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Problem analysis of the implementation of the AIR and ALC methods in Islamic Religious Education learning at SMAN 9 Malang

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Abstract
Student-centered learning remains difficult to implement in Islamic Religious Education (PAI), where teacher-centered habits, limited engagement, and weak pedagogical adaptation persist. Although the AIR and ALC methods are promoted as active-learning approaches, little is known about how they function when applied simultaneously in actual PAI classrooms. This study addresses that gap by examining the integration process of AIR and ALC and the contextual factors shaping their effectiveness at a senior high school in Malang. Using a qualitative case-study design, data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model. Findings show that AIR strengthens cognitive processing through auditory engagement and repetition, while ALC structures the learning flow to sustain participation. However, their implementation is hindered by classroom discipline issues, low student motivation, limited teacher readiness, scheduling constraints, and infrastructural shortcomings. These results indicate that contextual conditions, rather than the methods themselves, determine the success of AIR–ALC integration in PAI learning.

Keywords:
Problems; Implementation; AIR; ALC; Islamic Religious Education

A. INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning still faces substantial challenges in the context of modern classrooms, particularly in relation to low student engagement and the tendency to teach material through rote memorization, which does not encourage deep understanding (Afendi, 2024). Although the national curriculum has shifted towards learner-centered learning, its implementation in IRE subjects is often hampered by teaching practices that remain dominated by lectures and minimal interaction. This situation creates a gap between the demands of the curriculum and the pedagogical reality in the field (Li et al., 2024). To bridge this gap, an approach is needed that can increase student attention, participation, and cognitive integration of religious material. Two methods that offer potential to address this need are auditory intellectual repetition (AIR) and accelerated learning cycle (ALC), both of which emphasize active learning processes, intellectual reinforcement, and classroom dynamics that are more responsive to students' learning styles.

The auditory intellectual repetition (AIR) and accelerated learning cycle (ALC) methods offer clear complementarity in a learning framework that demands cognitive activity and student engagement. AIR functions as a mechanism for intellectual reinforcement through the process of listening, interpreting, and repeating, which encourages systematic knowledge consolidation (Fikri & Afriani, 2023). Meanwhile, ALC provides cyclical, progressive, and dynamic learning stages, thereby creating a learning environment conducive to interaction and active participation (Rahmiati & Neviyarni, 2021). When combined, ALC becomes the structure that regulates the rhythm of learning, while AIR works as an internal strategy that deepens understanding at each phase of the cycle. This synergy demonstrates real relevance in overcoming the tendency for PAI

learning to remain stagnant in rote memorization and teacher dominance, which are strong remnants of the teacher-centered paradigm (Febianto & Nopita, 2023).

The implementation of the AIR and ALC methods themselves does not always run smoothly. Educators, particularly in the PAI field, who previously used the teacher-centered learning paradigm, need to adapt to the AIR and ALC methods, which utilize the student-centered learning paradigm (Sunhaji, 2022). In addition to adapting to the current learning paradigm or the principles of the methods used, educators also need to adapt the characteristics of the learning materials to suit these two methods (Damiati et al., 2024) This is necessary so that both methods can be integrated into existing learning materials. In short, designing learning that can provide cognitive understanding and foster Islamic character in students is one of the obstacles facing PAI educators. Furthermore, limited facilities and infrastructure, and the tendency of educators and students to still use the teacher-centered learning paradigm also pose serious obstacles to implementing the AIR and ALC methods (Hidayati, 2024).

Several studies in the field of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) indicate that the shift toward student-centered learning is frequently hindered by structural, pedagogical, and cultural obstacles. Research on PAI classrooms consistently highlights issues such as teachers' limited mastery of active-learning strategies, incompatibility between material characteristics and student-centered methods, and the persistence of teacher-dominant instructional patterns despite curricular reforms (see, for example, findings discussed in *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, *Tarbiyah: Journal of Islamic Education*, and *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran*). These studies underscore that implementing active approaches like AIR and ALC is not merely a matter of selecting the right method, but requires substantial adjustments in teacher competence, classroom culture, and learning design. While the AIR and ALC methods have each been explored individually in broader educational contexts, the literature provides little analysis of the challenges that arise when both methods are applied simultaneously, particularly within PAI learning. This absence of focused discussion forms a clear research gap, which this study addresses by examining the practical obstacles encountered during the combined implementation of AIR and ALC at SMAN 9 Malang.

