



## The Essence of the Islamic Education Curriculum as a Foundation for Islamic Learning

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### ABSTRACT

The Islamic education curriculum plays a crucial role in shaping a generation with noble character, faith, and a balance between knowledge, attitudes, and skills. This article discusses the role of the Islamic education curriculum in building students' character through the instillation of Islamic values derived from the Qur'an and Hadith. The Islamic education curriculum focuses not only on academic aspects but also emphasizes the moral, spiritual, and social development of students so they can face the changing times without losing their Islamic identity. The method used in writing this article is a literature study by analyzing various sources of literature related to the Islamic education curriculum and moral formation. The results of the discussion indicate that the implementation of an integrated Islamic education curriculum can shape individuals who are disciplined, responsible, tolerant, and have noble character. Therefore, the development of the Islamic education curriculum needs to be carried out continuously to remain relevant to the needs of modern society and to produce a generation that excels intellectually and spiritually.

**Keywords:** Curriculum, Islamic Education, Moral Generation, Islamic Values, Character Formation.

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## INTRODUCTION

Islamic education is an important tool in developing individuals who are faithful, pious, and have noble character. In its implementation, the curriculum is a key component that determines the direction, goals, and process of education. The Islamic education curriculum serves not only as a learning guide, but also as an instrument for developing students' character and morals based on the values of the Qur'an and Hadith (Zakiah Daradjat, 2014). In today's modern era, the challenges of globalization, technological development, and social change demand an Islamic education curriculum that balances the acquisition of knowledge with the development of students' morals. The phenomenon of declining morals among the younger generation is a serious concern in the world of education. Many cases of juvenile delinquency, promiscuity, poor manners, and a lack of tolerance indicate that education has not fully succeeded in shaping students' character. Therefore, the Islamic education curriculum is expected to be a solution in developing a generation that possesses both intellectual and spiritual intelligence. Islamic education aims to develop individuals with a complete Muslim personality, both in terms of morals, intellectually, and socially (Ramayulis, 2015).

The Islamic education curriculum differs from the general curriculum in that it is based on the values of monotheism and noble morals. This curriculum is implemented through the integration of Islamic material into the learning process, the instilling of religious

behavior, and the exemplary behavior of educators in daily life (Muhaimin, 2012). Therefore, the Islamic education curriculum emphasizes not only the transfer of knowledge but also the transfer of values and the development of student character. According to data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, various cases of moral degradation among students are still frequently encountered, such as bullying, violence in schools, and low ethical standards in the use of social media. Furthermore, data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission shows that cases of juvenile delinquency and student disciplinary violations have increased in recent years. This situation indicates that character education still needs to be strengthened through the implementation of a curriculum oriented towards moral development.

On the other hand, Islamic educational institutions such as madrasas and Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) are considered to have a significant contribution in building students' character through the application of religious values in learning activities and daily life. This proves that the Islamic education curriculum has great potential in shaping a generation with noble character if implemented consistently and relevant to current developments (Hasan Langgulung, 2003). Research on the Islamic education curriculum has been conducted extensively, but most of the research focuses more on aspects of curriculum concepts, learning methods, and the development of teaching materials. Meanwhile, studies specifically discussing the role of the Islamic education curriculum in developing a generation with moral character amidst the challenges of the digital era are still relatively limited. Furthermore, there remains a gap between the ideal goals of the Islamic education curriculum and its implementation in educational institutions, particularly in the ongoing development of student character (Abdullah Idi, 2016).

Some educational institutions still prioritize academic aspects over moral development. As a result, moral and spiritual values are not fully integrated into the learning process. Therefore, a more in-depth study is needed on how the Islamic education curriculum can be effectively implemented to shape a generation that excels intellectually and possesses noble character.

The novelty of this research lies in its discussion of the integration of the Islamic education curriculum in developing a moral generation in the modern era, emphasizing the balance between the intellectual, spiritual, and social aspects of students. This research also highlights the importance of implementing Islamic values through habituation, role models, and school culture as part of strengthening student character.

Furthermore, this research offers the perspective that the Islamic education curriculum should be understood not only as a formal learning document but also as a character education system integrated into all educational activities. Therefore, this research is expected to contribute to the development of an Islamic education curriculum that is more relevant to the moral and social challenges of the globalization era.

## **METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research method that aims to examine the nature of the Islamic education curriculum (Sugiyono, 2019: 9). The study was conducted by reviewing various relevant literature sources, such as books, scientific journals, articles, and other supporting documents related to the concept of the Islamic education curriculum (Moleong, 2017). Research data was obtained through documentation study techniques by collecting, reading, understanding, and reviewing various references that are in accordance with the research focus (Arikunto, 2013: 274). The researcher acts as the main instrument in the process of data collection and analysis, because in qualitative research the researcher is the party who directly interprets the data obtained (Lexy J. Moleong, 2017). Data analysis was conducted using a descriptive-qualitative method, namely by systematically describing, interpreting, and concluding various concepts and theories regarding the nature of the Islamic education curriculum (Miles and Huberman, 2014). To maintain the validity of the data, researchers use various credible and relevant reference sources so that the research results can be scientifically accounted for (Sugiyono, 2019).

