Axiology of Independent Curriculum as Orientation for Developing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at MAN 2 Bima City

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the axiology of the Independent Curriculum as an orientation for the development of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at MAN 2 Kota Bima. The Independent Curriculum offers a flexible learning approach that focuses on strengthening character, so it has great potential in strengthening the relevance of Islamic religious education in madrasas. With a qualitative approach and case study design, this study involved the head of the madrasah, PAI teachers, and students as participants. Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MAN 2 Kota Bima significantly contributed to the formation of student character through the integration of spiritual, moral, and social values in PAI learning. From an axiological perspective, the values of honesty, discipline, and tolerance are important foundations that are instilled contextually. However, challenges remain, such as limited human resources, lack of intensive training for teachers, and the need to adapt to changes in the learning paradigm. These findings emphasize the importance of strengthening the capacity of educators and systemic support so that the Independent Curriculum truly functions as a vehicle for fostering students' religious and social character holistically. This research is expected to provide academic and practical contributions in the development of a more transformative Islamic religious education curriculum in various madrasas in Indonesia.

Keywords: Axiology, Independent Curriculum, PAI, MAN 2 Bima City

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education has a central role and is an important aspect in forming the character, morals, and spiritual values of students as Muslim individuals.(Ismail and Akbar 2024). As an integral part of the national education system, Islamic religious education not only aims to provide religious understanding, but also to instill universal values such as honesty, responsibility,

and tolerance.(Kamel 2023)In this challenging era of globalization, Islamic religious education in madrasas must be able to adapt to various social and cultural dynamics to produce a generation that is academically competent and has moral integrity.

The Independent Curriculum, introduced in Indonesia as a response to the need for more flexible and student-centered learning, opens up new opportunities for the development of Islamic religious education.(Ainissyifa et al. 2024). By emphasizing the concept of project-based learning, differentiation, and competency development, the Independent Curriculum provides space for teachers to integrate religious values into various aspects of students' lives.(Hadi 2024).This approach is expected to make Islamic religious education more relevant to the needs of the times.

However, the transformation of education through the Independent Curriculum is not free from challenges, especially in the context of its implementation in madrasas.(Widiansyah et al. 2024). One of the madrasas that has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum is MAN 2 Kota Bima, which is located in an area with a strong Islamic culture and tradition. This madrasah faces unique challenges in integrating religious values into a modern and flexible learning process.

Axiology, as a branch of philosophy that discusses values and goals,(Verawati and Sarjan 2023)becomes an important framework in understanding the relevance of the Independent Curriculum to Islamic religious education. The axiological approach allows us to evaluate the extent to which the values of Islamic religious education can be internalized in the Independent Curriculum, as well as how these values shape the character of students. In this context, Islamic religious education is not only a medium for transferring knowledge, but also a means of forming character based on values.(Saifullah and Sofa 2025).

MAN 2 Kota Bima, as a religious-based educational institution, has a great responsibility to support the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. With heterogeneous student characteristics, this madrasah faces challenges in aligning value-based learning with individual student needs. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum is expected to be able to answer these challenges through an approach that emphasizes strengthening spiritual, moral, and social competencies.

In addition, the social and cultural environment in Bima City which is rich in Islamic traditions provides great opportunities for madrasas to develop contextual Islamic religious education. Local traditions based on Islamic values can be an important asset in supporting the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, while strengthening students' Islamic identity. However, this potential must be balanced with serious efforts to improve the capacity of teachers and other resources.

This study aims to examine in depth how the axiology of the Merdeka Curriculum can be the basis for the development of Islamic religious education at MAN 2 Kota Bima. With a qualitative approach and a focus on the value aspect, this study not only explores the implementation practices of the Merdeka Curriculum, but also evaluates its impact on the formation of student character. The results of this study are expected to provide a significant contribution to the development of Islamic religious education in Indonesia.

By prioritizing an interdisciplinary approach involving axiological, philosophical, sociological, and Islamic educational perspectives, this study is expected to provide comprehensive insights. This study is expected to be a reference for other madrasas in developing learning models that are relevant to the needs of the times without neglecting religious values that are the core of education.

