

The Curriculum of Islamic Religious Education in the Whirlwind of Independent Education and Its Implementation on Learning

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Article History</p> <p>Received: September 28, 2023</p> <p>Revised: October 27, 2023</p> <p>Accepted: November 10, 2023</p> <p>Published: December 27, 2023</p> <p>Keyword: Curriculum; Islamic Religious Education; Independent Education; Implementation; Learning</p> <p>Copyright (c) 2023 Abdul Halim, Helmun Jamil, Miswanto Miswanto, Ita Tryas Nur Rochbani</p> 	<p>The curriculum is an important tool in the learning process that should provide guidance and direction for educational performance. Islamic religious education as an effort to internalize fundamental, social, and moral values, urgently needs an effective and efficient curriculum. This research is a Library Research with literature studies related to the Islamic religious education curriculum and Independent Learning. The data analysis technique used is content analysis by categorizing data so that it can be formulated based on the problem under study. The collected data is analyzed by analytical descriptive methods. The approach used is a qualitative approach where the data is in the form of narratives or sentences, and this data is processed systematically to produce conclusions. This research is also a type of historical-philosophical research. The results showed that, first, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum in the vortex of independent education became a challenge in itself, where the rapid development of science and technology, changes in education ministry regulations that hinted at independent education, and the demands of the industrial revolution 4.0. Second, the implementation of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum in Independent Learning education must be adjusted to include the values of science and technology, social values, culture, and the demands of the industrial revolution 4.0. especially after the Covid 19 pandemic which has changed the paradigm of Islamic religious education.</p>
<p>How to Cite: Halim, A., Jamil, H., Miswanto, M., & Nur Rochbani, I. T. (2023). <i>The Islamic Religious Education Curriculum and Its Application to Learning in the Context of Independent Education</i>. Progresiva : Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pendidikan Islam, 12(02). 261-274. https://ejournal.umm.ac.id/index.php/progresiva.v12i02.29415</p>	

Introduction

Curriculum is an important tool in the learning process that should provide guidance and direction in education, as stated by Akrim et al. (2022), who emphasize that every education system relies on the curriculum as a reference in learning.

An education system that is not effectively and efficiently oriented towards the curriculum is highly likely to be lacking direction and may result in unstructured and non-competitive learning in the global arena (Irawan, Hary Priatna, Neng Gustini, 2023). Ultimately, the educational objectives formulated in the learning process will not be maximally achieved.

Islamic religious education, as an effort to internalize fundamental, social, and moral values, requires an educational curriculum that encompasses Islamic values in a holistic and comprehensive manner through the learning process. As Ashraf suggests, there is a need for deep sensitivity training for students regarding all types of knowledge based on Islamic values. Thus, the performance of Islamic religious education is expected to guide all potential instruments of oneself with full awareness of intellectual, spiritual, and moral maturity (Halim, Abdul, 2023; Yaqin et al., 2021).

This principle was actually formulated in the Islamic education seminar in 1960, where it was agreed that Islamic education is an effort of guidance aimed at nurturing physical and spiritual integrity with wisdom, guiding, teaching, empowering, supervising, and internalizing all the inherent potentials within oneself (Wakhidah & Erman, 2022). In the 1977-1982 World Conference, it was more specific in emphasizing the need to activate the critical thinking of Muslim students as an effort to realize the truth of Islam as a "rahmatil Lil 'Alamin," which means a mercy to all worlds (Kolb, 2023). Islamic religious pedagogy at German-speaking universities has primarily faced basic questions like: What kind of methodological and didactic approaches can be employed in Islamic Religious Education (IRE).

From here, it is evident how important an open, universal, solution-oriented, critical, and ethically conscious Islamic religious education curriculum is, which should be accommodated in the learning process. Thus, the performance of Islamic education today is capable of competing in the whirlwind of globalization and modernization while maintaining the fundamental principles of Islam, as Kamaludin (2021) suggests that Islamic education can convey various moral messages to students, enriching their knowledge through the integration of intellectual, emotional, and spiritual aspects (Miswanto & Halim, 2023; Yasin et al., 2023).

Unfortunately, recent Islamic religious education has exhibited a traditional, rigid, pragmatic, local, and outdated character (Badriah et al., 2023; Ulum et al., 2023). As a result, Islamic religious education has become less adaptable to the rapid social and technological changes. This has led to the challenge of Islamic education in embracing the principles of self-directed learning, which are highly open to social change and globalization (Halim & Amril, 2022; Sveshnikova et al., 2022).

