



**JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY
ISLAMIC PRIMARY EDUCATION**

Vol. 3, No. 2, 2024 Page 245-251

<https://zia-research.com/index.php/jcipe>

**Islamic Religious Education Curriculum
as a Pillar of Islamic Character Formation for Students**

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords

Character Development
Curriculum
Islamic Religious Education

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the role of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum as a fundamental pillar in shaping students' Islamic character in the era of globalization. Utilizing a library research method, data were collected from various academic literature sources, including scholarly journals, books, and official documents published within the last five years. The findings indicate that the PAI curriculum significantly contributes to the internalization of moral, social, and spiritual values among students. Strategies such as project-based learning, extracurricular activities, and the reinforcement of Islamic values have proven effective in shaping students' Islamic character. However, the implementation of this curriculum faces challenges, including limited resources, inadequate teacher training, and insufficient time allocation for Islamic character education. The study concludes that the development of an adaptive PAI curriculum is essential to meet contemporary needs, integrating technology and value-based approaches. Furthermore, this research provides practical implications, emphasizing the need for innovative teaching methods, continuous teacher training, and supportive policies to ensure the effectiveness of the PAI curriculum in fostering a generation with strong Islamic character, capable of navigating modern challenges.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) sebagai pilar utama dalam pembentukan karakter Islami siswa di era globalisasi. Dengan menggunakan metode penelitian kepustakaan (library research), data dikumpulkan dari berbagai literatur akademik yang relevan, termasuk jurnal ilmiah, buku, dan dokumen resmi yang dipublikasikan dalam lima tahun terakhir. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kurikulum PAI berkontribusi signifikan dalam menginternalisasi nilai-nilai moral, sosial, dan spiritual pada siswa. Strategi pembelajaran berbasis proyek, kegiatan ekstrakurikuler, dan penguatan nilai-nilai keislaman terbukti efektif dalam membentuk karakter Islami siswa. Namun, implementasi kurikulum ini masih menghadapi tantangan, seperti keterbatasan sumber daya, kurangnya pelatihan guru, dan keterbatasan waktu untuk pengajaran karakter Islami. Kesimpulan penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya pengembangan kurikulum PAI yang adaptif terhadap kebutuhan zaman, dengan integrasi teknologi dan pendekatan berbasis nilai. Selain itu, penelitian ini memberikan implikasi praktis berupa perlunya inovasi dalam metode pengajaran, pelatihan guru berkelanjutan, dan kebijakan pendukung untuk memastikan efektivitas kurikulum PAI dalam membentuk generasi muda yang berkarakter Islami dan mampu menghadapi tantangan modern.

INTRODUCTION

The Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum is one of the important components in the national education system. The PAI curriculum must be developed systematically and continuously to achieve national education goals. The PAI curriculum development process must

involve various stakeholders, starting from the government, educators, students, and the community (Pranata, et.al., 2023).

Education plays a very important role in shaping the character of the younger generation. In the context of a pluralistic and religious Indonesian society, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is one of the main elements in instilling Islamic values in students. The PAI curriculum is designed not only to transfer religious knowledge, but also to shape Islamic character that includes moral, ethical, and spiritual values. This is in line with the goals of national education which focus on forming students who are faithful, pious, and have noble character (Salisah, et.al., 2024).

The formation of Islamic character through the PAI curriculum is becoming increasingly important in the era of globalization, where the flow of information and the influence of foreign cultures are increasingly difficult to contain. Children and adolescents today are faced with various challenges such as materialism, individualism, and moral decadence that have the potential to erode the religious values that have been taught. Therefore, the PAI curriculum is expected to be the main pillar in building a young generation that has a strong Islamic identity, can face the challenges of the times, and contributes positively to community life.

An effective Islamic Religious Education curriculum design must include the integration of Islamic values in various aspects of learning, from teaching materials, learning strategies, to evaluation. This process must be carried out holistically, so that students not only understand Islamic teachings theoretically, but are also able to internalize these values in everyday life (Mufidah, et.al., 2022). With this approach, Islamic Religious Education learning can make a real contribution to shaping students' Islamic character, which includes noble morals, social responsibility, and commitment to religious teachings.

