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Transformation of Islamic Religious Education Learning through the SAVI Model at Elementary School in the *Merdeka Belajar* Era

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ABSTRACT
This study examines the transformation of Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI) learning through the SAVI (Somatic, Auditory, Visual, Intellectual) model at SD Negeri 01 Pisang Baru in the Merdeka Belajar era. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, the research explores how the SAVI model facilitates active, meaningful, and student-centered learning while promoting cognitive, affective, motoric, and spiritual development. Data were collected through interviews with the principal, PAI teachers, and students, complemented by classroom observations and document analysis. Findings indicate that the SAVI model enhances student engagement, motivation, and comprehension by integrating physical movement, auditory, visual, and intellectual activities into learning. However, challenges remain, including limited facilities, media resources, and the need for continuous teacher training. The study highlights the importance of aligning pedagogical innovation with Islamic educational values and contemporary curricular policies. Practically, it provides guidance for educators to implement multisensory approaches effectively and for schools to support sustainable pedagogical transformation. This research contributes to the discourse on active, embodied, and multisensory learning in Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI), *offering insights for policy makers, practitioners, and future research.*

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ABSTRAK
Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis transformasi Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) melalui penerapan model SAVI *(Somatic, Auditory, Visualization, Intellectual)* di SD Negeri 01 Pisang Baru pada era Merdeka Belajar. Pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif digunakan untuk menggambarkan proses pembelajaran yang aktif, bermakna, dan berorientasi pada pengembangan karakter keagamaan siswa. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara dengan kepala sekolah, guru PAI, dan siswa, observasi kelas, serta dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis secara tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan model SAVI meningkatkan partisipasi aktif siswa, keterlibatan multisensorik, dan pemahaman kontekstual terhadap materi PAI, meskipun efektivitasnya dipengaruhi oleh keterbatasan sarana, media, dan kesiapan guru. Transformasi ini mendorong pergeseran paradigma dari pembelajaran berpusat pada guru ke pembelajaran berpusat pada siswa. Temuan penelitian menegaskan relevansi model SAVI dalam mendukung implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka serta pembelajaran abad ke-21. Implikasi praktis penelitian ini adalah perlunya pelatihan guru, penyediaan media dan fasilitas, serta pengembangan strategi pembelajaran multisensorik yang berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini memberikan dasar bagi penelitian lanjutan mengenai integrasi teknologi, pendekatan multisensorik, dan pedagogi Islam untuk meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan agama di sekolah dasar.

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A. INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) plays a strategic role in shaping students' character, morality, and spiritual development, positioning religious education not merely as mastery of theoretical knowledge but as the internalization of Islamic values that form holistic human behavior.[1] In the context of primary education, this process requires pedagogical approaches capable of linking Islamic teachings to concrete and meaningful learning experiences that align with students' developmental stages.[2] However, previous studies indicate that in practice, many Indonesian primary schools continue to rely heavily on traditional methods such as lecturing, memorization, and cognitively centered instruction that remains predominantly teacher directed.[3] Such traditional approaches often result in passive learners who are less engaged emotionally or physically and who struggle to connect religious teachings with real-life contexts.[4]

The rapid advancement of information and communication technology has introduced new challenges for the education sector, including efforts to integrate religious values into digital learning processes.[5] Digital transformation reshapes how students learn, interact, and access information, requiring educators to design learning strategies that are more adaptive and innovative.[6] In the context of Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI), traditional lecture-based and text-centered methods are increasingly viewed as insufficient for capturing students' interest or motivating them to learn.[7] Digital-native learners tend to prefer instructional approaches that are interactive, collaborative, and supported by technological media.[8] Consequently, developing Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) learning models that align with the demands of the digital era has become essential to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of religious education for contemporary students.

In this context, the Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek), introduced the *Merdeka Belajar* framework within the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* to encourage a shift in learning paradigms. *Merdeka Belajar* provides schools, teachers, and students with greater flexibility to

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[1]Sri Lestari and Jupriaman, "The Role Of Islamic Religious Education Teachers In The Digital Era," *Zeniusi Journal* 1, no. 1 (2024): 72–77, https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v6i4.6045.

[2]Destatil Maghfiroh and Nur Aisyah, "Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai *Pendidikan Agama Islam* Dalam Membentuk Karakter Siswa Melalui Budaya Religius," *Global Education Journal* 1, no. 2 (2023): 304–18, https://doi.org/10.59525/gej.v1i2.265.

[3]Sopian Kamil Muttaqin, Ahmad Fajri Asshdiqi, and Aulia Rizki, "The Qur'anic Learning Methods for Primary School Pupil in Indonesia: A Systematic Literature Review," *Journal of Education Method and Learning Strategy* 3, no. 02 (2025): 172–84, https://doi.org/10.59653/jemls.v3i02.1510.

[4]Heiko Dietrich and Tanya Evans, "Traditional Lectures versus Active Learning – A False Dichotomy?," *STEM Education* 2, no. 4 (2022): 275–92, https://doi.org/10.3934/steme.2022017.