METHOD

This research is a type of qualitative research with a case study approach to explore the implementation of the axiology of the Merdeka Curriculum in the development of Islamic religious education at MAN 2 Kota Bima. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the phenomenon in depth in a natural context, especially those related to religious values, student character, and learning dynamics. The research was conducted at MAN 2 Kota Bima, which is one of the madrasas that has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum. The research subjects included the head of the madrasah, the deputy head of the madrasah for curriculum, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, and students. The selection of subjects was carried out purposively to ensure that the data obtained was relevant to the focus of the research. The data in this study were collected through three main methods, namely participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The Data Analysis Technique used a model developed by Miles, Huberman & Saldana, namely data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification(Salehudin, Paselle, and Zulfiani 2020). To ensure the validity of the data, this study uses triangulation techniques, namely triangulation of methods, sources, and time.(Isseptiani and Subardjo 2023). The triangulation method was conducted by combining interviews, observations, and document analysis. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data from various informants, while time triangulation was conducted by collecting data at different times to avoid situational bias.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Results
Implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MAN 2 Bima City

The results of the study show that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at MAN 2 Kota Bima has been carried out with a more flexible approach than the previous curriculum. Teachers are given the freedom to develop learning strategies that are more adaptive to students' needs. Some of the methods applied include project-based learning, group discussions, and contextual approaches that aim to increase the active involvement of students in understanding religious values.

In addition, learning assessments have undergone significant changes, where assessments are not only focused on written exams, but also involve portfolio-based assessments, projects, and observations of students' religious behavior in everyday life. Thus, the evaluation process emphasizes more on internalizing religious values rather than just mastering theory.

However, in its implementation there is a disparity between teachers in the application of the Independent Curriculum-based learning method. Some teachers are more active in developing innovative learning models, while others still maintain conventional methods. Factors such as teaching experience, training, and availability of facilities are the main factors that influence the success of

implementing this curriculum in madrasas.

In addition, the level of student understanding of the concepts taught also varies. The Independent Curriculum gives students the freedom to explore their own understanding, but without optimal guidance from teachers, it is possible that some students will have difficulty understanding the material taught independently. Therefore, a more systematic mentoring strategy is needed so that the implementation of this curriculum runs effectively.

The Role of Axiology in the Orientation of Character Development of Students at MAN 2 Bima City

One of the significant impacts of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in Islamic Religious Education is strengthening Islamic character in students. This curriculum is not only oriented towards transferring knowledge, but also towards forming attitudes and behaviors that reflect Islamic values. Observation results show that students who are more active in value-based learning activities tend to show more responsible attitudes and have higher religious awareness.

Extracurricular programs such as Islamic studies, tahfiz, and direct worship practices are an integral part of strengthening students' characters. Through these activities, students not only understand Islamic teachings theoretically, but are also invited to practice them in everyday life. This is in line with the principles of Islamic education which emphasize the balance between knowledge and good deeds.

However, not all students can adapt easily to this approach. Family and social environmental factors play an important role in the success of character formation. Students who come from a religious environment tend to adapt more easily, while students from different social backgrounds may require a more personalized approach in internalizing religious values.

In addition, time constraints in formal learning are also a challenge in themselves. Although the Independent Curriculum provides flexibility, not all aspects can be covered in the available learning time. Therefore, additional strategies are needed such as intensive guidance and integration of religious values in every aspect of madrasa life so that the formation of students' character can run optimally.

Obstacles and Challenges in Implementing the Independent Curriculum at MAN 2 Bima City

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum in PAI at MAN 2 Kota Bima still faces various challenges, both from internal and external aspects. One of the main obstacles is the readiness of teachers to adapt this curriculum effectively. Some teachers still have difficulty in developing learning models that are in accordance with the principle of flexibility offered by the Independent Curriculum.

In addition, differences in the level of religious understanding among students are also a challenge. The Merdeka Curriculum allows for more personalized learning, but in practice, differences in student backgrounds make the process of internalizing religious values more complex. Teachers must be able to adjust learning methods to reach all students with different levels of understanding.

