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Islamic Religious Education as A Core Curriculum of National Education in Schools

Mulyawan Safwandy Nugraha [1]✉, Yusup Hamdani Bakhtiar[2], Tatang Muh Nasir[3]
[(1,2,3)] Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia

✉ **Corresponding author:** *mulyawan@uinsgd.ac.id*

Abstrak

PAI tidak saja menyampaikan materi pengetahuan agama saja kepada peserta didik, akan tetapi juga membimbing peserta didik untuk berperilaku sesuai dengan nilai-nilai yang diajarkan agama yang mengedepankan akhlakul karimah atau budi pekerti luhur sebagai perilaku dasar yang harus dimilki oleh semua peserta didik. Posisi PAI diantara mata pelajaran lain di sekolah adalah sebagai inti atau "*core*" dalam kurikulum pendidikan nasional. Oleh karena itu dalam prakteknya di lapangan harus memberikan proses keterbukaan pemahaman dan penerapan, sehingga melahirkan sikap dan perilaku yang inklusif dan diposisikan setara dengan mata pelajaran lain atau bahkan diprioritaskan. Untuk itu menempatkan mata pelajaran PAI sebagai mata pelajaran inti "*core*" di dalam kurikulum sekolah merupakan suatu kebutuhan dan keharusan. Ini merupakan suatu upaya cerdas bentuk penguatan PAI di dalam kurikulum sekolah. Sehingga PAI meliputi seluruh aspek mata pelajaran yang terintegrasi di dalam pengetahuan, perilaku, sikap, dan interaksi sosial.

Kata Kunci: Kurikulum Inti, Pendidikan Agama Islam, Pendidikan Nasional.

Abstract

Islamic Religious Education not only takes the discourse on religious knowledge course material to students but also guides students to behave according to the values taught by religion that promote karakul karma or noble character as the primary behavior the learner should own. The position of Isla, mic religious education, among other subjects at school, is the core of the national education curriculum. Therefore, practice in the field should be about [providing transparency, understanding, and application process, thus giving birth to inclusive attitudes and behaviors equivalent to other subjects or even prioritized. It puts the subjects of Islamic religious education as a core subject in the school curriculum, which is a need and a necessity. This is an intelligent effort to strengthen forms of Islamic religious education in the school curriculum. So, Islamic religious education covers all aspects of integrated subjects in knowledge, attitudes, behavior, and social interaction.

Keywords: Core Curriculum, Islamic Religious Education, National Education.

INTRODUCTION

Education involves interactions between educators and students to help students master educational goals. Educational interactions can take place within the family, school, or community. For this reason, it is necessary to have a definite mechanism to regulate the interaction process between educators and students so that they can achieve educational goals as optimally as possible and minimize all obstacles that can interfere with this process. (Ahyan Yusuf Sya'bani, 2018).

The curriculum is a set of lessons that must be taken in the learning process to become a reference and educational orientation. (Tatang Muh Nasir, Aan Hasanah, 2022). Since the Indonesian nation became independent, the education curriculum has undergone various policy changes. In Indonesia's curriculum

development history, it has experienced dynamic change at least eleven times. Starting from the pre-independence period in a straightforward form, then the independence period was continuously refined, namely in 1947, 1952, 1964, 1968, 1975, 1984, 1994, 2004, 2006, and 2013 (Machali, 2014).

These various curriculum change policies are based on the results of analysis, evaluation, predictions, and multiple internal and external challenges that continue to change. In this context, the curriculum as a policy product is dynamic, contextual, and relative. Dynamic because it continues to develop and adapt to current developments and is open to criticism. Contextual because it is needed and based on the context of the time. The resulting curriculum policy was considered perfect and will become irrelevant later. Therefore, the basic principle in curriculum policy is continuous change. Curriculum change policy is an effort and manifestation of the primary curriculum principle of change and continuity, which results from study, evaluation, criticism, response, prediction, and various challenges faced. Likewise, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum, the primary reference in the development of Islamic educational institutions, should follow the continuous flow of change and keep up with the times. (Dwi Noviani & Zainuddin, 2020). Apart from that, the development of the PAI curriculum requires a clear and solid foundation so that the tremendous current transformation and innovation in education and learning do not easily sway it. Some people assume the recent decline in Islamic education in Indonesia to be a result of the lack of clarity in the PAI curriculum, namely: first, curriculum development is more influenced by political factors than philosophical-pedagogical factors; second, PAI curriculum development is still partial; third, the development of the PAI curriculum is more oriented towards achieving material targets (material oriented) rather than basic abilities in carrying out actions and solving students' religious problems; fourth, PAI learning is more likely to develop cognitive aspects, so it cannot develop students' personalities in an integrative way, PAI is even more likely to function as schooling, while as an educational function Islamic values and teachings are still less effective. (Syarif, 2021)Based on the above, Islamic education, which is focused on studying curriculum development and innovation, especially strengthening Islamic Religious Education (PAI) as the core curriculum in schools, is necessary.

