The Essence of Islamic Religious Education Curriculum: Integrating Islamic Values with Contemporary Education

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Abstract

The purpose of writing this article is to explain the essence of the Islamic religious education curriculum in schools. Where the Islamic education curriculum plays a central role in shaping identity and scientific development in the context of religion-based education. This research is literature research by examining the nature of the Islamic education curriculum. The literature review method includes indirect observation or looking at internet platforms, books and other sources, then analyzing facts relevant to the specified topic. The findings reveal that the Islamic Education Curriculum is fundamentally designed to instill ethical values, promote critical thinking, and foster a sense of community among students. It emphasizes the integration of religious teachings with contemporary educational practices, aiming to cultivate well-rounded individuals who can navigate the complexities of modern life while adhering to Islamic principles. However, the study also identifies several challenges, including a lack of standardized implementation across different educational institutions, varying levels of teacher preparedness, and the need for more engaging instructional materials. These challenges highlight the necessity for ongoing professional development for educators and the importance of aligning the curriculum with current educational trends and student needs.

Tujuan dari penulisan artikel ini adalah untuk menjelaskan esensi dari kurikulum pendidikan agama Islam di sekolah. Dimana kurikulum pendidikan Islam memainkan peran sentral dalam membentuk identitas dan pengembangan keilmuan dalam konteks pendidikan berbasis agama. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kepustakaan dengan mengkaji hakikat kurikulum pendidikan agama Islam. Metode tinjauan literatur meliputi observasi tidak langsung atau melihat platform internet, buku dan sumber-sumber lain, kemudian menganalisis fakta-fakta yang relevan dengan topik yang ditentukan. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa Kurikulum Pendidikan Islam pada dasarnya dirancang untuk menanamkan nilai-nilai etika, mendorong pemikiran kritis, dan menumbuhkan rasa

kebersamaan di antara para siswa. Kurikulum ini menekankan integrasi ajaran agama dengan praktik pendidikan kontemporer, yang bertujuan untuk menumbuhkan individu-individu yang memiliki pengetahuan luas yang dapat menavigasi kompleksitas kehidupan modern dengan tetap berpegang teguh pada prinsip-prinsip Islam. Namun, studi ini juga mengidentifikasi beberapa tantangan, termasuk kurangnya implementasi standar di berbagai lembaga pendidikan, tingkat kesiapan guru yang berbeda-beda, dan kebutuhan akan materi pembelajaran yang lebih menarik. Tantangan-tantangan ini menyoroti perlunya pengembangan profesional yang berkelanjutan bagi para pendidik dan pentingnya menyelaraskan kurikulum dengan tren pendidikan saat ini dan kebutuhan siswa.

Keywords: Essence of Islamic Education Curriculum; Islamic Value in Schools; Islamic Religious Education; Contemporary Education

Introduction

Every educator must understand the curriculum developments that occur from time to time. Curriculum changes indicate that educators and students must upgrade themselves to be better, more creative and innovative in carrying out learning activities. As for another goal, educators must understand changes in the curriculum from time to time as a teaching method that is very important for the educational context. In the curriculum it will be clear what efforts are being made to support the development of student potential that exists in each student.[1]

The Islamic religious education curriculum aims to explain the message of the Koran and the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. to be able to organize the quality of human life on a better path. The Islamic education curriculum background is expected to contribute to better student behavior, most importantly in the formation of morals and manners, religious spirituality, and intellectual and professionalism.[2] The Islamic education curriculum must also be in accordance with the spirit of human life patterns, emphasize the value of progress, and seek new breakthroughs that can be free from ignorance and poverty.

Etymologically, curriculum comes from the Greek, namely curir which means runner and curere which means the distance covered by a runner. This term was originally used in the world of sports to mean "a little race course"

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[1] Samsul Kurniawan dan Erwun Makhrus, *Jejak Pemikiran Tokoh Pendidikan Islam* (Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz media, 2011).

