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GENDER-SEGREGATED LEARNING OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS AND CHARACTER EDUCATION AT SMPIT AL-HIKMAH AMANAH UMMAH, MAROS

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Abstract

*Islamic Religious Education and Character Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Budi Pekerti*, PAI) play a strategic role in shaping students' religious and moral character. One approach implemented in Islamic schools is gender segregation, which separates male and female students during the learning process. This practice, however, still requires empirical studies that comprehensively examine teachers' understanding, instructional implementation, and students' perceptions. This study analyzes gender-segregated PAI learning at SMP Islam Terpadu Al-Hikmah Amanah Ummah, Maros Regency. It employed a descriptive qualitative approach. The research subjects were PAI teachers and students. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, and were analyzed using the interactive model of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing; data validity was ensured through source and technique triangulation. The findings reveal that teachers have a strong conceptual understanding of gender-segregated learning and implement it systematically through planning, implementation, and evaluation. The learning process was conducive, with methods adjusted to students' characteristics. Students showed positive perceptions, reflected in greater comfort, concentration, and active participation. These findings suggest that gender-segregated PAI learning can support the development of religious character and create an effective learning environment, offering a reference for contextual Islamic educational practice.*
Keywords: *Learning, Islamic Religious Education, Character Education, Gender Segregation.*

Abstrak

Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Budi Pekerti (PAI) berperan strategis dalam membentuk karakter religius dan moral peserta didik. Salah satu pendekatan yang diterapkan di sekolah Islam adalah segregasi gender, yaitu pemisahan peserta didik laki-laki dan perempuan dalam proses pembelajaran. Namun, praktik ini masih memerlukan kajian empiris yang menelaah secara komprehensif pemahaman guru, pelaksanaan pembelajaran, dan persepsi peserta didik. Penelitian ini menganalisis pembelajaran PAI berbasis segregasi gender di SMP Islam Terpadu Al-Hikmah Amanah Ummah, Kabupaten Maros. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif. Subjek penelitian adalah guru PAI dan peserta didik. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi, lalu dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif berupa reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan; keabsahan data dijamin melalui triangulasi sumber dan teknik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru memiliki pemahaman konseptual yang kuat tentang pembelajaran berbasis segregasi gender dan menerapkannya secara sistematis melalui perencanaan, pelaksanaan, dan evaluasi. Proses pembelajaran berlangsung kondusif dengan metode yang disesuaikan dengan karakteristik peserta didik. Peserta didik menunjukkan persepsi positif yang tercermin dalam rasa nyaman, konsentrasi, dan partisipasi aktif yang lebih tinggi.

Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran PAI berbasis segregasi gender dapat mendukung pembentukan karakter religius dan menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang efektif, sekaligus menjadi rujukan bagi praktik pendidikan Islam yang kontekstual.
Kata Kunci: *Pembelajaran, Pendidikan Agama Islam, Pendidikan Karakter, Segregasi Gender.*

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INTRODUCTION

National education plays a strategic role in forming Indonesians who believe in God, are devout, have noble character, and possess adequate intellectual and social abilities, as affirmed in Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System. Education is oriented not only toward mastering knowledge but also toward forming the character and civilization of a dignified nation. In this context, religious education occupies a central position because it serves as the moral and spiritual foundation of learners.[1]

Islamic Religious Education and Character Education (PAI) specifically aims to give learners a comprehensive religious understanding and the ability to apply Islamic values in daily life. PAI learning therefore cannot be merely cognitive; it must also address the affective and psychomotor domains. The learning environment, social interaction, and classroom management strategies are important factors in achieving these aims.[2]

In contemporary educational practice, gender is one of the issues that shape learning policies and strategies. Differences in the psychological, social, and developmental characteristics of male and female learners are often taken into account in designing the learning process.[3]

Pedagogically, some regard gender segregation as a strategy for creating a more conducive learning atmosphere. Separate classes are thought to improve concentration, reduce distraction, and encourage more active participation because learners feel more comfortable expressing their opinions. In certain contexts, the approach is also considered to help teachers adapt their methods to the characteristics of each group.[4]

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[1] Safna Febriyani, Jarir, and Rini Nopita, "Peran Pendidikan Agama Islam dalam Mengembangkan Karakter Peserta Didik yang Berkarakter," *Nusantara: Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial* 12, no. 4 (2025): 1731, https://doi.org/10.31604/jips.v12i4.2025.1726-1733.

[2] Jariyah et al., "Strategi Meningkatkan Optimalisasi Pendidikan Agama Islam di Sekolah," *Fatih: Journal of Contemporary Research* 1, no. 2 (2024): 240.

[3] Nurdin, "Implementing Gender Mainstreaming in Indonesian Local Government: The Case of Tangerang Regency," *Jurnal Transformative* 8, no. 1 (2022): 31, https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.transformative.2022.008.01.2.

