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RECONSTRUCTING ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT: DEVELOPING A RELIGIOUS LITERACY AND CHARACTER FORMATION FRAMEWORK AT SMP AL-MUHAMMAD CEPU

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ABSTRAK

Manajemen kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) berperan strategis dalam mengintegrasikan pengetahuan keagamaan, literasi keagamaan, dan pembentukan karakter peserta didik. Namun, keterpaduan antara fungsi perencanaan, pengorganisasian, pelaksanaan, supervisi, dan evaluasi masih memerlukan penguatan agar tujuan tersebut dapat diwujudkan secara sistematis. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis praktik manajemen kurikulum PAI, mengidentifikasi kesenjangan dalam pelaksanaannya, dan merumuskan kerangka rekonstruksi untuk memperkuat literasi keagamaan dan pembentukan karakter di SMP Al-Muhammad Cepu. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semiterstruktur, observasi kegiatan pendidikan terkait PAI, dan analisis dokumen kurikulum serta pembelajaran. Informan penelitian berjumlah tujuh orang, terdiri atas satu guru PAI, satu kepala sekolah, dan lima orang tua yang dipilih secara purposif. Analisis data dilakukan secara tematik melalui pengodean, kategorisasi, interpretasi, dan triangulasi sumber serta teknik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perencanaan kurikulum telah mengintegrasikan pengetahuan keagamaan dan tujuan pembentukan karakter melalui koordinasi kepala sekolah dan guru PAI. Namun, tujuan literasi keagamaan belum dirumuskan secara eksplisit dalam kompetensi pembelajaran. Pelaksanaan dan supervisi telah mendukung pembelajaran keagamaan, tetapi keterpaduan antara tujuan pembelajaran, praktik supervisi, dan asesmen belum optimal. Selain itu, evaluasi masih perlu diperluas melampaui capaian kognitif dengan memperhatikan kemampuan interpretasi, penalaran etis, refleksi, dan perilaku peserta didik. Penelitian ini menghasilkan kerangka rekonstruksi manajemen kurikulum PAI yang mengintegrasikan lima fungsi manajemen dengan pengembangan literasi keagamaan, penalaran etis, pembelajaran reflektif, dan pembentukan karakter melalui siklus evaluasi dan perbaikan kurikulum berkelanjutan..

Keywords:
Islamic Religious Education;
Curriculum Management;
Religious Literacy.
Character Formation.

ABSTRACTS

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum management plays a strategic role in integrating religious knowledge, religious literacy, and students' character formation. However, the integration of planning, organization, implementation, supervision, and evaluation requires further strengthening to ensure the systematic achievement of these educational objectives. This study aims to analyze existing IRE curriculum management practices, identify implementation gaps, and formulate a reconstruction framework to strengthen religious literacy and character formation at SMP Al-Muhammad Cepu. This research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations of IRE-related educational activities, and analysis of curriculum and instructional documents. The study involved seven purposively selected informants: one IRE teacher, one school principal, and five parents. Data were analyzed thematically through coding, categorization, interpretation, and triangulation of sources and techniques. The findings reveal that curriculum planning has incorporated religious knowledge and character formation objectives through coordination between the principal and the IRE teacher. However, religious literacy has not been explicitly formulated as a learning competency. Although implementation and supervision support religious learning, alignment among learning objectives, supervisory practices, and assessment remains insufficient. Furthermore, evaluation needs to extend beyond cognitive achievement to include students' interpretive abilities, ethical reasoning, reflection, and behavior. This study proposes a reconstructed IRE curriculum management framework that integrates five managerial functions with religious literacy, ethical reasoning, reflective learning, and character formation through a continuous cycle of evaluation and curriculum improvement.

A. INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) occupies an important position in Indonesian schools because its educational function extends beyond the transmission of religious knowledge to the development of religious understanding, ethical judgment, and character. In contemporary educational settings, students encounter religious teachings and interpretations through formal instruction, family environments, peer interactions, and digital media. These conditions require students to do more than memorize religious concepts or reproduce normative statements. They need to understand religious knowledge, interpret its meaning, assess its relevance to particular situations, and translate Islamic values into responsible conduct. Recent studies on PAI have increasingly emphasized contextual, reflective, student-centered, and competency-oriented learning, particularly in relation to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum (Sukmawati & Istanto, 2025). Research on religious character education also identifies the importance of teacher competence, contextual learning, reflective practices, and systematic evaluation in connecting religious instruction with students' attitudes and behaviour (Satria & Dinata, 2025). However, the presence of religious values in curriculum documents does not automatically ensure that students develop the ability to interpret religious teachings and apply them in everyday situations. This distinction raises an important question concerning how schools manage PAI curricula so that religious knowledge can develop into meaningful religious literacy and character formation.

