

## Development of Islamic Religious Education Curriculum Based on Research and Local Wisdom

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### ABSTRACT

The curriculum is a central component of educational implementation, serving as a guide for the learning process. However, the existing Islamic Religious Education curriculum remains general and normative and has not yet fully addressed society's real needs and global challenges. This article proposes an alternative approach to developing an Islamic Religious Education curriculum, grounded in research and local wisdom, as a strategic effort to enhance its relevance, contextualization, and applicability to students' lives. This study employs a library research method by analyzing relevant literature, journals, and documents. The findings indicate that a research-based curriculum can present learning grounded in data, empirical evidence, and real-world problem-solving. Meanwhile, the integration of local wisdom, which constitutes an essential part of local community needs, enables the curriculum to be more attuned to the culture, potential, and challenges of the surrounding community, thereby allowing Islamic values to be internalized more effectively and meaningfully. An Islamic Religious Education curriculum grounded in research and local wisdom serves not only as a learning guide but also as an instrument for shaping a religiously critical, moderate, and broad-minded generation without compromising Islamic and national identity. Therefore, developing an Islamic Religious Education curriculum grounded in research and local wisdom is crucial to improving educational quality and strengthening community empowerment in the modern era.

**Keywords:** Islamic Religious Education Curriculum, Research, Local Wisdom

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the main components of educational implementation is the curriculum. The curriculum serves as a guideline for educational implementation. This is in line with the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System (Sisdiknas), which states that the curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding the objectives, content, lesson materials, and methods used as guidelines in the implementation of learning activities to achieve specific educational goals. According to Fauzan, the curriculum is an educational program comprising various teaching materials and learning experiences, systematically planned and designed in accordance with applicable norms. The curriculum serves as a guide for educators and students in the learning process, helping them achieve educational goals. (Fauzan, 2016). Thus, all parties involved in education must be grounded in the established curriculum to achieve educational goals.

Islamic Religious Education is an educational program that aims to instill Islamic values through learning and coaching, enabling students to understand and practice Islamic teachings in daily life. (Ismail, 2020). Islamic religious education also plays a strategic role in shaping students' character, morals, and spirituality, enabling them to face the challenges of modern life while adhering to Islamic and national values. From the perspectives outlined above, it can be concluded that the Islamic religious education curriculum comprises plans, teaching materials, and learning experiences that are systematically prepared in accordance with applicable norms to instill Islamic values through instruction and coaching. This curriculum serves as a guideline for shaping students' knowledge, character, morals, and spirituality, enabling them to understand and practice Islamic teachings and to face the challenges of modern life while adhering to religious and national values.

In practice, the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum remains general and normative, and has not fully addressed the needs of the community and the socio-religious dynamics of students. This condition creates a gap between the learning materials and the cultural, social, and moral realities they face in the era of globalization. Challenges such as moral degradation, intolerance, radicalism, and global cultural penetration demand a more responsive curriculum reform based on scientific studies (Marwiji, 2025).

In this context, the preparation of the PAI curriculum requires a strong research foundation and a deep understanding of local wisdom as part of the social character of a multicultural Indonesian society. (Mar'atus Sholikhah et al., 2025). The research-based approach enables mapping of the community's potential, challenges, and needs. At the same time, the integration of local wisdom makes the curriculum more contextual and better adapted to students' cultural values. Research in the literature indicates that a curriculum that integrates research and local wisdom can enrich learning strategies and strengthen the internalization of Islamic values in a more grounded manner.

Thus, this article aims to conceptually examine the development of the PAI curriculum, drawing on research and local wisdom, through a literature review. The main goal is to provide a relevant, contextual, and applicable framework of thought to strengthen students' Islamic character. As a literature review, this article synthesizes theories, prior research findings, and academic documents to formulate a development direction for the PAI curriculum that aligns with contemporary trends and is rooted in local cultural values.

