

AUTHENTIC EVALUATION BASED ON HIGHER ORDER THINKING SKILLS (HOTS) IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LEARNING

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ABSTRACT :

This research examines the concept of authentic assessment based on Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. Authentic assessment is a form of evaluation that measures students' abilities realistically and contextually, while HOTS refers to higher-order thinking skills encompassing analysis, evaluation, and creation. This article aims to analyze the relevance, urgency, and implementation of HOTS-based authentic assessment in PAI learning in the era of 21st-century education. Through a library research approach, this study finds that HOTS-based authentic assessment is highly relevant to PAI's goals, which emphasize not only cognitive aspects but also affective and psychomotor dimensions. Its implementation requires careful instrument design, adequate teacher training, and a supportive learning environment. Findings indicate that integrating HOTS into PAI assessment can enhance students' critical thinking, problem-solving, and spiritual reflection capabilities. This article also presents various challenges and strategic solutions in implementing HOTS-based authentic assessment in educational institutions.

Keywords: *Authentic Assessment, HOTS, Islamic Religious Education, Critical Thinking, 21st Century*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is a subject that holds a strategic position in Indonesia's national education system. It not only serves to transfer religious



knowledge, but also plays a role in shaping the character, noble morals, and spirituality of students (Mansir & Abas, 2024). However, in practice, PAI learning is often dominated by rote memorization and textual assessment, thus failing to optimally develop students' critical and reflective thinking skills.

The 21st-century education era demands a comprehensive transformation, not only in learning methods but also in evaluation systems. The competencies required in this era include critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration—often known as the 4Cs (Critical Thinking, Creativity, Communication, Collaboration) (Putra, 2025). To measure these competencies, evaluation instruments are needed that not only measure the ability to remember facts but also assess higher-order thinking skills (HOTS).

The HOTS concept was first popularized through Bloom's Taxonomy, which was later revised by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001). In this taxonomy, higher-order thinking skills encompass three highest levels: analyzing (C4), evaluating (C5), and creating (C6). These skills are highly relevant to the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning objectives, which require students not only to understand Islamic teachings but also to be able to analyze, assess, and apply them in real life (Rasyidi, 2024). On the other hand, authentic assessment offers a more comprehensive alternative to conventional assessment. Authentic assessment emphasizes actual performance-based assessment, portfolios, projects, and contextual assignments that holistically reflect students' abilities. When combined with a HOTS orientation, authentic assessment becomes a powerful instrument for measuring the achievement of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning objectives in a more meaningful and comprehensive manner (Hasmy, 2025).

Despite its high urgency, the implementation of HOTS-based authentic evaluation in Islamic Religious Education learning still faces various challenges. Starting from the limitations of teachers' understanding and skills in developing



HOTS instruments, the mismatch between evaluation design and the characteristics of Islamic Religious Education material, to resistance to a learning culture that is still oriented towards values and memorization. Therefore, an in-depth and comprehensive study of this topic is very necessary as a theoretical basis as well as a practical guide for Islamic Education educators.

This article aims to: (1) examine the basic concepts of authentic evaluation and HOTS theoretically; (2) analyze the relevance and integration of HOTS in PAI learning evaluation; (3) describe HOTS-based authentic evaluation models that can be applied in PAI; and (4) identify challenges and strategic solutions in their implementation. Thus, this article is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to the development of a quality PAI evaluation system.

METHODS

This study adopted a qualitative approach with a type of research known as a literature review. This approach was chosen because the research objective was to comprehensively explore authentic evaluation based on Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning by utilizing various relevant literature sources (Sahra et al., 2025) .

1. Types and Approaches of Research

The type of research applied is descriptive qualitative. In this study, the researcher attempted to describe and analyze various concepts, theories, and previous research findings regarding authentic evaluation and HOTS in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teaching (Rasyidi et al., 2024) . The qualitative approach was chosen because it focuses on analyzing texts, ideas, and the thoughts of experts, rather than on numerical data.

2. Data Sources

The data sources used in this study consist of:



Primary data, namely books and academic journals that directly discuss authentic evaluation, HOTS, and the Islamic Religious Education learning process.