Another factor that is an obstacle is the limited supporting facilities. The Merdeka Curriculum demands a more dynamic learning approach, but without the support of adequate technology and facilities, the learning process becomes less than optimal. Some project-based activities or alternative assessments are sometimes difficult to implement due to the limited resources available at the madrasah.

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On the other hand, regulatory and policy aspects also affect the effectiveness of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. Although the national education policy has accommodated this concept, implementation at the madrasa level still requires further adjustment. There needs to be support from various parties, including the government, schools, and parents, to ensure that the Independent Curriculum can be implemented optimally in improving the quality of Islamic religious education.

Discussion

Implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MAN 2 Bima City

Theoretically, the Independent Curriculum offers a more flexible and student-centered learning approach.(Rosa et al. 2024). In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at MAN 2 Kota Bima, the implementation of this curriculum is in line with the constructivism theory which emphasizes that students build their own understanding through experience and social interaction.(Sugar 2019). Project-based learning and group discussions reflect this approach, where students are given space to explore Islamic values in real life.

However, in practice, there are still gaps in the application of innovative learning methods. Some teachers who have experienced training are more adaptable to new methods, while others still maintain traditional approaches. According to Rogers' theory of innovation diffusion, the adoption of a change in the education system is influenced by internal factors.(Malik, Auliya, and Iqbal 2022), such as individual readiness and institutional support. This shows that training and mentoring for teachers are very important in the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

In addition, variations in students' understanding of the material taught can also be associated with differential learning theory. According to this theory, each student has a different learning style, so a more personalized learning approach is needed. In the context of the Independent Curriculum, teachers must be able to adjust teaching methods to the individual needs of students so that learning outcomes are more optimal.

The implications of these findings suggest that although the Independent Curriculum provides flexibility in learning, its effectiveness is highly dependent on teacher readiness and institutional support. Therefore, a more systematic strategy is needed to increase the capacity of educators and provide adequate resources to support the implementation of this curriculum.

Axiology of Independent Curriculum in the Development of Islamic Religious Education at MAN 2 Bima City

The axiology of the Independent Curriculum referred to in this study is the basic values contained in the Independent Curriculum as the basis for the orientation of the development of Islamic religious education at MAN 2 Bima City. Substantially, the basic values of the Independent Curriculum are contained in the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) which applies to all educational units,(Maulana et al. 2024)and the Rahmatan Lil'alamin Student Profile Project (PPRA) which is specifically for educational institutions under the auspices of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, such as RA, MI, MTS, and MA(Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022).

The profile of a Pancasila student describes a lifelong learner who is competent, has character, and behaves in accordance with Pancasila values.(Rahayuningsih 2021). This profile includes six main values, namely faith,

devotion to the one and only God, and noble character, global diversity, mutual cooperation, independence, critical and creative reasoning.(Ulandari and Rapita 2023). Meanwhile, Rahmatan Lil'alamin's Student Profile focuses on students who are devout, have noble character and moderate religion.(Nugraha, Razzaq, and Imron 2024).This profile includes ten main values, namely civilized (ta'addub), exemplary (qudwah), citizenship and nationality (muwaṭanah), taking the middle path (tawassuṭ), balanced (tawāzun), straight and firm (i'tidāl), equality (musāwah), deliberation (shūra), tolerance (tasāmuh), dynamic and innovative (taṭawwur wa ibtikār).(Yulianti 2024).

The Pancasila student profile describes a lifelong learner who is competent, has character, and behaves in accordance with the values of Pancasila. This profile includes six main values, namely faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character, global diversity, mutual cooperation, independence, critical and creative thinking. Meanwhile, the Rahmatan Lil'alamin Student Profile focuses on students who are devout, have noble character, and are moderately religious. This profile includes ten main values, namely civilized (ta'addub), exemplary (qudwah), citizenship and nationality (muwaṭanah), taking the middle path (tawassuṭ), balanced (tawāzun), straight and firm (i'tidāl), equality (musāwah), deliberation (shūra), tolerance (tasāmuh), dynamic and innovative (taṭawwur wa ibtikār).