## **METHOD**

This research employs a library-based approach, whereby the entire analysis is grounded in the available literature. The main characteristic of this method is that the researcher does not interact directly with field data or empirical events but instead examines ready-to-use written

sources, such as books, journals, documents, and other secondary data. Mendes, Wohlin, Felizardo, and Kalinowski explain that literature research involves reviewing and synthesizing literature relevant to the topic under study. A literature search can draw on a variety of academic references without requiring direct field observation. **(Rizaldy Fatha Pringgar and Bambang Sujatmiko, 2020)**. This approach was chosen because the study focuses on the conceptual analysis of the preparation of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum, drawing on research and local wisdom.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Definition of Islamic Religious Education Curriculum**

The curriculum is an important element that underpins the implementation of the educational process in schools. The word "curriculum" derives from the Latin "curriculae," meaning "the distance a runner must travel." According to Tarihoran, as quoted in Hendro Widodo's PAI Curriculum Development, if this meaning is applied to education, "runner" can be analogous to students who play the role of subjects. If runners must cover a certain distance, students must also follow a specific process or set of rules. Both are oriented toward achieving goals. Meanwhile, Fujiawati, as quoted in Hendro Widodo's PAI Curriculum Development, interpreted the curriculum as the period of time students must complete to obtain a diploma. (Widodo, 2023).

In traditional (narrow) terms, the curriculum is a collection of fields of study that must be studied and mastered by students intellectually (cognitively) as a condition for moving up or obtaining a graduation diploma. Meanwhile, in Modern (Broad) terms the curriculum is the overall experience experienced by students, both in the classroom through structured activities, outside the classroom such as in the yard, practice room, laboratory, and library, and outside school through visits to museums, tourist attractions, or other places that have a mission and learning objectives that are always within the responsibility of the school (Hamdan, 2014).

The Islamic religious education curriculum comprises Islamic educational materials, including activities, knowledge, and experiences, that are intentionally and systematically provided to students to achieve the goals of Islamic education. In other words, the Islamic education curriculum encompasses all activities, knowledge, and experiences that are deliberately and systematically conveyed by educators to students to achieve the goals of Islamic education (Noorzanah, 2017). Meanwhile, according to Anjar Mahmudin et al., the Islamic education curriculum comprises Islamic educational materials, including activities, knowledge, and experiences, that are intentionally and regularly provided to students to achieve the goals of Islamic education (Anjar Mahmudin et al., 2024). Meanwhile, the purpose of Islamic religious education is to cultivate students who are integrity-driven, adaptable to contemporary contexts,

positively influence their environment, and exhibit expected behavior through knowledge, understanding, and good attitudes (Irwan Efendi<sup>1</sup>, Sri Murhayati<sup>2</sup>, 2022). From some of the above understandings, it can be concluded that the Islamic religious education curriculum is a series of materials that include activities, knowledge, and experiences that are consciously, planned, and systematically given by educators to students, to form individuals with integrity, able to adapt to the times, provide a positive influence on the environment, and display behavior that is in accordance with the values of Islamic teachings through mastery knowledge, understanding, and good attitude.

### **Research-Based Islamic Religious Education Curriculum**

The world of education has undergone a significant transformation, marked by technological developments, social dynamics, ethical issues, and the complexity of global challenges that shape the needs and demands of Islamic education. In the context of these changes, schools are required to adapt so that the curriculum remains relevant and able to meet students' needs in the contemporary era. One approach that has emerged in response to this challenge is the development of a research-based Islamic education curriculum. This approach emphasizes the use of scientific evidence, empirical data, and research methods in the design and implementation of the curriculum, thereby making Islamic education more adaptive and responsive to social change and current challenges, without abandoning the core values of Islamic teachings.

Research is a contextual, authentic, problem-solving-oriented learning process, carried out cooperatively with an inquiry approach through direct practical activities (*Hands-on*), as well as emphasizing the development of thinking skills. (Winardi, 2024). The development of the Islamic religious education curriculum is an ongoing process of refinement and adaptation to meet students' needs, contemporary conditions, societal demands, and national education policies. According to Hendro Widodo, the development of the Islamic religious education curriculum is a process of planning learning experiences that aims to direct students toward desired changes and to evaluate the extent of change that occurs in students. (Widodo, 2023).