[4] M. Solih, Yusuf Hadijaya, and Nurika Khalila Daulay, "Kebijakan Pemisahan Kelas Berbasis Gender dalam Upaya Pembinaan Akhlak Siswa di SMP Swasta IT Bina Insan Batang Kuis," *Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Scientific Studies* 3, no. 5 (2025): 375.

In the wider educational discourse, however, gender segregation is also contested. Some argue that cross-gender interaction is an important part of learners' socialization and social development, and that coeducational learning trains communication, cooperation, and tolerance among individuals from different backgrounds. These differing perspectives show that gender segregation is not merely a technical matter of classroom management but an issue with complex pedagogical and social dimensions.[5]

SMPIT Al-Hikmah Amanah Ummah in Maros Regency is one of the institutions that implement gender-segregated PAI learning. This policy is part of an educational system designed to integrate Islamic values into formal learning. The practice offers a relevant context for academic study, particularly for examining how normative values and pedagogical strategies are put into practice.

This situation raises several research questions: how teachers understand the concept of gender segregation in PAI learning, how the policy is implemented in classroom dynamics, and how learners make sense of their learning experience in a gender-separated system. Answering these questions is important for obtaining an objective and comprehensive picture of the practice.

This study therefore analyzes gender-segregated PAI learning at SMPIT Al-Hikmah Amanah Ummah, Maros Regency. It is expected to contribute to the development of PAI learning practice grounded in Islamic values while considering pedagogical dimensions critically, proportionally, and contextually, so that it can serve as a reference for relevant and responsible educational policymaking.

Literature Review

The Concept of PAI Learning

Conceptually, learning can be understood as a relatively permanent change in behavior resulting from guided experience and practice. Learning is a dynamic interaction between teacher and learners aimed at developing intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual potential in an integrated way.[6]

Experts have defined learning from different but complementary perspectives. Wina Sanjaya views learning as an organized combination of human elements, materials, facilities, and procedures that interact to achieve particular goals.[7] This shows that learning is a complex system of interdependent components. Rusman adds that learning is the process of creating conditions conducive to communicative interaction among teachers, learners, and other components in

[5] Dini Damayanti and Fitria Rismaningtyas, "Pendidikan Berbasis Responsif Gender sebagai Upaya Meruntuhkan Segregasi Gender," *Jurnal Analisa Sosiologi* 10 (2021): 60–61.

[6] Satrianawati, Fitri Indriani, and Nurul Hidayati Rofiah, *Pembelajaran Terpadu Berbasis Outcome-Based Education (OBE)* (Yogyakarta: UAD Press, 2023), 73.

[7] Wina Sanjaya, *Perencanaan dan Desain Sistem Pembelajaran* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2015).

pursuit of educational goals. The success of learning is thus largely determined by the quality of interaction and the supporting environment.

According to Dimyati and Mudjiono, learning is a programmed teacher activity that makes learners study actively by providing learning resources that emphasize the transformation of learners' potential into competence.[8] This view shows that the teacher is not merely a transmitter of information but a designer of learning experiences that enable learners to develop optimally. In line with this, Jean Piaget saw learning as a constructive process in which learners actively organize information and experience into existing cognitive structures through assimilation and accommodation. B. F. Skinner described learning as a relatively permanent change in behavior resulting from experience and reinforcement, while Lev Vygotsky emphasized that learning is a social process that occurs through interaction with others, especially within the zone of proximal development (ZPD).

PAI is an integral part of the national education system that serves to form people who are faithful, devout, and of noble character. In the 2022 Merdeka Curriculum, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology defines PAI as a learning process that instills the values of Islamic teachings and shapes learners' character so that they behave in accordance with religious teachings in their personal and social lives.[9]

The term *budi pekerti* emphasizes the cultivation of noble character and social ethics. Character education (*pendidikan budi pekerti*) is a conscious and systematic effort to foster good habits (moral habituation) through role modeling, habituation, and reflection on moral values rooted in religion and national culture.[10]

The main aim of PAI is to form learners with strong faith in Allah, noble character, and conduct consistent with Islamic guidance in their personal, social, and national lives. Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System states that education serves "to develop abilities and to shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to enlighten the life of the nation" (Article 3).[11]

Islamic education aims to form a complete human being (*insan kamil*) with a balance of faith, knowledge, and righteous deeds.[12] In the national curriculum, the aims of PAI explicitly

[8] Dimyati and Mudjiono, *Belajar dan Pembelajaran* (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 2013).

[9] Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi Republik Indonesia, *Capaian Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Budi Pekerti: Kurikulum Merdeka* (Jakarta: Pusat Kurikulum dan Pembelajaran, Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan, 2022), 4–8.

[10] Zubaedi, *Desain Pendidikan Karakter: Konsepsi dan Aplikasinya dalam Lembaga Pendidikan* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2015), 43–48.

[11] *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*, art. 3, https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/details/43920/uu-no-20-tahun-2003.