Curriculum management provides an institutional basis for addressing this question. Curriculum should not be understood merely as a collection of subject content, lesson plans, or instructional documents. It functions as an integrated system that connects educational objectives, organizational responsibilities, learning implementation, supervision, assessment, and institutional improvement. From the perspective of Islamic Education Management (MPI), these functions form an interconnected management cycle. Planning establishes educational priorities and expected competencies. Organization distributes responsibilities and resources among school leaders, teachers, and other educational actors. Implementation translates curriculum objectives into learning experiences. Supervision examines the consistency between planned objectives and instructional practices. Evaluation identifies the extent to which educational processes achieve their intended outcomes and provides a basis for subsequent improvement. Recent studies of Islamic education curriculum management have highlighted the importance of planning, teacher readiness, implementation, and evaluation in translating curriculum policies into institutional practices (Mila & Zuhdi, 2025; Selma et al., 2024) . Other studies have examined the roles of leadership, school culture, and institutional coordination in supporting Islamic education and character development (Mappasanda et al., 2025; Mursalim et al., 2025). These studies establish the importance of managerial coordination, but their primary analytical emphasis tends to concern curriculum implementation, institutional effectiveness, or character education. Less attention has been given to how the complete management cycle can explicitly organize religious literacy, ethical reasoning, reflective learning, and character formation as interconnected educational outcomes. This study addresses that issue by examining curriculum management as the institutional mechanism that connects educational intentions with organized learning, assessment, and continuous improvement.

The need for such an approach becomes increasingly relevant within the development of Indonesian curriculum policy. The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes competency development, learning flexibility, contextual experiences, and the active involvement of students in the learning process. These orientations encourage PAI teachers to move beyond content coverage and provide learning experiences through which students can understand religious concepts, examine relevant problems, and connect Islamic teachings with their social environment (Aribah et al., 2025; Mundofi, 2025). The policy direction was further strengthened through Permendikdasmen No. 13 of 2025, which maintains the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and the 2013 Curriculum while encouraging the development of deeper learning experiences. In this context, deep learning refers to a pedagogical orientation that emphasizes comprehensive understanding, contextual application, critical thinking, and reflection. It is not a separate curriculum that replaces the Merdeka Curriculum. For PAI, this orientation is relevant because understanding religious teachings requires students to connect conceptual knowledge with ethical considerations and actual situations. Nevertheless, deep learning primarily provides a pedagogical direction. It does not, by itself, explain how schools should coordinate planning, organizational responsibilities, supervision, assessment, and institutional evaluation. Curriculum management is therefore necessary to translate these pedagogical orientations into coherent institutional practices. The relationship between curriculum policy and management is important because the quality of learning depends not only on instructional methods but also on the alignment of objectives, teacher responsibilities, learning activities, supervision, and evaluation.

Religious literacy provides the central conceptual foundation for the educational outcomes examined in this study. The concept should not be reduced to the ability to read, memorize, or reproduce religious texts. Moore (2015) explains religious literacy as the capacity to recognize, understand, and analyze the influence of religion in contemporary life, including its relationships with social, political, and cultural contexts. This perspective highlights that religious knowledge requires contextual interpretation rather than the passive acquisition of information. Shaw (2020) further develops a framework of religious literacy comprising four interrelated dimensions: category, disposition, knowledge, and skills. These dimensions indicate that religious literacy involves the ability to recognize how religion is represented, develop appropriate dispositions toward religious questions and differences, acquire relevant knowledge, and use the skills required to engage with religious issues. Building on these perspectives, the present study conceptualizes religious literacy in PAI through four related capacities: understanding Islamic concepts and teachings, interpreting religious information in context, evaluating its relevance through informed reasoning, and applying Islamic values responsibly in everyday situations. This conceptualization adapts the broader literature on religious literacy to the normative and educational context of Islamic Religious Education. It does not equate religious literacy with religious knowledge alone. Instead, it treats knowledge as a necessary foundation for interpretation, evaluation, and responsible application. This distinction is particularly important in digital environments, where students encounter religious information from sources that vary in authority, context, and reliability (Firnando et al., 2025). Consequently, PAI curriculum management needs

to provide structured learning opportunities that develop these capacities and establish appropriate ways to assess them.

The relationship between religious literacy, ethical reasoning, reflective learning, and character formation requires a further theoretical explanation. In this study, these concepts are treated as related educational outcomes rather than as an automatic or strictly linear sequence. Religious knowledge provides the conceptual and normative resources through which students understand Islamic teachings. Religious literacy develops when students use this knowledge to interpret religious information, recognize its context, and examine its relevance to particular situations. Ethical reasoning involves considering the moral implications of those situations and formulating judgments based on relevant religious principles. Reflective learning provides opportunities for students to examine their understanding, reconsider their judgments, and evaluate the relationship between their decisions and their conduct. Character formation concerns the development and habituation of ethical dispositions and responsible behavior through repeated learning experiences and social interaction. This relationship is consistent with character education perspectives that distinguish moral understanding, moral judgment, and the enactment of moral values in conduct (Lickona, 1991). It also corresponds with the reflective dimension of deep learning, which emphasizes the processes of understanding, application, and reflection rather than the accumulation of factual knowledge alone. The proposed trajectory therefore describes an educational logic: religious knowledge supports religious literacy; religious literacy provides resources for ethical reasoning; ethical reasoning can be examined and strengthened through reflective learning; and sustained opportunities to understand, judge, reflect, and act can contribute to character formation. The trajectory does not imply that character develops solely through classroom instruction. Family participation, school culture, teacher modeling, and students' social experiences also influence how religious and ethical values become part of everyday conduct. For this reason, the trajectory requires an institutional management system that coordinates learning activities and evaluates educational outcomes across relevant contexts.