[2] Ifham Choli, "Hakikat Pengembangan Kurikulum Pendidikan Islam," *Al-Risalah*, *Jurnal Studi Agama. dan Pemikiran. Islam.* 10, No. 2. (2019): 100–127. https://doi.org/10.34005/alrisalah.v10i2.407

which means a distance that must be covered in a sports competition.[3] Based on this understanding, in the context of the world of education, it is defined as a "circle of instruction", namely a teaching circle in which the teacher and mood are involved. Meanwhile, another opinion is expressed that the curriculum is a competition arena, a place where students compete to master the lessons in order to reach the finish line in the form of a certificate, diploma or graduate degree.[4]

As for terminology, many experts have defined curriculum including Crow and Crow defining that the curriculum is a teaching plan or a number of subjects that are arranged systematically to complete a program to obtain a diploma.[5] George A. Beaucham defined as a written document that contains all the subjects to be taught to students through a selection of various disciplines and problem formulations in everyday life.[6] Peter F. Olivva stating that the curriculum is essentially a form of planning or a program of the experiences of learners that is directed and developed in schools.[7] The curriculum is the entirety of the experiences of students that is the responsibility of the school or institution.[8] And Hilda Taba views that the curriculum is a number of educational, cultural, social, sports and artistic experiences provided by the school for its students inside and outside the school with the aim of helping them to develop holistically in all aspects and changing their behavior in accordance with educational goals.[9]

The curriculum can be categorized into several types, including formal, non-formal, and informal curricula. The formal curriculum is typically implemented in official educational institutions, such as schools and universities, and adheres to standards set by educational authorities. In contrast, non-formal and informal curricula are more flexible and can be tailored to the needs of individuals or communities.[10] The importance of the curriculum in education

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[3] Sukmadinata, Nana Syaodih,*Pengembangan Kurikulum: Teori dan Praktek*, (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2009).

[4] Samsul Nizar, *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam, Pendekatan Historis, Teoritis dan Pra*ktis, (Jakarta: Quantum Teaching. 2002).

[5] Lester Donald Crow, Alice Crow, *Educational Psychology*, (Universitas Michigan: American Book Company, 1958).

[6] Beauchamp, George A.. *Curriculum Theory*. (Illinois: The Kagg Press Bettencour, 1975).

[7] Oliva, Peter F. *Developing the Curriculum*. (Brown College Division: Scott Foresman, 1982)

[8] R. Tyler, *Basic Principles for Curriculum and Instruction*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949).

[9] Hilda Taba. *Process, Desaign and Strategy For Planning both Primary and Scondary*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc: (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962).

[10] Nana Syaodih Sukmadinata, *Pengembangan Kurikulum: Teori dan Praktek*, (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2009).

cannot be overlooked, as it plays a crucial role in shaping students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes. With a good curriculum in place, it is hoped that the learning process can take place optimally, producing graduates who are ready to face future challenges.

Thus, the definition of curriculum in a modern view is an educational program provided by a school, which is not only limited to the field of study and learning activities, but includes everything that can influence the personal development and formation of students in accordance with the expected educational goals so as to improve the quality. life, which is implemented not only at school but also outside school.

If applied in the Islamic education curriculum, the curriculum functions as a guideline used by educators to guide their students towards the highest goals of Islamic education, through the accumulation of a number of knowledge, skills and attitudes. In this case, the Islamic education process is not a process that can be carried out haphazardly, but should refer to the conceptualization of the perfect human (insan kamil) whose strategies have been systematically arranged in the Islamic education curriculum.

What is the essence of the Islamic education curriculum in the context of the present or contemporary era? In order not to lose its context, Islamic education must be sensitive to the development of technology, culture, and contemporary community life. Therefore, the study of the essence of the Islamic education curriculum in schools needs to integrate Islamic values and contemporary educational practices.

Method

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach in the nature of library research. This method was chosen because this research aims to discuss the nature of the Islamic education curriculum, which is more suitable to be explained through literature analysis. Literature study is a research method based on searching and analyzing various literature sources that are relevant to the topic being researched. Reference sources used in this research are books, journals, articles and documents related to the Islamic education curriculum.[11]

The research employs a phenomenological approach, which is particularly suitable for understanding the lived experiences of individuals as they relate to the Islamic Education Curriculum. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes of educators, students, and administrators regarding the curriculum's essence. By focusing on the subjective

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[11] Suharsimi Arikunto, *Prosedur Penilitian Suatu Pendekatan Praktek* (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 2011)

experiences of participants, the study aims to uncover the underlying meanings and values associated with Islamic education within the school context.[12]

The study adopts a qualitative research design to explore the intricate dimensions of curriculum development, implementation, and assessment within the context of Islamic education. Given the multifaceted nature of the curriculum and its implications for educational practices, a qualitative approach is deemed appropriate for capturing the nuanced perspectives of various stakeholders involved in the educational process.

