

SCOPE OF THE ISLAMIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM

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Abstract

This study examines the scope of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum and the fundamental principles guiding its development. The PAI curriculum plays a crucial role in shaping students to become individuals who are faithful, pious, and of noble character. However, technological advancement and social change require a curriculum that is more adaptive and relevant to contemporary needs. Using a library research method, this study reviews books, scholarly articles, and related documents. The findings reveal that the PAI curriculum encompasses the domains of creed, worship, morality, Qur'an and Hadith, Islamic history and culture, as well as Arabic language. Its formulation is based on religious, philosophical, psychological, social, and pedagogical principles. The study highlights the importance of continuously updating the PAI curriculum to ensure it remains comprehensive, contextual, and responsive to modern educational challenges.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education, Scope, Curriculum Principles

Introduction

As an agent of transformation, Islamic education in the context of globalization and modernization today is required to be able to carry out its role proactively, constructively, and adaptively. Its existence is expected to make a significant contribution to the progress of Muslims, both in the intellectual-theoretical realm and in daily practice. Islamic education does not merely serve as a means of internalizing moral values to deal with the various negative impacts of globalization, but more than that, the moral values instilled must be able to become a driving force that frees the ummah from various forms of poverty, backwardness in knowledge, and social, cultural, and economic backwardness(Hikmah, 2024).

In this context, the Islamic education curriculum plays a strategic role as a guideline in directing the entire learning process so that educational goals can be achieved. The curriculum is not only understood as a list of subject matter, but rather a set of plans that contain integrated learning objectives, structure, content, and methods. Changes in people's lifestyles, developments in digital technology, and the demands of the modern world require the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum to be continuously updated so that it remains relevant to the needs of students and social dynamics (Fathurrohman & Rizqi, 2021).

However, the development of the PAI curriculum still faces a number of problems. First, some educators' understanding of the curriculum is still focused on material aspects, so that philosophical, psychological, and social elements have not been fully taken into consideration. Second, the scope of PAI material in schools and madrasas is often not structured proportionally, resulting in repetition of material, an imbalance between cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects, and a lack of content relevant to the digital age. Third, developments in information technology require new skills in

Islamic digital literacy and media ethics, which are not yet fully accommodated in the PAI curriculum (Indarta et al., 2022).

Therefore, an in-depth study of the scope of the PAI curriculum is very important to ensure that the curriculum can meet the demands of the times while remaining grounded in the principles of Islamic teachings. An analysis of the scope of the curriculum helps to understand how the material is structured, what principles are used, and how it is relevant to the character building of students. This understanding is necessary not only for educators but also for policy makers to ensure that national education goals and Islamic education goals can be achieved in a balanced manner.

In addition, the development of an ideal PAI curriculum must take into account student development, community needs, and the challenges of the digital age. The curriculum needs to harmoniously integrate discussions on aqidah, worship, morals, and muamalah, as well as add contemporary competencies such as value-based digital literacy, critical thinking skills, and social media ethics (Rahmawati & Hidayat, 2021).

Method

In this study, the researcher employed a library research method, which involves a systematic series of activities centered on gathering information from various written sources. This approach includes identifying relevant materials, collecting library data, and reviewing existing literature that relates to the research topic. Through careful reading and note-taking, the researcher was able to compile a comprehensive set of references that formed the foundation of the study.

The study also adopted a qualitative approach, emphasizing the production of descriptive data derived from written or spoken information. This method allows the researcher to interpret and understand phenomena based on the words of individuals and observable behaviors. Rather than focusing on numerical analysis, the qualitative approach prioritizes depth, context, and meaning, making it well-suited for exploring concepts, perspectives, and patterns found within the collected literature.

Because this research is categorized as library research, all data used were sourced from written materials rather than field observations. The information gathered includes books, academic documents, research notes, articles, and credible online resources relevant to the issues addressed in the study. By relying on these sources, the researcher ensured that the analysis remained grounded in established knowledge while also allowing for a critical examination of existing viewpoints.