Secondary data, namely additional sources such as scientific articles, research reports, and relevant curriculum documents, including educational policies related to the application of HOTS in learning (Rifai et al., 2024) .

3. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was conducted through documentation studies. Researchers gathered various literature from books, national and international journals, and other credible sources related to the research topic. The collected data was selected based on the relevance and quality of the sources (Bancong, 2025) .

4. Data Analysis Techniques

The data was analyzed using content analysis methods. The steps taken in data analysis include:

- a. Data reduction, namely selecting and sorting information that is relevant to the research focus.
- b. Data presentation, namely arranging data systematically in the form of descriptive narrative.

Drawing conclusions, namely formulating research results based on data that has been analyzed to build a comprehensive understanding of authentic evaluation based on HOTS in Islamic Religious Education learning (Maslihah et al., 2025) .

5. Data Validity

To ensure the validity of the data, this study applies source triangulation techniques, namely by comparing various different literature sources to obtain valid and reliable data. In addition, researchers also ensure that the sources used come from reliable references and are relevant to the research topic.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Concept of Authentic Evaluation

Authentic assessment is an assessment approach that requires students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and attitudes through meaningful and real-life tasks (Angkat et al., 2024) . The term "authentic" refers to the authenticity and relevance of assessment tasks to real-world contexts, in contrast to conventional tests, which are artificial and detached from the realities of students' lives.

Wiggins (1989), who first popularized this concept, defined authentic evaluation as an assessment that requires students to use core competencies in real and complex situations (Ridho et al., 2025) . Mueller (2008) added that authentic evaluation asks students to demonstrate their competencies by performing real-world tasks, not simply answering questions that test how much knowledge they have (Setiawan et al., 2026) .

There are several key characteristics of authentic evaluation that distinguish it from conventional evaluation. First, authentic evaluation focuses on the process and product, not just the end result. Second, the tasks in authentic evaluation are complex and multidimensional. Third, authentic evaluation encourages the integration of various competencies simultaneously. Fourth, assessments are conducted in meaningful contexts that are close to the students' real lives. Fifth, authentic evaluations allow for the demonstration of competencies in a variety of ways tailored to the students' potential and learning styles (Judijanto et al., 2025) .

Common forms of authentic evaluation used in education include: performance assessment, portfolios, project-based assessment, reflective journals, interviews, oral presentations, and real-life situation assessments. Each of these forms has advantages and disadvantages that need to be tailored to the characteristics of the material and learning objectives (Paramita, 2025) .



Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)

Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) is a concept based on Bloom's Taxonomy, revised by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001). In this taxonomy, the cognitive domain is divided into six levels: remembering (C1), understanding (C2), applying (C3), analyzing (C4), evaluating (C5), and creating (C6). HOTS encompasses the three highest levels, C4 to C6, while C1 to C3 are categorized as Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) (Mulyasari, 2023) .

Analytical skills (C4) refer to students' ability to break down information or concepts into smaller parts, identify relationships between these parts, and discover hidden patterns and structures. Examples of cognitive operations at this level include comparing, contrasting, organizing, deconstructing, and integrating various components of information. The ability to evaluate (C5) involves the ability to make judgments based on specific criteria and standards (Hidajat, 2024) . At this level, students not only understand or analyze but are also able to critically evaluate an idea, solution, method, or product. This ability is crucial in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), where students need to develop *ijtikah* (judgment) skills—the ability to assess issues based on Islamic principles.

The ability to create (C6) is the highest level in the revised Bloom's taxonomy, requiring students to produce something new by combining various elements into new, previously nonexistent patterns or structures. In the context of Islamic Religious Education, this ability can be manifested in the form of students' ability to design solutions to contemporary religious problems, compose creative works with Islamic nuances, or develop innovative religious programs (Ratu, 2026) . In addition to Bloom's taxonomy, the HOTS concept can also be seen from the perspective of Vygotsky's constructivism theory which emphasizes the importance of the zone of proximal development , as well as Ausubel's theory of meaningful learning. Both perspectives emphasize that effective learning is that which



encourages students to think beyond simply remembering and understanding, towards constructing new and meaningful knowledge.

