

The Urgency of Diagnostic Assessment in Improving the Quality of Learning in Islamic Religious Education

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Abstract	
<p>This study aims to analyze the urgency of diagnostic assessment in improving the quality of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. The background of this research lies in the low quality of PAI learning, which remains predominantly cognitive-oriented while neglecting the integration of knowledge, religious attitudes, and worship skills. This study employed a library research method with content analysis using the Miles & Huberman interactive model. The findings reveal four main urgencies of diagnostic assessment. First, it supports differentiated learning by mapping students' initial abilities. Second, it provides the foundation for remediation and enrichment according to learners' needs. Third, it increases learning motivation by aligning instruction with students' conditions. Fourth, it fosters Islamic character formation through the integration of cognitive and non-cognitive. These results affirm that diagnostic assessment is not merely a technical tool but a fundamental strategy to achieve national education goals and support the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.</p>	<p>Keywords: Diagnostic Assessment; Islamic Religious Education; Learning Quality.</p>

Abstrak	
<p>Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis urgensi asesmen diagnostik dalam meningkatkan mutu pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI). Latar belakang penelitian ini adalah rendahnya mutu pembelajaran PAI yang masih berorientasi pada aspek kognitif dan tanpa mengintegrasikan secara holistik antara pengetahuan, sikap religius, serta keterampilan ibadah. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode studi kepustakaan (library research) dengan teknik analisis isi model interaktif Miles & Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa asesmen diagnostik memiliki empat urgensi utama. Pertama, mendukung pembelajaran berdiferensiasi melalui identifikasi kompetensi awal peserta didik. Kedua, memberikan dasar untuk pelaksanaan remedial dan pengayaan sesuai kebutuhan peserta didik. Ketiga, meningkatkan motivasi belajar dengan menyesuaikan proses pembelajaran dengan kondisi peserta didik. Keempat, membentuk karakter Islami melalui sinergi antara</p>	<p>Kata Kunci: Asesmen Diagnostik; Pendidikan Agama Islam; Mutu Pembelajaran.</p>

aspek kognitif dan non-kognitif. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa asesmen diagnostik tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai perangkat teknis pengukuran, tetapi juga sebagai strategi pedagogis fundamental dalam mewujudkan tujuan pendidikan nasional serta mendukung implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka.

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1. Introduction

The independent curriculum is one of the efforts of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) to represent strategic efforts to accelerate the quality of the national education system in Indonesia (Budiono & Hatip, 2023). The learning in this curriculum is compiled based on the results of evaluations at the beginning, middle, and end of learning (Efendi et al., 2024) to ensure that the learning process is in accordance with their needs, and this can be achieved by conducting diagnostic assessments (Hasmawati & Mukhtar, 2023). Diagnostic assessments help teachers to map learning preferences, competency strengths and areas that need reinforcement (Munaroh, 2024). This diagnostic assessment is very helpful for teachers to find out the type of learning, because each child has different uniqueness. The differentiated learning aims to provide learning that suits students' talents and can increase inspiration and learning outcomes for students (Asnawi et al., 2023).

The quality of learning in Islamic Religious Education is not only determined by the mastery of knowledge, but also the ability of students to integrate Islamic values and practice them in daily life (Jannah & Hamami, 2022). The Islamic education curriculum in Indonesia tends to be partial and dichotomous (Hamami & Nuryana, 2022). Partially, because learning emphasizes more on the cognitive aspect, one way to overcome this problem is to use diagnostic assessments. Shihab & Setiawan (2022) define diagnostic assessment as an important instrument to detect students' misconceptions, talents, interests, and potentials from the beginning of learning, so that teachers can plan learning strategies that are more targeted.

A Kompas report written by Hasan (2025) revealed that in Buleleng Regency, Bali, there were around 363 junior high school students with low reading skills, of which 155 students could not read at all and 208 students were not fluent in reading. This fact confirms the failure to detect learning difficulties from an early age, which has an impact on the weak quality of learning, including in PAI subjects. Therefore, an assessment that can diagnose from the beginning is needed to prevent the spread or expansion of ignorance of learning and indirectly diagnostic assessment becomes an urgency that cannot be ignored in an effort to improve the quality of PAI learning.