Results

Definition of Curriculum

According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), curriculum is understood as a set of subjects prepared to be taught in an educational institution, or a series of courses related to a particular field of expertise (KBBI Daring, 2023). Meanwhile, Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System defines curriculum as a set of plans and arrangements that include objectives, content, and learning materials along with the methods used as a reference in the preparation of curricula and syllabi at each level of education (Hermawan et al., 2020).

When viewed from its etymology, the term curriculum comes from Latin. The word *curir* means runner, while *curere* refers to a track or place to run. Initially, this term was used in the context of sports to describe the distance that a runner must cover from the starting line to the finish line in order to win a medal. This meaning was then adapted to the field of education, so that curriculum is understood as a set of subjects that students must complete from the beginning to the end of a learning program in order to obtain a certificate or diploma (Robbi, 2025).

The understanding of curriculum has generally referred to concepts developed in Western tradition, because its theoretical basis has been largely adapted from the thinking of experts there. The Qur'an and Hadith were not compiled as books of science, philosophy, or mysticism, but rather contain the basic principles of Islamic teachings. Therefore, it is inappropriate to expect an explicitly structured curriculum theory in these two sources. Based on this reality, Islamic educational thinkers then developed their own ideas about the curriculum. However, to date, there have been no works by Muslim scholars that discuss the curriculum in detail and systematically as written by many Western experts. Nevertheless, this does not mean that Muslim education experts do not have an understanding of curriculum; this can be seen from the education programs they have designed for madrasas, which contain a structure of subjects and activities that reflect their views on curriculum (Khon, 2021).

According to the National Education Law No. 20 of 2003, a curriculum is a set of plans that outline the objectives, content, and learning materials, as well as the methods that guide curriculum development at the educational unit level and related syllabi for each educational unit. Etymologically, the word "curriculum" comes from the Greek words 'curir' (runner) and "curare" (horse racing track). This term originated in the world of ancient Roman and Greek sports, referring to the distance a runner had to cover from start to finish. This concept was later applied to education, covering the number of subjects that students must complete from the beginning to the end of a study program in order to obtain a degree (Ulya & Kusmawati, 2023).

According to Oemar Hamalik, a curriculum is an educational program offered by educational institutions (schools) to their students. From a pedagogical perspective, a curriculum is a set of plans that contain objectives, content, and teaching materials that serve as guidelines for learning and achieving educational goals (Mahmudi, 2019).

The old definition of curriculum emphasized course content or subjects, namely the number of subjects or courses required to complete a degree at a school or university, as well as the entire curriculum offered by an educational institution. The term "curriculum" originated in 1968; previously, it was known as a syllabus.

In the context of Islamic education, the term curriculum is often referred to as *manhaj*, which means a clear and directed path taken by educators and students in developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Imam al-Ghazali did not explicitly define curriculum, but through his thinking, it can be understood that the Islamic education curriculum is based on two main approaches, namely the religious and Sufi approaches. These two approaches encompass religious sciences that serve as a means of purifying oneself from the influences of worldly life. In addition, there is also a pragmatic orientation, namely that knowledge must benefit humans, both in this world and in the hereafter. Therefore, the curriculum in al-Ghazali's perspective needs to be structured to include useful knowledge and presented systematically so that it is easy to understand and communicate (Firmansyah, 2019).

The Islamic education curriculum has a number of important functions. In particular, the curriculum serves as a vehicle for nurturing the younger generation, encouraging them to be open-minded, develop their potential, talents, and skills, and thoroughly prepare them to carry out their mandate of stewardship on earth. Thus, the direction of the Islamic education curriculum is not limited to a single goal. The curriculum is not only aimed at achieving happiness in this world, but also at attaining eternal happiness in the hereafter. In addition, the curriculum aims to develop intellectual insights oriented towards the hereafter, strengthen faith, improve physical capacity, and foster spiritual, moral, and noble character balance (Faizah, 2022).

A. Definition of Islamic Education

According to Zakiah Daradjat, as quoted by Abdul Majid, Islamic education is an effort to educate and guide students so that they understand Islamic teachings in a holistic and comprehensive manner and achieve their goals. This ultimately enables them to practice Islam and make it their way of life.