Several studies have shown that the implementation of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum based on Islamic character values has a significant impact on the development of students' character. For example, recent research has shown that a curriculum designed with a value-based approach can significantly increase students' spiritual and moral awareness (Romlah & Rusdi, 2023). Therefore, it is important to continue to review and develop the Islamic Religious Education curriculum to make it more relevant to the needs of the times without neglecting the essence of Islamic values. This article aims to analyze how the Islamic Religious Education curriculum can function as the main pillar of the formation of students' Islamic character. By exploring the design, implementation, and challenges in the implementation of this curriculum, it is hoped that this study can contribute to the development of a more effective Islamic Religious Education curriculum that is oriented towards the formation of a strong Islamic character.

METHOD

This study uses a library research approach that aims to examine various literatures relevant to the topic of the role of Islamic religious education in shaping the character of students. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to collect, analyze, and synthesize information from various sources that have been previously published. The data sources used in this study consist of secondary literature including scientific journals, reference books, conference articles, and official documents.

Data collection in this study was carried out in several stages. The first stage is to identify sources by searching for relevant literature through various academic databases, such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, Springer, and ProQuest (Assingkily, 2021). Furthermore, the literature found was selected based on inclusion criteria, namely literature published in the last five years, relevant to the research topic, and of proven quality. After the literature was selected, data was collected from these sources, including information related to research methods, results, and findings related to the role of Islamic religious education in shaping the character of students in the digital era. To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, source triangulation was

carried out by utilizing various types of data to reduce bias and increase the accuracy of the findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Islamic Religious Education Curriculum as a Pillar for the Formation of Students' Islamic Character

Based on the analysis of the implementation of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in several secondary schools in Indonesia, it was found that this curriculum has a significant role in the formation of students' Islamic character (Safitri, et.al., 2023). The results of the study show that the implementation of the PAI curriculum based on Islamic values can develop students' character in moral, social, and spiritual aspects. In general, this curriculum not only teaches religious knowledge, but also includes the development of attitudes, behavior, and social responsibility in accordance with Islamic teachings.

The study also revealed that learning strategies implemented in the Islamic Religious Education curriculum, such as project-based learning and extracurricular activities involving Islamic values, have a positive impact on students' character development. These activities, which include leadership training, community service, and Islamic studies, have been shown to increase students' awareness of the importance of noble morals and social responsibility. Interviews with several Islamic Religious Education teachers also showed that consistent teaching of Islamic moral values can increase discipline, empathy, and mutual respect among students.

However, although the overall PAI curriculum has a positive impact, there are challenges in its implementation, such as the lack of supporting resources, teacher training, and differences in understanding between teachers and students regarding the expected Islamic character values. Most schools also reported limited time that can be allocated to teaching Islamic character outside of core subjects. In this regard, efforts to strengthen the PAI curriculum must be carried out by considering the local context and the specific needs of students, as well as by supporting teacher professionalism through ongoing training and capacity development.

Discussion

Islamic education curriculum is all educational programs built on the concept of Islam (Fauzi, 2022). Because it not only transfers religious knowledge but also instills moral and spiritual values. Islamic character education reflected in the PAI curriculum aims to form individuals with noble morals, who have a sense of responsibility towards themselves, society, and religion. During increasingly complex challenges of the times, the PAI curriculum must be able to adapt to developments in the times without losing its essence as a source of character formation based on Islam.

Definition of Islamic Religious Education

Islamic Religious Education is a learning process aimed at teaching the teachings and principles of Islam to individuals or groups. The main objective of Islamic religious education is to form a correct and deep understanding of the teachings of Islam, strengthen faith and piety to Allah, and develop noble morals in accordance with Islamic values. Islamic Religious Education covers various aspects of life, such as beliefs, worship, morals, Islamic laws, history, ethics, social, and morals. Through Islamic religious education, individuals are expected to be able to understand and practice the principles of Islam in everyday life.

Islamic Religious Education can be provided in various forms, starting from formal learning in religious schools, Islamic educational institutions, or in the general education curriculum in countries with a Muslim majority population. In addition, Islamic religious education can also be organized in the form of home teaching, religious study groups, or through media and information technology.