[12] Siti Aisyah Panjaitan, Rahmat Nasution, and Shofwatul Inayah, "Hakikat Tujuan Pendidikan Islam," *Edu-Riligia: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Islam dan Keagamaan* 7, no. 4 (2023): 270, http://jurnal.uinsu.ac.id/index.php/eduriligia/article/view/16451.

include (1) fostering and strengthening faith and devotion to Allah; (2) forming learners of noble character and high integrity; (3) developing tolerance, responsibility, and a spirit of mutual cooperation; and (4) fostering awareness as citizens who uphold the values of Islam as *rahmatan lil 'alamin*.[13]

The core values of Islamic character education are reflected in Surah Luqman [31]: 13–19, which contains principles of Islamic ethics such as monotheism, gratitude, responsibility, discipline, social courtesy, and justice. In Quraish Shihab's *Tafsir al-Misbah*, these verses depict character education based on *tawhid*, which places faith at the center of moral formation.[14] Islamic character education emphasizes the balance between one's relationship with Allah (*hablun minallah*), with other people (*hablun minannas*), and with oneself. These three relationships form the basis of spiritual, social, and personal balance in Islamic moral formation.[15]

Islamic character education thus not only forms individual piety but also fosters moral consciousness that encourages learners to understand, judge, and practice goodness on the basis of revealed values rather than social norms alone. Its ultimate goal is the formation of the *insan salih*, a person who is faithful, knowledgeable, righteous, and contributes positively to society and the nation. PAI therefore functions not only as a religious subject but also as a strategic instrument for building Islamic character and a civilized society in accordance with Islamic values.[16]

Perspectives on Gender Segregation

Gender is a social and cultural concept that distinguishes men and women on the basis of the traits, roles, status, and responsibilities agreed upon in a society.[17] Gender relates not only to biological identity but also to how a person behaves, interacts, and is treated in accordance with prevailing social norms and expectations. In other words, gender describes a social construction that regulates "masculine" and "feminine" roles, which differ between societies and can change over time.[18] In one culture, for example, men may be regarded as the main breadwinners while women manage the household; with social change, these roles may shift as women also take an active part in the public sphere.

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[13] Kemendikbudristek, *Capaian Pembelajaran*, 8.

[14] Miftah Farid, Muhammad Iqbal Al-Kautsary, and Asep Hilmi Muhamad Sidik, "Pendidikan Karakter dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an (Analisis Corak Tafsir Tarbawi dalam QS. Luqman Ayat 12–19)," *Jurnal Al-Qiyam* 5, no. 1 (2024): 13, https://doi.org/10.33648/alqiyam.v5i1.457.

[15] Arifuddin M. Arif, *Pendidikan Berbasis Budaya Religius dan Implikasinya terhadap Karakter Siswa* (Lembaga Education Development Center [ENDECE], 2021), 19.

[16] Feri Indra Irawan et al., "Pendidikan dan Pembentukan Karakter Peserta Didik Perspektif Teologi Pendidikan Islam," *Journal of Education and Social Culture* 1, no. 1 (2025), https://doi.org/10.58363/jesc.v1i1.18.

[17] Afifah, "Pendekatan Gender dalam Islam Perspektif Sachiko Murata," *TarunaEdu: Journal of Education and Learning* 1, no. 1 (2023): 49.

[18] Ika Wahidah, "Menggali Konstruksi Sosial Gender dalam Tradisi Nyongkolan Pernikahan Masyarakat Lombok," *Jurnal Eksplorasi Keilmuan dan Kajian Strategis* 9, no. 3 (2025): 39.

Etymologically, *segregation* derives from *to segregate*, meaning to separate; the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* defines it as the separation of one group from another.[19] Theoretically, gender segregation is a form of learning that separates males and females for pedagogical, cultural, or religious reasons, with the aim of creating a learning atmosphere considered more focused and suitable for each gender.

Gender segregation generally refers to the separation of functions, spaces, or roles of individuals according to sex within a social system or institution. In education, it can refer to the practice of separating male and female learners in classes, activities, or learning facilities. Although the term often appears in educational studies, its meaning is not limited to schools; it also reflects broader social patterns in the distribution of roles and spaces between men and women in society.[20]

Although both concern the division of roles by sex, gender segregation is not the same as gender discrimination. Gender segregation refers to separation or differentiation by gender in space, function, or activity.[21] Segregation is not automatically discriminatory if it does not structurally restrict the rights, access, and opportunities of men and women.

In practice, there are three forms of gender segregation in educational institutions: (1) full segregation, which separates the entire learning and institutional system; (2) incomplete segregation, which separates only classrooms while the school's organizational structure remains unified; and (3) partial segregation, applied only to certain subjects.[22] All three forms are quite common in Indonesia, especially in Islamic schools and *pesantren*, with the aim of safeguarding social conduct and creating a conducive learning climate.