[5]Abil Wafa Almaulana and Suhari Suhari, "Penanaman Nilai Karakter Religius Pada Siswa Kelas X Di SMAN 1 Menganti Gresik," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Ilmu Sosial (Jupendis)* 1, no. 4 (2023): 161–70, https://doi.org/10.54066/jupendis.v1i4.891.

[6]Anastassis Kozanitis and Lucian Nenciovici, "Effect of Active Learning versus Traditional Lecturing on the Learning Achievement of College Students in Humanities and Social Sciences: A Meta-Analysis," *Higher Education* 86, no. 6 (2023): 1377–94, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-022-00977-8.

[7]Siti Rohmah Kurniasih and Hasbiyallah Hasbiyallah, "Application of the Humanistic Model Theory Accelerated Learning Through Approach CLAY To Improve Students' Critical Thinking Skills," *Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan Agama Islam (JIPAI)* 3, no. 1 (2023): 31–51, https://doi.org/10.15575/jipai.v3i1.25821.

[8]Hala Shaker Hammad, "Teaching the Digital Natives: Examining the Learning Needs and Preferences of Gen Z Learners in Higher Education," *Transcultural Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 6, no. 2 (2025): 214–42, https://doi.org/10.21608/tjhss.2025.346098.1303.

design learning processes that are contextual and responsive to learners' needs, without being constrained by the rigidity of a centralized curriculum.[9] The framework also underscores the importance of student-centered learning by emphasizing character development, creativity, and collaboration as core components of the learning experience rather than focusing solely on academic attainment.[10]

In addition, the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* promotes the use of project-based learning and contextual activities in primary schools so that students gain learning experiences that are more meaningful and relevant to their everyday lives.[11] This approach also enables teachers to adapt instructional strategies to the needs, interests, and unique potential of each learner, thereby fostering active engagement and the development of twenty-first-century competencies.[12] *Merdeka Belajar* therefore represents more than an administrative policy; it constitutes a pedagogical paradigm shift that requires innovation in instructional models, including within Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI), to ensure its continued relevance amid the complexities of the digital era.[13]

In the context of Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) instruction, the transformation of Indonesia's education system under the *Merdeka Belajar* policy requires a learning paradigm that is more contextual, participatory, and reflective, emphasizing not only cognitive mastery but also the affective, motor, and spiritual development of students.[14] This need highlights the relevance of adopting multisensory and inclusive instructional approaches. The SAVI Model (Somatic, Auditory, Visual, Intellectual) is proposed as a response to these demands because it activates learners' physical, sensory, and intellectual dimensions. Through this model, religious learning can become more dynamic, meaningful, and foundational to students' faith formation and character development.[15]

The SAVI learning model is grounded in the principles of multisensory instruction and embodied learning. These concepts have gained broad attention in cognitive psychology and educational science. Multisensory learning theory is based on the understanding that humans learn not only through abstract verbal input but through holistic experiences that engage sensory, motor, affective, and cognitive-reflective processes.[16] A growing body of research demonstrates that multisensory approaches enhance student engagement, memory retention,

[9]Kemendikbudristek, *26 Episode Merdeka Belajar* (Jakarta: Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2024).

[10]Nursalam Nursalam, Sulaeman Sulaeman, and Ridhwan Latuapo, "Implementasi *Kurikulum Merdeka* Melalui Pembelajaran Berbasis Proyek Pada Sekolah Penggerak Kelompok Bermain Terpadu Nurul Falah Dan Ar-Rasyid Banda," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan* 8, no. 1 (2023): 17–34, https://doi.org/10.24832/jpnk.v8i1.3769.

[11]S. Komariah, W. Wilodati, and S. Wahyuni, *Merdeka Belajar: Konstruksi Pedagogi Kritis Dalam Kurikulum Merdeka* (Malang: Unisma Press, 2023).

[12]W. Nugroho and D. Setiawan, *Merdeka Belajar: Sebuah Pilihan* (Jakarta: Kubuku, 2020), https://kubuku.id/detail/merdeka-belajar---sebuah-pilihan/48793?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

[13]Suplimi Hartobi, Ahmad Suradi, and Adi Saputra, "The Implementation of Independent Learning Curriculum (*Merdeka Belajar*) at the Primary School Level," *Indonesian Journal of Innovative Teaching and Learning* 1, no. 2 (2024): 105–16, https://doi.org/10.64420/ijitl.v1i2.181.

[14]Luqmanul Hakim and Abdul Mu'id, "Integration of Differentiation Learning in Islamic Religious Education in Improving Spiritual Literacy in the Society Era 5.0," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 15, no. 2 (2025): 210–22, https://doi.org/10.38073/jpi.v15i2.3480.

