

Islamic Education Curriculum in Junior High Schools**Muhamad Nursyahid¹, Dety Mulyanti²**

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Education, Junior High
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The Islamic education curriculum in Junior High Schools (SMP) plays an important role in shaping students' character and spiritual values. This research aims to analyze the curriculum structure, teaching methods, and challenges in implementing the Islamic education curriculum in junior high schools. The research methodology used is qualitative with a case study approach in several junior high schools in Indonesia. Data was collected through interviews, observation and document analysis. The research results show that the Islamic education curriculum in junior high schools includes subjects such as the Al-Qur'an, Hadith, Fiqh, Aqidah, Akhlak, and the History of Islamic Culture. The teaching methods applied vary, from lectures, discussions, to religious practices. The main challenges faced are limited resources, teacher readiness, and support from the school and parents.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Historically and philosophically, education has colored and become a moral and ethical foundation in the process of forming national identity (Suradarma, 2018). Education is a variable that cannot be ignored in transforming knowledge, skills and moral values. This is in accordance with the function and objectives of education as stated in Law no. 20 concerning the National Education System of 2003 are stated in article 3, namely:

National education functions to develop abilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to make the nation's life more intelligent, aimed at developing the potential of students to become human beings who have faith and devotion to God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens (Limpo, 2018). All educational programs at various levels and types of education are designed to achieve these educational goals. The design of educational programs at each level and type of education is called the curriculum. Curriculum is the intention and hope expressed in the form of an educational plan or program to be implemented by teachers at school (Quintana, Pérez, Espinoza, Rios, & Paredes, 2018).

The curriculum is a tool to foster and develop students into human beings who have faith and devotion to God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens (Pamuji & Mulyadi, 2024).

Religious education is an integral part of national education, this is explained in the Law on the National Education System article 33 paragraph 2 that "the primary and secondary education curriculum must include, among other things, religious education", including Islamic religious education (Pumfrey & Verma, 2018). Islamic religious education is carried out to develop the potential for faith and devotion to Allah SWT as well as noble morals. According to previous research, religious education is a conscious effort made by

teachers to influence students in the context of forming religious people. Meanwhile, more specifically, the meaning of Islamic religious education expressed by the National Education Research and Development Research and Development Center (2001: 8), is as follows: Conscious and planned efforts in preparing students to know, understand, appreciate and have faith, piety and noble character in carrying out the teachings of the Islamic religion from The main source is the holy book Al-Qur'an and Hadith, through guidance, teaching and training activities, as well as the use of experience. Such Islamic religious education is to strengthen faith and devotion to Allah SWT and have noble morals. According to previous research, "the position of Islamic religious education at various levels in the national education system is to create students who are faithful and devout and have noble character" (Ismail, 2016).

This position becomes even more urgent at the junior high school level, where they are aged between 15-18 years, which is almost agreed by psychologists. This age group is in adolescence, with an unstable social and emotional situation and condition, while the demands they will face getting bigger and more complicated, namely the world of higher education or the world of work/society. Therefore, the formulation of the objectives of Islamic religious education in junior high schools is to: Increase students' belief, understanding, appreciation and experience of the Islamic religion so that they become Muslim people who believe in and are devoted to Allah SWT and have noble character in their personal, social, national and state life as well as to continue education at a higher level (Ebrahimi, Yusoff, & Rosman, 2021).

This goal illustrates awareness of the importance of education that provides concern for the formation of people who are faithful and devout and have noble character. This awareness is based on the belief that humans who believe and are devoted to Allah SWT and have noble morals will be able to create harmony in their personal, national and state lives (Ebrahimi, 2017). According to the Islamic concept, faith is a spiritual potential that must be actualized in the form of good deeds, resulting in a spiritual achievement called *taqwa*. Pious deeds involve the harmony and harmony of man's relationship with Allah and man's relationship with himself which forms personal piety; human relationships with each other that form social justice (social solidarity), as well as human relationships with the natural environment (Munjin & Windariyati, 2021).