Authentic Evaluation in Islamic Perspective

Islam places great emphasis on the importance of evaluation and reflection as part of the learning and self-development process. The Quran and Hadith frequently encourage tafakkur (deep reflection), tadabbur (contemplation), and tafaquh (deep understanding) as forms of intellectual worship. This demonstrates that evaluation from an Islamic perspective goes beyond memorization to assess depth of understanding, application, and character transformation (YANUAR SOFYAN, 2026) .

The concept of authentic evaluation is in line with the principles of holistic Islamic education. Imam Al-Ghazali in *Ihya Ulumiddin* emphasized that the aim of Islamic education is to get closer to Allah SWT through the development of the mind, heart and charity. Assessment in this context is not sufficient to measure only knowledge (ilm), but also appreciation (halun) and practice (amal). The alignment between these three aspects is the basis for authentic evaluation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning (Kartikasari, 2022) .

Islamic education scholars such as Ibn Khaldun have also demonstrated a deep understanding of authentic evaluation. In the *Muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldun emphasized the importance of applying knowledge to real-life situations as an indicator of learning success. This principle aligns with the concept of performance-based assessment, which assesses students' ability to apply knowledge contextually (Ikram & Alwi, 2026) .

RELEVANCE OF HOTS IN PAI LEARNING **PAI Objectives and HOTS Orientation**

Islamic Religious Education has a very comprehensive goal. Based on Ministerial Regulation No. 22 of 2006, which was reinforced by Ministerial



Regulation No. 21 of 2016, Islamic Religious Education aims to develop students' abilities to understand, internalize, and practice Islamic values while harmonizing their mastery of science, technology, and the arts. This goal will not be optimally achieved if learning and evaluation only focus on lower cognitive domains such as memorization and text comprehension (Ramdani et al., 2025) .

HOTS is relevant in Islamic Education because Islamic teachings themselves contain very rich dimensions to be studied critically and reflectively. Fiqh, for example, requires analytical and evaluation skills in identifying the law of an action based on existing evidence. Faith demands the ability to evaluate logical arguments about the existence of God and the truth of Islam. Morality demands the ability to create behavioral patterns consistent with Islamic values in various contexts of modern life (MURTI, 2024) .

The integration of HOTS in Islamic Religious Education is also supported by the spirit of the Quran which repeatedly invites humans to think (tafakkur), reflect (tadabbur), understand (tafaqquh), and use reason (ta'aqqul). Verses such as "Afala ta'qilun" (do you not use your reason?) and "Afala yatadabbarun" (do they not reflect?) show that Islam strongly encourages high-level thinking activities as a form of obedience to Allah SWT.

21st Century Competencies in Islamic Education

The 21st century is marked by rapid technological developments, complex social issues, and a rapid flow of information. In this context, Islamic Religious Education students need to be equipped not only with comprehensive religious knowledge but also with critical thinking skills to distinguish valid religious information from invalid ones, creative skills to express Islamic values in a modern context, and communication and collaboration skills to contribute positively to society. (Sakdiyah et al., 2025) .

The Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) framework identifies 21st-



century core competencies, including: learning and innovation skills (4Cs), information, media, and technology literacy skills, and life and career skills. All of these competencies require a strong HOTS orientation (Nurhayati et al., 2025). For Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, this means that evaluations must be designed to measure the extent to which students can think critically about contemporary religious issues, be creative in Islamic expression, and communicate Islamic values effectively. The phenomena of radicalism, low religious literacy, and moral degradation among the younger generation further reinforce the urgency of HOTS (Host Values) in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Students who are accustomed to memorizing texts without critical thinking skills are easily influenced by shallow and misleading interpretations of religion. Conversely, students with strong HOTS skills will be able to critically analyze religious issues, evaluate various interpretations against valid standards, and develop a moderate, inclusive, and contextual understanding of religion.