Previous studies provide important foundations for this research, but they also reveal several limitations. Research on PAI and religious literacy has examined religious understanding, instructional practices, and the challenges of digital information. These studies explain why students need contextual and critical engagement with religious knowledge, but they provide less explanation of how school-level management coordinates the development and assessment of these competencies across the curriculum (Abdullah et al., 2020; Rifdillah, 2025). Studies of religious character education have emphasized religious habituation, teacher roles, and school culture as important influences on student development (Fitriah et al., 2025; Samsuriadi & Suardi, 2025). However, these approaches do not always examine the relationship between curriculum planning, organizational responsibility, supervision, and evaluation as a continuous management process. Meanwhile, research on Islamic education curriculum management has addressed planning, implementation, teacher readiness, and evaluation, but has not sufficiently integrated religious literacy, ethical reasoning, reflective learning, and character formation into one explicitly connected framework (Mila & Zuhdi, 2025; Selma et al., 2024; Sulastri et al., 2024; Sunita et al., 2025). Research on deep learning has also strengthened the

pedagogical discussion by emphasizing meaningful understanding, contextual application, and reflection (Masruroh et al., 2025). Nevertheless, the pedagogical emphasis needs to be connected more explicitly with the institutional mechanisms that support its implementation and evaluation. The central gap, therefore, is not the absence of studies on PAI curriculum management or character education. Rather, it concerns the limited integration of pedagogical outcomes and managerial functions within a single analytical framework. This study responds to that gap by examining how the management cycle can organize the development of religious literacy and character formation through coordinated planning, organization, implementation, supervision, and evaluation.

Based on this theoretical and empirical gap, the study proposes two interconnected analytical dimensions. The first is the managerial dimension, which consists of planning, organization, implementation, supervision, and evaluation. The second is the educational-outcome dimension, which connects religious knowledge, religious literacy, ethical reasoning, reflective learning, and character formation. The two dimensions are related through a continuous process of institutional feedback. Educational objectives guide planning and organizational arrangements; these arrangements shape learning implementation; supervision examines the consistency of practice; and evaluation identifies areas requiring improvement. The resulting feedback informs subsequent curriculum planning. This framework differs from approaches that examine curriculum management primarily through administrative functions or treat character formation as a general educational objective. It specifies the educational capacities that curriculum management is expected to support and identifies the institutional processes required to sustain their development. Accordingly, curriculum reconstruction in this study does not mean replacing the existing PAI curriculum or merely adding new learning materials. It refers to strengthening the alignment between existing managerial practices, explicit religious literacy competencies, pedagogical experiences, supervision, and multidimensional assessment. This framework also positions reflective learning as a pedagogical connection between students' understanding and their ethical conduct, while character formation remains a broader educational outcome influenced by both school and family environments.

The empirical setting of this study is SMP Al-Muhammad Cepu. The study examines how the school manages its PAI curriculum and how school leadership, PAI teachers, and parents contribute to the educational processes associated with religious understanding and character development. The involvement of parents is relevant because students' religious practices and behavior also develop through family interaction and experiences beyond the classroom. Their perspectives can therefore provide complementary information about how students demonstrate religious and ethical values in everyday settings. However, parental accounts are treated as contextual evidence and not as substitutes for direct assessment of students' competencies or character. This distinction is important because character formation involves multiple dimensions and cannot be established solely through general statements about student behavior. By examining the perspectives of institutional actors alongside curriculum and learning documents and observations of PAI-related educational activities, this study seeks to understand the relationship between formal curriculum arrangements and their implementation within the school context. The

analysis focuses on the managerial processes and institutional coordination that support or constrain the development of religious literacy and character formation.

Based on this background, the study aims to analyze PAI curriculum management and formulate a reconstruction framework for strengthening religious literacy and character formation at SMP Al-Muhammad Cepu. It addresses three research questions: (1) How is the PAI curriculum planned and organized to strengthen religious literacy and character formation at SMP Al-Muhammad Cepu? (2) How is the PAI curriculum implemented, supervised, and evaluated at SMP Al-Muhammad Cepu? and (3) How can PAI curriculum management be reconstructed to strengthen religious literacy and character formation at SMP Al-Muhammad Cepu? The study contributes to Islamic Education Management by connecting managerial functions with clearly defined educational outcomes. Its theoretical contribution lies in integrating religious literacy, ethical reasoning, reflective learning, and character formation within a curriculum-management framework. Its practical contribution lies in proposing a feedback-oriented management process that can help schools align curriculum objectives, institutional responsibilities, learning practices, supervision, and multidimensional evaluation. Rather than presenting reconstruction as an abstract recommendation, the study examines existing management practices, identifies areas requiring stronger alignment, and formulates a framework for continuous curriculum improvement.

B. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study design to examine Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum management at SMP Al-Muhammad Cepu. The school constituted the bounded research setting, while curriculum management served as the primary unit of analysis. Guided by the Islamic Education Management (MPI) perspective, the study examined five interconnected management functions: planning, organizing, implementation, supervision, and evaluation. A qualitative case study was appropriate because it enabled an in-depth examination of institutional practices, stakeholder roles, and contextual challenges within a specific educational setting (Ahmad & Mohammad, 2026).

The study focused on institutional curriculum management rather than directly measuring students' religious literacy or character development. These two educational objectives were examined through curriculum documents, instructional arrangements, teacher explanations, and parental perspectives. Consequently, the findings describe institutional efforts and reported educational outcomes rather than independently verified changes in individual student competencies. Seven informants were selected through purposive sampling based on their institutional and familial involvement in PAI education. They consisted of one PAI teacher, one school principal, and five parents of students. The teacher provided information about curriculum planning, instructional implementation, and assessment. The principal explained institutional coordination, supervision, and evaluation. Parents contributed complementary perspectives on students' religious practices and character-related behavior outside school (Djazilan & Wuryandan, 2024). This selection enabled the study to examine curriculum management from different stakeholder perspectives.

Data were collected in 2026 through semi-structured interviews, informal observations, and documentary analysis. Interviews explored participants' experiences

and responsibilities in relation to PAI curriculum management. Informal observations during school visits provided contextual information about the educational environment and relevant institutional practices. Documentary analysis examined available PAI teaching modules and assessment instruments, particularly their learning objectives, religious content, character-related values, and assessment components (Suparno et al., 2025). The three techniques provided complementary evidence for understanding institutional arrangements and instructional practices.

Students were not directly interviewed because the research focused on institutional management rather than individual student experiences or competencies. Information about student development was therefore treated as contextual and indirect evidence derived from adult informants and available educational materials.

Data were analyzed thematically through five stages: familiarization, initial coding, categorization, theme development, and interpretation. The coding process combined deductive categories derived from the MPI perspective with inductive codes emerging from the empirical data. The initial categories covered curriculum planning, organization, implementation, supervision, evaluation, religious literacy, and character formation. Related codes were subsequently grouped into three analytical themes: (1) PAI curriculum planning and organization; (2) curriculum implementation, supervision, and evaluation; and (3) reconstruction of PAI curriculum management (Ula & Suwarno, 2023).The analysis involved comparing interview accounts, observation notes, and documentary evidence to identify convergent and divergent patterns. This process supported a contextual interpretation of institutional practices and helped distinguish formal curriculum arrangements from stakeholders' reported experiences. The final reconstruction framework was developed as a conceptual and managerial synthesis of the empirical findings, not as an experimentally validated intervention.

Research trustworthiness was supported through source and methodological triangulation. Source triangulation compared information from the teacher, principal, and parents, while methodological triangulation examined interview findings against observation notes and available curriculum documents. The analysis also considered discrepancies between sources rather than assuming that all accounts were consistent. Different sources were interpreted according to their evidentiary functions: school leaders and teachers informed institutional management, documents demonstrated formal instructional arrangements, parents provided accounts of experiences outside school, and observations supplied contextual information.

The study was conducted with institutional permission from SMP Al-Muhammad Cepu. All informants provided consent after receiving information about the research purpose and the academic use of their contributions. Confidentiality was maintained by protecting participants' identities and avoiding the disclosure of unnecessary personal information. Data were used exclusively for academic purposes

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Planning and Organization of the PAI Curriculum

Curriculum planning at SMP Al-Muhammad Cepu involves translating institutional educational objectives into operational plans for Islamic Religious Education (PAI). The interview data obtained from the school principal and the PAI teacher provide insight into the distribution of responsibilities in this process. The principal is responsible for providing institutional direction and coordinating

curriculum management, while the PAI teacher translates curriculum objectives into instructional plans, learning activities, and assessment arrangements. These responsibilities indicate that curriculum planning involves coordination between institutional policies and pedagogical practices.

From the perspective of Islamic Education Management (MPI), this relationship reflects the importance of integrating institutional objectives with instructional implementation. Curriculum planning should not be limited to preparing teaching materials or arranging learning activities. It should also establish a coherent relationship between educational objectives, the allocation of responsibilities, instructional strategies, and assessment. This managerial orientation is consistent with (Ristianah, 2025), who emphasizes the relationship between curriculum planning, institutional coordination, and the development of students' religious and moral competencies.