The Islamic Religious Education curriculum and learning in junior high schools is designed to lead students to increase their faith and devotion to Allah SWT as well as the formation of noble morals (Biantoro, 2019). Faith and devotion as well as moral nobility as stated in the objectives can be achieved first if students have complete and correct knowledge and understanding of the teachings of the Islamic religion, so that they are internalized in the appreciation and awareness to implement them correctly (Budiyaarno, Triastuti, & Muchtarom, 2023). Thus, the PAI curriculum and learning that is designed should be able to deliver students to complete and balanced knowledge and understanding between mastery of knowledge about the Islamic religion and the ability to implement the teachings and develop the values of *akhlakul karimah* (Irham, 2017).

PAI teachers are one of the factors that influence the quality of Islamic religious education learning. According to previous research, teacher behavior is seen as a "source of influence", while learning behavior is an "effect" of various processes, behavior and interactive activities (Rifki, Sauri, Abdussalam, & Supriadi, 2022). Experts state that, no matter how good the (official) curriculum is, the results really depend on what the teacher does in the "actual curriculum" class. Another factor that influences the quality of PAI learning is students. Judging from the level of intellectual development, junior high school students are able to think logically about various abstract ideas. According to previous researchers, brain growth reaches perfection from the age of 12-20 years. In this way, PAI learning models and strategies in junior high schools are presented to facilitate the development of thinking abilities through the use of teaching methods that encourage students to actively ask questions, express opinions, or try out material, conduct dialogue and discussions. So that PAI learning contains meaning and function in their lives.

According to the Ministry of Religion (1999: 33), the conditions for learning Islamic religious education in public schools have characteristics such as: "(1) heterogeneous student abilities, (2) limited time/hours for Islamic religious lessons, (3) greater student interest in other subjects, and (4) facilities and infrastructure for Islamic religious education are still limited. From the description above, the paper that will be presented is limited to the problem of "How to develop Curriculum and learning in the Field of Islamic Religious Education in Junior High Schools (SMP)".

Theoretical basis

Islamic Education Curriculum

The Islamic education curriculum includes various aspects that aim to shape students' character in accordance with Islamic teachings. The main components of this curriculum include lessons on the Koran, Hadith, Fiqh, Aqidah, Akhlak, and the History of Islamic Culture (Fakhrurrozi, Minabari, Saguni, & Nadirah, 2023).

Learning methods

A learning model is a teaching plan that pays attention to certain learning patterns, this is in accordance with the opinion of Briggs (1978: 23), that a model is a set of procedures and sequences to realize a process. Thus, the definition of a learning model is a set of sequential procedures for carrying out the learning process.

Meanwhile, what is meant by learning is essentially a reciprocal, transactional communication process between teacher and student, student and student to achieve the goals that have been set (Elysia & Sarah, 2024). Transactional communication is a form of communication that can be accepted, understood and agreed upon by the parties involved in the learning process so that it shows acquisition, mastery, results, processes or functions. General learning mechanisms include:

- a Preparation phase; preparation of the learning process which involves preparing the design (plan) of teaching and learning activities to be held, which includes objectives, methods, media, sources, evaluation and student learning activities.
- b Implementation stage; the implementation of the learning process describes the dynamics of student learning activities which are guided and made dynamic by the teacher.
- c Evaluation stage; Evaluation is a report of the learning process, especially a report on student progress and learning achievement.
- d Reflection stage; Follow-up in the learning process can be divided into two things, namely promotion and rehabilitation. Promotion is a determination to move on and further increase student success. Rehabilitation is the improvement of deficiencies that have occurred in the learning process.
- e Types of models

Previous researchers revealed that there are four families of learning models, namely: (a) social interaction models; (b) information processing model; (c) personal development model; (d) behavior model. Based on theoretical studies conducted by the author on several learning models that can improve the quality of the learning process and outcomes of Islamic religious education, including:

Classroom Meeting Model

This model figure is William Glasser. According to Glasser in (Moejiono (1992: 155), schools are generally successful in fostering scientific behavior, however there are times when schools fail to foster warm interpersonal relationships. Interpersonal warmth is beneficial for successful learning, so that schools can foster warm interpersonal relationships, it is required:

- 1) Teachers have a deep sense of involvement;
- 2) Teachers and students must have the courage to face reality, and dare to reject irresponsible behavior;
- 3) Students want to learn better ways to behave.
- 4) The face-to-face meeting model is a model that is useful for fostering warm interpersonal relationships.