Based on data obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation, the researcher found that there are four main axiologies (values) of the independent curriculum as an orientation for the development of Islamic religious education at MAN 2 Kota Bima, namely:

1. Religious

Religious values are the main foundation in Islamic religious education at MAN 2 Kota Bima. The Merdeka Curriculum allows the integration of Islamic values into daily learning. For example, students are encouraged to practice noble moral values through activities such as joint prayer, congregational prayer, and religious sermons. According to the Head of Madrasah, the flexibility of the Merdeka Curriculum allows teachers to teach Islamic values with a contextual approach that is relevant to students' lives.

Theoretically, religious values are in line with the vision of Islamic education to form individuals who are not only knowledgeable, but also have good morals.(Utomo and Rizqa 2024). In an empirical context, extracurricular activities such as religious studies and lectures strengthen the internalization of these values. For example, the "Kultum after dzhur and ashar prayers" program. This activity was designed and implemented since the implementation of the independence curriculum at MAN 2 Kota Bima as a program and means for students to practice their preaching skills while strengthening their spiritual values. The school makes a schedule and students take turns delivering a kultum or short lecture at the school mosque every day.

Some of the religious values installed in students at MAN 2 Kota Bima are as follows:

a. Faith and Devotion

The values of faith and piety are fundamental values that must be instilled in every individual so that they are formed and become pious people. This is what MAN 2 Kota Bima continues to strive for and continues to carry out and develop, especially with the implementation of the Independent Curriculum for the past three years, especially in intracurricular (regular) learning, both in the lessons of the

Qur'an and Hadith, SKI, Fiqh and Akidah Akhal. In addition, the development of the values of piety and faith is also developed in co-curricular learning (P5 and PPRA) and extracurricular (Interests and Talents). The main objective of the Pancasila and Rahmatan Lil'alamin student profile is to produce students who believe and are devout to God Almighty.

The following will be presented in table form regarding the learning support program in the framework of developing faith and piety at MAN 2 Kota Bima, namely as follows:

Table 1.

No	Program Name	Information
1	Quran literacy	Scheduled every Friday under the guidance of each homeroom teacher
2	Commemoration of religious holidays	Prophet's Birthday, Isra Mi'raj, Islamic New Year
3	Ramadan greetings	Character Education and Religious Moderation Activities in the Month of Ramadan
4	habituation of Dhuha prayer	Every Friday in rotation
5	The habit of praying Dhuhur and Asr prayers in congregation	Congregation in the mosque
6	Sermon before congregational Dhuhur and Asr prayers	Kultum by students on a scheduled basis

Based on the table, we can see that the development and guidance of religious values, especially faith and piety in the scope of education at MAN 2 Kota Bima, apart from classroom learning (intracurricular), is also through supporting learning activities that are deliberately designed by the Curriculum Development Team (TPK) of MAN 2 Kota Bima.

b. Honesty

Honesty is one of the main character values that is the foundation in forming students' personalities with integrity. In the context of implementing the Independent Curriculum at MAN 2 Kota Bima, the value of honesty is not only taught theoretically, but also internalized through a holistic approach that covers all aspects of learning. The Independent Curriculum provides a wider space for madrasas to shape students' character contextually and meaningfully through three main channels: intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular learning.

First, intracurricular learning, namely the main learning that takes place in the classroom based on the madrasa curriculum structure, is implemented through religious subjects such as Fiqh, History of Islamic Culture (SKI), Aqidah Akhlak, and Al-Qur'an Hadith. Each of these subjects has a strategic role in shaping the honesty values of students. In Fiqh, students are taught to be honest in muamalah transactions and worship. In SKI, they learn the exemplary behavior of Islamic figures who uphold honesty, such as the Prophet Muhammad SAW with the title al-Amin. Meanwhile, in Aqidah Akhlak, honesty is part of the morality of mahmudah which must be practiced in everyday life. As for the Al-Qur'an Hadith, the value of honesty is instilled through understanding verses and hadiths that contain commands to behave correctly and avoid lying. This learning not only forms cognitive understanding, but also encourages internalization of attitudes through practice and teacher exemplars.