From a pedagogical perspective, gender segregation is understood as a learning management strategy designed to create learning conditions better suited to learners' developmental characteristics. The approach concerns not only the physical separation of male and female students but also how the learning environment, classroom interaction, and academic expectations are shaped in a particular context. Recent literature shows that the gender composition of a school can influence its learning climate, teachers' perceptions, and students' academic orientations. Ortega and colleagues, writing in the *American Educational Research*

[19] *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, s.v. "segregasi," accessed November 16, 2025, https://kbbi.web.id/segregasi.

[20] Arif Ardiansyah and Muna Erawati, "Segregasi Gender dalam Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Implikasinya terhadap Penanaman Kedisiplinan Siswa MA Al Irsyad Putra dan MA Al Irsyad Putri," *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pemikiran* 18, no. 2 (2023).

[21] Moh. Afif Al Mubaraq and Dartim Dartim, "Segregasi Kelas Berdasarkan Gender sebagai Alternatif Pencegah Pergaulan Bebas di Sekolah Menengah Pertama: Studi Kasus SMP Muhammadiyah 10 Surakarta," *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan dan Ilmu Sosial* 5, no. 5 (2024), https://doi.org/10.38035/jmpis.v5i5.2347.

[22] Zainul Muflihin and Fatmawati, "Implementasi Kebijakan Segregasi Kelas Berbasis Gender di SMPs IT Mutiara Duri," *El-Darisa: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 2 (2023): 258.

Journal, show that a school's gender culture plays a protective role against stereotype-based segregation in course choices. In other words, it is not separation as such that determines outcomes but how a school builds an academic culture responsive to gender issues.[23]

In the educational literature, single-sex education is understood as a classroom management strategy that limits formal interaction between male and female students during learning so that each can develop without the social stereotypes that often arise in mixed classes. The concept differs from merely separating facilities or extracurricular activities; it concerns the core structure of teaching and learning interaction. Research shows that gender segregation can have various academic and social implications depending on its context, implementation, and the motivations behind the policy.[24]

The main purpose of gender segregation in education is often linked to expected pedagogical benefits for academic focus and character. Proponents argue that separation reduces social distraction between male and female students, creating a classroom atmosphere more conducive to concentration and achievement. Some studies report that single-sex education supports higher achievement, especially for female students who may feel intimidated or less motivated in mixed classes, for instance in STEM subjects often perceived as male domains. An experimental study at university level found that women placed in single-sex classes had higher attendance and academic results and were less likely to drop out than those in mixed classes.[25]

The relevance of gender segregation to PAI learning is highly contextual, especially in religious educational institutions such as an SMPIT. In PAI learning, character, morals, and social ethics are the main focus alongside cognitive competence. Gender segregation can be seen as one strategy for instilling religious values in a manner considered consistent with the Islamic educational community's view of interaction between men and women, so that students can learn moral teachings without the unwanted social stereotypes of a mixed class. This relevance must, however, be balanced by approaches that ensure students still acquire the social skills and ethics needed to live alongside the opposite sex in wider society. Hence the importance of designing PAI learning that treats gender separation not only as a learning structure but also as a reflection of the values of inclusion, tolerance, and equality taught in Islam.[26]

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[23] Lorena Ortega et al., "Gender Segregation in Secondary School Course Choices: Socioeconomic Gradients and the Protective Role of School Gender Culture," *American Educational Research Journal* 62, no. 3 (2025), https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312241308537.

[24] Evi Muafiah, "Realitas Segregasi Gender di Pesantren," in *AnCoMS: Proceedings of Annual Conference for Muslim Scholars* (2018), 1066.

[25] Alison L. Booth, Lina Cardona-Sosa, and Patrick Nolen, "Do Single-Sex Classes Affect Academic Achievement? An Experiment in a Coeducational University," *Journal of Public Economics* 168 (2018): 109, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2018.08.016.

[26] Ayu Safitri and Rubi Awalia, "Pengarusutamaan Pendidikan Gender dalam Lingkup Pendidikan Agama Islam," *ILJ: Islamic Learning Journal* 3, no. 1 (2025): 93–94, https://doi.org/10.54437/iljjislamiclearningjournal.v3i1.2026.

From the perspective of adolescent developmental psychology, gender segregation at the junior secondary level can be understood as an adaptive response to the emotional and social characteristics of early adolescents, who remain vulnerable and sensitive to social dynamics. Segregation can function as a short-term psychological protection strategy that supports emotional comfort and improves learners' focus.

Its effectiveness, however, depends greatly on teachers' reflective role and on the underlying school policy. Segregation designed flexibly, contextually, and with developmental goals in mind can support students' psychological well-being while maintaining the quality of learning. Conversely, segregation applied rigidly, without efforts to develop cross-gender interaction, risks hindering adolescents' social development in the long term.

The developmental psychology perspective thus treats gender segregation not as inherently positive or negative but as a pedagogical strategy that must be evaluated critically and continuously, on the basis of its effects on learners' emotional, social, and academic development and its fit with the holistic aims of junior secondary education.