This is an experience shared by several religion-based Islamic countries as well (Rashed, 2015). Similarly, public schools face challenges in developing critical thinking skills, building identity, and connecting curriculum content with modern life (Gallagher, 2023).

Therefore, the reform of the Islamic religious education curriculum is an inevitability, considering the integration of religious, social, and scientific aspects. In the implementation context, it is crucial to have a formula packaged through learning

that incorporates theological-Qouliyah, humanistic-humanity, and ecological-Kauniyah values. As emphasized by several previous studies, for instance: first, Akrim et al., (2022) stated that including cultural elements in the Islamic religious education curriculum would facilitate its implementation in learning (Halim & Amril, 2022). Second, The research by Wakhidah & Erman, (2022) emphasized the need to incorporate environmental concepts into the Islamic religious education curriculum at all school levels. Third, Khalili (2022) highlighted that humanitarian issues are consistently considered in the Islamic religious education curriculum, with an emphasis on spiritual and social aspects.

Research Method

The research method used is library research, specifically literature review related to the Islamic religious education curriculum and independent learning. This was done by searching various online platforms such as sinta.kemdikbud.go.id, Scopus.com, Google Scholar, DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals), Garuda, Mendeley.Com, Emerald Insight, ScienceDirect, Open Knowledge Maps, Connected Papers, Vos Viewer, and various other media sources. (Ridwanulloh et al., 2022).

The data analysis technique used is content analysis, which involves categorizing the data to formulate conclusions based on the research questions. The collected data is analyzed using a descriptive-analytical method. The approach employed is qualitative, where the data is in the form of narratives or sentences, and this data is systematically processed to generate conclusions. (Khalili, 2022) Furthermore, this research is also a type of historical-philosophical research. Data collection in this study involves a literature review of various sources, including books, journal articles, and other media.

Data was collected by initiating the process of identifying the required data/library (Husein et al., 2022). The researcher used a thematic approach to analyze the data. This process began with intensive reading of the literature while taking notes in Mendeley. The data from these notes were then coded into keywords representing each piece of information in the field notes. The researcher discussed these codes and selected the most prominent and general codes. These keywords or codes formed themes that then constructed the relationships between the themes.

Result and Discussion

The curriculum is the soul of education that must be innovatively, dynamically, and periodically evaluated to adapt to the changing times and technology (IPTEK) (Siahaan et al., 2023). In the rapid and fast-paced development of technology, it can be said that the education world cannot linger in the comfort zone of the existing curriculum (Kamalia & Andriansyah, 2021; Muhajir, 2020).

We can see this in the political context alone, where it can be imagined that regardless of the accompanying political context, within a span of six years, the Higher Education Standard (SN-Dikti) has undergone changes three times, namely: Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education Regulation No. 49 of 2014 - Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education Regulation No. 44 of 2015 - Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 3 of 2020. Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 3 of 2020 coincided with the Independent Learning-Campus Independent (MBKM) policy (Puspitasari & Nasihin, 2021). This reflects that change demands acceleration, not just speed (Habibi, 2022).

In the ongoing development of the era, higher education institutions face

challenges in curriculum development, especially in the Industry 4.0 era. In this context, universities must produce graduates with new literacy skills, (Elihami & Melbourne, 2022) namely: data literacy, technology literacy, and human literacy that pivot on noble character (Pandiangan, 2023). To address these challenges, a policy of the right to learn for students outside their study programs was introduced (Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 3 of 2020 on Higher Education Standards) (Irawan & Eneng Nunuz Rohmatullayaly, 2023; Yaqin et al., 2021).

This policy is popularly known as Freedom to Learn or Independent Campus and aims to create an autonomous and flexible learning process in higher education institutions, fostering an innovative learning culture that is not restrictive and is tailored to students' needs (Halim & Alpi, 2023). It encourages students to master various fields of knowledge relevant to entering the workforce and provides students with the opportunity to choose their courses. This policy also aims to enhance the link and match between academia and the business/industrial world while preparing students for the workforce from the outset (Sveshnikova et al., 2022).

This Independent Learning program also extends to primary schools, junior high schools, and senior high schools, with the goal of liberating students to understand learning materials and develop noble knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Independent Learning is also aligned with the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum (Rizk, 2021).