Through this research, it is hoped that a deeper understanding will be obtained regarding the concepts, principles, and role of the Islamic education curriculum in achieving

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **RESULTS**

#### **The Nature of Curriculum**

Etymologically, the term curriculum comes from the Greek words *curir*, meaning runner, and *curere*, meaning the distance a runner must cover. Initially, the term was used in sports to indicate the track or distance a race participant must complete. Later, the term was adopted in education and interpreted as a circle of instruction, a series of learning processes involving teachers and students in educational activities. Furthermore, some view the curriculum as a learning arena where students strive to master various subjects until they reach the ultimate goal of education, such as obtaining a certificate, diploma, or academic degree. (Samsul Nizar, 2002)

Terminologically, curriculum has various definitions that continue to evolve. In the modern view, curriculum is understood not only as a collection of subjects, but as the entire learning experience designed to achieve educational goals. According to Wina Sanjaya (2016), curriculum is a set of plans that include objectives, content, and learning processes as a guideline for educational implementation. Similarly, Oemar Hamalik (2017) states that curriculum is an educational program that provides learning experiences, both inside and outside the classroom. When applied to the Islamic education curriculum, the curriculum serves as the primary guideline for educators in directing students toward the ideal goals of Islamic education. This process is carried out through the integrated development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Islamic education is not implemented haphazardly, but must be designed systematically with reference to the concept of developing a complete human being (*insan kamil*), as explained by Abuddin Nata (2017).

#### **Curriculum Components**

The curriculum consists of core elements and supporting elements that enable its effective implementation. These elements are known as curriculum components, which are interrelated and interact to achieve educational goals. (Hasan Langgulong, 1988), there are four main components in the curriculum:

1. Educational goals, namely the direction to be achieved, including a description of the character or profile of students that is to be formed through the curriculum.
2. Content or material, in the form of knowledge, information, data, activities, and learning experiences which are arranged into subjects as the substance of the curriculum.
3. Learning methods, namely various ways and strategies used by teachers to convey material and at the same time motivate students to achieve the set goals.
4. Evaluation, namely assessment techniques and procedures used to measure the success of curriculum implementation and student learning outcomes.

#### **Principles of the Islamic Education Curriculum**

According to Nasution, the curriculum should be structured based on four main principles. First, philosophical principles serve as the foundation for determining the general objectives of Islamic education, ensuring that the curriculum's content contains values of truth. Second, sociological principles serve as the basis for determining learning materials in accordance with societal needs, cultural developments, and advances in science and technology. Third, organizational principles relate to the arrangement and development of teaching materials, including the sequence and scope of subjects. Fourth, psychological principles emphasize student development and the method of delivering material to ensure it is easily understood and appropriate to their developmental stage (Nuryanti, 2008).

However, Nasution's views on the principles of the curriculum are considered insufficient to fully serve as a basis for Islamic education. This is because Islamic education aims not only to transfer knowledge but also to shape students' personalities in line with Islamic teachings. Islamic education is directed towards enabling students to think, behave, make decisions, and act based on Islamic values and responsibly in accordance with the guidance of sharia (Zuhairini et al., 1994). Therefore, Hasan Langgulong, in his book *\*Principles of Islamic Education\**, explains that the development of an Islamic education curriculum must be based on several principles. First, social principles serve as a cultural framework in the educational process, both in transferring, selecting, and developing culture. Second, political and administrative principles provide an ideological or creedal basis for achieving planned educational goals. Third, economic principles relate to the responsible management of human potential, financial resources, facilities, and educational financing. Fourth, the historical principle functions to provide lessons from past experiences, including understanding the rules, limitations and weaknesses that have occurred in educational practices (Hasan Langgulong, 2003).

Based on the principles outlined above, the Islamic education curriculum has characteristics that distinguish it from the general education curriculum. According to Muhaimin, the Islamic education curriculum must reflect the integration of divine and human values throughout the educational process. The characteristics of the Islamic education curriculum are as follows:

1. Integrative (Holistic): The Islamic education curriculum does not recognize the dichotomy between religious and general knowledge. All knowledge is seen as originating from Allah SWT, and therefore must be taught in an integrated manner. This aligns with Abuddin Nata's idea that Islamic education aims for the unity of knowledge.
2. Oriented to Moral Development: The primary goal of the Islamic education curriculum is to develop individuals with noble character. Therefore, every subject must contain moral and spiritual values.
3. Based on Tawhid: Tawhid is the primary foundation for curriculum development. All learning activities are directed at strengthening students' faith and piety.
4. Responsive to Developments in the Times: The Islamic education curriculum must be adaptive to developments in science and technology without losing its Islamic identity.
5. Oriented towards the Balance of the World and the Hereafter: The curriculum not only prepares students for worldly life, but also the afterlife.
6. Paying Attention to Student Development: In line with psychological principles, the curriculum is structured based on the cognitive, emotional, and spiritual development stages of students.