Result and Discussion

Principles of the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum

A good and relevant curriculum in order to achieve the goals of Islamic education is one that is integrated and comprehensive and uses the Al-Quran and Hadith as the main sources in its preparation. In the Al-Qur'an and Hadith, a basic framework is found that can be used as operational guidance in the preparation and development of the Islamic Education curriculum. The basic framework is:

a. Tawheed

Tawheed as the basic framework of the curriculum must be strengthened from infancy, starting by listening to tawheed sentences such as the call to prayer or iqamah to newly born children. With monotheism, we can realize a harmonious world order, a cosmos (universe) that is full of purpose, social equality, equality of belief, equality of gender and race, equality in all activities and freedom, even the entire world community is the same, which is called "ummatan wahidah".[13]

In this way, monotheism is the main principle in all dimensions of human life, both in the aspect of the vertical relationship between humans and God and the aspect of the horizontal relationship between humans and the natural surroundings, so that a prosperous, happy life can be achieved in this world and in the afterlife, including relationships within educational process. This kind of monotheism is used as the basic framework for the Islamic religious education curriculum.[14]

b. Reading Command

The command to "read" Allah's verses includes three types of verses, namely: 1) Allah's verses are based on revelation; 2) Allah's verses that exist

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[12] Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian. Kuantitatif,. Kualitatif, dan. Kombinasi (Mixed Methods)*. (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2009).

[13] Ramayulis. *Ilmu Pendidikan Islam*. Jakarta: Penerbit Kalam Mulia, 2008

[14] Muhaimin, *Nuansa Baru Pendidikan Islam*. (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo, 2006).

within humans; and 3) Allah's verses exist in the universe outside humans. The soul of these three types of verses from Allah is "tawheed". This is where the Islamic education curriculum lies, because according to Islam, all knowledge comes from Allah, but the way it is conveyed is some directly from Allah and some is through human thinking and sensory experiences which are different from each other.

Viewed from a curriculum perspective, the Word of Allah SWT is actually the basic material for education which includes all the knowledge needed by humans. Reading besides involving high mental processes, recognition (cognition), memory (memory), observation (perception), pronunciation (verbalization), thinking (reasoning), creativity (creativity).[15] The motivation contained in Q.S. Al-Alaq verses 1-5 are so that humans are encouraged to explore nature and its surroundings with the ability to read and write.

The principles of curriculum vary according to expert analysis and are then added to and adapted to the essence of the Islamic education curriculum. These principles are as follows:

1. Principles based on Islam including its teachings and values. So everything related to the curriculum, including philosophy, objectives, content, teaching methods, methods of treatment and relationships that apply in educational institutions must be based on Islamic religion and morals.[16]

2. The principle of aiming at goals is that all activities in the curriculum are directed to achieve previously formulated goals.

3. The principle of integration between subjects, experiences and activities contained in the curriculum, as well as the link between curriculum content and the needs of students as well as the needs of society.

4. The principle of relevance is the suitability of education to students' living environment, relevance to present and future life, relevance to job demands.17

5. The principle of flexibility is that there is room for movement which provides a little freedom in action, both oriented towards flexibility in selecting educational programs and in developing teaching programs.

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[15] Hasan Langgulung,. *Asas-Asas Pendidikan Islam*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Husna,1988).

[16] Ahmad Tafsir, *Ilmu Pendidikan dalam Perspektif Islam*, (Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya, 2008).

[17] Ramayulis. *Ilmu Pendidikan Islam*. Jakarta: Penerbit Kalam Mulia, 2008).

6. The principle of integrity is that the curriculum can produce complete humans, humans who are able to integrate the faculty of dhikr and the faculty of thought, as well as humans who can harmonize the structure of life in this world and the structure of life in the afterlife.18

7. The principle of efficiency is that the curriculum can utilize time, energy, funds and other resources carefully, precisely, adequately and can meet expectations.19

8. The principle of continuity and partnership is how the curriculum is structured which consists of sustainable parts with other curriculum links, both vertically (leveling, stages) and horizontally.