The analysis further highlights the need to distinguish between the inclusion of religious content and the development of religious literacy. PAI curriculum planning provides a foundation for introducing students to Islamic teachings, values, and practices. However, the presence of religious knowledge in instructional content does not necessarily demonstrate that religious literacy has been systematically developed. Religious literacy requires students to understand religious concepts, interpret religious information, examine its contextual implications, and formulate appropriate responses to practical situations. Therefore, the development of religious literacy requires more explicit learning objectives and instructional arrangements.

This distinction has implications for curriculum planning at SMP Al-Muhammad Cepu. Religious knowledge should function as the foundation for developing students' capacity to interpret Islamic teachings and relate them to everyday situations. Ethical reasoning and reflective learning should subsequently provide opportunities for students to consider the implications of religious values in their attitudes and actions. This orientation is consistent with research emphasizing the importance of connecting religious knowledge with contextual understanding and students' social experiences (Ramli et al., 2025). Accordingly, curriculum planning needs to establish a clearer relationship between religious knowledge, religious literacy, ethical reasoning, reflection, and character formation.

The organizational dimension of curriculum management also involves the respective roles of school leaders, teachers, and families. The principal provides institutional coordination, while the PAI teacher is responsible for pedagogical implementation. The study also involved five parents as informants to obtain complementary perspectives on students' religious practices, attitudes, and character-related behavior outside school. Their participation provides an additional perspective on the relationship between school-based religious education and students' experiences within the family environment.

Nevertheless, parental perspectives must be interpreted according to the scope of the available data. The research materials presented in this study do not include specific parental quotations or detailed examples of students' behavior. Therefore, parental accounts cannot be used to establish particular behavioral changes or to measure the level of students' character development. Their contribution is limited to providing complementary information about students' experiences beyond the classroom. This distinction is important because the involvement of parents as research

informants does not automatically demonstrate the existence of a formal school-family collaboration system. Previous studies nevertheless recognize the relevance of family participation in supporting religious and character education (Kibtiyah et al., 2025; Suresmiyati et al., 2025).

The findings suggest that curriculum management at SMP Al-Muhammad Cepu has an institutional foundation involving school leadership and teacher responsibilities. However, the relationship between religious literacy and character formation requires clearer formulation within curriculum objectives and their corresponding instructional and assessment arrangements. The available research materials do not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that these competencies have been fully integrated into all aspects of the school's curriculum planning.

From the MPI perspective, this issue can be addressed through stronger vertical and horizontal alignment. Vertical alignment connects institutional educational goals with PAI objectives, learning activities, and assessment. Horizontal alignment connects the responsibilities of school leaders, teachers, and families according to their respective roles. On this basis, the proposed planning orientation can be formulated as follows:

School Educational Goals → PAI Curriculum Objectives → Religious Knowledge → Religious Literacy → Ethical Reasoning → Reflective Learning → Character Formation → Evaluation and Feedback.

This sequence represents the proposed direction for improving curriculum planning. It does not describe a fully implemented process at SMP Al-Muhammad Cepu. Rather, it provides a conceptual structure for connecting the existing curriculum management arrangements with the broader educational objectives of PAI. The proposed orientation seeks to ensure that religious knowledge is not treated merely as instructional content but as a foundation for developing interpretation, ethical judgment, reflection, and responsible conduct.

Implementation, Supervision, and Evaluation of the PAI Curriculum

The implementation of the PAI curriculum at SMP Al-Muhammad Cepu was examined through semi-structured interviews, informal observations during school visits, and documentary analysis. The interviews involved the PAI teacher, the school principal, and five parents. Documentary analysis focused on PAI teaching modules and PAI assessment instruments. These sources provide complementary information about institutional responsibilities, instructional arrangements, and the educational context in which curriculum management takes place.

The PAI teacher occupies a central position in curriculum implementation through the preparation of learning activities and assessment arrangements. The principal contributes through institutional coordination and supervision. Meanwhile, parents provide additional perspectives concerning students' experiences outside the school environment. These roles demonstrate the relevance of examining curriculum implementation through institutional and family perspectives. However, the available data do not provide detailed descriptions of particular classroom interactions, individual teaching episodes, or students' direct responses to learning activities. Consequently, the analysis focuses on curriculum management arrangements rather than claiming to evaluate specific classroom outcomes.

The documentary analysis examined PAI teaching modules and assessment instruments to identify how learning objectives, religious content, character-related

values, and assessment components were represented. These documents provide evidence of the formal instructional and assessment arrangements available for the study. However, the research materials presented here do not identify specific sections, learning indicators, assessment items, or examples of student work. Therefore, the study cannot establish the precise extent to which particular dimensions of religious literacy were represented in individual documents without further documentary evidence.

This limitation is particularly relevant to the relationship between religious knowledge and religious literacy. The inclusion of Islamic concepts and values in teaching materials does not automatically demonstrate that students receive structured opportunities to interpret religious information, examine contextual meanings, or formulate ethically reasoned responses. These competencies require explicit connections between learning objectives, instructional activities, and assessment criteria. Religious literacy should therefore be treated as a specific educational competency rather than an assumed consequence of learning religious content.