The Role of Islamic Education Curriculum in Forming Islamic Character

As an important part of the national education system, the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum has enormous potential in shaping students' characters based on Islamic values. PAI not only functions as a medium for conveying knowledge about religious teachings, but also as a strategic means to internalize the noble values of Islam, such as discipline, honesty, sincerity, and social solidarity. These values aim to build a solid moral foundation in students, preparing them to become individuals with noble character and contribute positively to society. Research conducted by Aisyah revealed that the integration of technology in Islamic Religious Education learning can increase students' active participation and understanding of religious values. This allows students to better understand the essence of Islamic teachings and how to apply them in everyday life, including in making decisions that are in accordance with religious principles. In the digital era, technology is a relevant tool for connecting religious learning with the real world, so that students can feel the positive impact of these values in various aspects of life.

The following are some of the Fundamental Values in Islamic Education, namely: first, Honesty (*As-Sidq*). Honesty is a fundamental value that is the core of Islamic religious education. Through this learning, students are invited to always speak and act according to the truth, even in challenging situations. This value forms the moral integrity of students, helping them understand the importance of transparency and honesty in every aspect of life, both at school and outside the educational environment. Second, Responsibility (*Amanah*). Islamic religious education instills the value of responsibility, which teaches students to be responsible for every action, decision, and mandate they carry. This value trains students to become individuals who can be trusted and have a high sense of responsibility towards themselves, their families, society, and the environment.

Third, Tolerance (*Tasamuh*). In the era of globalization, interaction with various cultural backgrounds, religions, and traditions is increasing. Islamic education teaches the value of tolerance as the ability to appreciate and respect differences, and to create a harmonious life amidst diversity. This value prepares students to live side by side peacefully with others, without losing their Islamic identity. Fourth, Discipline (*Iltizam*). Discipline is one of the key values taught in Islamic Religious Education, teaching students to obey the rules, respect time, and carry out tasks responsibly. This value helps students develop positive habits that support academic success and daily life. Fifth, Cooperation (*Ta'awun*). The value of cooperation encourages students to work together with others in achieving common goals. Through this learning, students learn about the importance of collaboration, empathy, and supporting each other in facing common challenges.

Through this approach, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum is not only a teaching tool, but also an instrument for the formation of sustainable Islamic character. With a combination of noble values, innovative learning methods, and technology integration, Islamic religious education can produce a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also has noble character, is responsible, and is ready to face global challenges without losing its Islamic identity (Iswanto, et.al., 2023).

PAI Curriculum Implementation Strategy

To optimize the role of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum in the formation of Islamic character, various implementation strategies must be applied. One of them is the integration of Islamic values in every aspect of learning. This includes teaching materials based on the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, as well as learning methods that support the development of student character. According to research, Islamic Religious Education teaching that involves interactive discussions and reinforcement of daily practical experiences is more effective in forming students' Islamic character than relying solely on lectures or memorization methods (Alam, 2020).

Learning approaches that are oriented towards participatory activities such as interactive discussions, simulations, case studies, and projects based on Islamic values are considered more effective than conventional methods such as lectures or just memorizing. By providing space for students to dialogue, exchange ideas, and share experiences, they not only understand Islamic values theoretically but are also able to internalize them in everyday life. In addition, it is also important to provide relevant practical experiences, such as religious activities in the school environment, community service programs, and the habituation of noble morals through daily activities. These activities provide opportunities for students to apply Islamic values directly in real situations, thus building strong moral awareness and responsibility.

Furthermore, the success of the implementation of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum also depends heavily on the support of various parties, including teachers, parents, and the surrounding environment. Teachers not only act as teachers, but also as role models in demonstrating good Islamic morals. Parents at home must support this learning by creating a harmonious Islamic atmosphere, while the school environment must support it by building a conducive Islamic culture through extracurricular activities, school policies, and management based on religious values. By implementing these strategies consistently and in an integrated manner, the PAI curriculum is expected to be the main instrument in forming a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also strong in Islamic character, has noble morals, and is able to become an agent of positive change in society.

Challenges and Obstacles in Implementing the PAI Curriculum

Although the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum has a very important role in shaping students' Islamic character, its implementation is not free from various challenges and obstacles that require serious attention. One of the main challenges is the gap between the objectives of the curriculum that have been designed and the real conditions in the field. This mismatch is often caused by the lack of training and professional development for PAI teachers, especially in teaching Islamic character values effectively and relevant to students' needs. Teachers are often faced with limited innovative teaching methods, so that the learning process tends to be monotonous and less arousing student participation.