9. The principle of individuality is how the curriculum pays attention to differences in children's nature and environment in general, which includes all personal aspects of students, such as physical differences, character, intelligence, talents and their strengths and weaknesses.

10. The principle of equality of opportunity, and democracy is how the curriculum can empower all students in acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes which are highly prioritized. All students from various groups such as economically and socially disadvantaged groups who need special assistance, are talented and superior have the right to receive appropriate education according to their abilities and speed.

11. The principle of dynamism is that the curriculum is not static, but can follow developments in science and social change.20

12. The principle of balance is how the curriculum can develop students' potential attitudes in a harmonious manner.

13. The principle of effectiveness is that the curriculum can support the effectiveness of educators who teach and students who learn.[21]

The Nature of the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum in Schools

The curriculum of Islamic religious education in schools plays a pivotal role in shaping the moral and ethical foundations of students. This discussion aims to critically analyze the essence of the curriculum, its objectives, implementation strategies, and the challenges faced in its application within educational institutions. By examining these components, we can gain a deeper understanding of how Islamic education can be effectively integrated into the

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[18] Ahmad, H. M., dkk, *Pengembangan Kurikulum*, (Bandung: CV. Pustaka Setia, 1998)

[19] Hasan Langgulung, *Asas-Asas Pendidikan Islam.* (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Husna, 1988).

[20] Abdurrahman An-Nahlawi, *Prinsip Prinsip dan Metode Pendidikan Islam Dalam Keluarga, Di Sekolah dan di Masyarakat* (Bandung: CV Diponegoro, 1989).

[21] Iskandar Wiryokusumo & Usman Mulyadi, *Dasar-Dasar Pengembangan Kurikulum*, (Jakarta: Bina Aksara, 1988).

broader educational framework, thereby fostering a generation that is not only academically proficient but also morally grounded.[22]

At its core, the curriculum for Islamic religious education is designed to instill a comprehensive understanding of Islamic principles, values, and teachings among students. This curriculum is not merely a set of academic subjects to be taught; it encompasses a holistic approach that integrates religious knowledge with ethical behavior and social responsibility. The objectives of this curriculum extend beyond rote memorization of religious texts; they aim to cultivate critical thinking, encourage moral reasoning, and promote a sense of community and belonging among students.[23]

One of the significant aspects of the Islamic education curriculum is its emphasis on integrating religious teachings with contemporary knowledge. This holistic approach seeks to ensure that students are not only well-versed in religious texts but also equipped with the critical thinking skills necessary to engage with modern societal issues. The inclusion of subjects such as science, mathematics, and social studies alongside Islamic studies reflects an understanding of the need for a well-rounded education. This integration is crucial in dispelling the notion that religious education is antithetical to secular knowledge, thereby fostering a more inclusive and comprehensive educational experience.

One of the primary aims of Islamic religious education is to develop a strong sense of identity among students. In a multicultural and multi-religious society, it is imperative for students to have a clear understanding of their own beliefs while also respecting the beliefs of others. The curriculum should provide students with the tools to navigate complex social landscapes, fostering an environment where dialogue and mutual respect can flourish. This aspect of the curriculum is particularly relevant in contemporary society, where issues of intolerance and discrimination are prevalent. By emphasizing the importance of empathy, compassion, and understanding, the curriculum can contribute to the development of a more harmonious society.[24]

Implementation of the Islamic religious education curriculum poses several challenges. One significant hurdle is the varying interpretations of Islamic teachings and the diverse cultural contexts in which these teachings are applied.

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[22] Zainal Arifin, *Konsep dan Model Pengembangan Kurikulum*, (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2012).
[23] Azyumardi Azra, *Pendidikan Islam di Era Globalisasi: Peluang dan Tantangan DalamMereka Bicara Pendidikan Islam: Sebuah Bunga Rampai.* (Jakarta: Raja GrafindoPersada, 2009).
[24] Abdul Majid, dan Dian Andayani, *Pendidikan Agama Islam Berbasis Kompetensi; Konsep dan Implementasi Kurikulum PAI*, (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2006).