Cooperative Learning Model

This model was developed by Robert E. Slavin. This model divides students into discussion groups, where one group consists of 4 or 5 people. This model will open a developing learning atmosphere, stimulate and increase student motivation in learning.

This model offers students activeness and order in the learning process. The weakness of this model is that it focuses on how to activate students and be able to work together, but does not discuss the learning material so that the organization of the material is not a concern, it still prioritizes mastering the material separately, so learning cannot provide meaning for the learning participants. In addition, learning with separate material does not give students the opportunity to understand the problem as a whole. Meanwhile PAI learning requires complete understanding and abilities and can provide meaning so that awareness and motivation arises to practice religious teachings in everyday life.

Integrated Learning Model

The integrated learning model is essentially a learning system that presents learning materials in an overall form and eliminates the boundaries between various subjects/sub T subjects. Integrated learning allows students, both individually and in groups, to actively seek, explore and discover scientific concepts and principles holistically and authentically (Depdikbud, 1996: 3). According to Su'ud (1997), the implementation of an integrated curriculum is an effective vehicle for helping students to grow and develop naturally as complete individuals in the context of everyday life.

The integrated learning approach is intended to organize study materials thematically, adhering to the principles of simplicity, communicative meaningfulness, contextual reasonableness, flexibility (according to local conditions and needs), integration and continuity of various life skills. With the principles of organizing learning that are meaningful, authentic, holistic, communicative, reasonable and flexible, it allows students to be more motivated to actively master, understand and appreciate it.

Integrated learning plans explicitly formulate learning objectives. The impact of the teaching objectives and their accompaniments can be directly seen in the formulation of these objectives. The impact of the accompaniment will generally result in changes in the development of attitudes and abilities to think logically, creatively, predictively and imaginatively.

Characteristics

Several characteristics of integrated learning were put forward by Collin (1991), Miller (1990), the PGSD and S2 integrated learning development team (1997), whose characteristics can be summarized as follows:

- a Holistic (comprehensive); This means that a phenomenon that is the center of attention in integrated learning is observed and studied from several scientific disciplines at once, not from a compartmentalized perspective. This is intended to train students to understand a phenomenon from all sides.
- b Meaningful; This means that meaningfulness in communication is a link between the knowledge that students have and the material being studied, so that the learning process is felt to be more meaningful for students. Real references to various concepts and their relationships with other concepts will add to the meaningfulness of the concepts studied, so that in the end students are able to apply their learning gains to solve real problems in their lives.
- c Authentic; This means that students directly understand the concepts and principles they want to learn, through interactions and learning from facts and events. In this way, the information and knowledge obtained by students becomes more authentic.
- d Active; This means that students are actively involved in the learning process, either individually or in groups. In integrated learning, students' desires, interests and abilities are considered, so that students are motivated to seek information and knowledge in understanding the concepts they are studying.

- e Simplicity; The material is presented in a simple, meaningful and easy to understand manner, contextually reasonable, flexible (according to local conditions and needs), integrated, and there is continuity of various life skills.
- f Experience; This means that integrated learning provides an environment that allows students to learn naturally, according to the level of development of students who are always experiencing the process and are not isolated from the natural environment.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data was collected through interviews with teachers and students, observation of the learning process, and analysis of curriculum documents and teaching materials. The research subjects were several junior high schools in Indonesia that implemented an Islamic education curriculum.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Islamic Education Curriculum Structure

The structure of the Islamic education curriculum in SMP (Junior High School) is usually designed to provide comprehensive knowledge of the Islamic religion to students. This curriculum covers several main subjects related to Islamic religious education. The following is an explanation of the general structure of the Islamic education curriculum in junior high schools:

1. Al-Qur'an and Hadith

Material: Reading, memorizing and understanding the verses of the Koran and Hadith. Objective: Develop skills in reading the Koran with correct recitation, as well as understanding the content and messages in the verses studied.