Rahma Ayu Wisiynti also highlighted another challenge in the form of a gap between students' theoretical understanding of religious teachings and their application in everyday life (Muthrofin & Madekhan, 2023). Students may understand religious concepts academically but have difficulty internalizing and practicing them in their social interactions and personal lives. This challenge is exacerbated by social and cultural changes in the digital era, where the influence of media and technology often dominates students' attention, so that Islamic values are less of a priority in their lives.

In this context, ongoing efforts are needed in the form of research, evaluation, and critical reflection on the effectiveness of the implementation of the PAI curriculum in madrasahs and public schools. This process involves collecting data on teacher experiences, challenges faced, and student responses to the teaching methods applied. This evaluation must be carried out periodically to identify aspects that need to be improved, both in terms of materials, methods, and learning environments.

In addition, the involvement of various parties, including teachers, principals, parents, and policy makers, is very important in supporting better implementation. Stakeholders need to be empowered through training, workshops, and discussions to continuously improve their competence and understanding of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum. With the synergy between various parties, Islamic religious education in madrasahs and schools can develop into an educational instrument that truly meets the needs of Muslim students in Indonesia. By monitoring and evaluating the implementation consistently, and making necessary adjustments, it is hoped that the Islamic Religious Education curriculum can continue to be relevant, effective,

and able to become a solid foundation in producing a generation of Muslims who have Islamic character, are competitive, and contribute positively to the wider community.

Evaluation and Development of PAI Curriculum

Curriculum Evaluation and Development The evaluation and development of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum that is oriented towards the formation of Islamic character needs to be carried out continuously and comprehensively. This effort includes not only the preparation of teaching materials that are relevant to the development of the times, but also periodic reviews of the effectiveness of curriculum implementation at various levels of education. Curriculum development must be based on the principle of adaptability to social, cultural, and technological changes, so that it can answer the challenges and needs of students in the modern era (Yusuf & Nata, 2023).

According to Khoirul Muthrofin and Madekhan, a curriculum that is responsive to social and cultural dynamics tends to be more accepted by students and has a significant impact on the formation of their Islamic character. This is in line with the research of Safitri, Sa'baniah, and Eko Nursalim which states that a relevant and contextual PAI learning approach can strengthen students' character through internalization of Islamic values in everyday life.

Therefore, it is important for educational institutions to routinely conduct comprehensive studies and evaluations of the implementation of the PAI curriculum. This evaluation must cover various aspects, such as the suitability of the material to current developments, the effectiveness of teaching methods, the level of student understanding of Islamic values, and the impact of the curriculum on character formation. The study can also involve the participation of various parties, including educators, students, parents, and other stakeholders, to gain a holistic perspective.

In addition to evaluation, curriculum development also needs to involve innovation in learning design, such as integrating technology into the teaching and learning process, strengthening experience-based approaches, and creating a learning environment that supports the practice of Islamic values. With this step, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum will not only become a teaching tool, but also a strategic means to produce a generation with noble character, a deep understanding of Islam, and the ability to face global challenges without losing their Islamic identity.

Through a systematic evaluation and development process, the PAI curriculum can continue to develop into an educational instrument that is relevant, effective, and has a significant impact in forming students' Islamic character optimally. This ensures that the main goal of education, namely producing a generation that is intelligent, moral, and has an Islamic personality, can be achieved optimally.

CONCLUSION

Based on the description above, it is concluded that the Islamic religious education (PAI) curriculum not only functions as a pillar for the formation of students' Islamic character but also becomes an integral part of the development of Islamic education knowledge and practice. Logically, the implementation of the PAI curriculum requires a holistic and transformative approach, where Islamic values are applied in all aspects of learning. This curriculum broadens the horizon of Islamic education science by integrating contemporary thinking that remains based on the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, creating a theory of Islamic education that is relevant to the development of the times.

In practice, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum presents a challenge to translate spiritual values into real behavior in students' lives. This requires commitment from all stakeholders, including teachers, families, and communities, to create a conducive educational ecosystem. Thus, the logical consequence of the development of this curriculum is the need for synergy between the theory and practice of Islamic education, both in the form of updating teaching methodologies and the application of Islamic values in overall educational policies.

Furthermore, the success of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum in shaping students' Islamic character can be the basis for the development of a broader Islamic education paradigm. This paradigm carries education based on universal Islamic values that are not only relevant at the local level but also have a significant contribution to the global dialogue on education based on morality and ethics.

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