If implemented in education, this research-based Islamic religious education is a learning process that employs authentic strategies, problem-solving, cooperative learning, contextual learning, and inquiry approaches. This learning integrates research activities into the Islamic religious education process to build knowledge through the stages of formulating problems, collecting data, analyzing, drawing conclusions, and compiling reports (Rahman, 2023). The Islamic education curriculum is prepared based on Islamic teachings and values and developed in line with advances in science and technology. The purpose of developing this research-based Islamic religious education curriculum is to foster a research culture within the religious field in the school environment, as evidenced by achievements at the national and international levels. This is achieved by providing briefings on the fundamentals of religious research for students and

teachers, as well as by establishing research collaborations with universities, both domestically and abroad (Aliva Humairah Br. Ginting, 2021).

The development of a research-based Islamic education curriculum cannot be undertaken carelessly; it must be grounded in established principles to ensure clear direction and goals. These principles underpin the design, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum, ensuring that the resulting curriculum makes a meaningful contribution to improving educational quality. With these principles, the Islamic education curriculum not only functions as a guideline for the learning process but also as a means to address societal needs, scientific development, and global challenges. Therefore, the development of a research-based Islamic religious education curriculum must always pay attention to the following principles:

1. The principle based on Islam, namely, the curriculum must be prepared based on Islamic teachings and values, which include philosophy, goals, content, learning methods, approaches in treatment, and relationships that apply in educational institutions.
2. The principle is goal-oriented, that is, all activities in the curriculum are directed to achieve predetermined goals.
3. The principle of relevance, namely that the curriculum must be in accordance with the needs and demands of the community, as well as in line with the development of science and technology.
4. The principle of flexibility, namely, the curriculum must be able to adapt to the needs and conditions of the school.
5. The principle of efficiency, namely, the curriculum must be designed efficiently so that it can support the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process, both for educators and students.
6. The principle of dynamism, namely, the curriculum must be dynamic so that it can follow the development of science and social change.
7. The principle of balance, namely, the curriculum must be able to develop students' attitudes, potentials, and abilities in harmony.
8. The principle of integrity, namely the curriculum, must have integration, both between subjects and between the curriculum and research activities

The development of a research-based Islamic education curriculum requires a planned sequence of stages to address students' needs while aligning with advances in science and technology. The stages of developing the research-based PAI curriculum are as follows:

1. Identify topics to be developed, both in the fields of general science, religious science, and technology.
2. Manage human resources involved in curriculum development, including teachers, students, and school leaders.

3. Design the learning cycle by applying research-based methods, such as classroom action research (PTK) and *lesson study*.
4. Carry out research activities to produce findings that are useful for the development of science and technology, through the guidance of research competitions, seminars, and exhibitions of research results.
5. Analyzing and utilizing research results as a basis for the development of the Islamic religious education curriculum
6. Develop cooperation with educational institutions and universities, both domestically and abroad, to realize innovative and inclusive research programs.
7. Develop a research-based religious learning program, which includes human resource management, learning cycle design, and research implementation.
8. Developing students' critical and creative thinking skills through a research-based approach, to create sustainable research skills (Murniati, 2023).

With these stages, the development of a research-based PAI curriculum is expected to strengthen the quality of education in schools while forming religious, critical, creative, and competitive students in the global era.

In developing the Islamic education curriculum in research-based schools, various factors affect its success. These factors can take the form of supporting factors that facilitate implementation of the curriculum and inhibiting factors that impede it. Understanding these two aspects is important for ensuring that curriculum development is conducted more effectively, relevantly, and sustainably. The supporting and inhibiting factors in the research-based pie curriculum development process are as follows:

1. Supporting Factors
  - a. There is support from the head of the madrasah and related institutions.
  - b. The availability of quality educator human resources, namely teachers and education personnel who are professional and experienced, so that they can make a significant contribution to the development of research-based curriculum.
  - c. There is motivation and willingness to learn from students.
  - d. The availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure, such as laboratories, classrooms, and other supporting facilities, makes it easier for madrasahs to develop research-based curricula.
  - e. Collaboration with educational institutions and universities, which allows schools to develop research programs more inclusively and innovatively.
2. Inhibiting Factors
  - a. Limited understanding of research concepts, so the application has not run optimally.