2. Aqidah (Faith)

Material: Basics of faith in Islam, such as the pillars of faith (belief in Allah, angels, books, messengers, the Day of Judgment, and destiny). Objective: Strengthen students' faith in the basic teachings of Islam.

3. Fiqh (Islamic Law)

Material: Rules and procedures for worship, such as prayer, fasting, zakat and Hajj, as well as muamalah laws (social and economic interactions). Goal: Equip students with practical knowledge about how to carry out worship and interact in accordance with Islamic law.

4. Morals (Ethics)

Material: Good Islamic values and behavior, such as honesty, patience, humility and mutual help. Objective: Instill moral and ethical values in accordance with Islamic teachings in students' daily lives.

5. History of Islamic Culture (SKI)

Material: History of the development of Islam from the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, his companions, to Islamic civilization in various parts of the world. Objective: Understand the development of Islamic history and learn lessons from important events in Islamic history.

6. Arabic

The basics of the Arabic language, including grammar (nahwu and sharaf), vocabulary, and basic conversation. Objective: To provide basic skills in reading, writing and understanding Arabic, the language of the Quran and Hadith?

Teaching Methods

The teaching methods applied in junior high schools are varied, including lectures, group discussions, religious practices, and the use of interactive learning media. Teachers strive to make lessons more interesting and relevant to students' daily lives.

Development of learning models

1. Relevance of the integrated learning model with PAI

The integrated concept in Islamic religious education includes: (a) process integration, (b) material integration, (c) implementation integration, (d) development areas.

According to the Indonesian Ministry of Religion (1999: 59), the development of integrated Islamic religious education is as follows:

- a. Institutional integration, namely the establishment of cooperative relationships between schools, families and communities to complement each other and take responsibility for the implementation of Islamic religious education in schools which is coordinated by Islamic Religious Teacher Education.
- b. Material integration, namely so that subjects other than Islamic religious education are able to support the achievement of educational goals in the context of achieving national education goals.
- c. Regional integration of Islamic religious education development, which includes integration between cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects.
- d. Integration of the educational process, namely harmony between teaching, guidance and training activities.
- e. Staff integration, namely the need for responsible cooperation between Islamic religious education teachers and the School Principal in order to achieve the goals of Islamic religious education.

2. Development stages

Previous researchers stated that the components of integrated learning include: planning, implementation and assessment. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education and Culture (1996: 16) stated that the integrated learning process includes the stages of planning, implementation and culmination.

- a. Planning stage;
 - 1) Teachers and researchers develop concepts and abilities that students must have on each subject in the field of study of Islamic religious education which includes: Aqidah/tauhid, morals, al-Qur'an, hadith, guidance on worship, sharia and Islamic history according to the applicable GBPP.
 - 2) Teachers and researchers examine the concepts, abilities, skills and attitudes that students must have on a subject and look for connections with concepts, abilities, skills and attitudes on other subjects in the class subject matter.
 - 3) Teachers and researchers determine the learning theme for each lesson unit.
 - 4) Teachers and researchers develop integrated learning plans which include goal setting, materials, learning processes and evaluation.
- b. Implementation stage;

At the implementation stage of integrated learning, the activities of teachers and researchers include: religious teachers carrying out teaching and learning activities in accordance with the integrated learning design. Learning activities in the classroom include preliminary activities, core activities and evaluation.

Next, the activity presents the lesson material with group discussions and class discussions. Next are evaluation and follow-up activities by carrying out formative assessments and providing extra assignments to improve and develop student learning outcomes.

3. Culmination stage;

This stage displays the results and integrated learning process at each learning meeting. At this stage, the Islamic religious education subject teacher and researchers identify various problems that arise at each meeting and discuss and look for alternative solutions, which will be used as input to improve the integrated learning design and its implementation at the next meeting.