Research by Fahmi et al. (2023) shows that diagnostic assessments have succeeded in improving students' understanding of Islamic religious education materials. Hadziq (2023) found that most teachers are still limited to cognitive assessment, while non-cognitive ones are less paid attention to. In fact, diagnostic assessments have a significant relationship with learning motivation. This is proven by Bakhrudin et al. (2023) showing that the diagnostic assessment and motivation to improve learning are interconnected with the average result obtained of 4.21%. These findings confirm that diagnostic assessment is not only an evaluation tool, but also an instrument to improve the

quality of PAI learning. In addition, Huda & Khairina (2023) prove that non-cognitive diagnostic assessments in PAI are able to identify students' difficulties in reading the Qur'an, which has not been detected well through written exams. From the results of the previous research, it can be concluded that diagnostic assessments have proven to be important in improving the quality of learning, both in terms of motivation, independence, and early detection of learning difficulties.

Based on this description, this study aims to analyze the urgency of diagnostic assessments in improving the quality of Islamic Religious Education learning. This article will emphasize how diagnostic assessments are an important foundation for PAI teachers in designing learning strategies that suit the needs of participants, so that the learning process is more effective and learning outcomes improve.

2. Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of library research. The selection of this approach is based on a literature review to reveal the urgency of diagnostic assessment in improving the learning quality of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Library research is a research method that is very relevant in the realm of Islamic education because it allows researchers to conduct in-depth studies of written sources such as books, scientific journals, and official documents without the need to collect field data (Abdurrahman, 2024).

The data sources used are primary and secondary data. Data collection is carried out by searching, collecting, recording, and managing relevant literature materials to the research focus. The data that has been collected is then analyzed using the content analysis of the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014). This model is carried out through three flows of activities that take place simultaneously and repeatedly during the research process: first, data condensation, which is the process of selecting, concentrating, and simplifying data from the sources that have been collected. Second, the presentation of data, by taking into account data that has been condensed. Third, drawing conclusions, where verification and logical intervention are carried out to answer the formulation of the problem and extract the essence of all the findings of the analysis.

3. Result and Discussion

Concept of Diagnostic Assessment in PAI

Diagnostic assessment is an assessment procedure used to find out the weaknesses and strengths of students in mastering certain materials or competencies and their causes. Diagnostic assessments are carried out in pre-learning, which aims to diagnose the basic abilities of students and to determine the initial condition of the students. The process of knowledge transfer or learning definitely requires in-depth information related to students, both from cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects (Lubis & Syawalina, 2025). The results of this diagnostic assessment are used as a basis for providing follow-up in the form of appropriate treatment (intervention) that is appropriate and in accordance with the needs of students (Forisma et al., 2023). In the world of education, diagnostic assessment is the first step to unveil the veil from students. As the name implies, it is diagnostics which means identifying, identifying students' interests, talents, strengths, and shortcomings before starting to provide learning materials (Awwal et al., 2024).

Diagnostic assessment in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays an important role in identifying the needs, abilities, and potentials of students as a

whole. This approach is more relevant in the independent curriculum where assessments are carried out from the beginning of the study to map the initial abilities of students. Diagnostic assessments are at the beginning of learning so that teachers can choose the right learning methods, strategies, and models for students (Nugroho et al., 2023). This shows that diagnostic assessments are not just an assessment instrument, but part of learning engineering. If PAI teachers ignore it, then learning risks losing direction because they do not understand the initial condition of the student. Therefore, diagnostic assessments are the entrance to realizing contextual learning. Without an initial mapping of the conditions of students, the differentiation of learning proclaimed in the Independent Curriculum will only be rhetoric, not real practice.

Diagnostic assessments in PAI not only aim to find out the cognitive abilities of students, but also explore non-cognitive aspects that include psychological, social, and spiritual. Thus, diagnostic assessments play an important role as an important instrument for teachers in understanding the condition of students as a whole before the learning process begins (Awwal et al., 2024). This comprehensive understanding allows teachers to design learning that suits the abilities, interests, and character of students, so that the PAI learning process becomes more effective and meaningful. In general, the objectives of diagnostic assessment in PAI can be grouped into two main dimensions, namely cognitive and non-cognitive, which complement each other in supporting the achievement of better learning quality.