This argument is consistent with research emphasizing the relationship between religious understanding, contextual interpretation, and students' social experiences (Ramli et al., 2025). Research on Islamic religious education in the digital era also highlights the importance of curriculum adaptation to contemporary student environments (Syahruddin et al., 2025). These perspectives suggest that PAI implementation needs to connect religious knowledge with students' actual contexts while maintaining the normative and ethical foundations of Islamic education.

Supervision is another important function within PAI curriculum management. At SMP Al-Muhammad Cepu, the principal has an institutional role in curriculum coordination and supervision, while the PAI teacher is responsible for instructional implementation. From the perspective of MPI, supervision should ensure that instructional practices remain consistent with curriculum objectives. It should also provide opportunities to identify implementation problems, review instructional arrangements, and improve pedagogical practices.

However, the available research information does not specify the frequency, procedures, instruments, or documented results of supervision at the school. Therefore, the study cannot establish how regularly supervision was conducted or demonstrate its direct effects on instructional quality. The discussion consequently focuses on the managerial function of supervision and its relevance to curriculum improvement. This position is consistent with research highlighting the contribution of academic supervision to instructional quality through guidance, monitoring, and improvement-oriented feedback (Fakhrur et al., 2025).

Curriculum evaluation should also correspond to the broader objectives of PAI. The study included PAI assessment instruments as part of its documentary analysis. These instruments provide a basis for examining the formal assessment arrangements available at the school. Nevertheless, without specific information about their indicators and assessment items, the study cannot determine the extent to which they assess religious interpretation, ethical reasoning, reflective abilities, or character-related behavior.

From an MPI perspective, evaluation should examine both the implementation of curriculum activities and their relationship with intended educational objectives. Cognitive achievement remains important because students require an adequate understanding of Islamic teachings and principles. However, cognitive achievement

alone cannot represent the full educational objectives of religious literacy and character formation. Assessment arrangements should therefore consider relevant evidence of students' ability to interpret religious information, apply ethical reasoning, reflect on values, and demonstrate appropriate behavior. These dimensions require appropriate assessment methods and should not be inferred solely from cognitive test results.

The perspectives of parents can complement this evaluation process. Parents may provide information about students' religious practices, attitudes, and behavior within the family environment. Such information can help contextualize the relationship between school-based religious education and students' everyday experiences. However, the absence of specific parental statements and behavioral examples in the available research materials limits the extent to which these perspectives can support detailed empirical conclusions. Parental accounts should therefore be treated as complementary contextual information rather than as direct measurements of students' religious literacy or internalized character. This interpretation is consistent with research emphasizing the relevance of family participation in Islamic character education (Kibtiyah et al., 2025).

The relationship between implementation, supervision, and evaluation can be understood as an interconnected managerial process. Implementation translates curriculum objectives into instructional activities. Supervision examines the consistency between curriculum intentions and educational practices. Evaluation provides information for identifying areas that require improvement. The results of evaluation should subsequently inform curriculum planning and instructional development. This relationship can be represented through the following proposed management cycle:

Curriculum Objectives → Implementation → Supervision → Evaluation → Feedback → Curriculum Improvement.

The cycle represents a managerial recommendation derived from the MPI perspective. It should not be interpreted as evidence that SMP Al-Muhammad Cepu has already implemented a fully integrated supervision and evaluation system. Rather, it provides an analytical framework for connecting the existing management functions. Such an approach is consistent with research emphasizing the relationship between curriculum implementation, monitoring, and continuous institutional improvement in Islamic education (Nurhayati & Suhendi, 2025; Rifan et al., 2026).

The analysis therefore identifies the importance of strengthening the alignment between curriculum objectives, instructional implementation, supervision, and assessment. The available evidence supports discussion of institutional responsibilities, the types of instructional documents examined, and the complementary perspectives obtained from parents. However, it does not support detailed conclusions about supervision frequency, the specific content of assessment items, or measurable changes in students' religious literacy and character. This distinction provides a more methodologically defensible basis for the proposed reconstruction of PAI curriculum management.

Reconstruction of PAI Curriculum Management for Religious Literacy and Character Formation

The reconstruction of PAI curriculum management at SMP Al-Muhammad Cepu represents the analytical and managerial proposal developed from the preceding findings. The first two sections examine institutional responsibilities, instructional arrangements, assessment documents, and complementary parental perspectives. This section develops a framework for strengthening the relationship between curriculum management and the educational objectives of religious literacy and character formation.

The proposed reconstruction addresses the need to connect five management functions: planning, organization, implementation, supervision, and evaluation. These functions provide the institutional structure for managing the PAI curriculum. However, their contribution to religious literacy and character formation requires clearer connections with the educational competencies that the curriculum seeks to develop. The proposed framework therefore integrates managerial processes with religious knowledge, contextual interpretation, ethical reasoning, reflective learning, and character formation.