According to BSNP or the National Education Standards Agency, the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is a learning curriculum related to the approach of talents and interests. Here, students can choose the subjects they want to study according to their talents and interests (Ni'mah & Sari, 2022). The curriculum or independent learning program was established by Nadiem Makarim, Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Mendikbud Ristek) as a form of assessment of the improvement of the 2013 curriculum. The prototype syllabus is a simplification of the 2013 syllabus with a project-based learning system. Since 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, efforts have been made to implement an independent learning curriculum or prototype curriculum of at least 2,500 driving schools and Indonesian Vocational Competence Centers (Sa'diyah et al., 2022).

The focus of freedom of learning is the freedom to think creatively and independently. Teachers are expected to be the driving force behind actions that bring positive things to students (Putkonen & Poulter, 2023) the number of pupils studying Islamic religious education (IRE). The conclusion on the concept of learning is a form of proposal in the restructuring of the national education system. Reorganization is carried out to respond to changes and progress in the country and adapt to changing times. Thus, students can develop according to their potential and abilities. Self-directed learning is characterized as critical, high-quality, fast, applicative, expressive, progressive, and diverse learning. Students learn on their own initiative can be seen from their attitudes and ways of thinking. One of them is energetic, optimistic, positive, creative and not worried about trying new things (Khalili, 2022).

The Merdeka Curriculum perfects the cultivation of student character education with the Pancasila student profile, which consists of 6 dimensions, each dimension which is described in detail into each element consisting of; first, Believing in devotion to God Almighty, Indonesian students who believe, fear God Almighty, and have noble morals are students who are moral in relation to God Almighty. He understands the teachings of his religion and beliefs and applies these understandings in his daily life. There are

five key elements of faith, fear of True Source, and noble character: religious morality; personal morals; morals to man; morals to nature; State morals.

Second, Global diversity, Indonesian students maintain their noble culture, locality and identity, and remain open-minded in interacting with other cultures, thus fostering mutual respect and the possibility of forming a new culture that is positive and does not conflict with the nation's noble culture. Key elements of global diversity include recognizing and appreciating cultures, intercultural communication skills in interacting with others, and reflection and responsibility for the experience of diversity consisting of: Recognizing and appreciating culture, Communication and interaction between cultures, Reflection and responsibility for the experience of diversity, Social Justice.

Third, Gotong royong, Indonesian students have the ability to work together, namely the ability to carry out activities together voluntarily so that the activities carried out can run smoothly, easily and lightly. The elements of working together are collaboration, caring, and sharing consisting of: Collaboration, caring, sharing.

Fourth, Independent, Indonesian students are independent learners, namely students who are responsible for the learning process and outcomes. The key elements of self-reliance consist of awareness of self and the situation at hand as well as self-regulation. Self-understanding and the situation at hand, Self-regulation.

Fifth, Critical reasoning, students who reason critically are able to objectively process information both qualitatively and quantitatively, build relationships between various information, analyze information, evaluate and conclude it. The elements of critical reasoning are obtaining and processing information and ideas, analyzing and evaluating reasoning, reflecting on thoughts and thought processes in decision making. Acquire and process information and ideas, Analyze and evaluate reasoning, Reflect and evaluate one's own thoughts.

Sixth, Creative. Creative learners are able to modify and produce something original, meaningful, useful, and impactful. The key elements of creative consist of generating original ideas and producing original works and actions and having flexibility of thinking in finding alternative solutions to problems. Produce original ideas, Produce original works and actions, Have flexibility of thinking in finding alternative solutions to problems (Susilowati, 2022).

Islamic Religious Education is one of the compulsory subjects in Indonesia, and it has its own curriculum called the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum or Kurikulum PAI. In PAI, the curriculum is often referred to as "manhaj," which means a clear path that educators and students must follow to develop their knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Wakhidah, 2022).

Islamic education is based directly on the Quran as its primary source and considers the Quran as the main source for structuring the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum (Kurikulum PAI) (Suhayib, 2023). The fundamental framework of the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum (Kurikulum PAI) found in the Quran and Hadiths as guidelines for its development is as follows:

Tawheed is explained in Surah Al-Ikhlâs: 1-4, with the aim of increasing faith in Allah SWT in the teaching and learning activities for both educators and students. Iqra', which means "read," is explained in Surah Al-'Alaq: 1-5, with the aim of obligating reading, whether implicit or explicit, in the learning process conducted by educators and students.