Hots-Based Authentic Evaluation Model in PAI Performance Assessment

Performance assessment is a form of authentic evaluation that assesses students' abilities based on actual performance in completing certain tasks. In the context of PAI, performance assessments can be designed to measure HOTS capabilities through various activities. For example, teachers can ask students to simulate deliberations on contemporary fiqh issues, present comparative analyses between Islamic values and contemporary social issues, or demonstrate their ability to conduct *ijtihad* in simple fiqh cases. HOTS-based performance assessment rubrics in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) need to be designed with clear and measurable criteria. These criteria include: (1) in-depth analysis of Islamic sources; (2) accuracy in evaluating various opinions or arguments; (3) creativity in generating new solutions or conclusions; (4) the ability to relate Islamic teachings to real-life contexts; and (5) clarity and logic in presenting



arguments. With a structured rubric, performance assessments can be conducted objectively and transparently.

The implementation of performance assessment in PAI also needs to pay attention to the balance between cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. A student who is able to analyze the law of multiple prayers very well cognitively, but does not show sincere spiritual appreciation in carrying out prayers, cannot be said to have achieved the objectives of PAI learning comprehensively. Therefore, performance assessment in PAI needs to integrate indicators from these three domains in a balanced manner.

Project-Based Assessment

Project-based assessment is a form of evaluation that assesses students' ability to complete meaningful projects that require comprehensive planning, research, analysis, and presentation of results. In Islamic Religious Education (PAI), projects that can be designed based on HOTS include: simple research on religious practices in society, the development of a guidebook on Islamic etiquette for teenagers, the production of a short film on Islamic values, or the design of an innovative school religious activity program.

HOTS-based projects in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) allow students to experience a holistic thinking process, from analysis to creation. For example, in a research project on the implementation of Islamic values in modern life, students must collect and analyze field data (analysis-C4), evaluate the suitability of existing practices to Islamic teachings (evaluation-C5), and design creative and feasible recommendations for improvement (creation-C6). This process is much more cognitively enriching than simply answering multiple-choice questions.

Project assessment in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) needs to be complemented by a robust monitoring system to ensure that HOTS thinking processes actually occur throughout the project, not just in the final product.



Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers need to actively provide guidance, asking probing questions such as "Why did you choose this approach?", "What are the advantages and disadvantages of your proposed solution? ", and "How do you ensure that this solution aligns with Islamic values?". These questions encourage students to think more deeply and reflectively.

Reflective Portfolio

A reflective portfolio is a systematically selected collection of student work to demonstrate their competency development over a specific period of time. Unlike a traditional portfolio, a reflective portfolio requires students to include written reflections on their thinking processes, challenges faced, and lessons learned from each submitted work. This reflective dimension makes the portfolio a highly effective HOTS-based evaluation instrument.

In Islamic Religious Education (PAI), a reflective portfolio can include various types of work such as: analytical essays on religious issues, daily devotional diaries with spiritual reflections, news clippings and analysis on contemporary Islamic issues, creative works with Islamic nuances (poetry, short stories, designs), transcripts of group discussions on Islamic Religious Education themes, and documentation of social activities based on Islamic values. This diversity of work types allows HOTS assessment from various dimensions of Islamic Religious Education competency.

The HOTS-based Islamic Education reflective portfolio assessment rubric needs to include assessment components for: (1) the quality of analysis in each work; (2) the depth and sincerity of reflection; (3) the consistency between the knowledge acquired and the attitudes and behaviors demonstrated; (4) the development of religious understanding and appreciation over time; and (5) creativity and originality in expressing religious understanding. Thus, the portfolio becomes an authentic reflection of the learning journey and development of



students.

HOTS questions in Islamic Education

In addition to non-test authentic evaluation forms, HOTS-based written questions are also an important component in a comprehensive PAI evaluation system. HOTS questions are questions that require higher-order thinking skills to answer, not just memorizing or understanding information. The main characteristics of HOTS questions are: presenting stimuli that are new and unfamiliar to students, requiring multi-step reasoning, having more than one valid answer, and linking concepts from various knowledge domains.

In Islamic Education subjects, HOTS questions can be presented in various formats. First, case-based questions present real-life cases or situations that must be analyzed and assessed from an Islamic perspective. For example: "Read the following case about a Muslim's dilemma in a work environment that conflicts with Islamic values. Analyze the available options and evaluate which one best aligns with Islamic principles, supporting it with strong arguments." Second, argumentative text-based questions require students to evaluate arguments from various religious perspectives. Third, open-ended questions that encourage students to produce creative and original responses.