[15]Muhamad Akip, Nevi Laila Khasanah, and Asih Rahmawati, "Implementasi Model Pembelajaran Savi (Somatis-Auditori-Visual-Intelektual) Terhadap Hasil Belajar Siswa Pada Mata Pelajaran PAI Di SMP N 6 Lubuklinggau," *Ej: Edification Journal* 5, no. 1 (2022): 37–53, https://doi.org/10.37092/ej.v5i1.414.

[16]Zhiwei Liu et al., "The Effect of Embodied Learning on Students' Learning Performance: A Meta-Analysis," *Frontiers in Psychology* 16, no. August (2025), https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1658797.

knowledge transfer, and deeper conceptual understanding compared to purely verbal forms of instruction. For example, studies with preschool children indicate that multisensory approaches are highly effective in developing foundational numerical concepts when compared with traditional methods.[17]

Students in the digital era, confronted with rapid information flow, diverse media formats, and the demands of twenty-first-century competencies, including critical, creative, and collaborative thinking, require instructional approaches that offer flexibility. A multisensory approach provides such flexibility by enabling teachers to design activities that integrate movement, visualization, audio stimulation, reflection, and social interaction.[18] Moreover, the integration of theories such as Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) with multisensory learning has been proposed as a neuro-pedagogical framework to optimize students' comprehension and engagement by reducing extraneous cognitive load and activating the brain's multisensory processing networks.[19] This context underscores the need for learning models and methods that align with the characteristics of multisensory instruction.

In formal educational settings, particularly in religious instruction, learning models and methods have traditionally been teacher centered, positioning the teacher as the transmitter of knowledge and students as passive recipients. This approach aligns with a transmission-oriented paradigm that prioritizes memorization and cognitive attainment while giving limited attention to students' active participation. [20] As societal developments evolve and twenty-first-century competencies become increasingly essential, this teacher-centered paradigm faces growing challenges. Students today encounter rapid information flows, diverse media environments, and heightened demands for critical, creative, and collaborative thinking.[21]

The transformation toward a student-centered learning paradigm grounded in multisensory or embodied learning has become increasingly relevant in the context of Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI), given that religious education aims not only at cognitive mastery but also at the affective, motor, and spiritual development of students.[22] The SAVI model (Somatic, Auditory, Visual, Intellectual) is proposed as a solution because it activates learners' physical, sensory, and intellectual dimensions, allowing religious instruction to become more dynamic, meaningful, and foundational to students' faith formation and character development.[23] The integration of multisensory approaches with

[17]Ramlan Abdul Wasi et al., "Integrasi Cognitive Load Theory Dan Pembelajaran Multisensorik: Kerangka Neuro-Kognitif Untuk Optimalisasi Dan Keterlibatan Siswa Di Era Digital," *Paedagogy: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Psikologi* 5, no. 3 (2025): 1165–77, https://doi.org/10.51878/paedagogy.v5i3.6532.

[18]Ratna Dyah Suryaratri, Eko Hadi Prayitno, and Wuryani Wuryani, "The Implementation of Multi-Sensory Learning at Elementary Schools in Jakarta," *JPUD - Jurnal Pendidikan Usia Dini* 13, no. 1 (2019): 100–113, https://doi.org/10.21009/10.21009/jpud.131.08.

[19]Wasi et al., "Integrasi Cognitive Load Theory Dan Pembelajaran Multisensorik: Kerangka Neuro-Kognitif Untuk Optimalisasi Dan Keterlibatan Siswa Di Era Digital."

[20]A. Agus, *Pedagogi Pendidikan Agama Islam Di Era Digital.* (Jakarta: Prenadamedia Group, 2021).

[21]Emily Q. Rosenzweig et al., "College Students' Reasons for Leaving Biomedical Fields: Disenchantment with Biomedicine or Attraction to Other Fields?," *Journal of Educational Psychology* 113, no. 2 (2021): 351–69, https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000456.

[22]M. Aris Akin, "Integration of Values and Cognition: Enhancing The Role of Educators in Modern Islamic Education," *International Converence on Research Issues (ICORES*, 2024, 232–39, https://doi.org/10.31332/i-cores.v1i1.11115.

[23]Akip, Khasanah, and Rahmawati, "Implementasi Model Pembelajaran Savi (Somatis-Auditori-Visual-Intelektual) Terhadap Hasil Belajar Siswa Pada Mata Pelajaran PAI Di SMP N 6 Lubuklinggau."

Islamic pedagogy and educational technology offers opportunities to create learning processes that are active, participatory, and reflective. Such integration is also positioned to address the challenges of the digital era while supporting holistic character formation in learners.[24]

Nevertheless, conventional Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) models that rely on lecturing, memorization, and theoretical instruction are often criticized for emphasizing cognitive aspects while providing limited opportunities for value internalization, spiritual experience, and concrete character development. Several conceptual studies indicate that even when cognitive learning theories, such as those derived from developmental psychology, are applied to Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) instruction, their impact remains largely confined to cognitive understanding rather than generating meaningful attitudinal or behavioral transformation.[25]

In this context, integrating Islamic pedagogy, multisensory approaches, and technology, particularly digital learning media, becomes increasingly relevant. Early studies on technology-based religious education and contextual instructional methods show that the integration of media and innovative approaches can enhance the relevance of learning and strengthen students' motivation.[26] However, empirical literature that specifically examines the implementation of multisensory models, including the SAVI model, in the context of Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) at the primary school level, particularly within the *Merdeka Belajar* policy framework, remains very limited.