Objectives of Cognitive Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic assessment in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has an important role to provide a comprehensive picture of the abilities, needs, and conditions of students before the learning process begins. The main goal is not only limited to mapping cognitive aspects, but also includes non-cognitive dimensions which include the psychological, social, emotional, and religious well-being of students. By comprehensively understanding the condition of students, teachers can design learning strategies that are more effective, adaptive, and meaningful for each individual (Awwal et al., 2024)

Cognitive diagnostic assessments function to identify students' learning outcomes from the beginning. Through written, oral, or concept mapping tests, teachers can find out the extent of students' initial mastery of the main materials in PAI such as faith, worship, morals, and Islamic cultural history. This information is the basis for teachers to determine the starting point of learning that suits the students' abilities, so that learning activities become more efficient and directed (Fan et al., 2021). The results of the assessment also help teachers adjust strategies, approaches, and learning media to be in line with the average level of competence of the class. This principle is in line with the spirit of differentiated learning in the Independent Curriculum, which emphasizes the equal distribution of learning opportunities based on the individual needs of students (Nugroho et al., 2023)

Apart from being a mapping tool, cognitive diagnostic assessments also serve as a basis for teachers in designing follow-up programs in the form of remedial learning and enrichment. Students who have not achieved basic competencies can be given additional guidance, while those who have exceeded the minimum achievement can obtain more challenging enrichment activities. Thus, diagnostic assessments support the implementation of more adaptive learning and are oriented towards improving the quality of learning outcomes (Rahman et al., 2025). Meanwhile, in the non-cognitive realm, diagnostic assessments have an equally important role in understanding the social,

emotional, and spiritual dimensions of students. Teachers can use various instruments such as questionnaires, observations, interviews, or reflection journals to explore the psychological and social-emotional well-being of students. Through this assessment, teachers can find out the level of confidence, learning motivation, and emotional condition of students, so that they are able to create a supportive, religious, and empathetic classroom climate (Kholid et al., 2024).

Non-cognitive assessments also help teachers understand students' learning activities and habits at home, including how students apply Islamic values such as discipline, responsibility, and the implementation of worship outside of school. The results of this assessment provide a complete picture of the integration between spiritual values and students' daily practices (Huda & Khairina, 2023). In addition, by knowing the social background and social environment of students, teachers can provide more contextual guidance, so that religious values can be internalized more effectively according to their social conditions (Prihatin & Hamami, 2022). Furthermore, non-cognitive diagnostic assessments also allow teachers to identify learners' learning styles, characters, and interests. This mapping is important so that teachers can adjust learning methods according to students' learning tendencies, whether visual, auditory, or kinesthetic, so that the learning process becomes more fun and personal. Thus, diagnostic assessments are not only an evaluation tool, but also a means to understand the uniqueness of each student (Asnawi et al., 2023).

Overall, the purpose of diagnostic assessments in PAI is not just to measure students' academic abilities, but also to understand them as complete individuals with intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual potential. The implementation of diagnostic assessments that touch on these two dimensions is an important foundation for teachers in creating humanistic, adaptive, and oriented PAI learning that is balanced between science and morals (Hadziq, 2023).

Cognitive and Non-Cognitive Diagnostic Assessments

Diagnostic assessments include cognitive and non-cognitive. Cognitive diagnostic assessment focuses on students' initial knowledge and understanding of PAI material. According to Fan et al. (2021), cognitive diagnostic assessments help teachers map the strengths and weaknesses of students in a particular knowledge structure, so that learning can be directed more appropriately. In the context of PAI, this assessment includes an understanding of: Faith, Worship, Morals and Islamic Cultural History (SKI). Forms of instruments that can be used include 1) written tests such as multiple choice, description, or concept mapping questions. 2) oral tests such as questions and answers about daily prayers or memorization of hadiths. 3) digital quizzes such as Google Form, Kahoot, or Wordwall to attract learners. An example of its application in PAI is that before starting the material on prayer, the teacher provides simple diagnostic questions about the requirements for ablution. And from these results, teachers know who has mastered and who has not mastered.

However, research shows that cognitive assessments alone are not enough to provide a complete picture of students' learning readiness. For example, Awwal et al., (2024) found that a diagnostic test based on written questions was effective in mapping students' initial understanding of the material of faith and worship. However, Fitriah et al. (2025) revealed that many teachers still have difficulty compiling valid and reliable cognitive instruments, so that the assessment results are less than optimal in describing the real condition of students. This difference confirms that cognitive assessment remains important

as a starting point, but must be equipped with non-cognitive instruments for PAI learning to be truly adaptive and comprehensive.