B. Scope of the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum

To educate graduates who have the competencies outlined in the Islamic religious education curriculum, namely, the development of students into individuals who are pious, devout, and have strong character. This curriculum is based on the teachings of two main sources: the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Furthermore, the teaching materials are enriched with the insights of scholars through *istinbath* (reasoning) and *ijtihad* (religious *ijtihad*), which allow for a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of these fundamental teachings. Islamic religious education covers harmony, compatibility, and balance between:

1. the relationship between humans and Allah SWT,
2. the relationship between humans and themselves,
3. the relationship between fellow humans, and
4. the relationship between humans and other living creatures and their environment.

These four aspects are discussed in Islamic religious education, which is divided into several subjects:

1. Aqidah and Akhlak
2. Ubudiyah (Sharia, Fiqh)
3. Al-Qur'an and Hadith, History (Tarikh), and Islamic Culture
4. Arabic

These subjects are part of Islamic religious education in schools and madrasas. However, in public schools, Islamic religious education is taught based on the concept of “broad subjects” or “*Nazhariyatul Wahdah*”. This concept transcends the boundaries of individual subjects and integrates them into a group of subjects. This curriculum structure is often referred to as an “integrated system” or “*Nazhariyatul Wahdah*” curriculum, which combines various disciplines into one subject or field of study. The Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in public schools covers elementary education, junior high school, and senior high school/vocational education in the form of various subjects. This means that PAI subjects cover discussions on the science of Tawhid, the Qur'an and Hadith, Fiqh, history, and morals. (Ulya & Kusmawati, 2023).

C. The scope of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) material includes:

1. Tawhid. This aspect is fundamental. The religious aspect of Islamic teachings provides access to these teachings and shapes the behavior of Muslims as a whole.
2. Sharia (Islamic norms or laws), which are teachings that regulate the behavior of Muslims. This legal aspect includes doctrines that have legal significance, covering obligatory acts, *sunnah*, *halal*, *makruh* (disliked), and *haram*.
3. Akhlak or behavior, which is a description of the behavior that a Muslim must have in relation to Allah, in relation to others, in relation to nature, and in relation to themselves. (Ulya & Kusmawati, 2023).

The curriculum, as an important component of education that plays a significant role in achieving the desired educational goals, must be based on principles that significantly influence and

shape the teaching materials, structure, and organization. The basis for developing the Islamic education curriculum is:

1. **Religious Principles.** All Islamic social systems, including the education system, must base their philosophy, objectives, and curriculum on Islamic teachings. This includes faith, worship, social interaction, and relationships within society.
2. **Philosophical Principles.** These principles determine the direction and objectives of Islamic education. Philosophically, the Islamic curriculum conveys truth, especially regarding values and ways of life that are considered authentic.
3. **Psychological Principles.** This principle states that the Islamic curriculum must take into account the growth and development stages of students. The curriculum must be tailored to the developmental characteristics of students, their physical, intellectual, linguistic, emotional, and social maturity, needs and desires, interests, skills, and individual differences.
4. **Social Principles.** These principles provide an overview of the Islamic curriculum and reflect the social foundations that encompass the characteristics of Islamic society and culture. This includes knowledge, ideal values, ways of thinking, customs, and arts. The Islamic curriculum must be rooted in society, its changes, and its developments.
5. **Organizational Principles.** These principles form the basis for organizing and delivering learning materials in the learning process. (Hermawan et al., 2020).

Conclusion

The Islamic Education (PAI) curriculum plays a crucial role as a guideline for shaping students into individuals who are faithful, pious, and have noble character. The scope of the PAI curriculum is very comprehensive, covering the domains of faith, worship, morals, the Qur'an and Hadith, Islamic history and culture, and Arabic language, all of which are based on the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. The development of this curriculum must be based on integrated principles, namely religious, philosophical, psychological, social, and organizational principles. However, modern challenges such as technological advances and social changes require the PAI curriculum to be continuously updated to remain relevant, contextual, and responsive to the needs of the times, particularly by addressing issues of material imbalance and the lack of accommodation for Islamic digital literacy and media ethics. Therefore, it is recommended to continuously update the material by integrating contemporary competencies, ensuring a proportional balance between cognitive-affective-psychomotor aspects, and improving educators' understanding of the philosophical and psychological foundations of the curriculum.

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