Based on the literature reviewed above, several significant research gaps can be identified. First, there is a limited body of empirical research, both internationally and nationally, that systematically applies multisensory or SAVI-based learning models in religious education, particularly in Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) at the primary school level. A second gap concerns the lack of integration between multisensory theory or embodied cognition and Islamic pedagogy in the academic literature, as most multisensory research focuses on language development, early literacy, or science education rather than religious instruction, resulting in conceptual and methodological inconsistencies. In addition, many multisensory studies tend to be ad hoc, lacking robust theoretical grounding and offering minimal critical analysis of spiritual and character-based dimensions. They also seldom address the need to align implementation with national education policies such as *Merdeka Belajar* to ensure contextual relevance and applicability in primary schools. These gaps provide the rationale for conducting the present study entitled *"Transformation of Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) Learning through the SAVI Model at SD Negeri 01 Pisang Baru in the Merdeka Belajar Era."*

The formulation of this research title is grounded in preliminary observations conducted at SD Negeri 01 Pisang Baru, which indicate that the learning of Islamic Religious Education

[24]Enjang Aris Somantri et al., "Improving Islamic Religious Education Learning Outcomes Utilizing the Brain-Based Learning Model Based on Students' School Origin and Cognitive Stage," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education Studies (IJIES)* 7, no. 1 (2024): 114–26, https://doi.org/10.33367/ijies.v7i1.5302.

[25]Puji Wismaningrum and Sita Acetylena, "Pengembangan Materi PAI Berbasis Teknologi Dengan Kecerdasan Buatan Untuk Meningkatkan Efektivitas Dan Interaksi Belajar," *Jurnal Intelek Insan Cendikia* 2, no. 7 (2025): 13929–41, https://jicnusantara.com/download/4463/4523.

[26]Salamayanti, Imam Syafe'I, and Muhammad Akhmansyah, "The Problems of Learning Islamic Religious Education at Kasui 1 State High School Way Kanan Regency," *International Journal on Advanced Science, Education, and Religion* 7, no. 4 (2024): 139–50, https://doi.org/10.33648/ijoaser.v7i4.490.

(*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) still relies heavily on conventional methods such as lecturing and memorization, positioning the teacher as the central source of instruction while students tend to remain passive listeners. Students' kinesthetic, creative, and reflective activities are limited, which restricts the optimal internalization of Islamic values. The use of digital learning media or interactive learning resources is also minimal, despite the fact that digital-native learners require learning experiences that are interactive, collaborative, and multisensory. Some students demonstrate enthusiasm during activities such as memorization quizzes or recitations, yet many show low motivation when the material is delivered verbally without varied learning activities.

Preliminary observations also reveal both teacher readiness and the availability of facilities that support the implementation of innovative learning models. The PAI teacher demonstrates openness to integrating movement-based activities, auditory and visual stimuli, and cognitive reflection into instruction, although noting the need for training and practical guidance in applying multisensory models such as SAVI. These findings indicate strong potential for transforming Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) learning through the SAVI model, shifting the paradigm from teacher-centered to student-centered instruction, increasing active engagement, and fostering more holistic internalization of Islamic values. The observations further highlight that administrative support and access to digital learning media are critical factors in ensuring the consistent and successful implementation of the SAVI model in the classroom.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to addressing gaps in both the literature and classroom practice regarding the use of multisensory learning models, particularly SAVI, within the context of Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) in Indonesian primary schools. Preliminary observations indicate that although teachers and students express interest in instructional innovation, systematic implementation remains limited. This research will provide empirical insight into how the SAVI model can be integrated with Islamic pedagogy and the *Kurikulum Merdeka* to create learning experiences that are active, participatory, and meaningful. It also aims to align Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) instruction with the characteristics of digital-native learners and the competency demands of the twenty-first century.

The purpose of this study is to describe the process of transforming Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) instruction through the implementation of the SAVI model at SD Negeri 01 Pisang Baru and to evaluate its impact on student participation, motivation, and value internalization. The findings are expected to yield both theoretical and practical contributions: theoretically, by enriching the discourse on multisensory and embodied-learning approaches within Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) and practically, by providing guidance for teachers in designing active and contextual instructional strategies that align with the *Kurikulum Merdeka* while strengthening students' character, spiritual development, and twenty-first-century competencies. Accordingly, this study is expected to offer conceptual and practical contributions to the development of Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) pedagogy, broaden the literature on multisensory learning in religious contexts, and propose a contextual, humanistic, and twenty-first-century-relevant instructional model.

B. METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at providing an in-depth account of the transformation of Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) learning through the implementation of the SAVI model. The descriptive qualitative approach is designed to depict phenomena systematically and factually without intervening in or manipulating research variables.[27] Its primary focus is to understand the experiences, perceptions, and actual practices of research participants within their natural settings.[28] The qualitative approach is appropriate because it allows the researcher to obtain a holistic understanding of students' learning experiences, teachers' instructional strategies, and the real-world implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* at Pisang Baru State Elementary School No. 01 (*Sekolah Dasar Negeri 01*) Pisang Baru.[29] The descriptive method is used to present the transformation process comprehensively and systematically, enabling the findings to portray authentic classroom practices as well as the challenges encountered by both teachers and students.[30]

The research subjects consist of the Principal, the PAI teacher, and fifth-grade students at SD Negeri 01 Pisang Baru. The principal serves as a key informant who provides perspectives on school policies and institutional support for instructional innovation. The PAI teacher functions as the primary implementer of the SAVI model, making their experiences and strategies central to the data collected. The students are included as main participants whose engagement, motivation, and understanding are observed to assess active and meaningful learning. This composition aligns with qualitative research principles that foreground participants' perspectives as the primary source of information.[31]

Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The observation focused on classroom practices in Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) to capture the implementation of the SAVI model, student interactions, and overall classroom dynamics.[32] Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the school principal and the PAI teacher to explore their perspectives on the model's implementation, the challenges encountered, and the innovative strategies employed. The documentation included lesson plans, student worksheets, photographs of classroom activities, and audio or video recordings. This combination of techniques enabled systematic triangulation, strengthening the validity and depth of the analysis.[33]

Data validity was ensured through source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and member checking. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from the School Principal, the PAI teacher, and the students. Methodological triangulation integrated data from observations, interviews, and documentation to verify the consistency of emerging findings. Member checking was employed to confirm the researcher's interpretations with the participants, thereby strengthening the accuracy and credibility of

[27]Riduwan Abdullah Sani, *Penelitian Pendidikan* (Jakarta: Tira Smart, 2021).

[28]Burhan Bungin, *Metodologi Penelitian Sosial: Format-Format Kuantitatif Dan Kualitatif* (Surabaya: Airlangga University Press, 2022).

[29]John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches. 4th Ed.* (New York: Sage Publications, 2021).

[30]Hardani, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif & Kuantitatif* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Ilmu Group, 2020).

[31]Lexy J. Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 2021).

[32]Afrizal, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2023).

[33]R.C. Bogdan and S.K. Biklen, *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theories and Methods (5th Ed.)* (Boston, MA: Pearson Education, 2020).

the results.[34] In addition, the researcher engaged in reflexivity to minimize subjective bias and ensure that the findings accurately reflected the actual classroom realities.

The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of data reduction, data display, and the drawing and verifying of conclusions. Data reduction involved selecting relevant information and organizing it into analytic categories that reflected the core themes of the study. The data were then displayed through tables, narrative descriptions, and diagrams to support clear interpretation. The stage of drawing and verifying conclusions was conducted inductively to address the study's focus on the transformation of Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) learning through the SAVI model.[35] This analytic process also examined the implications of SAVI for students' motivation, participation, and character development.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

These findings present the results of the study on the transformation of Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) learning through the application of the SAVI model (Somatic, Auditory, Visual, Intellectual) at SD Negeri 01 Pisang Baru within the *Merdeka Belajar* policy context. The analysis draws on data obtained from interviews with the principal, the PAI teacher, and Grade V students, as well as classroom observations and supporting documentation. The discussion focuses on three core areas: the conceptual transformation of Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) learning in the *Merdeka Belajar* era, the implementation of the SAVI model in fostering active and meaningful learning, and a critical analysis of the model's pedagogical implications. Each finding is interpreted in relation to multisensory learning theory, embodied learning, and Islamic pedagogical principles to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the SAVI model enhances learning quality. This section further evaluates challenges faced by teachers and students and identifies enabling and constraining factors that shape the success of instructional transformation.

1. Conceptualizing the Transformation of Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) Learning in the *Merdeka Belajar* Era

Educational transformation refers to a comprehensive shift in instructional methods, underlying philosophies, and learning structures to enhance relevance, effectiveness, and overall quality. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI), this transformation entails moving away from lecture-based and memorization-oriented practices toward learning that positions students as active, reflective, and contextually engaged participants. The shift involves not only methodological adjustments but also a reorientation of school culture and teacher roles within the learning environment. Teachers are expected to function as facilitators who guide students' meaning-making processes rather than as the sole providers of knowledge. This conceptual shift aligns with the *Merdeka Belajar* framework, which emphasizes autonomy, learner-centeredness, and the development of holistic competencies.

[34]Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches. 4th Ed.*

[35]M.B. Miles, A.M. Huberman, and J. Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook.* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2019).