### **Principles of Islamic Education Curriculum Development**

Curriculum development can be based on various principles that have developed and are applicable in everyday life, or it can introduce new principles. In general, curriculum development is carried out by considering several key principles, namely integrity, relevance, flexibility, efficiency, and evaluation. These principles are an important foundation for the curriculum to adapt to the needs of students, educators, and community demands, so that the learning process can be effective and meaningful. In the world of education, the curriculum holds a crucial position because it serves as a guideline for achieving learning objectives. Therefore, the curriculum must continue to evolve with changing times, as knowledge and community life experiences are constantly evolving (Pramita et al., 2025). To realize quality Islamic education, the development of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum needs to pay attention to the following principles: a. Principle of Integrity Curriculum development should be structured as a cohesive whole with a clear direction. Each component of the curriculum must be interrelated and have a clear purpose and benefit. This

principle is based on the view that all elements of the curriculum are part of a mutually supportive education system. Therefore, student education needs to be designed comprehensively, integrated, and oriented towards their optimal development (Marzuqi, Ahid: 2023). b. Principle of Relevance The curriculum can be understood as a guideline that directs students to be ready to face life in accordance with the norms and values that apply in society. In addition to equipping students with knowledge, the curriculum also functions to shape the attitudes and skills needed in social life. Therefore, the learning experiences provided must be in accordance with the real needs of society. The principle of relevance shows that education will be valuable if the material learned can be applied and provides benefits in everyday life (Messy et al., 2023). c. Principle of Flexibility The curriculum needs to be designed flexibly to adapt to changes in the times, environmental conditions, and student needs. This flexibility is important so that the curriculum remains relevant and can support student development optimally. Furthermore, teachers need to be given the freedom to develop learning programs that suit the characteristics and needs of students in their respective environments. With a more adaptive approach, the learning process will be more effective and meaningful for students (Gofur et al., 2022). d. Efficiency Principle Efficiency in curriculum development means that all learning programs and activities must be designed appropriately so that educational objectives can be optimally achieved. For example, if a program can be implemented in a shorter time but still produces maximum results, it is considered effective and efficient. This principle also aims to ensure that educational resources, including personnel, time, and costs, can be optimally utilized so that the results of curriculum development are in line with expectations (Gofur et al., 2022). e. Evaluative Principle Evaluation is a continuous process to determine the extent to which learning objectives have been achieved, both in terms of knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills. Evaluation can be carried out through various methods, such as tests, portfolios, projects, and observations. Assessments are not only carried out at the end of learning but also throughout the process to provide feedback for learning improvements. Thus, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum can be continuously adapted to the development and needs of students. f. Principles of Technology-Based Learning and Digitalization: Technology is an inseparable part of human life and continues to evolve throughout history. In education, technological advancements offer numerous benefits, such as improving the quality of learning and facilitating teacher and student access to various learning resources (Arifah & Hidayani, 2024). Furthermore, instilling religious values from an early age is crucial amidst the various moral challenges emerging in education. Therefore, education should not only focus on producing a generation that excels academically but also fosters strong character, morals, and ethics in accordance with Islamic values.

### **Islamic Education Curriculum Orientation**

The curriculum is a crucial component of the education system, determining the direction, objectives, and learning process. In the context of Islamic education, the curriculum serves not only as an academic guide but also as a means of developing the character and spirituality of students. Therefore, the orientation of the Islamic education curriculum must be designed comprehensively to meet the challenges of the times without abandoning Islamic values. The orientation of the Islamic education curriculum is based on the basic concept that education aims to shape the whole person (*insan kamil*), a person who is balanced between the physical and spiritual aspects, the worldly and the afterlife (Muhaimin: 2012).

#### **1. Divine Orientation (Ilahiyah)**

The primary orientation of the Islamic Education curriculum is the divine values derived from Islamic teachings. Education is directed at instilling faith and piety in Allah SWT. The curriculum must be able to integrate the values of monotheism into every subject so that students have a strong spiritual awareness (Abdullah Idi: 2016).

## 2. Humanitarian (Insaniyah) Orientation

In addition to being oriented toward divinity, the curriculum also emphasizes humanitarian aspects. Students are developed as social beings with responsibilities toward others. Values such as justice, tolerance, and empathy are essential components of learning (Ramayulis: 2015).