RESEARCH METHODS

This is a qualitative study producing descriptive data in the form of spoken and written words, following the procedure set out by Bogdan as presented by Gunawan. The research was located at SMPIT Al-Hikmah Amanah Ummah, Maros Regency, South Sulawesi, and focused on gender-segregated PAI learning.

The study is descriptive and uses a phenomenological approach to describe and explain the phenomenon holistically. Primary data were obtained directly from PAI teachers and students, and secondary data from the syllabus and lesson plans or teaching modules.

Data were collected in natural settings through structured observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, with the researcher as the main instrument supported by interview guidelines and documentation related to PAI learning. The data were analyzed through data reduction (selecting the main points), data display (in narrative form), and conclusion drawing (critically, on the basis of field facts).

Data validity was tested through three forms of triangulation: source triangulation, comparing data from different informants; method triangulation, combining observation, interviews, and documentation; and time triangulation, examining the stability of data at different times.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers' Understanding of Gender-Segregated PAI Learning

In-depth interviews with three PAI teachers at SMPIT Al-Hikmah Amanah Ummah, Maros Regency, showed that the teachers have a relatively uniform understanding of gender-segregated PAI learning. Their understanding is not limited to the physical separation of classes but also covers its aims, foundations, and implications for the learning process.

Gender Segregation as a Pedagogical Strategy

Interviews with the PAI teachers indicated that gender segregation is understood not merely as an administrative school policy but as a pedagogical strategy designed to support effective PAI learning. This understanding was evident in how teachers explained the aims, benefits, and implications of gender segregation in the classroom.

Teachers interpret gender segregation as separating male and female learners in PAI so as to create a learning atmosphere that is more conducive, comfortable, and suited to the psychological characteristics of each gender. One teacher explained that gender segregation gives learners more freedom to express themselves, ask questions, and discuss without shame or awkwardness, especially when dealing with personal and sensitive PAI topics.

The view of gender segregation as a pedagogical strategy was also evident in teachers' accounts of how much easier it is to adapt their communication style and teaching approach. In gender-homogeneous classes, teachers feel freer to use language, case examples, and illustrations relevant to learners' experiences, so that the learning message is conveyed more effectively.

In this context, gender segregation is understood not as a restriction of learning space but as pedagogical differentiation aimed at adapting learning to learners' needs and characteristics. Teachers consciously adjust their approach so that PAI values can be better understood, internalized, and practiced.

Overall, the interviews show that the PAI teachers at SMPIT Al-Hikmah Amanah Ummah see gender segregation as a learning approach of strategic value in supporting the aims of Islamic education. It is regarded not as a barrier to interaction but as a pedagogical means of creating a safe, conducive learning environment that supports the internalization of religious and character values.

The Aims of Gender Segregation in PAI Learning

According to the PAI teachers, the aims of gender segregation are not singular but encompass several interrelated pedagogical and religious aims. Teachers see gender segregation as a means of creating a learning atmosphere that is more effective, comfortable, and suited to the characteristics of the material and the learners.

Teachers thus do not treat gender segregation as an end in itself but as a pedagogical tool for achieving the aims of PAI more fully. These aims are formulated on the basis of teachers' empirical experience in managing classes and their observation of learners' responses and engagement.

The most prominent aim is to provide learners with a safe and comfortable space for learning. Teachers explained that separating classes allows students to express opinions, ask questions, and take part in discussions more freely, without shame or awkwardness. This is considered especially important in PAI, which often deals with personal and sensitive matters.

This aim confirms that teachers understand PAI as a long-term process of formation rather than mere knowledge transfer. Gender segregation becomes one means of strengthening a pedagogical relationship that educates, guides, and models good conduct.

Overall, the interviews show that the aims of gender segregation in PAI are not limited to the technical separation of classes but are directed at creating a learning environment that supports the aims of Islamic education: increasing learning comfort, safeguarding Islamic etiquette and norms of interaction, deepening understanding of PAI material, and optimizing the internalization of religious and character values.

Integrating Mentoring into PAI Learning

The PAI teachers reported that gender-segregated PAI learning does not stand alone as a classroom activity but is integrated with Islamic mentoring, a hallmark of the school's educational system. Teachers regard mentoring as an inseparable part of PAI, particularly in fostering learners' religious attitudes and character.

This integration is evident in the continuity between the material and values taught in class and the mentoring activities. Teachers explained that PAI topics taught in class, such as ethics, norms of social interaction, worship, and Islamic habits, are reinforced through mentoring, which thus serves as a space for internalizing and deepening the values conveyed conceptually in class.

Overall, the PAI teachers understand the integration of mentoring into PAI as a pedagogical strategy that reinforces gender segregation. Mentoring serves as a space for continued formation that supports the internalization of PAI values and strengthens the pedagogical relationship between teachers and learners, contributing to the sustained development of learners' character and religious attitudes.

In addition to interview and observation data, the study used documentation to corroborate the findings on teachers' understanding of the gender segregation policy. The documentation analyzed comprised not only formal written documents but also school policy decisions made through end-of-semester evaluation meetings and school work meetings.