The *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum policy grants schools, teachers, and students greater flexibility to design learning processes that align with learners' needs, characteristics, and real classroom conditions. This flexibility creates space for pedagogical innovation that integrates Islamic values, character formation, and twenty-first-century competencies such as creativity, collaboration, and reflective thinking, rather than focusing solely on academic attainment. In this regard, Solpani, the *Principal* of SD Negeri 01 Pisang Baru, stated that *"the school fully supports the implementation of innovative methods. As the principal, I support the use of innovative learning models such as SAVI. Teachers are given the autonomy to design learning activities that are relevant and engaging, although some limitations in facilities remain."* His statement reflects clear institutional commitment to pedagogical transformation, which is a critical prerequisite for sustaining innovation over time.

The Principal's account is reinforced by Mahmud Ashari, the PAI teacher, who explained that *"efforts toward transformation have begun through a combination of activities involving movement, audio, visualization, and reflective tasks as alternatives to lecture-based and memorization-oriented instruction."* He nevertheless acknowledged persistent constraints, particularly related to instructional time and the availability of supporting facilities and resources. These conditions indicate that a shift in pedagogical paradigm requires systemic support and cannot rely solely on the initiative of individual teachers.

One of the Grade V students, Tibran Hakim Fatkullah, described his experience by stating, *"Now we learn while moving, looking at pictures, listening to stories, and discussing. It becomes easier to understand the lesson, and it is more enjoyable than only listening to the teacher's lecture."* His account illustrates that when students are engaged through active and multisensory activities, their emotional and cognitive involvement increases in ways consistent with student-centered and active learning principles.

These practical findings are reinforced by international literature on multisensory and embodied learning. A recent meta-analysis reported that embodied learning yields a moderate positive effect on student performance (effect size ≈ 0.406) while also enhancing engagement and long-term retention.[36] This approach enables learners to grasp abstract concepts through concrete and sensory-based experiences, making it particularly relevant for Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI), which requires the internalization of values and character formation.

Despite these positive indications, the process of transformation is not without challenges. Many teachers and schools struggle to adapt to new pedagogical approaches, particularly when resources such as instructional media, facilities, and professional development opportunities are limited. This aligns with prior studies on pedagogical innovation in primary schools, which emphasize that institutional support and continuous teacher training are essential for ensuring the consistent implementation of alternative models.[37] Active student engagement also emerges as a critical determinant of success; without sustained learner participation, the broader goals of transformation related to

[36]Liu et al., "The Effect of Embodied Learning on Students' Learning Performance: A Meta-Analysis."

[37]Nasser Mansour et al., *Embodied Learning of Science Concepts Through Augmented Reality Technology*, *Education and Information Technologies*, vol. 30 (Springer US, 2025), https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-024-13120-0.

twenty-first-century skill development and the internalization of Islamic values are unlikely to be achieved.[38]

The ongoing paradigm shift in Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) also invites a deeper philosophical reflection: religious education should not be confined to the transmission of knowledge, but should support learners in constructing meaning, character, and spiritual awareness.[39] An active and contextually grounded learning model provides opportunities for religious education to become more relevant to students' lived experiences rather than remaining a ritualistic routine or an exercise in memorization.[40] This orientation aligns with constructivist principles, which posit that learners build understanding through experience and reflective engagement.[41] In addition, international research indicates that integrating active and multisensory approaches into religious education enhances emotional engagement and supports deeper comprehension of religious concepts.[42]

Initial observations at SD Negeri 01 Pisang Baru indicate that the existing learning culture provides a supportive foundation for pedagogical change, as some teachers have begun experimenting with new strategies and many students demonstrate growing enthusiasm. However, the success of this transformation depends heavily on sustained commitment, ongoing professional development, and adequate instructional resources. Without these conditions, innovation risks becoming episodic rather than a structural and durable shift in instructional practice. The observations also reveal varying levels of teacher adaptability, with those more familiar with technology and active learning methods adopting new models more readily. Students who receive consistent guidance from such teachers show notable improvements in participation and engagement, underscoring the importance of continuous instructional support to ensure that the transformation is effective and sustained.

Taken together, these findings illustrate a shift from transmission-based instruction to experience-centered, reflective, and participatory learning. They provide preliminary evidence that the *Kurikulum Merdeka* and multisensory approaches can serve as a strong pedagogical foundation for revitalizing Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) in the contemporary era, provided that implementation is consistent and supported at the institutional level.

2. Implementation of the SAVI Model in Developing Active and Meaningful Learning

The SAVI model (Somatic, Auditory, Visualization, Intellectual) serves as a practical framework for advancing the transformation of Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI). It is designed to activate students' sensory, physical, and cognitive capacities simultaneously, thereby shifting learning beyond verbal and textual modes toward more holistic, concrete, and meaningful experiences. This approach enables teachers to align

[38]Somantri et al., "Improving Islamic Religious Education Learning Outcomes Utilizing the Brain-Based Learning Model Based on Students' School Origin and Cognitive Stage."

[39]Hakim and Mu'id, "Integration of Differentiation Learning in Islamic Religious Education in Improving Spiritual Literacy in the Society Era 5.0."

[40]Dietrich and Evans, "Traditional Lectures versus Active Learning – A False Dichotomy?"