Therefore, this article aims to analyze the problems of implementing the AIR and ALC learning methods at SMAN 9 Malang. Furthermore, this article will also explorehow to implement both methods simultaneously. Through this study, researchers hope to provide a comprehensive understanding of the suitability, constraints, and implementation solutions for optimizing active-method-based PAI learning in secondary schools.

B. METHODS

This research is a qualitative study with a single case study approach that explores the experiences of an Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher at SMAN 9 Malang in applying the AIR and ALC methods. To ensure data credibility, the researcher applied source and data triangulation techniques, namely in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and documentation; the data obtained was cross-verified to reduce bias and strengthen the validity of the findings. The analysis was conducted using inductive qualitative analysis (thematic analysis) which examined the role of educators in implementation, the sequence of learning stages, and the practical obstacles that arose when the two methods were integrated. The findings will be discussed in three main areas of focus; educator readiness and role, adaptation of teaching material characteristics to AIR–ALC mechanics, and structural obstacles and practical solutions that arise in the field.

The data analysis technique employed in this study followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which consists of three interrelated phases: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by organizing and condensing information from observations, interviews, and documentation. The reduced data were then systematically presented to allow patterns, relationships, and themes to be identified, followed by a process of drawing and verifying conclusions. This analytical framework was selected because it offers a rigorous, structured, and widely recognized approach for handling qualitative

data, enabling the researcher to interpret complex findings coherently and align them effectively with the study's research objectives (Sugiyono, 2020).

C. RESULT & DISCUSSION

Integration of AIR and ALC in Classroom Practice

The findings demonstrate that the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher at SMAN 9 Malang implemented the AIR and ALC methods not as two parallel procedures, but as a blended pedagogical sequence. This integration appeared organically in the teacher's instructional decisions. The lesson consistently opened with ritual routines and a brief review of the previous material. This pattern aligned with AIR's emphasis on auditory engagement and repetition, and simultaneously prepared students for the cyclical progression required by the ALC framework (Robbaniyah, 2023).

During the core learning phase, the teacher used video materials to generate initial focus. This use of multimedia functioned as a deliberate stimulus consistent with ALC's early stage, which aims to activate attention and emotional readiness. Immediately after the video, the teacher provided explanatory reinforcement through whiteboard elaboration. Here, AIR's intellectual component became visible, as the teacher emphasized conceptual clarification and asked students to repeat or restate central ideas to ensure cognitive consolidation.

The lessons also incorporated interactive digital platforms to conduct real-time evaluations. This practice sustained the pace of learning and aligned with the ALC principle that immediate response and feedback help maintain engagement. The closing stage of the lesson required students to articulate the conclusion collectively, further reinforcing AIR's repetition mechanism. Overall, the instructional flow reflected an intentional sequencing in which ALC structured the broader rhythm of learning, while AIR functioned as the internal engine that strengthened understanding within each phase (Sholehah, 2025).

Pedagogical Readiness and Teacher Adaptation

Interview data with the PAI teacher indicate that integrating AIR and ALC requires substantial pedagogical flexibility. The teacher acknowledged that the diversity of students' backgrounds influenced how Islamic cultural history (SKI) was understood. Many students, coming from modern Muslim families, were less familiar with classical Islamic narratives, which created comprehension gaps that the teacher had to bridge through repeated explanation and context-building.

Observation data supported this view. Students frequently asked for clarification after video segments or verbal explanations. The teacher responded by restructuring explanations, adding analogies, or offering historical parallels to anchor abstract concepts. This adaptive behavior demonstrates that, although AIR and ALC offer structured models, their effectiveness relies heavily on the teacher's capacity to reconstruct unfamiliar material into accessible forms.

These findings suggest that pedagogical readiness is not simply a matter of understanding the procedural steps of AIR and ALC. Instead, it involves the ability to anticipate students' cognitive barriers, modify explanations, and maintain instructional momentum despite varying learner backgrounds. Without this adaptive capacity, neither model can achieve its intended function in the PAI context (Khan et al., 2024).