Educators must be equipped with a comprehensive understanding of Islamic scholarship to navigate these complexities effectively. This necessitates ongoing professional development and training for teachers, ensuring they are well-versed in both the theological aspects of the curriculum and the pedagogical strategies required to engage students meaningfully.[25]

Moreover, the integration of Islamic education within the broader educational framework can sometimes lead to tensions between secular and religious curricula. In many educational systems, there is a growing emphasis on standardized testing and academic performance, which can overshadow the importance of religious education. This tension raises critical questions about the value placed on moral and ethical education compared to academic achievement. It is essential for educational policymakers to recognize the integral role that religious education plays in shaping well-rounded individuals and to create policies that support its inclusion rather than marginalization.[26]

Challenges of the Islamic Education Curriculum

Another challenge lies in the resources available for teaching Islamic religious education. Many schools may lack the necessary materials, such as textbooks and teaching aids, that are aligned with the curriculum. Furthermore, the availability of qualified educators who can effectively deliver the curriculum is often limited. To address these issues, collaboration between educational institutions, religious organizations, and community stakeholders is crucial. By pooling resources and expertise, stakeholders can create a more robust educational environment that supports the effective teaching of Islamic values and principles.[27]

The assessment of students' understanding of Islamic teachings is another area that warrants attention. Traditional assessment methods, which often focus on memorization and recall, may not adequately reflect a student's grasp of the material. Alternative assessment strategies, such as project-based learning, reflective journaling, and community service projects, can provide a more comprehensive evaluation of students' understanding and application of Islamic principles. These methods encourage students to engage with the material in a

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[25] M. Atho. Mudzhar, *Pendidikan Agama di Sekolah dalam persfektif HAM, dalam mereka bicara pendidikan Islam; Sebuah Bunga Rampai*. (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 2010).

[26] Yusuf Amir Faisal, *Reorientasi Pendidikan Islam*, (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 1995).

[27] Sofan Amri, dan Iif Khoiru Ahmadi. *Konstruksi Pengembangan Pembelajaran; Pengaruhnya Terhadap Mekanisme dan Praktik Kurikulum*. (Jakarta: Prestasi Pustaka Publisher, 2010).

meaningful way, fostering a deeper connection to their faith and its relevance in their daily lives.[28]

Furthermore, the role of parents and the community in supporting Islamic religious education cannot be overstated. Parents are often the first educators of their children and play a crucial role in reinforcing the values taught in schools. Schools should actively engage parents in the educational process, creating opportunities for them to participate in their children's learning experiences. Community involvement can also enhance the curriculum by providing students with real-world applications of Islamic principles through service projects and interfaith dialogues.[29]

In addition to these challenges, it is essential to consider the impact of technology on Islamic religious education. The digital age has transformed the way information is accessed and consumed, presenting both opportunities and challenges for educators. Online resources, such as virtual classrooms and educational platforms, can enhance the learning experience by providing students with access to a wealth of information and diverse perspectives. However, educators must also be vigilant about the potential for misinformation and the need for critical evaluation of online content. Teaching students how to navigate the digital landscape responsibly is an essential component of modern Islamic education.

The curriculum for Islamic religious education must also evolve to address contemporary issues that students face in their lives. Topics such as environmental stewardship, social justice, and mental health are increasingly relevant and should be integrated into the curriculum. By addressing these issues through an Islamic lens, educators can provide students with a framework for understanding their responsibilities as global citizens. This approach not only enhances the relevance of the curriculum but also empowers students to take an active role in addressing the challenges facing their communities and the world at large.

Conclusion

The curriculum of Islamic religious education in schools is a vital component of holistic education that aims to develop morally and ethically grounded individuals. While there are numerous challenges in its implementation, including diverse interpretations of Islamic teachings, resource

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[28] Abuddin Nata, *Manajemen Pendidikan: Mengatasi Kelemahan Pendidikan Islam di Indonesi*a. (Jakarta: Prenada Kencana, 2003).

[29] Muhaimin, *Pengembangan Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam di Sekolah, Madrasah dan Perguruan Tinggi*, (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2007).

limitations, and the need for effective assessment strategies, there are also significant opportunities for growth and development. By fostering collaboration among educators, parents, and the community, integrating technology thoughtfully, and addressing contemporary issues, we can create a more effective and relevant curriculum that resonates with students. Ultimately, a well-structured Islamic religious education curriculum has the potential to shape not only the individual lives of students but also the broader society in which they live, promoting values of empathy, understanding, and social responsibility.

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