[41]C.T. Fosnot, *Constructivism: Theory, Perspectives, and Practice (2nd Ed.)* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2019).

[42]D.A. Sausa and C.A. Tomlinson, *Differentiation and the Brain: How Neuroscience Supports the Learner-Friendly Classroom (2nd Ed.)* (Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press, 2018).

instructional strategies with students' individual learning preferences, ensuring that each learner participates actively and develops deeper conceptual understanding.

The PAI teacher at SD Negeri 01 Pisang Baru enacted the Somatic dimension through hands-on activities such as wudu simulations, guided prayer practice involving coordinated movements, and role-play exercises depicting everyday moral situations. These activities enabled students to experience religious concepts physically rather than merely hearing abstract explanations. This aligns with embodied learning perspectives, which argue that bodily engagement with the environment can deepen conceptual understanding. The integration of somatic tasks also strengthened students' focus and emotional involvement, allowing the learning process to become more dynamic and memorable.

The Auditory dimension was implemented through small-group discussions, narrative-based moral stories, and interactive mini-lectures rather than monologic instruction. Iffatin Naila Rahma, one of the interviewed students, noted that *"I understand the lesson more easily when I listen to stories and we discuss them together, not just listen and memorize."* Such forms of auditory engagement provide space for value reflection and dialogic exploration, which are central to religious education. This approach also strengthens communication and interpersonal skills, as students learn to listen attentively, respond constructively, and appreciate the perspectives of their peers.

The Visualization dimension was operationalized through the use of images, illustrated prophetic stories, moral value diagrams, and visual models of abstract religious concepts. This approach supported students with strong visual learning preferences and broadened access to complex Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) content. Research on multisensory learning indicates that the integration of visual and verbal stimuli enhances retention and comprehension through dual coding, and it strengthens the ability to transfer knowledge to real-life contexts.[43] Visualization also enabled students to connect Islamic values with concrete everyday experiences, making moral and spiritual concepts more accessible, memorable, and actionable.

The Intellectual dimension is integrated through reflective tasks, values-based discussions, real case studies, and collaborative problem-solving activities. These strategies encourage students to think critically, analyze moral principles, and articulate how such values can be applied in daily life. The approach aligns with active learning, which positions students as engaged participants in constructing meaning. It is also consistent with constructivist theory, where learners build knowledge through experience and guided reflection.[44] This integration ultimately strengthens students' metacognitive abilities, enabling them to assess, plan, and evaluate their actions in accordance with Islamic values.

According to the principal, the implementation of the SAVI approach is supported institutionally. The principal explained that *"classrooms have begun to be arranged more flexibly, teachers are encouraged to join training programs, and simple visual and audio learning media are being provided. This statement reflects the school's awareness that*

[43]Giulia Cosentino et al., "Students' Experience and Learning Outcomes in Multisensory Environments: The Moderating Role of Interaction Modalities," *Smart Learning Environments* 12, no. 1 (2025), https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-025-00402-4.

[44]Michelene T.H. Chi, Paul J. Feltovich, and Robert Glaser, "Categorization and Representation of Physics Problems by Experts and Novices," *Cognitive Science* 5, no. 2 (2020): 121–52, https://doi.org/10.1207/s15516709cog0502_2.

pedagogical transformation is not solely the responsibility of teachers but requires sustained policy support, adequate facilities, and long-term institutional commitment". It also indicates that structural readiness within the school plays a decisive role in enabling multisensory learning practices to function effectively. Overall, the principal's explanation underscores that successful SAVI implementation depends heavily on institutional support, including facilities, teacher development, and classroom arrangements aligned with multisensory learning.

Classroom observations indicated that students were more interactive, engaged in discussions, and participated in collaborative activities, contrasting sharply with the passive atmosphere typical of traditional lecture-based instruction. Many students displayed enthusiasm, interacted actively with peers, and appeared motivated when assigned creative tasks. These patterns suggest that the SAVI approach successfully fosters a participatory and collaborative learning environment. However, the implementation also faces tangible constraints, including limited visual media, restricted movement space, inadequate audio tools, short instructional time, and heavy teacher preparation demands. As one student, Mihrima Asma Chandani, noted, *"Sometimes we want more activities, but the tools and space are not sufficient,"* highlighting the strong influence of contextual resources on implementation quality.

International literature affirms that while multisensory potential can be optimized, maintaining an appropriate balance of cognitive load and instructional design is essential to ensure that embodied learning remains effective without causing sensory overload. Studies in science education using Augmented Reality (AR) demonstrate that embodied, multisensory, and interactive approaches can enhance students' conceptual understanding and interest in learning. These findings indicate that physical, visual, auditory, and intellectual activities must be integrated through systematic design rather than incidental inclusion.[45] Such integration allows each element to reinforce the others, producing a holistic and meaningful learning experience. This approach also supports the transfer of knowledge to real-life contexts, which is a key objective of effective embodied learning.