RESEARCH METHODS

This discussion uses a qualitative approach and literature study methods. Data collection techniques by examining various literary sources originating from various documents note that the primary nature of this document data is not limited to space and time, thus allowing researchers to find out about things that have happened in the past (Fabiana Meijon Fadul, 2019). In detail, documentary materials are divided into several types, namely autobiographies, personal letters, books, diaries, memorial clippings, government or private documents, and data on servers, flash disks, and websites. The author collects literature sources in the form of documents, both from books, journals, seminar results, and discussions with experts relevant to the research. After the data is collected, data analysis is carried out. Discussions on information originating from documentation in the form of writing, recordings, and images are usually known as content analysis research. (Arikunto, 2021). The author uses content analysis techniques by interpreting data, adding explanations, and drawing conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This section is the central part of the article, which is presented from the main results to supporting results and is equipped with a discussion. Data analysis processes such as statistical calculations and hypothesis testing processes do not need to be presented. Only the results of the analysis and the results of hypothesis testing need to be given. For qualitative research, the results section contains detailed sections in the form of sub-topics directly related to the research focus.

In historical reality, the development of the PAI curriculum experienced paradigm changes, although in some instances, the previous paradigm is still maintained today:

Table 1: This can be observed from the following phenomena

No	Phenomena
1	This changes from an emphasis on memorization and memory of texts from Islamic religious teachings, as well as spiritual and mental discipline as influenced by the Middle

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	East, to understanding the goals, meaning, and motivation of Islam to achieve PAI learning objectives.
2	Change from a textual, normative, and absolute way of thinking to a historical, empirical, and contextual way of thinking in understanding and explaining the teachings and values of the Islamic religion.
3	They have changed from their predecessors' emphasis on the products or results of Islamic religious thought to the process or methodology that produces these products.
4	Change from the PAI curriculum development pattern, which only relies on experts in selecting and compiling PAI curriculum content, towards broad involvement of experts, teachers, students, and the community to identify PAI goals and ways to achieve them.

Source : Karakteristik Pendidikan Agama Islam Pada Lembaga Pendidikan.

Whatever the development pattern, the PAI curriculum must be continuously innovated to respond to and anticipate existing developments and demands without having to wait for a change in officials (ministers). Moreover, society is currently in a global era, which has implications for many complex problems that require proper, fast, and accurate handling. The development of the PAI curriculum should provide the best solution for people facing these problems by injecting Islamic values in a structured manner as early as possible as a provision in their lives.

Discussion

PAI Curriculum Development

PAI curriculum development can be understood in a broad sense, namely: Activities to produce a PAI curriculum, A process that links one component to another to create a better PAI curriculum, and Activities for preparation (design), implementation, assessment and improvement of the PAI curriculum (Ishak, 2021).

Aspects of Islamic Religious Education

Education is closely related to social life because education is a social aspect. Education is not only limited to formal education but also non-formal education. Education includes all one's efforts or external efforts to increase knowledge and skills, acquire skills, and form certain attitudes. (Nasir, Tatang Muh, Hasbiyallah, 2024). Islamic religious education in schools contains teaching material consisting of several aspects: Al-Quran Hadith, Faith/Aqidah, Morals, Fiqh (Islamic Law), and Tarikh (History). Although each of these aspects in practice is interrelated (fills in and complements), if seen theoretically, each has its characteristics, namely, Aspects of the Al-Quran and Hadith, emphasizing excellent and correct reading and writing skills, understanding textual and contextual meaning, and practicing its contents in everyday life.

The Aqidah aspect emphasizes understanding and maintaining correct belief/faith and living and practicing the values of Asma al-Husna. The moral aspect highlights the habit of carrying out commendable morals and avoiding disgraceful morals in everyday life. Fiqh aspect, stressing the ability to carry out worship and mu'amalah correctly and well. Elements of the Date/History of Islamic Culture, emphasizing the ability to take ibrah (lessons/wisdom) from historical events, emulate outstanding figures, and relate them to social, cultural, political, economic, science and technology phenomena, etc. to develop culture and Islamic civilization (Ishak, 2021).