Second, through co-curricular learning, implemented in the form of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) in public schools and the Rahmatan lil 'Alamin Student Profile Strengthening Project (PPRA) in madrasas, MAN 2 Kota Bima actively designs thematic projects that encourage students to

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reflect on and apply the value of honesty. For example, students are asked to create reflective stories, honesty campaign videos, or social projects that require a commitment to the value of truth. This approach not only strengthens students' understanding of honesty, but also trains them to make this value part of their personality.

Third, through extracurricular activities, MAN 2 Kota Bima facilitates various interest and talent-based activities such as Scouts, journalism, Rohis, sports, and arts. In these activities, the value of honesty continues to be instilled in real practice, such as being honest in activity reports, not falsifying data in journalism, or upholding sportsmanship in matches. The habituation of honesty values in this realm makes students more responsible for themselves and their environment.

Table 2.

Types of Learning	Implementation Form	Honesty Value Instillation Strategy	Implementation
Intracurricular	The main subjects of religious studies are: Fiqh, SKI, Aqidah Akhlak, and Al-Qur'an Hadith.	- Instilling honesty through teaching materials and teacher role models - Encouraging personal reflection and practice of religious teachings	- Fiqh: Honesty in transactions and worship - SKI: The exemplary behavior of the Prophet Muhammad SAW (al-Amin) - Aqidah Akhlak: Honesty as a noble morality - Al-Qur'an Hadith: Verses and hadiths about the prohibition of lying and the command to behave correctly
Co-curricular	Rahmatan lil 'Alamin Student Profile Strengthening Project (PPRA)	- Encourage students to internalize the value of honesty through reflective and collaborative activities - Provide creative space for students to express character values	- Create a reflective story about honesty - Create a video campaign for honesty - Social projects with the theme of integrity and responsibility
Extracurricular	Interest and talent based activities: Scouts, Journalism, Rohis, Sports, Arts	- Cultivate honesty through real activities outside of class hours - Practice honesty in social and leadership contexts	- Scouts: Be honest in activity reports - Journalism: Do not falsify information - Sports: Uphold sportsmanship and do not cheat in competitions

Thus, the integration of honesty values in all forms of learning shows MAN 2 Kota Bima's commitment to forming students who are not only academically intelligent, but also morally and spiritually strong. This is in line with the main objective of the Merdeka Curriculum, which is to create a generation with strong character, independence, and the soul of Pancasila.

c. Concern

The value of caring (ta'awun) is an important principle that includes social responsibility, compassion, and cooperation within the community.(Iryani, Ali, and Rosyadi 2021). Contextual learning is learning that is relevant to the daily lives of students, one of which is to share with others in an effort to foster caring values. In fiqh learning at MAN 2 Kota Bima in particular and other MAs in general, of

course, material is taught about the obligations of zakat, infaq, and alms as a form of social concern from an Islamic perspective. By implementing this independent curriculum, they immediately apply (practice) the material so that learning really has a social impact (contextual).

Contextual learning at MAN 2 Kota Bima is directed to form social awareness, compassion, and cooperation between students. In Fiqh learning, students not only learn zakat, infaq, and alms in theory, but also apply them through direct practice, so that the value of caring becomes real and relevant in their lives. In the subject of Islamic Cultural History (SKI), teachers use group discussion methods with themes related to caring in Islamic history, such as protection of the weak and caring for science. This strategy fosters students' historical and social awareness of the importance of caring.

Aqidah Akhlak teachers also play an important role in instilling the value of caring. They teach the concept of ihsan and noble morals that encourage students to do good in everyday life, through small actions such as helping friends study or keeping the classroom clean. These values are reinforced through joint reflection, discussions of inspiring stories from Islamic history, and collaborative learning that fosters a sense of social responsibility. In addition, daily habits and teacher role models are important keys. Teachers demonstrate a friendly and caring attitude from the moment students arrive at school, creating an environment full of love and mutual respect. Caring is also practiced in activities such as mutual cooperation and positive interactions between students. For more details, see the following table:

Table 3.