Design and Implementation of Hots-Based Authentic Evaluation in PAI

Design Principles

Designing authentic HOTS-based evaluations for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects requires a deep understanding of several fundamental principles. First, the alignment principle: evaluations must align with established PAI learning objectives and competency standards. Each evaluation instrument must be traceable to the core competency indicators it is intended to measure.

Second, the principle of authenticity: evaluation tasks must reflect real-life



situations and problems relevant to students' lives. In Islamic Religious Education (PAI), authenticity can be achieved by integrating contemporary religious issues, moral dilemmas in everyday life, and the socio-cultural context of students' communities into the evaluation instruments.

Third, the cognitive demand principle: evaluations must consistently demand cognitive operations at the HOTS level, not simply measure factual knowledge and conceptual understanding. Cognitive adequacy can be ensured by using operational verbs from levels C4-C6 of Bloom's Taxonomy in formulating evaluation tasks and questions.

Fourth, the fairness principle: evaluations must be designed with students' diverse backgrounds, abilities, and learning styles in mind. Fair HOTS evaluations offer a variety of modalities for demonstrating competency, do not discriminate based on gender, social status, or language ability, and provide adequate scaffolding support for students who need it.

Fifth, the principle of transparency: assessment criteria must be clearly communicated to students before the evaluation is conducted. Assessment rubrics must be easy to understand and provide a concrete picture of quality expectations at each level of achievement. This transparency not only increases the fairness of evaluation, but also helps learners understand the quality standards they must achieve.

Implementation Steps

Implementing authentic HOTS-based evaluation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning can be done through systematic stages. During the planning stage, Islamic Religious Education teachers need to analyze the core competencies to be assessed, identify HOTS thinking domains relevant to each competency, select the most appropriate authentic evaluation format, develop a detailed and operational assessment rubric, and prepare examples of work or



performance at various achievement levels as assessment references.

During the implementation phase, student orientation is crucial. Teachers need to explain the evaluation objectives, distribute and discuss assessment rubrics with students, provide examples of similar assignments that have been completed, and ensure students understand the quality expectations. Throughout the process, teachers act as facilitators, assisting and encouraging students to think more deeply through probing questions.

At the assessment stage, Islamic Education teachers need to calibrate the assessment to ensure consistency and reliability. Especially for tasks that are assessed subjectively, the assessment should be carried out by more than one assessor (inter-rater reliability). The feedback given should be constructive, specific, and oriented towards improving thinking skills, not merely justifying or condemning the quality of the work.

Implementation Challenges And Solutions

Challenges Faced

The implementation of authentic HOTS-based evaluation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning faces various multidimensional challenges. The first challenge relates to the competence of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in designing HOTS-based evaluation instruments. Research by Kunandar (2014) and Saputra (2016) shows that most PAI teachers still lack an adequate understanding of the differences between HOTS and LOTS questions and are not yet skilled in developing valid and reliable assessment rubrics for authentic evaluation.

The second challenge is limited time and resources. HOTS-based authentic evaluations are generally more time- and resource-consuming than conventional tests. Performance, project, and portfolio assessments take longer to implement and assess. Meanwhile, the high teaching load of Islamic Religious Education



teachers and the large number of students per class often become real obstacles in its implementation.

The third challenge is resistance from various parties. Some parents and students are still very exam-oriented, so authentic evaluations that do not directly produce numerical scores are often considered less useful. In addition, the culture of rote learning that has been deeply rooted in the Islamic Religious Education learning tradition in many schools has also become a cultural barrier that is not easily changed in the short term.

The fourth challenge relates to the validity and reliability of assessments. Authentic evaluation, due to its subjective and holistic nature, is susceptible to bias and inconsistency between assessors. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), this issue is further complicated because assessing affective and spiritual aspects—such as sincerity of worship, depth of faith, and moral quality—is very difficult to operationalize into objectively measurable indicators.

Strategic Solutions

To address teacher competency challenges, a systematic and ongoing professional development and training program needs to be designed. Ideally, this training should include workshops on developing HOTS-based evaluation instruments, simulations of authentic evaluation implementation and assessment, case studies of best practices from various schools, and individual coaching by supervisors or more experienced teachers. The Islamic Education Subject Teachers' Conference (MGMP) program can serve as a forum for collaboration and sharing of best practices among teachers.