Non-cognitive diagnostic assessments focus on students' attitudes, conditions, motivations, interests, and skills. This assessment was carried out to determine the psychological, emotional, and social conditions of students (Kholid et al., 2024). The non-cognitive aspect of diagnostic assessments is important to understand because with it we can know the extent to which Islamic values have been applied in students, including awareness of worship, discipline, and sincerity (Huda & Khairina, 2023). Non-cognitive diagnostic assessments at the beginning of learning are carried out to explore aspects: psychological and social-emotional well-being of students, students' activities while studying at home, students' family conditions, students' associations and friendships, learning styles, characters, and students' interests. Assessment of things that have their application in daily life is a demand for Islamic religious education (Prihatin & Hamami, 2022). In addition, non-cognitive assessments also function to detect students' emotional and psychological conditions, such as confidence, learning anxiety, and religious motivation. This is important because the success of PAI learning is not only determined by cognitive mastery, but also by the mental and emotional readiness of students in accepting and practicing religious teachings.

In the context of PAI, this non-cognitive assessment includes: religious attitudes, motivation to learn worship skills, and Islamic character. The forms of instruments that can be used are: 1) questionnaire, to measure learning motivation or interest in PAI subjects. 2) observation, the teacher observes the religious attitude of the students during learning or religious activities. 3) interviews, exploring the difficulties of students, for example in reading the Qur'an. 4) Reflection journal, students write down their spiritual experiences, such as the sultan maintaining the consistency of prayer. An example of its application in PAI, teachers provide non-cognitive questionnaires at the beginning of the semester to find out students' worship habits. The results are used to determine the focus of coaching, for example strengthening the motivation for congregational prayer or improving the reading of the Qur'an. The fundamental weakness of PAI practice in schools so far is that the success of students is more often measured through written tests. In fact, the ability to perform ablution correctly, the skill of reading the Qur'an, or the habit of keeping prayers on time cannot be measured by cognitive tests. This is where the urgency of non-cognitive assessment lies: linking conceptual mastery with real practice in religious life

Research conducted by Chotimah (2025); Hadziq (2023) shows that teachers are still limited to cognitive assessment, while non-cognitive aspects are less considered. However, the findings (Huda & Khairina, 2023) prove that non-cognitive assessments are able to detect difficulties in reading the Qur'an that pass written tests. This difference emphasizes the need to integrate the two forms of assessment so that the learning outcomes of PAI are not just cognitive, but touch on aspects of worship skills and religious attitudes. Thus, diagnostic assessments in PAI cannot be viewed partially. Cognitive assessments are important for mapping initial conceptual mastery, while non-cognitive assessments are needed to assess religious attitudes, motivations, and worship skills. The integration of the two will result in a more comprehensive picture, so that teachers can design PAI learning strategies that not only focus on cognitive, but also on the formation of Islamic character.

Thus, the urgency of diagnostic assessment lies precisely in the integration between cognitive and non-cognitive aspects. Without integration, PAI only produces students who know the concept of religion without internalizing values,

or conversely, have religious attitudes without deep understanding. This has been the weakness of PAI learning.

Stages of Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic assessment in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is carried out through several stages that are continuous with each other and form a reflective learning cycle. This process does not stop at collecting data on students' abilities alone, but includes careful planning, empathetic implementation, systematic data processing and analysis, and interpretation of results followed by learning follow-up. Thus, diagnostic assessments play an important role in creating an adaptive and student-centered learning process (Aslihah et al., 2023).

The first stage is planning, which is the main foundation for the successful implementation of diagnostic assessments. At this stage, the teacher determines the objectives of the assessment, the aspects to be measured, and chooses instruments that are in accordance with the characteristics of the students and the subject matter. To assess cognitive aspects, teachers can use various forms of tests such as written exams, oral tests, digital quizzes, and concept mapping, while for non-cognitive aspects, the instruments used can be in the form of questionnaires, observation sheets, interviews, or reflection journals (Awwal et al., 2024). Good planning is not only oriented to the preparation of instruments, but also pays attention to the principles of validity, reliability, and fairness of assessments. As emphasized by Fadlillah & Kusaeri (2024), the design of diagnostic assessments in the context of Islamic education must reflect ethical and spiritual values so that the assessment process is not only technical, but also reflects justice and humanity.