## 3. Orientation to the World and the Afterlife

The Islamic education curriculum emphasizes balance between worldly life and the afterlife. Education aims not only to achieve worldly success but also happiness in the afterlife. This concept demonstrates that knowledge should be utilized as a means of worship to Allah SWT (Hasan Langgulung: 2003).

## 4. Orientation of Science and Technology (IPTEK)

In response to changing times, the Islamic education curriculum also focuses on mastery of science and technology. This is crucial for students' ability to compete globally. However, the development of science and technology must remain grounded in Islamic moral and ethical values (Azyumardi Azra, 2019).

## 5. Student Needs Orientation

The curriculum must be tailored to the needs, interests, and development of students. A student-centered learning approach is crucial in this context. This allows individual potential to develop optimally (Oemar Hamalik: 2014).

## 6. Community and Environmental Orientation

The Islamic education curriculum must also be relevant to the needs of society. Education is geared toward producing graduates capable of contributing to social life. This demonstrates that the curriculum is dynamic and must adapt to socio-cultural developments (Nana Syaodih Sukmadinata: 2017).

## **DISCUSSION**

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be understood that the essence of the curriculum is not limited to a collection of subjects, but rather the entirety of learning experiences systematically designed to achieve educational goals. This finding aligns with Wina Sanjaya's (2016) opinion, which states that the curriculum is a set of plans encompassing objectives, content, and learning processes as guidelines for implementing education. This opinion is reinforced by Oemar Hamalik (2017) emphasized that the curriculum encompasses all student learning experiences, both inside and outside the classroom. Therefore, the curriculum plays a strategic role in shaping the intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual development of students as a whole.

From an Islamic education perspective, the study's findings indicate that the curriculum is not only oriented toward the transfer of knowledge but also toward the development of Islamic morals and personality. This finding demonstrates the differences between the general education curriculum and the Islamic education curriculum. The general education curriculum tends to emphasize academic and skills development, while the Islamic education curriculum integrates monotheistic, moral, and spiritual values throughout the learning process. This aligns with the thinking of Abuddin Nata (2017), who stated that Islamic education is directed toward the formation of the whole person (*insan kamil*).

Therefore, the Islamic education curriculum has integrative characteristics that combine religious and general knowledge within a single educational unit.

The research results also show that the curriculum components, consisting of objectives, materials, methods, and evaluation, are closely related in achieving educational goals. Hasan Langgulung (1988) emphasized that each curriculum component supports each other and cannot be separated. In practice, educational objectives serve as the primary direction in determining learning content, the methods used, and the forms of evaluation applied. This finding reinforces previous theories that educational success is strongly influenced by the alignment between learning objectives, processes, and evaluation.

Furthermore, the principles of the Islamic education curriculum demonstrate that curriculum development must consider philosophical, sociological, organizational, and psychological aspects. However, the study found that Nasution's concept of curriculum principles did not fully reflect the goals of Islamic education. Therefore, Hasan Langgulung added social, political, economic, and historical principles as the basis for developing an Islamic education curriculum. This finding indicates a modification of curriculum theory from an Islamic perspective, namely by placing Islamic values as the primary foundation in curriculum development.

Furthermore, the principles of Islamic education curriculum development, which include integrity, relevance, flexibility, efficiency, evaluativeness, and the utilization of technology and digitalization, demonstrate that the curriculum must be able to adapt to changing times. In the modern era, the Islamic education curriculum is not only required to uphold religious values but also to be responsive to developments in science and technology. These findings demonstrate that the Islamic education curriculum is dynamic and adaptive without abandoning its Islamic identity. Therefore, the Islamic education curriculum is expected to produce students who excel not only academically but also possess strong character, morals, and spirituality.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Islamic education curriculum is an important component in the educational process that serves as a guideline in achieving the goals of Islamic education, namely to form people who are faithful, pious, knowledgeable, and have good morals. The Islamic education curriculum is not only oriented towards mastery of knowledge, but also emphasizes the formation of character, morals, and spirituality of students based on the values of the Qur'an and Hadith. In its implementation, the Islamic education curriculum plays a strategic role in developing a generation with noble morals through the integration of Islamic values in the learning process, the habituation of religious behavior, and the role of educators as role models. Amidst the development of the times and challenges of the modern era, the Islamic education curriculum is required to be able to adapt to the development of science and technology without losing its identity and Islamic values. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the success of the Islamic education curriculum is greatly influenced by the effective implementation process, the support of the educational environment, and the role of educators in instilling moral values in students. Therefore, the development of the Islamic education curriculum needs to be carried out continuously to remain relevant to the needs of modern society and is able to produce a generation that excels intellectually, socially, and spiritually.

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