To overcome time constraints, Islamic Religious Education teachers need to conduct thorough and integrated planning. Authentic evaluation doesn't have to be conducted separately from the learning process—in fact, it should ideally be integrated into daily learning activities. Observational assessment techniques



during class discussions, assessing analytical questions posed by students, and assessing group work processes are examples of HOTS evaluations that don't require additional time allocation.

To change the culture and orientation of learning, a holistic approach is needed and involves all educational stakeholders. Regular outreach to parents about the importance of HOTS and authentic evaluations is essential. Recognizing and appreciating student work that demonstrates high HOTS skills—for example, through portfolio exhibitions, religious project competitions, or publications of best works—will build motivation and pride, driving organic change in the learning culture.

To improve the validity and reliability of assessments, the development of standardized and validated rubrics is essential. The government, through the Ministry of Religion and the Ministry of Education, needs to provide a HOTS-PAI question bank and examples of authentic, validated evaluation rubrics as a reference for teachers. In addition, the implementation of structured peer assessment and self-assessment can help broaden the assessment perspective and increase the accuracy of measuring students' HOTS competencies.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Implications for Islamic Education Curriculum Development

The findings of this study have important implications for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum development. First, there needs to be a paradigm shift in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum documents from a content-oriented to a competency-oriented (HOTS) orientation. The formulation of core competencies and achievement indicators need to be revised to explicitly encompass higher-level cognitive abilities, not simply the ability to memorize and understand religious facts.

Second, the Islamic Education syllabus and Learning Implementation Plan



(RPP) need to be redesigned to systematically integrate learning activities that encourage HOTS. The use of problem-based learning, inquiry-based learning, and project-based learning approaches needs to be encouraged as learning methods that are compatible with authentic HOTS-based evaluation.

Implications for Teacher Education and Training

The implementation of HOTS-based authentic evaluation in Islamic Education is highly dependent on the quality and competence of teachers. Teacher Training Institutions (LPTK) that produce Islamic Religious Education teachers need to integrate material on HOTS assessment and authentic evaluation more deeply into the teacher education curriculum. Prospective Islamic Education (PAI) teacher students need to not only understand the theory, but also practice intensively in designing, implementing, and reflecting on authentic HOTS-based evaluations.

For Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers currently on duty, the Continuing Professional Development (PKB) program should focus on strengthening HOTS-based evaluation competencies. Support from principals and supervisors in creating a HOTS-oriented assessment culture in schools is also essential. Collaboration between Islamic Education teachers through forums such as MGMP, professional learning communities, and online networks needs to be facilitated and intensified.

CONCLUSION

Based on the studies that have been carried out, several main things can be concluded. First, HOTS-based authentic evaluation is a very relevant and urgent assessment approach to be implemented in Islamic Religious Education learning in the 21st century. Its relevance stems from the alignment between the holistic objectives of Islamic Education (PAI) and the multidimensional orientation of



HOTS, as well as the compatibility between the principles of authentic evaluation and the values of Islamic education that emphasize the balance between knowledge, faith, and good deeds.

Second, there are various authentic evaluation models that can be applied in HOTS-based Islamic Education, including performance assessment, project-based assessment, reflective portfolio, and contextual HOTS questions. Each model has advantages and is appropriate for certain aspects of PAI competencies, so it is ideally used in a complementary and integrated manner in a comprehensive PAI assessment system.

Third, the implementation of authentic HOTS-based evaluation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) faces various systemic and cultural challenges, ranging from limited teacher competency, time and resource constraints, resistance to a rote-oriented learning culture, to issues of assessment validity and reliability. However, various strategic solutions have been identified and can be implemented gradually through strong synergy between teachers, principals, supervisors, teacher education institutions, and policymakers.

Fourth, the successful implementation of HOTS-based authentic evaluation in Islamic Religious Education will ultimately have a significant positive impact, not only on improving the quality of Islamic Religious Education learning, but also on the formation of a generation of Muslims who are intellectually intelligent, spiritually strong, and able to contribute positively to building an Islamic civilization that is rahmatan lil'alam in the contemporary era.

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