- b. The amount of money needed, because madrasas with limited financial support will experience difficulties in implementing research-based curriculum and development programs.
- c. Limited time that teachers and students have in carrying out research activities.
- d. Lack of support from institutions, teachers, and students, as well as limited resources available (Aliva Humairah Br. Gintingga, 2021).

Thus, the success of developing the PAI curriculum in research-based madrasas is primarily determined by the ability to optimize supportive factors and overcome inhibiting factors. This effort is expected to produce a curriculum that not only aligns with the needs of students and the community but also strengthens the quality of Islamic education in the modern era.

### **Islamic Religious Education Curriculum Based on Local Needs**

Indonesia has local strengths that can serve as the basis for developing a curriculum relevant to students, society, and the nation. The curriculum, grounded in local needs, emphasizes the use of regional assets, including culture, local wisdom, human resources, language, environment, and technological developments within the community. Thus, the curriculum is expected to develop student competencies aligned with the needs of the surrounding environment while strengthening the nation's identity. Local wisdom is a collection of values, norms, beliefs, and practices that arise from people's adaptation to social, cultural, and natural environments. This wisdom is passed down from generation to generation and is integral to the community's identity. In the context of education, local wisdom can serve as a source of contextually relevant value because it reflects the realities of students' daily lives. From an Islamic perspective, local wisdom is not only a cultural tradition but also an acceptable custom, provided it does not contradict the basic principles of sharia. Therefore, integrating local wisdom into Islamic education has the potential to be a strategic means of instilling Islamic values in a more contextual, lively, and grounded way. (Shawn, 2025).

According to Qalam, quoted in the Journal by Hasyim As'ari, the integration of local wisdom in the Islamic Religious Education curriculum is a strategic step to strengthen the relevance, attractiveness, and effectiveness of learning. Through this approach, students not only gain a theoretical understanding of Islamic teachings but also connect emotionally and practically with the values they embody. The form of integration of local wisdom in learning Islamic education can be realized through several aspects as follows:

#### **1. Utilization of Local Stories**

Folklore and regional legends that convey moral values and local wisdom can be an effective medium for conveying Islamic concepts. For example, to teach honesty and integrity, teachers can use local stories that emphasize the importance of those values. Thus,

students not only understand honesty in the abstract but also see its application in social reality.

2. Use of Traditional Songs

Traditional songs that convey moral messages or religious values can be used to strengthen students' understanding of Islamic teachings. Through singing, religious messages are more easily absorbed and internalized in daily life. In addition, traditional songs also play a role in fostering a sense of togetherness and religious spirit among students.

3. Parables from Everyday Life

The use of analogies drawn from everyday experiences can help students understand Islamic teachings more deeply. For example, the concept of God's love for humanity can be illustrated by the parable of a mother's love for her child. This approach facilitates learners' ability to relate abstract concepts to real-world experiences.

4. Practical Activities Based on Local Wisdom

The integration of local wisdom can also be achieved through practical measures that are consistent with Islamic teachings. For example, learning about cleanliness and health can be realized through cleaning the school or mosque environment. Similarly, gotong royong activities or processing agricultural products can be a means of learning about cooperation, responsibility, and social concern (As'ari, 2024).

By integrating local wisdom into Islamic religious education, students are expected to develop a more comprehensive understanding and practical skills for implementing Islamic teachings in daily life.

The Islamic Religious Education curriculum is, in essence, flexible and can be developed to meet students' needs and characteristics. The enrichment of material through the local context provides an opportunity for students to understand religious teachings more closely in relation to the realities of daily life. According to Maulana, quoted in the Journal by Abd. Rahman Saleh, this approach introduces a new dimension to religious learning, as the material is associated with local narratives, such as the history of the spread of Islam in the area, legends with religious nuances, and the community's spiritual traditions, among others. (Saleh et al., 2025). The stages of developing the Islamic education curriculum based on local wisdom are as follows:

1. Local needs analysis

Analysis of local needs, namely by identifying relevant local wisdom values and determining how to integrate them into the PAI curriculum.

