjects in constructing knowledge, skills, and Islamic character. Based on the synthesis of the literature reviewed, the implementation of various strategies such as Problem-Based Learning, Project-Based Learning, Inquiry Learning, Discovery Learning, Contextual Teaching and Learning, cooperative learning, experiential learning, and authentic assessment is reported to contribute to increased learning motivation, critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving ability, while also strengthening the internalization of Islamic values through meaningful learning experiences. The success of SCL implementation is conditional — influenced by teacher competence, student readiness, curriculum support, facilities and infrastructure, school culture, and digital technology integration — such that SCL has the potential to become an effective strategy for realizing PAI learning that is innovative, contextual, and responsive to the demands of 21st-century education, provided these contextual conditions are met.

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