At the level of application in the field, these aspects of PAI aim to form students, which include Jismiyah Tarbiyah, namely all forms of education whose form is to nourish and nourish the body and strengthen it so that it can overcome the difficulties faced in life. Tarbiyah Aqliyah, namely all forms of education and lessons which, as a result, educate and sharpen the mind. Tarbiyah Adabiyah, namely all kinds of practices and theories whose form is to improve one's mind and improve one's character (Majid, 2019).

In this case, Islamic religious education is not only about the Arabiya aspect, which is oriented towards developing character (morals). Still, it is also comprehensive on the aqliyah side, which builds the ability to reason in seeing and providing solutions to various societal problems, as well as the jizyah aspect, which creates physical abilities in various personal skills to be competent in the public domain.

PAI as Core Curriculum

The Core Curriculum, as defined by Caswell in Abdullah Idi (Sukmadinata, 2020), is a continuous, carefully *planned series of experiences based on significant personal and social problems that involve learning of common concern to all youth*. Based on the definition above, the characteristics of the core curriculum are a series of

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interrelated experiences planned continuously before and during implementation, based on the problem, intended for all students. (Magdalena et al., 2020).

The core curriculum is prepared to realize national education goals by considering the stage of student development and its suitability to the environment, national development needs, developments in science and technology, and the arts according to the type and level of each educational unit. The core curriculum is the content of the lessons students will teach or study. It can also be called a teaching plan, which is how it is made, the scope and sequence of learning materials, and the methods and techniques used to achieve the curriculum. As the core curriculum, PAI is expected to guide the course of education according to its characteristics: PAI strives to maintain students' faith to remain strong in any situation and condition. PAI seeks to protect and preserve the teachings and values contained in the Al-Quran and Hadith and the authenticity as the primary source of Islamic teachings. PAI emphasizes the unity of faith, knowledge, and charity in daily life. PAI seeks to shape and develop individual piety as well as social piety. PAI is a moral and ethical basis for the development of science, technology, culture, and other aspects of life. PAI substance contains rational and supra-rational entities. PAI seeks to explore, develop, and take inspiration from Islamic history and culture/civilization. In some cases, PAI contains diverse understandings and interpretations, so it requires an open and tolerant attitude or the spirit of ukhuwah Islamiyah. (Muhaimin, 2017).

From this explanation, as the core curriculum of PAI, it contains learning messages that seek to build an inner force in the form of the strength of aqidah (faith) and spiritual depth, which is also strengthened by Islamic religious knowledge to be actualized in the form of pious deeds in daily life in every aspect of life. In turn, the development of the PAI curriculum is expected to be able to create ukhuwah Islamiyah in the broadest sense, namely Islamic brotherhood, not just brotherhood between Muslims as currently understood, but also to build brotherhood between people, and to form personal piety as well as social piety.

PAI Curriculum Development Model

In Indonesia's educational history, certain aspects of education have experienced changes and improvements. This is caused by policies implemented from one government to another. Likewise, Islamic education is affected by these policy changes. So, the curriculum, as stated above, changed both during the old order, new order, and reform era. So, the model of PAI curriculum development that has been developed is the dichotomous Model. In this model, aspects of life are viewed very simply, and the keyword is a dichotomy (split in two). Everything is only seen from two opposing sides, namely religious education and non-religious education. This dichotomous view, in turn, was developed by looking at worldly life and the hereafter, as well as physical and spiritual life, so that Islamic religious education was only focused on aspects of the afterlife or spiritual life. (Muhaimin, 2017). The section that deals with religious issues is called the spiritual section. In this way, religious education is confronted with general/non-religious education, Islamic education with non-Islamic education, and so on. This dichotomous view has implications for the development of Islamic religious education, which is more oriented towards the afterlife, while world problems are considered unimportant. So, it emphasizes the deepening of al-ulum ad-diniyah, which is a shortcut to happiness in the afterlife, while science (general knowledge) is considered separate from religion. Likewise, the approach is more religious, normative, doctrinaire, and absolutist.

Mechanism Model**.** This Mechanism Model views life as consisting of various aspects, and education is seen as the cultivation and development of a set of life values, each of which moves and operates according to its function. This is like a machine consisting of several components, each carrying out its function, and each can consult with the other. In simple terms, it can be understood that the aspects or values themselves consist of religious, individual, social, political, economic, rational, aesthetic, and others. Thus, religious aspects or values are one aspect or value of life from other aspects or values of life. The relationship between spiritual values and other values is lateral sequential, which means that each subject has a relationship of equals who can consult each other.