The next stage is the implementation of diagnostic assessment, which is the process of applying instruments to obtain information about students' initial abilities, potentials, interests, and psychological conditions. At this stage, teachers need to ensure that assessments are carried out objectively, humanistically, and in accordance with the learning context. In practice, cognitive assessments can be done through written tests, digital quizzes such as Google Form or Kahoot, and concept interviews, while non-cognitive assessments are conducted using visual aids, storytelling, writing, or drawing activities to express students' feelings (Huda & Khairina, 2023). In addition, teachers can provide reflective questions such as "How are you feeling right now?", "What do you do when you are angry?", and "What makes you happy while studying?" to explore the social-emotional dimension of students. This stage of implementation is important because it creates a space for teachers and learners to build a more empathetic relationship, as well as encourage learners to recognize their potential and feelings more deeply.

After the assessment is carried out, teachers enter the data processing and analysis stage, which aims to interpret the assessment results into meaningful information for learning decision-making. Data obtained from various instruments are processed to identify students' strengths, weaknesses, potentials, and learning difficulties. This data analysis not only includes numbers from test results, but also includes qualitative data such as the results of observations, interviews, and reflections of students. Teachers can analyze the data thematically to understand the emotional state and learning motivation of students (Aslihah et al., 2023). In-depth analysis helps teachers find patterns of students' learning characteristics, so that they can determine more targeted learning steps.

The final stage is the interpretation of the results and follow-up, which is the culmination of the entire diagnostic assessment process. At this stage, teachers

use the results of data analysis to design learning interventions according to the needs of students. Students who experience difficulties can be given remedial programs, while those who have achieved competence can participate in enrichment activities. In addition, teachers can also conduct religious coaching to strengthen students' spiritual values (Rahman et al., (2025). Hadziq (2023) emphasized that the follow-up of diagnostic assessment results has strategic significance because it is the basis for the implementation of differentiated learning in the Independent Curriculum. Without a follow-up stage, the assessment only stops at data collection without having a real impact on improving the quality of learning.

Thus, the four stages of diagnostic assessment planning, implementation, data analysis, and follow-up are a complementary unit. Each stage has an important role to play in ensuring that diagnostic assessments are truly a reflective instrument that helps teachers understand the characteristics of learners holistically. When these four stages are carried out consistently and continuously, diagnostic assessments not only function as an initial evaluation tool, but also as a means of developing learning strategies that are adaptive, humanist, and oriented towards the formation of students' Islamic character.

Urgency of Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic assessments have a very significant urgency to improve the quality of learning, especially in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). The existence of this assessment not only serves as a measure of students' initial abilities, but also as the foundation for learning planning that is adaptive, reflective, and oriented towards the formation of Islamic character. In the Independent Learning paradigm, diagnostic assessments are a strategic component to understand the potential and learning needs of students holistically, both from cognitive and non-cognitive aspects (Aslihah et al., 2023).

One of the main urgency of diagnostic assessments is its ability to help teachers design adaptive and differentiated learning. Through this assessment, teachers can obtain initial information about learning readiness, learning styles, and difficulties faced by students. The data allows teachers to adjust learning strategies, methods, and media to suit the individual needs of students. As emphasized by Dianti et al. (2025), diagnostic assessments help teachers optimize students' potential from the beginning of learning. In the context of the Independent Curriculum, the implementation of diagnostic assessments is an important requirement for the realization of differentiated learning, because differentiation can only be done if teachers have preliminary data on the condition and abilities of students (Wiyaka et al., 2025). Kholid et al. (2024) added that diagnostic assessments contribute significantly to the design of integrated learning modules that are able to adapt to individual needs of students and improve the learning experience.

In an educational environment with a large number of students, diagnostic assessments can be carried out efficiently by utilizing digital technologies such as Google Form or Kahoot. Meanwhile, in religious educational institutions that still emphasize the memorization aspect, non-cognitive assessments through worship observation and reflection journals are an important complement to cognitive assessment, because it provides a comprehensive picture of the spiritual development of students. This shows that diagnostic assessments can be adapted according to the characteristics of the institution and the needs of learning, making it a flexible and contextual instrument.