In general, planning integrated learning goes through the following steps:

- a Determine or choose a central theme
- b Identify the concept that will be discussed.
- c Choose appropriate learning activities
- d Prepare a systematic schedule of activities.
- e Development evaluation

The development of an integrated model in the field of Islamic religious education studies uses themes by presenting them in an integrated manner with elements of aqidah, morals, fiqh and dates.

Implementation Challenges

The implementation of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in Junior High Schools (SMP) faces various challenges that affect the effectiveness of teaching and students' understanding of religious material. Some of the main challenges in implementing the PAI curriculum in junior high schools include:

1. Resource Limitations
 - a) Limited Teachers: The availability of teachers who have qualifications and competence in teaching PAI is still lacking, especially in remote areas.
 - b) Facilities and Teaching Materials: Lack of textbooks, learning media, and other supporting facilities such as adequate classrooms and teaching aids.
2. Solid Curriculum
 - a) Diverse Material: The PAI curriculum covers various aspects of religion such as aqidah, worship, morals, and Islamic history, which require time and a special approach to be taught effectively.
 - b) Integration with Other Subjects: Difficulty in integrating PAI with other subjects so as to create holistic and non-fragmented learning.
3. Learning methods
 - a) Conventional Methods: Many teachers still use conventional learning methods such as lectures, which are less effective in actively involving students.
 - b) Learning Innovation: Limitations in adopting innovative and interactive learning methods such as the use of technology, project-based learning, etc.
4. Evaluation and Assessment
 - a) Less Comprehensive Assessment: An evaluation system that focuses more on cognitive aspects, while less attention is paid to affective and psychomotor aspects.
 - b) Difficulties in Measuring Understanding: Challenges in measuring students' understanding of PAI material in depth, especially related to the application of religious values in everyday life.
5. School and Family Environment Support
 - a) Role of Parents: Lack of support from parents in guiding their children to apply the religious values learned at school.
 - b) School Environment: The school environment is not conducive to supporting PAI teaching, for example, the lack of extracurricular activities that support the development of religious values.
6. Regulations and Policies
 - a) Policy Implementation: Implementation of government policies regarding religious education is sometimes inconsistent in the field.
 - b) Changing Curriculum: Frequent curriculum changes mean that teachers and students have to adapt quickly, which can disrupt the smooth teaching and learning process.
7. Solutions to Consider:
 - 1) Improving Teacher Quality: Training and professional development program for PAI teachers to increase competency and creativity in teaching.
 - 2) Development of Media and Learning Resources: Procurement of books, teaching aids and interesting and interactive learning media.
 - 3) Active Learning Methods: Adopt learning methods that are more varied and involve students actively, such as group discussions, simulations, and project-based learning.
 - 4) Community Support: Increasing parental and community involvement in religious education through activities that support PAI values.
 - 5) Competency Based Evaluation: Developing a comprehensive assessment system covering cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects.

CONCLUSION

From the descriptions above, it can be concluded that the Islamic Religious Education study curriculum in junior high schools covers several important aspects. The definition of Islamic religious education in public schools is a conscious effort to prepare students to believe, understand, appreciate and practice the Islamic religion through guidance, teaching and/or training activities with respect for other religions for the sake of national unity. The aim of Islamic religious education in general is to form students who have faith and devotion to Allah SWT and have noble morals, with the teaching function to instill faith and devotion and familiarize students with noble morals. The scope of Islamic religious teaching in the public school program structure includes seven elements: Al-Qur'an, Hadith, Faith, Morals, Worship Guidance, Sharia/fiqh, and Islamic History, based on the 1999 Curriculum. Curriculum analysis involves evaluating the content of the PAI curriculum at the level SMP listed in GBPP 1994. The learning model is a set of sequential procedures for carrying out the learning process, which is essentially a reciprocal communication process between teachers and students and between students to achieve the set goals. The development of an integrated learning model in Islamic religious education includes integration of processes, materials, and implementation and development areas. Development evaluation is carried out on learning processes and outcomes using test and non-test techniques, as well as observing student activities individually and in groups at each stage of activity.

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