According to informants and a review of meeting records, gender-segregated PAI learning is an institutional decision agreed upon by the PAI teachers, the school leadership, and the foundation. The policy arose from an evaluation of the effectiveness of PAI learning, particularly regarding the integration of mentoring and the teaching of sensitive Islamic topics.

The document review shows that gender segregation and the integration of mentoring are seen as pedagogical solutions suited to the learners' character and the school's educational vision. The decision was not unilateral but the result of collective reflection on the need for PAI learning that is more effective, deeper, and consistent with the Islamic values the institution holds. Teachers' understanding of mentoring integration and gender segregation is therefore grounded not only in teaching experience but also in planned and sustained institutional policy.

Adjusting Materials and Strategies by Gender

Teachers' understanding of gender-segregated learning is also reflected in their efforts to adjust material and strategies to the characteristics of male and female learners. Teachers do not see gender segregation simply as physical separation but as a basis for pedagogical adjustment in delivering PAI material.

This shows that teachers are pedagogically aware of the link between the gender segregation policy and differentiated instruction. Gender segregation is seen as an opportunity to tailor the learning approach to learners' needs, so that learning is responsive to the character of each class rather than uniform.

Teachers explained that, in substance, the PAI material taught in the boys' and girls' classes follows the same curriculum. There are, however, adjustments in emphasis, case examples, and delivery to suit the needs and character of each gender, so that the material is easier to understand and relevant to learners' experience.

Teachers regard these different strategies as an adaptation to learners' learning styles. They consider the effectiveness of PAI learning to depend greatly on the fit between strategy and class character, so the approach must be adjusted flexibly.

Overall, the PAI teachers see gender segregation as a basis for differentiated instruction. Adjusting materials and strategies by gender is regarded as part of a pedagogical effort to make PAI learning effective, contextual, and oriented toward forming learners' attitudes and character.

The interviews, observations, and documentation also show that gender segregation at SMPIT Al-Hikmah Amanah Ummah is not applied to all subjects. Boys and girls are separated specifically in PAI, while other subjects are taught in mixed (coeducational) classes.

This shows that the school does not adopt gender segregation as a total educational system but applies it in a limited and contextual way. Theories of gender-based education generally identify three tendencies in segregation practice: full acceptance of separation, rejection

with mixed classes retained, or modification through selective application according to particular needs and considerations.

In terms of these categories, the practice at SMPIT Al-Hikmah Amanah Ummah is best understood as contextual modification. The school does not fully accept segregation as a structural principle governing the whole learning system, yet neither does it reject it, since for subjects with strong normative and character-formation content, separate classes are seen as a relevant strategy.

Moreover, since no differences were found in the curriculum, competency standards, or academic attainment between the boys' and girls' classes, the practice shows no substantive differentiation leading to academic inequality. The differences are methodological and contextual rather than normative or discriminatory.

Based on the findings and their dialogue with theory, it can be concluded that SMPIT Al-Hikmah Amanah Ummah neither fully accepts nor rejects gender segregation but modifies it into a selective pedagogical policy applied specifically to PAI. This position shows that teachers' understanding of gender-segregated PAI learning is contextual, adaptive, and integrated with the school's distinctive vision of character formation.

Implementation of Gender-Segregated PAI Learning

The findings show that although gender segregation is applied at the classroom level, the academic substance of learning continues to follow national curriculum standards. There are, however, strategic adjustments in approach, classroom dynamics, and interaction style suited to the characteristics of each gender. These findings are grouped into the following themes.

Learning Planning

Learning planning is the initial stage that determines the direction and quality of gender-segregated PAI learning at SMPIT Al-Hikmah Amanah Ummah. Interviews, observation, and document review showed that PAI teachers plan systematically by preparing teaching modules and learning materials based on the current curriculum and the school's gender segregation policy.

This emphasis on planning shows that teachers regard the planning stage as the main foundation for effective PAI learning. Planning is treated not as a mere administrative obligation but as a reflective process for aligning learning objectives with learners' characteristics and school policy.

Teachers explained that PAI teaching modules are prepared with attention to learning objectives, learning outcomes, core material, methods, and forms of evaluation. Structurally, the modules used for boys' and girls' classes share the same basic competencies and substance. There

are, however, adjustments in learning approach, case examples, and delivery strategies to suit the characteristics of each gender.

Planning also takes into account the link between classroom PAI learning and Islamic mentoring. Teachers reported that the material and values planned in the modules are aligned with mentoring themes, creating continuity between formal classroom learning and religious formation outside the classroom. This shows that PAI planning is integrated and sustained.

Overall, the findings show that gender-segregated PAI learning at SMPIT Al-Hikmah Amanah Ummah is planned systematically, adaptively, and with a pedagogical orientation. Teaching modules and materials are designed not only to meet curriculum requirements but also to support implementation suited to learners' characteristics and to the aims of religious and character formation.