In addition to functioning for learning planning, diagnostic assessments also have urgency as the basis for the implementation of remedial programs,

enrichment, and Islamic guidance. Through the results of the assessment, teachers can identify students who are experiencing specific learning difficulties and design appropriate interventions. Remedial programs can be done with an individualized approach, the use of alternative methods, or guidance with peer tutors. On the other hand, for students who have achieved basic competencies, teachers can provide more challenging enrichment programs. This approach has been proven to be effective in improving learners' learning outcomes and motivation, especially when integrated with Islamic values such as patience, sincerity, and responsibility (Rahman et al., 2025). In the context of PAI, this is very important because small mistakes in aspects of worship such as prayer readings or ablution must be corrected early so that they do not become a habit. The results of Bakhrudin et al.'s (2023) research also show that the application of diagnostic assessments has a positive relationship with increased motivation and enthusiasm for learning of students, because the process encourages reflective awareness and continuous self-improvement.

The next urgency lies in the role of diagnostic assessments in improving students' motivation, learning outcomes, and religious attitudes. Learners who feel cared for and valued through early assessments tend to show higher learning engagement. Learning based on the results of diagnostic assessments encourages the creation of a humanistic and dialogical classroom atmosphere, where students are not only objects, but also subjects in the learning process. Nurmalia et al. (2024) show that differentiated learning based on diagnostic assessments in PAI is able to increase students' interest, creativity, and independence. In addition, assessments that integrate affective and psychomotor aspects have been proven to improve learning outcomes and foster stronger religious attitudes (Wijaya et al., 2023).

Furthermore, diagnostic assessments have a direct contribution to strengthening the Islamic character of students, in line with the main goal of national education. Through this assessment, teachers can map not only cognitive abilities, but also the profile of students' attitudes, habits, and religious practices. The mapping is the basis for teachers to design pedagogical interventions that suit the spiritual needs of each student. Hadziq (2023) emphasized that diagnostic assessments that are integrated with Islamic values through worship observations, spiritual reflection journals, and assessment of religious attitudes can form a complete character, including cognitive, affective, and moral dimensions.

In a broader framework, diagnostic assessments are a bridge between national curriculum policies and real practices of classroom learning. Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System emphasizes that the purpose of education is to form people of faith, piety, and noble character. By implementing diagnostic assessments consistently, PAI teachers can make these normative goals more measurable and implemented in daily learning activities. Therefore, diagnostic assessments not only function as a technical tool in the classroom, but also as an ideological instrument to realize the profile of Pancasila students who have faith, piety, and noble character. In this context, diagnostic assessment is an integral part of the mission of Islamic education: to produce people who are knowledgeable, faithful, and of noble character.

Obstacles and Solutions for Implementing Diagnostic Assessments

The implementation of diagnostic assessments in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is inseparable from various obstacles that affect the effectiveness of its implementation. These challenges are not only technical, but also related to pedagogical, structural, and cultural aspects in the school

environment. However, every obstacle can be overcome with a comprehensive, innovative, and sustainable approach so that diagnostic assessments truly function as an instrument to improve the quality of learning.

One of the main obstacles faced by PAI teachers is the limited learning time. The relatively small number of face-to-face hours compared to other general subjects causes teachers to focus more on delivering material rather than conducting initial assessments of students' abilities (Fadlillah & Kusaeri, 2024). To overcome this constraint, diagnostic assessments can be integrated into routine learning activities through simple forms such as short pre-tests, concept mapping, or digital quizzes. Teachers can also take advantage of platforms such as Google Forms and Kahoot to conduct quick assessments at the beginning of learning, so that data on students' abilities can be obtained without significantly reducing teaching time (Awwal et al., 2024). Thus, diagnostic assessments are no longer an additional burden, but rather an integral part of an efficient learning process.

In addition to time constraints, the next obstacle is the lack of teacher competence in designing valid and reliable diagnostic assessment instruments. Many PAI teachers still rely on written tests to assess cognitive aspects, while the ability to measure affective and psychomotor aspects is relatively limited (Hadziq, 2023). This condition can be overcome with continuous professional training and mentoring programs. Through training, teachers can learn how to prepare diagnostic instruments that are in accordance with the characteristics of students and Islamic values, as well as validate instruments so that assessment results are more accurate and meaningful. Academic mentoring by educational institutions or MGMP is also important to help teachers improve reflective skills in applying assessment results into learning strategies (Fadlillah & Kusaeri, 2024).