So, from the explanation provided, it is clear that the Independent Learning program created by Minister Nadiem Makarim is very much in line with the PAI

Curriculum. The apparent difference lies only in the context of its implementation, where the PAI Curriculum focuses on worldly learning and preparation for the hereafter. In essence, the PAI Curriculum, if well understood, offers two advantages: the advantage of keeping up with the developments and progress of the world and the advantage of the hereafter, where every learning endeavor balances the world and the hereafter.

The Implementation of the PAI Curriculum in Independent Learning

The application of the Curriculum in the Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary is defined as "putting something into effect", i.e. applying an idea, concept, policy, or innovation into practical action so as to produce an impact, including changes in knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes. (Susilowati, 2022) Implementation is intended to involve activities, actions, or operations, as well as the existence of mechanisms in a system. This is not only an activity, but an activity that is structured and designed to achieve certain goals in an activity (Susilowati, 2022).

From this it can be understood that implementation is a process of activities that are pursued in a planned manner based on a guideline and carried out to achieve certain goals. Implementation cannot run well without association with other objects. While curriculum comes from Latin, namely *curriculum*, meaning a running course or a race course, especially a chariot race course. While in French, namely *Courier* means to run (to run) the term is used in the field of sports which means curriculum as the distance that must be traveled by horse race runners to get medals or awards (Jumaeda, 2022a; Nasir, 2020; Yaqin, 2021).

In Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System that the curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding objectives, content, and learning materials, as well as ways used as guidelines for the implementation of learning activities to achieve educational goals (Susilowati, 2022).

While curriculum implementation can be interpreted as actualization of written curriculum in the form of learning. This is in line with what Miller and Seller say that: "in some cases implementation the result was identifier with instruction....". It is further explained that "curriculum implementation is a process of applying concepts, ideas, programs, or curriculum arrangements into new learning practices or activities, so that changes occur in a group of people who are expected to change (Ni'mah & Sari, 2022).

Then it was also stated that curriculum implementation is a process of interaction between facilitators as curriculum developers, and students as learning subjects. Umar Hamalik believes that curriculum implementation is the application or implementation of curriculum programs that have been developed in the previous stage, then tested with implementation and management while always making adjustments to the field situation and the characteristics of students, both intellectual, emotional and physical development (Susilowati, 2022). It can be concluded that curriculum implementation is the application of the curriculum as a guideline to carry out a learning that is expected to achieve the expected learning objectives.

The curriculum in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is better known as "manhaj," which means a clear path that educators and students must follow with the aim of developing their knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Akrim, 2022).

From the presentation, it can be seen that the PAI curriculum is actually in line with Independent Learning (Independent Learning). However, in reality, the PAI curriculum does not align and even contradicts Independent Learning. For example,

traditional Islamic boarding schools, Islamic-based schools, and boarding schools mostly adhere to a classical learning style or remain rooted in traditional Islamic teaching methods. They often prioritize the belief that teachers are everything in education within these institutions (Jumaeda, 2022b). This clearly imposes limitations on the development of students' learning styles, resulting in many students who are conservative and unable to keep up with the rapid developments in science and technology. Moreover, any sudden changes in the field of education are often considered taboo within the context of learning styles in the PAI curriculum (Yaqin et al., 2021).

For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, students in public schools who were following the "Independent Learning" approach utilized technology for their learning, enabling them to learn independently without constant guidance from educators. Educators in public schools provided guidance and facilitated what students should learn and understand. This is in stark contrast to Islamic boarding schools or the PAI curriculum, which still heavily rely on educators. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the PAI curriculum also utilized technological advancements for teaching and learning, but the focus remained on educators, leading to limited progress for students in the competitive job market (Putkonen & Poulter, 2023) the number of pupils studying Islamic religious education (IRE).

The impact felt by graduates of Islamic boarding schools is that they tend to return to their places of education if they want to become educators, and they often struggle to compete in the available job market in Indonesia (Sveshnikova et al., 2022). OBE (Outcome-Based Education) is a focus on achieving specific, predetermined concrete outcomes in the educational process. It involves curriculum organization, assessment, and educational reporting practices that reflect high-level learning achievements rather than credit accumulation (Prastowo, 2020).

However, in practice, the implementation of the PAI curriculum is not realized, and it still focuses on traditional teaching methods where everything revolves around the educator. There is limited room for students to learn independently. As a result, this approach hinders education from producing graduates who can compete effectively in the era of Industry 4.0 (Famularsih, 2022).