2. Study of culture and tradition

To study in depth the local culture and traditions. The values must truly reflect the character and principles embraced by the local community. Community involvement in this

process is also necessary to ensure that the resulting curriculum accurately reflects local wisdom.

3. Teacher training

Teacher training is essential to the successful implementation of a curriculum grounded in local wisdom. PAI teachers need to receive specialized briefings, including a deep understanding of local wisdom and skills, to integrate them into learning. Training can be done through workshops, seminars, or collaboration with local practitioners and cultural experts.

4. Development of teaching materials

Designing teaching materials that reflect the values of local wisdom. These teaching materials, which may take the form of textbooks, modules, or digital media, must be organized to enable comprehensive exploration and application of the values of local wisdom.

5. Organizing learning

Organizing learning is one of the most important steps, so that local wisdom is integrated in every aspect of the teaching and learning process. Learning strategies need to be designed in an interactive and participatory manner, for example, through community-based projects, field studies, or cultural activities that can bring students closer to the values of local wisdom.

6. Evaluation and assessment

Evaluations and assessments are designed to measure the extent to which students understand local wisdom and PAI values. Assessment instruments must be objective and administered periodically to evaluate the effectiveness of applying local wisdom and to adjust it to meet learning needs better.

7. Collaboration with local communities

An important aspect in the development of a curriculum grounded in local wisdom. Close relationships with local communities strengthen the learning process by involving community leaders, cultural practitioners, and parents in various educational activities and school projects. Thus, the PAI curriculum based on local wisdom not only reflects local cultural values, but also becomes a means to strengthen the relationship between the school and the community (Husni, 2024).

A curriculum grounded in local wisdom and needs aims to develop education rooted in the local community, making it more relevant to students' lives. A curriculum based on local wisdom emphasizes the values, traditions, cultures, and norms of society. In contrast, a curriculum based on local needs focuses more on the region's potential, problems, and real demands, including social, economic, environmental, and resource conditions. The two are closely related: local wisdom can inform the articulation of local needs, preserving deep-rooted cultural values

while addressing the challenges of modern life. In addition, both share similar orientations: contextualizing education, empowering the community, fostering character and skills, and positioning schools as centers of community development that benefit students' real lives.

The preparation of a curriculum based on local needs involves planning and developing a curriculum tailored to the region's potential, characteristics, challenges, and actual needs. This curriculum is not only aligned with national standards but also designed to be relevant to students' social, cultural, economic, and environmental contexts. In the context of education in Indonesia, these local needs are addressed through local content as an implementation mechanism at the level of educational units. Local content is a practical instrument for translating curricula aligned with local needs into classroom learning and school programs. The form may take the form of special subjects, such as regional languages, local arts and culture, or regional skills. It can also be integrated into other subjects and habituation activities. Thus, local content serves as a means of connecting the national curriculum to regional needs, making education more contextual, adaptive, and meaningful for students in their environment.

According to E. Mulyasa, the local content curriculum is understood as a set of planning and arrangements that include objectives, content, and learning materials designed to provide opportunities for students to develop their knowledge and competencies in accordance with the characteristics and needs of the environment. (Mulyasa, 2011). The purpose of developing the local content curriculum is to equip students with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors necessary to gain broad, in-depth insight into environmental conditions and community needs. (Basari, 2014).

## **CONCLUSION**

The development of an Islamic Religious Education curriculum grounded in research and local wisdom is a strategic step toward making learning more relevant, contextual, and attuned to students' lived realities. A research-based approach enables the curriculum to be developed from data, scientific studies, and objective analysis, thereby providing solutions to real problems in the learning process. Meanwhile, the integration of local wisdom makes the curriculum more attuned to the culture, potential, and characteristics of the local community, thereby enabling Islamic values to be internalized more effectively and to be grounded in local contexts. Thus, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum, grounded in research and local wisdom, not only serves as a learning guideline but also as a means of cultivating a generation that is religious, critical, characterful, and socially sensitive. This curriculum is expected to equip students to adhere to Islamic and national values while being ready to face the challenges of the times.

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