Another significant obstacle is the limited variation in the use of diagnostic assessment instruments. Many teachers still use conventional test models such as multiple-choice or short-description, even though diagnostic assessments should be more creative and contextual (Septiana et al., 2025). To overcome this, PAI teachers need to develop a variety of instruments that not only assess knowledge, but also students' attitudes, values, and worship skills. Alternative forms of assessment such as observation of worship practices, spiritual reflection journals, religious interviews, and social project portfolios can provide a more comprehensive picture of students' character and understanding. In addition, the use of digital technology such as Wordwall or Quizizz can help make assessments more interesting, interactive, and relevant to the learning styles of the current generation (Huda & Khairina, 2023).

Resistance from teachers and students is also an obstacle that often arises in the implementation of diagnostic assessments. Some teachers view diagnostic assessments as an additional administrative burden, while students often assess them as an additional exam that causes anxiety (Kholid et al., 2024). Therefore, to overcome this resistance, effective socialization and communication are needed regarding the goals and benefits of diagnostic assessment. Teachers need to understand that this assessment is not just a formal assessment, but a means to recognize students' potentials and difficulties early. Meanwhile, students can be actively involved in the process of designing and reflecting on assessment results so that they feel responsible for their own learning. By creating a participatory dialogical atmosphere, both teachers and students will be more open to the implementation of humanist and non-discriminatory diagnostic assessments (Wiyaka et al., 2025).

In addition to the above obstacles, there are still obstacles in the form of limited technological infrastructure, especially in madrasas or schools that do not

have adequate digital facilities. This makes it difficult to implement technology-based assessments evenly (Awwal et al., 2024). The solution that can be taken is to apply a hybrid model, which combines manual and digital assessments according to the school's ability. For example, teachers can use observation sheets and interviews in schools with minimal devices, while still pursuing basic training in the use of simple technology such as Google Forms via mobile phones. In the long term, schools can propose facility support through cooperation with local governments, CSR, or higher education institutions that have community service programs.

Furthermore, the implementation of diagnostic assessments also requires synergy between teachers, schools, and parents. Mahmudah & Shafrizal (2022) found that some parents still completely leave their children's character development to the school, so that the process of forming Islamic values does not run optimally. Therefore, strong collaboration between teachers, schools, and parents is an important solution to ensure that diagnostic assessments truly impact students' academic and spiritual development. Through this collaboration, teachers can obtain additional information about students' behavior at home, while parents can understand their children's learning needs based on the results of the assessment. Shihab & Bukik Setiawan (2022) that this kind of synergy will result in more comprehensive and effective monitoring of student growth, both from cognitive, affective, and moral aspects.

Thus, obstacles in the implementation of diagnostic assessments can be overcome through an integrated strategy that emphasizes teacher training, instrument diversification, technology integration, and collaboration with parents and schools. If these measures are applied consistently, diagnostic assessments in PAI not only become a technical evaluation instrument, but also a strategic means to realize adaptive, contextual, and Islamic character formation of students.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of literature review and analysis, it can be concluded that diagnostic assessment has a high urgency in improving the quality of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. The urgency includes at least four main things. First, diagnostic assessments support differentiated learning by mapping students' initial abilities, so that teachers can adjust learning strategies according to students' needs. Second, diagnostic assessments are the basis for the implementation of remedial and enrichment, so that the learning process is more adaptive and on target. Third, diagnostic assessments play a role in increasing students' motivation to learn, because they feel cared for according to their respective conditions and potential. Fourth, diagnostic assessments contribute to the formation of Islamic character through the integration of cognitive and non-cognitive aspects. Thus, diagnostic assessment is not only a technical instrument, but a fundamental strategy to realize a comprehensive quality of PAI learning, while supporting the implementation of the Independent Curriculum and national education goals.

The contribution of this research lies in a comprehensive analysis that highlights the diagnostic assessment of PAI holistically, covering cognitive and non-cognitive aspects. This is still rarely studied in previous studies that tend to be partial. However, the limitation of this research is the approach of literature study so that it has not described empirical practice in schools and madrasas. Therefore, advanced research based on field data is urgently needed to test the effectiveness of diagnostic assessments in the real-world context of PAI learning.

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