The concept of "Independent Learning" as articulated by Nadiem Makarim in his policy suggests that "Merdeka Kampus" or "Free Campus" means providing autonomous freedom to educational institutions, freeing them from bureaucratic complexities, and granting students the freedom to choose their desired programs (Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, 2020). In this context, the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemdikbud) aims to establish an autonomous, non-bureaucratic educational institution culture and create an innovative learning system based on the demands and requirements of the modern world (Li & Wei, 2023) the present study examined the independent and joint predictive effects of three emotions - enjoyment, anxiety, and boredom - on L2 achievement over time. The participants of the study were a group of junior secondary English learners in rural China, a population that has hitherto never featured in L2 learning research. Questionnaire data and achievement data were collected at four different time points (Time 1-Time 4: T1-T4).

In the modern era of learning, it can be firmly stated that shifting towards a student-centered learning concept is essential. This means transferring the focus of education from the educator to the learner, making the learner the center of the learning

process. In the context of modern Islamic education, this shift is no longer just a debate but a necessity. Considering the rapid development of technology and the changing needs of society, it is crucial to implement such changes to improve the quality of education and the outcomes of the learning process. (Fabiatti, 2022).

The new era of learning provides significant opportunities for acquiring and developing knowledge and skills, which aligns well with the concept of the Islamic religious education curriculum. This curriculum emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and noble attitudes/morality (akhlak) (Miao, 2022).

In the present era, the field of education is facing intense competition, driven by the use of modern technology-based educational services that offer faster and more accurate services. Additionally, there is significant growth in data on a large scale through data interconnectivity and information exchange among various branches of knowledge. This has led to a shift from an idealistic to a pragmatic approach in education. In this context, those involved in Islamic religious education must adapt wisely to these changes, embracing the developments in technology and not avoiding or rejecting them. Instead, they should seek to maximize the benefits of these advancements to improve the way Islamic religious education is delivered, keeping pace with the changing times (Felsenthal, 2023).

Considering the current circumstances, the issues within the Islamic religious education curriculum (Kurikulum PAI) can actually be improved through a reevaluation of its underlying concepts. Let's begin with knowledge. Educators should undergo training to explore the extent of students' knowledge and facilitate it according to their talents, thereby nurturing better skills and instilling values that are beneficial to community life. This approach can help shape students' character positively, dispelling any negative perceptions the community may have about graduates of Islamic religious education or religious-based schools (Wakhidah, 2022).

If this is implemented effectively, it would result in individuals who are intelligent in dealing with the world and society. They would have a strong religious foundation for the afterlife and be capable of providing what the community needs, contributing to progress in the worldly sense. They would no longer be seen as old-fashioned but rather as brilliant individuals whose presence is valued in society.

Conclusion

The curriculum is an important tool in the learning process that should be able to provide guidance and guidance in the direction of education. An effective and efficient education system that is curriculum-oriented is needed as a structured and competitive learning direction in the global world. Islamic religious education as an effort to internalize fundamental, social, and moral values, urgently needs an effective and efficient curriculum. The Islamic religious education curriculum must be able to respond to the challenges of the growing times, science and technology that are so fast, changes in education ministry regulations that emphasize independent education, and the demands of the industrial revolution 4.0 while maintaining strong and conscious religious principles.

This research shows that, first, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum in the vortex of independent education is a challenge in itself, where the rapid development of science and technology, changes in education ministry regulations that hint at independent education, and the demands of the industrial revolution 4.0. has brought

Islamic religious education to continue to enter the vortex of independent education problems. The shock of Islamic religious education that displays a more dichotomous, traditional, rigid and closed face is the starting point for the problem of the Islamic religious education curriculum. The Islamic religious education curriculum should not be limited to strengthening religious values which are precisely trapped in attitudes and behaviors of religious rituals, procedurals, and worship routines that eliminate awareness of social, cultural, human and universal values. The integrity of religious, social, cultural and universal values is a necessity that is synergized and formulated in the Islamic religious education curriculum. So that Islamic religious education will be more relevant to the demands of the times with the spirit of Islam that rahmatal Lil 'Alamin.

Second, the implementation of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum in Independent Learning education must be adjusted to include the values of science and technology, social values, culture, and the demands of the industrial revolution 4.0. especially after the Covid 19 pandemic which has changed the paradigm of Islamic religious education. Various important elements of the independent learning education signal echoed by the Indonesian Ministry of Education should be considered in formulating Islamic religious education. So that Islamic religious education that includes religious, social, cultural and universe values can be implemented in learning.

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