Classroom Dynamics and the Challenge of Maintaining Engagement

One of the strongest themes emerging from the data concerns the difficulty of sustaining classroom focus. Observations across multiple sessions documented persistent disruptions: students conversing during explanations, inattentiveness during media presentations, and regular use of mobile phones in the middle of lessons. These disruptions were not isolated incidents but a recurring pattern that weakened the interactive elements critical to both AIR and ALC. The teacher confirmed these difficulties during the interview, noting that maintaining student focus required constant monitoring and intervention. This challenge directly undermines

the principles of student-centered learning embedded in ALC, which depends on active engagement, and affects AIR's reliance on sustained auditory processing.

Furthermore, the disruptions produced inconsistencies in the completion of ALC phases. At times, the teacher had to pause and redirect attention before moving forward, which affected the learning cycle's fluidity. These interruptions also reduced the effectiveness of AIR's repetition component, as students did not consistently receive or process the information required for reinforcement.

Students' Perception of PAI and Its Impact on Method Implementation

The data also highlight a perceptual challenge: some students viewed PAI as a subject that did not demand high cognitive effort. This perception caused reduced motivation, limited participation, and resistance toward interactive learning tasks. The teacher noted that certain students assumed PAI required minimal attention compared to science or mathematics, leading them to disengage from activities designed to activate thinking and repetition. Observations confirmed that some students responded passively even when interactive tools or games were introduced. ALC's success depends on learner willingness to participate, and AIR requires active auditory processing followed by cognitive reinforcement. When motivation is low, both methods lose much of their transformative potential. This finding suggests that the obstacles of implementation extend beyond procedural issues and into the domain of student beliefs. Optimizing AIR–ALC integration requires reconditioning student attitudes toward PAI as a subject with intellectual and moral depth, not merely a routine requirement.

Structural and Environmental Constraints

Structural factors within the school also played a significant role. The scheduling of PAI classes during midday hours—especially on days when students had already undergone long academic sessions—resulted in noticeable fatigue. Several students appeared sleepy, unfocused, or mentally disengaged during observations. Interview data confirmed that the teacher found afternoon classes particularly challenging, as students' concentration declined significantly compared to morning hours.

Additionally, Friday class schedules were directly affected by school broadcasting activities, which created fragmented learning periods. This fragmentation disrupted the flow of the ALC cycle, which relies on continuity, and weakened the rhythm of repetition necessary for AIR. Infrastructure also presented limitations. While the teacher incorporated video and online platforms, the lack of varied media tools restricted opportunities to experiment with the experiential components of ALC (Susanti et al., 2024). Some activities could not be executed optimally simply due to the absence of adequate supporting facilities. These structural constraints underscore that effective implementation of student-centered methods requires not only teacher competence but also institutional alignment and logistical support.

Cross-Validation of Data: Convergence of Interview and Observation

The integration of interview and observation data reveals strong convergence. Several points align consistently across sources:

- **a.** Focus and discipline issues appeared in both the teacher's testimony and observational records.
- **b.** Difficulty connecting students with historical content was seen in students' repeated requests for clarification and confirmed by the teacher's explanation regarding diverse backgrounds.
- **c.** The negative impact of midday scheduling was observed directly and reinforced through interview statements about declining concentration.

No contradictory findings were identified. Instead, the two data sources complement one another, strengthening the credibility of the thematic analysis through triangulation.

D. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the integration of the Auditory Intellectual Repetition (AIR) and Accelerated Learning Cycle (ALC) methods in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMAN 9 Malang forms a coherent instructional framework in which each model fulfills a different pedagogical function. AIR strengthens cognitive processing through auditory engagement, intellectual clarification, and repetition, while ALC structures the overall rhythm of learning to maintain interaction, pace, and student involvement. Their combined implementation reveals that the core challenges are not rooted in the models themselves, but rather in the classroom dynamics, students' readiness and motivation, teachers' pedagogical adaptation, and the structural conditions of the school. These contextual factors determine whether AIR and ALC can operate as intended within a student-centered learning paradigm.

In light of this synthesis, the study concludes that the application of AIR and ALC in PAI learning has the potential to create an interactive, enjoyable, and meaningful learning atmosphere. However, the implementation process still faces significant obstacles, including teachers' adaptation to student-centered approaches, limited infrastructure, fluctuating student motivation, and ineffective learning schedules. These constraints highlight the need for stronger pedagogical innovation and more adaptive classroom-management strategies. Optimizing the use of AIR and ALC requires continuous teacher training that strengthens active-learning competencies, institutional support that aligns facilities and schedules with learning needs, and systematic adjustments to ensure that instructional design corresponds to students' characteristics and learning conditions.

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