The first component is planning. Curriculum planning should formulate PAI objectives that explicitly connect religious knowledge with religious literacy and character formation. Learning objectives should identify not only the concepts students are expected to understand but also the competencies they are expected to demonstrate through interpretation, contextual analysis, ethical consideration, and reflection. This approach provides a clearer foundation for designing instructional activities and assessment arrangements. It also responds to the need to move beyond content-oriented curriculum planning toward more contextual and adaptive educational objectives (Firnando et al., 2025; Masruroh et al., 2025).

The second component is organization. Curriculum organization translates planned objectives into the distribution of responsibilities, learning resources, instructional activities, and coordination among relevant educational actors. The principal provides institutional direction, while the PAI teacher operationalizes curriculum objectives through instructional planning and implementation. Parents can contribute complementary information about students' experiences outside school. Their role should remain distinct from the professional responsibilities of teachers and school management. This arrangement establishes a basis for connecting school-based education with the family environment without transferring institutional curriculum responsibilities to parents.

The third component is implementation. The reconstructed curriculum should provide learning experiences that connect religious knowledge with interpretation, ethical reasoning, and reflection. Students need opportunities to understand Islamic teachings, examine religious information, consider its relevance to practical situations, and formulate reasoned responses. Reflective learning can help students relate religious values to personal attitudes, interpersonal relationships, and social responsibilities. The proposed educational trajectory can be expressed as follows:

Religious Knowledge → Religious Literacy → Ethical Reasoning → Reflective Learning → Character Formation.

This trajectory should not be understood as a rigid or exclusively linear process. Its components represent interconnected educational objectives. Religious knowledge

provides the conceptual foundation. Religious literacy develops students' capacity to understand and interpret religious information. Ethical reasoning enables them to consider the implications of religious principles, while reflective learning encourages them to examine the relationship between religious values and personal conduct. Character formation represents the broader educational orientation of this process. This approach is consistent with discussions of Islamic education that emphasize the relationship between religious learning and students' contemporary social environments(Firnando et al., 2025)

The fourth component is supervision. Supervision should examine the alignment between planned objectives and actual curriculum implementation. School leadership should review whether instructional activities correspond to the intended learning outcomes and whether teachers receive adequate guidance to improve their practices. Supervision should also consider the relationship between learning activities and assessment arrangements. Within the reconstructed framework, supervision functions not merely as administrative monitoring but as a mechanism for providing feedback and supporting continuous instructional improvement. This perspective corresponds with research emphasizing the relationship between institutional management, educational policy, and pedagogical improvement in Islamic education(Ma'ani et al., 2024).

The fifth component is evaluation. Evaluation should generate information about curriculum implementation and its relationship with the intended educational objectives. Cognitive achievement remains important because religious literacy requires an adequate understanding of Islamic concepts and principles. However, the proposed framework also recommends attention to students' ability to interpret religious information, apply ethical reasoning, reflect on values, and demonstrate relevant behavior. These dimensions may require different assessment methods and sources of evidence. They should not be treated as outcomes that can be established through a single instrument or inferred exclusively from academic achievement. This orientation is consistent with research emphasizing the need to connect religious understanding with contextual learning and student development (Rindu et al., 2025).

The five management functions form a continuous and recursive process. Planning establishes educational objectives. Organization distributes responsibilities and resources. Implementation translates objectives into learning experiences. Supervision examines implementation and provides feedback. Evaluation generates information for curriculum improvement. The results of evaluation subsequently become inputs for the next planning cycle. This structure positions curriculum reconstruction as an ongoing process of institutional learning rather than a one-time revision of curriculum documents. It also emphasizes the importance of aligning curriculum design with the broader management of educational processes (Masruroh et al., 2025).

Family participation constitutes a complementary dimension of the proposed framework. Parents can provide contextual information about students' religious practices and behavior in everyday settings. Such information may help the school understand the relationship between formal religious education and students' experiences outside the classroom. Nevertheless, parental accounts should not replace professional assessment conducted by teachers and school management. Nor should they be treated as definitive measurements of students' internalized character. The

school retains responsibility for curriculum management, while family perspectives can contribute additional information about students' educational environments. This approach is compatible with character education perspectives that recognize the interaction between formal education and students' social environments (Bahiyah, 2025).

The contribution of the proposed reconstruction to Islamic Education Management lies in integrating managerial functions with specific educational objectives. Curriculum planning, organization, implementation, supervision, and evaluation provide the institutional mechanisms for managing PAI. Religious literacy, ethical reasoning, reflective learning, and character formation provide the educational orientation that guides these managerial processes. The framework does not propose an entirely new PAI curriculum. Instead, it offers a managerial approach for strengthening the relationship between existing curriculum arrangements and the broader objectives of Islamic Religious Education. This contribution is consistent with scholarship that views Islamic education curriculum development as requiring structural and pedagogical adaptation rather than merely the addition of instructional materials (Lestari & Khoeron, 2025; Masruroh et al., 2025).