No	Implementation Strategy	Brief Explanation
1	Contextual Learning of Fiqh	The material on zakat, infaq, and alms is applied directly in the form of social practices to foster empathy.
2	Thematic Discussion on SKI	Students are divided into discussion groups with themes of concern in Islamic history such as for the poor and education.
3	Teaching the Value of Ihsan	Aqidah Akhlak teachers teach the values of goodness and students practice them in everyday school life.
4	Role Model Discussion	The stories of the Prophet and his companions are discussed to inspire caring actions in students' lives.
5	Collaborative Learning	Group work in understanding noble morals that trigger solidarity and concern for friends.
6	Daily Habits	Daily programs to practice caring such as greeting each other, helping others, and working together.
7	Teacher's Exemplary Behavior	Teachers demonstrate a caring attitude since students enter school, becoming positive role models for students.

Based on the flexibility of the Merdeka Curriculum, the value of caring can be fully internalized in students' lives, forming individuals who are caring, responsible, and have a high social spirit. The implementation of this strategy strengthens the expected character of Pancasila students: faithful, pious, and noble and actively contributing to the community in a positive and sustainable manner.

d. Discipline

The value of discipline is one of the important axiological elements in the development of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at MAN 2 Kota Bima through the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. Based on the results of interviews with the head of the madrasah, PAI teachers, and direct observations, discipline is not only interpreted as obedience to the rules, but more deeply as a manifestation of the values of Islamic teachings that teach order and responsibility in every aspect of life. The Independent Curriculum provides freedom in managing learning, but still

emphasizes the importance of character values, including discipline, which are integrated into every teaching and learning process.

In practice, Islamic Religious Education teachers shape student discipline through a program of habituating worship such as Duha prayer, Dhuhur prayer in congregation, and morning recitations before learning begins. These activities are carried out regularly and are the main indicators in assessing students' spiritual discipline. In addition, discipline in terms of time, such as punctual attendance, assignment submission, and active involvement in class, is also a serious concern for teachers and the madrasah. Reinforcement of these values is carried out through an exemplary approach, supervision, and routine evaluation of student behavior, both individually and in groups.

The value of discipline in the Independent Curriculum from a philosophical perspective, is in accordance with the views of figures such as Al-Ghazali, who emphasizes the importance of moral education to form humans who are physically and spiritually balanced.(Busroli 2019). Discipline becomes a moral instrument to train the soul in distinguishing between right and wrong, and to build steadfastness in carrying out religious commands. Education is not just transferring knowledge, but also forming a civilized and responsible character.

Meanwhile, the sociological approach shows that the culture of discipline instilled in MAN 2 Kota Bima is rooted in a supportive social system, such as teacher involvement, peer roles, and parental support. A consistent and responsive school climate to rule violations creates a conducive learning environment. Discipline is no longer a burden, but rather part of students' self-identity as responsible Muslims. This reinforces that the Merdeka Curriculum has a strong axiological driving force in forming a generation that is not only academically intelligent, but also spiritually and socially disciplined.

2. Critical Thinking

The Independent Curriculum provides an example space for students to develop critical reasoning skills through a project-based learning approach, group discussions, and exploration of contextual issues.(Aulya et al. 2025). At MAN 2 Kota Bima, Islamic Religious Education learning is designed to encourage students to analyze social and religious phenomena in depth. One example is a discussion about the differences in determining the day of Eid al-Fitr between the hisab and rukyat methods. In this process, students are not only asked to know the differences of opinion, but also to examine the basis of their arguments, develop an open attitude, and take a position based on rational considerations and Islamic values.

Theoretically, critical thinking is an essential skill in constructivist educational theory.(Hana 2025). This theory emphasizes that knowledge is actively constructed by learners through interaction with their environment and experiences.(Arini and Umami 2019). Therefore, critical reasoning is not just about memorizing information, but the ability to evaluate information, identify biases, and construct logical arguments.(Sulfan and Akbar 2024).

Empirically, the implementation of critical reasoning values at MAN 2 Kota Bima is realized through the use of digital technology. Students actively access online scientific journals, Islamic articles, and educational videos from trusted sources to support their opinions in discussion forums. The use of this technology strengthens students' information literacy and enriches their perspectives in discussing various religious issues. In addition, teachers also facilitate individual reflection and group presentations to train students in presenting arguments

regularly and responsibly.