This model can be developed in public schools as an effort to form a religious personality. The implications in the field depend on the willingness and ability of school leaders, especially in building collaborative relationships with other subjects. This model can be applied by integrating imtaq with learning material, namely by incorporating religious concepts or teachings into the material (theories, ideas) students are studying or teaching.

Strengthening PAI in Schools.

Islamic religious education in schools is more oriented at the level of moral action, namely so that students not only stop at the level of competence but also have the will and habits to realize the teachings

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and values of religion in life daily. According to Lickona, in (Mustajab, 2014), that to educate children's morals to the level of moral action, three continuous coaching processes are needed, from moral knowing and feeling to ethical action. The revitalization of PAI will not be possible if teachers narrowly view the existing PAI curriculum. This perspective results in learning that is not dynamic and too textual, and more attention needs to be paid to contextual learning material in the curriculum. It would be best if you thoroughly understood the curriculum concept.

According to Said Hamid Hasan, there are at least four dimensions of the curriculum. (Hisyam, 2020) :

Table 2: Four dimensions of the curriculum

No	Name	Ket.
1	Curriculum as an idea or concept,	
2	Curriculum as a written plan,	
3	Curriculum as an activity or process, and	
4	Curriculum as a learning outcome	
5	Curriculum as an idea or concept,	

Source : *Refleksi dan Reformasi Pendidikan di Indonesia Memasuki Milenium III*.

In its implementation in the field, PAI admitted that it experienced many challenges, including the lack of allocated learning hours. In that short time, teachers must deliver fairly dense material to students. A practical approach is needed to deliver PAI material meaningfully and optimize the minimum number of subject hours at school. In this case, several approaches can be used as a reference, namely:

Table 3: Several approaches can be used as a reference

No	Name	Ket.
1	The faith approach, namely providing opportunities for students to develop an understanding of the existence of God as the source of life for creatures in nature	
2	The practice approach involves providing opportunities for students to practice and feel the results of the practice of worship and morals in facing tasks and problems in life.	
3	The habituation approach involves providing opportunities for students to get used to attitudes and behaviors that are in accordance with Islamic teachings and national culture when facing life problems.	
4	Rational approach, namely giving a role to students' minds in understanding and differentiating various teaching materials in terms of material standards and their relationship to good and bad behavior in life	
5	Emotional approach: efforts to arouse students' feelings about embracing behavior that is in accordance with religious teachings and national culture.	
6	A functional approach, namely, presenting the form of all material standards (Al-Quran, Hadith, Faith, Morals, Fiqh, and Tarikh) in terms of their benefits for students in everyday life broadly.	
7	An exemplary approach, namely making the figures of religious teachers and teachers of other subjects as well as all school parties as a reflection of human beings with personality	

Source: Competency-Based Islamic Religious Education.

At a practical level, the PAI curriculum as learning outcomes and learning experiences must constantly be developed and updated according to the times. (Ashari, 2021; Yusuf & Nata, 2023)So, PAI learning is not just a written curriculum that is conveyed only as (cognitive) knowledge. However, the PAI curriculum can provide value and equip students with understanding, behavior, attitudes, and habits of doing good

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from the existing material. In facing global challenges, PAI material not only discusses religious issues narrowly but also touches on social areas. So, it is necessary to strengthen Islamic religious education through innovative PAI materials that provide contextual insight.

There are at least four relevant PAI insight orientations: First, PAI has a national perspective. Second, PAI has a democratic perspective. Third, PAI has a human rights perspective. Fourth: PAI has a pluralist outlook (Amnur, 2017). In the long term, the four PAI insights are expected to be able to make a real contribution to reducing the moral, social, economic, and political problems of the Indonesian nation. In implementation in the field, PAI material should not only be presented about cognitive aspects. Still, it must be realized in students' psychomotor and affective aspects through examples or accurate and continuous demonstration of life and the creation of a religious atmosphere.

CONCLUSION

PAI's contextual approach, synergizing with other school subjects, positions it as a central element in the school curriculum. This makes PAI a critical factor in achieving national education goals. As a comprehensive and complex education, PAI addresses all educational dimensions, guiding students in acquiring religious knowledge and developing noble character (karakul karma).

This highlights the importance of placing PAI as the "core" subject within the national education curriculum. In practice, this requires an open understanding and application that encourages inclusive attitudes and behaviors, aligning PAI with other subjects or prioritizing it. Thus, making PAI the core subject in the school curriculum is essential, as it integrates knowledge, behavior, attitudes, and social interactions with a focus on moral action. Students are encouraged to acquire competence and develop the will and habits to apply Islamic teachings in their daily lives.

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