This consistency is reflected in the alignment between learning planning, class organization, and teachers' daily practice. The gender segregation policy is understood and implemented collectively by all elements of the school, so that, although it is not written in a single official document, it functions effectively as an operational guideline for PAI learning. Planning for gender-segregated learning at SMPIT Al-Hikmah Amanah Ummah can thus be understood as the result of a living and sustained institutional agreement in the school's educational practice.

Learning in the* Ikhwan *and* Akhwat *Classes

Gender-segregated PAI learning at SMPIT Al-Hikmah Amanah Ummah is carried out in a structured and systematic manner in accordance with teachers' plans. Observation and interviews showed that learning in the boys' and girls' classes follows the same sequence of opening, core, and closing activities, with adjustments in approach and classroom dynamics according to the characteristics of each gender.

This shows consistency between planning and implementation. Teachers do not treat the teaching module as a mere administrative document but actually implement it in practice while attending to the context of the gender-segregated class.

From the standpoint of *tarbiyah Islamiyah*, learning that combines lecture, discussion, case study, and reflection applies the principle of holistic education covering the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Reflection activities at the close of a lesson are consistent with the ultimate aim of Islamic education, namely to form people who are faithful, of good character, and able to practice Islamic values in daily life.

Gender-segregated PAI learning at SMPIT Al-Hikmah Amanah Ummah can thus be positioned as an Islamic educational practice with strong theoretical and normative foundations. Gender segregation is not practiced as rigid separation but as a pedagogical strategy for

safeguarding etiquette, increasing learning effectiveness, and strengthening the internalization of Islamic values. This confirms that gender segregation in Islamic education, when managed pedagogically and proportionally, can support the full achievement of the aims of Islamic education.

Methods, Strategies, and Classroom Dynamics

Gender-segregated PAI learning at SMPIT Al-Hikmah Amanah Ummah is characterized by varied methods and strategies adapted to the characteristics of the *ikhwan* (boys') and *akhwat* (girls') classes. This variety shows teachers' pedagogical awareness that PAI cannot be taught uniformly without regard to learners' psychological and social differences and learning styles. These adjustments aim to create active, participatory, and meaningful learning, so that learners not only understand the material cognitively but also internalize Islamic values in daily life.

According to the PAI teachers, the methods most often used are lecture, discussion, and question and answer. Lectures are used to convey basic concepts, explain terms, and reinforce initial understanding of the core material, while discussion and question and answer are used to deepen understanding, develop critical thinking, and involve learners actively in the learning process.

Reflectively, the methods, strategies, and classroom dynamics of gender-segregated PAI learning show adaptive pedagogical differentiation. The uniformity of teaching modules maintains consistency of curriculum standards and learning outcomes, while flexibility in implementation allows teachers to develop learning that is contextual, humane, and responsive to learners' needs. Gender segregation thus functions not only as a classroom arrangement but also as a learning strategy that supports a conducive and effective learning climate oriented toward strengthening Islamic values.

Evaluation of Learning Processes and Outcomes

Evaluation of learning processes and outcomes is an integral part of gender-segregated PAI learning at SMPIT Al-Hikmah Amanah Ummah. Interviews, observation, and document review showed that evaluation is carried out continuously to assess the achievement of learning objectives in learners' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.

Process evaluation takes place during learning. Teachers observe learners' activeness, discipline, attitudes, and involvement in discussions and other learning activities. This process assessment serves as the basis for adjusting learning strategies, especially in the context of gender-segregated classes, and functions as a feedback mechanism that allows teachers to reflect on the effectiveness of their methods and strategies.

From the perspective of Islamic education, this approach reflects the principles of caution in interaction (*ihtiyat*) and the preservation of etiquette (*hifz al-adab*), without neglecting the

principle of spiritual equality and shared intellectual responsibility between men and women. The school does not construe segregation as a symbol of the superiority of either gender but as a strategy for creating a learning space considered safer and more open for discussing ethics, the jurisprudence of worship, and adolescent problems.

Critically, however, the selective implementation of segregation also shows that the school recognizes the limits of segregation's relevance in contemporary education. By not applying it across the board, the school implicitly acknowledges the importance of cross-gender social interaction in general learning. The segregation policy is therefore not a rejection of coeducation but a compromise between normative religious values and modern pedagogical needs.

This position shows that gender segregation in contemporary Islamic educational practice can be understood as a limited pedagogical strategy integrated into the learning system rather than a comprehensive structure of social separation. It also confirms that value-based educational policy can coexist with the principles of academic equality and pedagogical professionalism.

Students' Perceptions of Gender-Segregated PAI Learning

In-depth interviews with seven students representing different grades, together with direct observation of PAI learning at SMPIT Al-Hikmah Amanah Ummah, showed that students have very positive perceptions of gender-segregated learning.

Perceptions of the Gender Segregation Policy

Students' perceptions of the gender segregation policy in PAI were generally positive. Interviews with students in grades VIII and IX, from both the *ikhwan* and *akhwat* classes, showed that they understand the separation of boys and girls as a learning arrangement intended to create a more orderly, comfortable learning atmosphere consistent with Islamic values.