Based on this, the critical reasoning values integrated into the Merdeka Curriculum not only train students' cognitive abilities, but also shape characters who are able to think openly, objectively, and provide solutions in facing the complexities of religious and social life. This approach makes Islamic Religious Education learning at MAN 2 Kota Bima more relevant and responsive to the dynamics of the times.

3. Moderate (Tawassuth)

Moderate values or tawassuth are an integral part of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at MAN 2 Kota Bima, especially in the development of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. Moderation here is interpreted as a balanced attitude in thinking, behaving, and moving away from extreme attitudes both in religious and social matters.(Husain and Wahyuni 2021). The Head of Madrasah emphasized that in the context of madrasah, moderation is an important foundation in forming students who are inclusive, tolerant, and able to live side by side in a pluralistic society.

The tawassuth value in this learning practice is internalized through group discussion activities, as well as contextual learning that encourages students to see differences as a blessing, not a threat. For example, in the subjects of Aqidah Akhlak and SKI (History of Islamic Culture), teachers raise the theme of tolerance between religious communities, the role of Islam in building world civilization, and the importance of intercultural dialogue. This method not only fosters a friendly understanding of Islam, but also develops students' social skills in interacting moderately in a pluralistic environment.

Philosophically, the value of tawassuth is in line with the principle of wasathiyah in Islam which is stated in QS. Al-Baqarah verse 143, that Muslims are ummatan wasathan (middle people)(Rahmadi, Syahbudin, and Barni 2023). This principle emphasizes the balance between spirituality and rationality, between tradition and progress, and between individuality and collectivity. The Independent Curriculum, which provides space for value-based and contextual learning, is a strategic vehicle for bringing the spirit of moderation to life in the educational process.

The sociological approach reinforces that the implementation of moderate values in this madrasah contributes to the creation of a harmonious and peaceful school climate. Teachers, as agents of change, not only deliver teaching materials but also become role models in being moderate in responding to current issues. Thus, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at MAN 2 Kota Bima not only produces students who are academically competent, but also have moderate characters and are able to become agents of peace in a diverse society.

4. Dynamic and Innovative (Tatawwur Wa Ibtikar)

The Independent Curriculum explicitly encourages dynamics and innovation in the learning process.(Utami, Rahmawati, and Noktaria 2025), including in teaching Islamic Religious Education (PAI). At MAN 2 Kota Bima, the value of tatawwur wa ibtikar is implemented by giving teachers the freedom to design creative, adaptive, and relevant learning to the needs of the times. PAI teachers are no longer fixed on conventional methods, but actively use various digital media and approaches such as learning videos, online platforms, and collaborative project-based activities that involve active student participation.

Empirically, student involvement in innovative activities is manifested in

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programs such as "Teenager Scientific Work", where they raise contemporary issues through the perspective of Islamic teachings. This activity provides space for students to develop critical thinking skills, scientific writing, and convey ideas systematically, while strengthening the integration of religious values with the realities of modern life. This approach creates a learning experience that is not only academic, but also forms the character of leadership, creativity, and social responsibility of students.

Innovation in the perspective of modern educational theory is the key to answering the challenges of the 21st century. The learning process is not enough to be informative, but must be transformative, encouraging students to become lifelong learners who are ready to face change.(Fatmawati 2025). The axiology of the Independent Curriculum that emphasizes innovation strengthens this goal, by making madrasas a space that is adaptive to technological developments and social dynamics. This dynamic and innovative value is also in line with the spirit of ijtihad in Islam, namely openness to change as long as it does not conflict with the basic principles of religious teachings.

The four axiological values of the Independent Curriculum found in MAN 2 Kota Bima, namely religion, critical reasoning, moderate (tawassuth), and dynamic and innovative, reflect the integration between theory and practice in Islamic education. Religious values are rooted in noble morals that are manifested in religious activities. Critical reasoning is formed through a constructivist and reflective approach. Moderation is instilled through multicultural education and interfaith dialogue. Meanwhile, dynamic and innovative values encourage the use of technology and creativity as part of a contextual and transformative learning strategy. All of these values show that the Independent Curriculum has provided a strong axiological orientation in the development of Islamic Religious Education in madrasas, responding to the challenges of the times without abandoning authentic Islamic principles.