Based on the overall analysis, the implementation of SAVI at SD Negeri 01 Pisang Baru demonstrates that the model is not merely theoretical but can be actualized effectively when institutional support, resources, and teacher training are available. The presence of these enabling factors ensures that each SAVI dimension can function optimally in daily instructional practice. The multidimensional sensory approach provides students with an opportunity to learn in a more holistic, active, and meaningful manner. This learning environment aligns well with the characteristics and needs of contemporary learners who respond positively to interactive and experiential methods. The findings affirm that SAVI has strong practical potential when supported by coherent policy, adequate facilities, and sustained professional development.

3. Critical Analysis and Implications

Although the initial findings indicate significant potential, it is important to interpret them critically, as most of the data are qualitative, derived from observations, interviews, and documentation, without longitudinal quantitative evidence measuring the long-term impact

[45]Mansour et al., *Embodied Learning of Science Concepts Through Augmented Reality Technology*.

on value internalization and character development. Therefore, claims that the SAVI model "shapes religious character" remain indicative rather than conclusive.

Furthermore, the successful implementation of SAVI depends on contextual factors such as the availability of facilities, learning media, classroom space, and instructional time. In schools where resources are limited or teachers lack adequate training, there is a risk that teaching may revert to conventional methods. These considerations highlight that pedagogical transformation requires structural support and school policy; it cannot rely solely on individual teacher initiative. Consequently, the effective application of the SAVI model demands coordinated efforts involving school policy, provision of resources, and professional development of teachers to ensure sustainable and systemic educational innovation rather than episodic implementation.

From a learning theory perspective, the literature on embodied learning indicates that positive effects occur when sensory and physical interactions are designed with appropriate scaffolding, aligned with students' developmental stages, and adapted to the content. This implies that in Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI), the design of multisensory activities must carefully consider students' age, cognitive and emotional maturity, and socio-cultural context. Therefore, the integration of scaffolding principles and contextual adaptation is crucial to ensure that multisensory learning in Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) is not only engaging but also effective in fostering value comprehension and character internalization.

The implications for educational practice, particularly at the elementary school level, underscore the need to consider the adoption of multisensory or embodied learning models, such as SAVI, as part of efforts to innovate Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) instruction. However, adoption must be accompanied by teacher training, provision of instructional media, and ongoing evaluation of effectiveness, including spiritual, character, and value internalization aspects, rather than focusing solely on academic outcomes. From a policy perspective, these findings support the notion that initiatives such as the *Kurikulum Merdeka* not only provide curricular flexibility but also create opportunities for pedagogical transformation. Government authorities and policymakers should ensure adequate infrastructure, professional development for teachers, and pedagogical guidance for Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) to enable broader and more consistent implementation of innovations like the SAVI model.

Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) by applying multisensory and embodied learning approaches, which have been predominantly discussed in the fields of science, arts, or language education. Consequently, this research opens avenues for further studies to explore how religious values, character, and spirituality can be cultivated through sensory, physical, and reflective experiences. However, an important limitation remains: valid and reliable instruments to systematically measure value internalization or character change are not yet available. Therefore, future research is recommended to develop quantitative or mixed-method instruments capable of capturing long-term affective, moral, and spiritual development in students.

Future research could expand the sample to include multiple elementary schools with diverse characteristics to examine variations in the implementation of the SAVI model. This is important to identify contextual factors influencing the success of pedagogical transformation,

such as infrastructure support, teacher commitment, school culture, and community resources. Therefore, although the initial implementation of SAVI shows great promise, long-term success depends on consistency, systemic support, and ongoing evaluation. This study provides a preliminary foundation, but collective commitment is required to ensure that pedagogical transformation in Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) genuinely fosters holistic changes in students' character, spirituality, and overall educational quality.

D. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that implementing the SAVI model (Somatic, Auditory, Visualization, Intellectual) in Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI)) at SD Negeri 01 Pisang Baru promotes a shift from teacher-centered to student-centered learning by enhancing active participation, contextual understanding, and meaningful engagement. The multisensory approach enables students to engage cognitively, emotionally, and physically, supporting both knowledge acquisition and the internalization of religious values. Findings indicate that although the model improves motivation, engagement, and conceptual understanding, its effectiveness is influenced by limitations in resources, facilities, and teacher preparedness. The study confirms the potential of multisensory and embodied learning approaches to strengthen Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) pedagogy in alignment with the principles of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. However, the research is limited to a single elementary school and does not quantitatively measure learning outcomes, indicating the need for further studies to generalize the findings. Based on these findings, it is recommended that PAI teachers continue developing innovative, student-centered strategies that integrate multisensory approaches. Schools should provide ongoing professional development, adequate instructional media, and supportive facilities to optimize the implementation of the SAVI model. Educational policymakers are encouraged to facilitate access to training and resources that enable teachers to deliver active and meaningful learning aligned with 21st-century skills. Future research should examine the long-term impact, scalability of the model across different schools, and integration of technology with multisensory learning to further enhance the quality and effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI).

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