The proposed reconstruction can be summarized through two interconnected dimensions. Management Dimension:

Planning → Organization → Implementation → Supervision → Evaluation → Feedback → Subsequent Planning. Educational Dimension:

Religious Knowledge → Religious Literacy → Ethical Reasoning → Reflective Learning → Character Formation.

These dimensions are interconnected rather than independent. The management dimension provides the institutional conditions for planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating educational objectives. The educational dimension provides the substantive direction for management decisions. Evidence obtained through curriculum implementation and evaluation can subsequently inform institutional planning and improvement. Thus, the proposed framework establishes a reciprocal relationship between managerial processes and educational objectives.

The proposed model must nevertheless be interpreted within the methodological scope of this research. The study involved one PAI teacher, one school principal, and five parents. Data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews, informal observations during school visits, and documentary analysis of PAI teaching modules and assessment instruments. Students were not directly interviewed, and the study did not employ a structured observation protocol. Consequently, the reconstruction represents an analytical and managerial proposal derived from the available institutional evidence. It does not demonstrate measurable improvements in students' religious literacy or character formation, nor does it establish the effectiveness of the proposed framework through experimental implementation.

Overall, this study identifies the need to strengthen the alignment between PAI curriculum management and the educational objectives of religious literacy and character formation at SMP Al-Muhammad Cepu. The empirical analysis provides information about institutional responsibilities, instructional and assessment documents, and complementary perspectives from parents. Building on these findings, the proposed reconstruction connects five management functions with an educational

trajectory encompassing religious knowledge, religious literacy, ethical reasoning, reflective learning, and character formation. Its contribution lies in positioning curriculum management as an institutional mechanism for coordinating these educational objectives through planning, organization, implementation, supervision, and evaluation. The framework provides a conceptual basis for future curriculum improvement, while its implementation and effectiveness require further investigation using more detailed classroom evidence, direct student perspectives, and assessment data.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the management of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum at SMP Al-Muhammad Cepu through the perspective of Islamic Education Management (MPI), with particular attention to religious literacy and character formation. The findings lead to three main conclusions.

First, PAI curriculum planning and organization at SMP Al-Muhammad Cepu involve complementary roles between the principal and the PAI teacher. The principal provides institutional direction, while the teacher translates curriculum objectives into instructional planning. The existing arrangements provide a foundation for integrating religious knowledge and character-related objectives into PAI learning. However, the relationship between these objectives and the competencies associated with religious literacy requires more explicit formulation. In particular, curriculum planning needs to connect the acquisition of religious knowledge with interpretation, contextual understanding, and ethical reasoning.

Second, curriculum implementation, supervision, and evaluation need stronger alignment. The PAI teacher carries the primary responsibility for classroom instruction, while the principal provides institutional direction and supervision. Parents offer complementary perspectives on students' religious experiences beyond the school environment. The analysis of PAI teaching modules and assessment instruments also provides insight into instructional planning and assessment arrangements. Nevertheless, the available data do not establish students' actual levels of religious literacy or character development. The central issue identified by this study therefore concerns the alignment of curriculum objectives, instructional practices, supervision, and assessment, rather than a demonstrated deficiency in students' competencies.

Third, this study proposes a reconstructed PAI curriculum management framework that integrates five managerial functions: planning, organization, implementation, supervision, and evaluation. These functions are oriented toward five interconnected educational objectives: religious knowledge, religious literacy, ethical reasoning, reflective learning, and character formation. The proposed framework represents the study's conceptual contribution to Islamic Education Management. It positions curriculum management not merely as an administrative process but as an institutional mechanism for connecting educational objectives with instructional practices, supervision, evaluation, and subsequent curriculum improvement. This framework remains a conceptual proposal and requires further implementation and empirical evaluation.

The practical implications concern school leadership, teachers, and parents. School principals need to strengthen curriculum coordination and direct supervision

toward the consistency between PAI learning objectives, instructional activities, and assessment. PAI teachers need to develop learning activities and assessment tasks that encourage religious interpretation, contextual application, ethical reasoning, and reflection alongside cognitive achievement. Parents can support the continuity of religious education by providing relevant information about students' religious practices and character-related behavior at home. Their accounts should serve as complementary sources of information rather than substitutes for systematic school-based assessment.

This study has several limitations. It focuses on a single institution, SMP Al-Muhammad Cepu, and therefore does not support broad generalization to other educational contexts. The empirical analysis draws on seven adult informants: one principal, one PAI teacher, and five parents. Students were not directly interviewed. Furthermore, observations were informal and conducted during school visits, while documentary analysis was limited to PAI teaching modules and assessment instruments. These limitations mean that the study could not directly assess students' religious literacy or character development, establish the effectiveness of existing supervision practices, or test the proposed framework. Future research should examine multiple schools, incorporate students' perspectives through appropriate research procedures, analyze a wider range of curriculum and assessment documents, and evaluate the proposed framework through implementation-based or longitudinal studies.

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