This shows that students do not perceive gender segregation as a social restriction but as part of a learning system that has become internalized in the school culture. The policy is accepted as a reasonable arrangement relevant to the Islamic educational context of their daily lives.

Most students see the policy as having a positive effect on focus and order in learning. They consider that separate classes make the learning atmosphere more conducive and less distracting, so that they can follow PAI lessons more seriously.

Overall, students' perceptions of the gender segregation policy show good acceptance and a positive response. The policy is seen as an arrangement relevant to learners' developmental needs and consistent with the Islamic values on which the school is founded. These positive perceptions are an important indicator that the policy does not provoke resistance among students but supports a conducive and meaningful learning climate.

Comfort and Openness in Learning

Comfort and openness in learning are among the main aspects students experience in gender-segregated PAI learning. Interviews with students in grades VIII and IX, from both the *ikhwan* and *akhwat* classes, showed that most students feel more comfortable learning in separate classes than in mixed ones.

This shows that gender segregation not only functions as a structural classroom arrangement but also shapes the psychological climate of learning. The comfort students feel is an important foundation for a conducive classroom atmosphere that supports active engagement.

Students' perceptions of comfort and openness thus indicate that class separation contributes positively to the learning climate. The psychological comfort and open interaction it creates support the achievement of PAI's aims, especially in forming learners' attitudes, morals, and religious values, and strengthen PAI's function as a vehicle for the sustained formation of learners' Islamic character and personality.

The Teacher's Role in Students' Learning Experience

Students' perceptions show that teachers play a very important role in shaping a positive learning experience in gender-segregated PAI classes. Interviews with students in grades VIII and IX, from both the *ikhwan* and *akhwat* classes, showed that teachers are perceived not only as conveyors of material but also as mentors who understand learners' character, needs, and circumstances in the gender-segregated class.

This shows that the success of gender-segregated learning is determined not solely by the policy of class separation but greatly by the quality of the teacher's management of learning. The teacher is the key actor bridging institutional policy and students' learning experience in the classroom.

Overall, students see the teacher as the key factor in creating a comfortable, open, and meaningful learning experience. The teacher's ability to adapt methods, communicate effectively, and model PAI values is the main determinant of success in gender-segregated classes. This role strengthens the effectiveness of the gender segregation policy and makes PAI learning more contextual and oriented toward forming learners' character.

Effects on Understanding and Practice of Religious Values

Students' perceptions indicate that gender-segregated PAI learning has a positive effect on their understanding and practice of religious values in daily life. Interviews with students in grades VIII and IX, from both the *ikhwan* and *akhwat* classes, showed that most students feel that learning in separate classes helps them understand religious material more clearly, deeply, and practically.

Students consider that the calmer, more focused, and more comfortable atmosphere of gender-segregated classes makes it easier to absorb PAI material. This supports the internalization of religious values, since students can follow lessons without disturbance or psychological pressure, especially when discussing personal and sensitive material.

The effects of gender-segregated PAI learning on the understanding and practice of religious values can thus be understood as the result of the interaction between a conducive learning atmosphere, a contextual learning approach, and the teacher's role in connecting religious teachings with learners' realities. This strengthens the effectiveness of PAI as a means of forming learners' Islamic morals and character at SMPIT Al-Hikmah Amanah Ummah.

CONCLUSION

Gender-segregated PAI learning at SMPIT Al-Hikmah Amanah Ummah, Maros Regency, is carried out systematically and effectively. Teachers have a good and reflective understanding of gender segregation as a pedagogical strategy grounded in religious values and psycho-pedagogical considerations, not merely an administrative policy. This understanding is reflected in planning, implementation, and evaluation adapted to the characteristics of male and female learners without altering the substance of the learning objectives. Learning is implemented consistently through the management of *ikhwan* and *akhwat* classes, varied and contextual methods, and assessment covering cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. Students perceive the model positively because it provides comfort and safety and increases focus and participation, especially when dealing with sensitive material. Overall, the model can be categorized as gender-responsive pedagogy from an Islamic educational perspective that integrates intellectual, emotional, and spiritual aspects in a balanced way and contributes to learners' character formation.

Theoretically, this study strengthens the understanding of gender-segregated PAI learning as a relevant pedagogical strategy in Islamic education that integrates religious, psychological, and pedagogical approaches in the internalization of values and character formation. Practically, the findings can serve as a reference for Islamic schools designing gender-segregated learning that is not merely structural but supported by careful planning, improved teacher competence, and comprehensive and continuous evaluation. For policy, the study offers considerations for decision-makers in integrated Islamic schools to adopt gender segregation as an alternative learning strategy with clear implementation guidelines and strong institutional legitimacy. Future research could examine the effectiveness of gender segregation compared with mixed classes, its long-term effects on academic attainment, and the perspectives of parents and school managers, including through quantitative or mixed-methods approaches.

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