Implications for the Development of Islamic Religious Education at MAN 2 Bima City

The implementation of the axiological values of the Independent Curriculum at MAN 2 Kota Bima shows that this curriculum has great potential as a strategic instrument in improving the quality of Islamic religious education. The teachers at this madrasa do not only focus on delivering material theoretically, but also present contextual, applicable, and meaningful learning experiences. This is in line with the vision of the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes student-centered learning, in accordance with the characteristics of the times and the needs of today's generation.

In practice, the development of PAI through the Independent Curriculum at MAN 2 Bima City has a number of positive implications, including:
1. Flexibility and Innovation in Learning

Islamic Religious Education teachers have the freedom to design creative and innovative learning strategies. The methods used include group discussions, project-based learning, the use of digital technology, and the integration of materials across subjects. This flexibility encourages teachers to adjust the approach to the needs and learning styles of students, while maintaining the relevance of teaching materials to contemporary issues.
2. Internalization of Islamic Values Contextually

Through activities such as social issues discussions, video analysis, value reflection, and collaborative projects, students not only understand Islamic teachings normatively, but also live them in the context of everyday life. This strengthens students' spiritual and moral understanding, making religious values not just memorization, but an integral part of their way of thinking and acting.

3. Increasing Student Participation and Learning Motivation

The Independent Curriculum provides greater space for students' active involvement in the learning process. Their participation is evident in intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities that are collaborative and exploratory. This increased participation has an impact on increasing students' learning motivation and emotional involvement in Islamic Religious Education subjects.

4. Strengthening Academic and Non-academic Achievements

The revitalization of leading programs such as Youth Scientific Work (KIR) and student involvement in various religious competitions shows that the Independent Curriculum contributes to the development of student competencies as a whole. The achievements achieved are not only limited to the academic realm, but also in aspects of leadership, cooperation, and innovation.

Thus, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MAN 2 Kota Bima has shown that axiological values such as religiosity, moderation, caring, discipline, critical thinking, and dynamic and innovative can be implemented effectively in the development of Islamic Religious Education. This is a concrete example that the national curriculum can be adapted and optimized to strengthen the Islamic character of students, forming a generation that excels in morals, knowledge, and social contribution.

Obstacles and Challenges

In the perspective of educational change theory, every curriculum reform always faces challenges in its implementation. Changes in the education system require time, institutional support, and the readiness of education actors to adapt to new learning models. Findings at MAN 2 Kota Bima show that teacher readiness is still a major obstacle in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

In addition, the differences in students' backgrounds in understanding religion are also challenges that are relevant to Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development. According to this theory, each student has a different level of understanding, and the role of the teacher is as a facilitator who helps them achieve a higher understanding.(Suardipa 2020). In this context, Islamic Religious Education teachers must be able to adjust learning methods to suit the level of student understanding, so that internalization of religious values can run more effectively.

Limited facilities are also an inhibiting factor in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. The input-output theory in education states that the quality of education is highly dependent on the availability of adequate resources.(Saleh and Malik 2019). Therefore, without the support of technology, quality teaching materials, and a conducive learning environment, the implementation of innovative learning methods becomes less than optimal.Finally, policy and regulatory factors also affect the effectiveness of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. According to the theory of educational policy, curriculum implementation must consider the readiness of the system as a whole, including regulatory aspects, human resources, and community support. Therefore,

synergy is needed between the government, schools, and the community in ensuring that the Independent Curriculum can be implemented optimally in improving the quality of Islamic Religious Education at MAN 2 Kota Bima.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at MAN 2 Kota Bima shows a more flexible approach to learning, with an emphasis on internalizing religious values such as honesty, responsibility, and tolerance. However, the success of its implementation still faces various challenges, including the readiness of educators, variations in student understanding, limited facilities, and policy factors that are not yet fully supportive. The axiology of the Independent Curriculum plays an important role in shaping the character of students, but its effectiveness is highly dependent on the synergy between madrasas, families, and communities. Therefore, a more comprehensive strategy is needed to ensure that the Independent Curriculum not only improves cognitive religious understanding, but is also able to form students who have noble character and are ready to face the challenges of life in the future.

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