

## Religious Literacy in The PAI Curriculum in Madrasah

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### ABSTRACT

The Curriculum of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Madrasah based on Religious Literacy can be referred to as a conceptual reality. This means that this idea is conceptual in nature. Therefore, what is referred to as Madrasah based on Religious Literacy is an attempt to describe how the concept of the PAI curriculum in Madrasah is based on religious literacy. It also explains that due to the conceptual crisis of Islamic Religious Education in Madrasah, which has moved further away from the values and cultural system of Salafi Islamic education, a conceptual solution is proposed that the appropriate Islamic Religious Education should be based on religious literacy. The research method used is a literature study by gathering data. Religious literacy in the PAI curriculum is highly essential for Madrasah students and it should start with research activities. This research aims to determine the implementation of religious literacy in the PAI curriculum in Madrasah. This research aims to determine the implementation of religious literacy in the PAI curriculum in Madrasah. The results of this study indicate the need for an improvement in more contextual and inclusive teaching approaches to integrate religious literacy into the PAI curriculum in Madrasah.

**Keywords: Religious Literacy, Curriculum, PAI, Madrasah**

### ABSTRAK

Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) di Madrasah dengan basis Literasi Agama, bisa disebut sebagai realitas konseptual. Artinya, gagasan ini bersifat konseptual. Sehingga apa yang disebut sebagai Madrasah Berbasis Literasi Agama Tulisan ini mendeskripsikan bagaimana gagasan kurikulum PAI di Madrasah berbasis literasi agama, dan menjelaskan bahwa karena krisis konseptual Pendidikan Agama Islam di madrasah yang semakin jauh dari sistem nilai dan kultur pendidikan Islam salafi maka ditawarkan solusi konseptual bahwa Pendidikan Agama Islam yang tepat adalah berbasis literasi agama. Metode penelitian adalah studi literature dengan mengumpulkan data-data. Literasi agama dalam kurikulum PAI sangat urgen dimiliki oleh peserta didik madrasah dan itu mesti dimulai dengan aktivitas riset. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui implementasi literasi agama dalam kurikulum PAI di Madrasah. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan perlu adanya peningkatan pendekatan pembelajaran yang lebih kontekstual dan inklusif dalam mengintegrasikan literasi agama dalam kurikulum PAI di madrasah.

**Kata Kunci: Literasi Agama, Kurikulum, PAI, Madrasah.**

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

Madrasah has experienced rapid development from the early 21st century to the present, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitatively, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) has reached 23,298 madrasahs, Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) has reached 9,846 MTs, and Madrasah Aliyah (MA) has reached 3,392 madrasahs. Qualitatively, in the academic field of religion, madrasahs excel compared to general schools at various educational levels. However, in the academic field of general subjects, madrasahs are not yet on par with general education. This is where it becomes a challenge for us, the Muslim community, to continue improving academic performance in general subjects while maintaining excellence in the field of religious education.

The long history of Madrasah's growth began with its initiation by the community, which was later incorporated into government programs with the establishment of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Indonesia. Madrasahs were officially recognized as being on par with public schools in 1974. Through Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, the position of madrasah was acknowledged as equal to public schools, although their management and supervision remained under the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

The differential treatment by the government, particularly during the New Order era, had caused madrasahs to lag significantly behind in terms of quality management, educational services, and learning outcomes. However, various programs have since been developed with the theme of social equity, promoting fairness and eliminating discriminatory disparities between schools and madrasahs. As a result, many government programs and policies have become more balanced, except for those of regional governments, which have, on various grounds, restricted their involvement in madrasah development.

It's worth noting that madrasahs have consistently asserted their origins in the community and their growth alongside the community, with limited reliance on the government. Despite their limitations, madrasahs have managed to continuously improve their academic achievements, narrowing the gap in learning outcomes with public schools, and in some cases, even outperforming them.

Qualitative recognition from graduates and school customers is not sufficient without legal recognition from the government. Hence, an external evaluation system has been developed through evaluation by the National Accreditation Board for Schools/Madrasahs (BAN S/M).

The purpose of this article is to analyze religious literacy in the PAI curriculum in Madrasah. Its benefits include enriching the body of knowledge on religious literacy in the PAI curriculum in Madrasah and making the PAI curriculum in Madrasah a superior form of education for practitioners. (Dede Rosyada, 2017: 20-24)

## **B. LITERATURE RIVIEW**

### **a. Religious Literacy in the PAI Curriculum**

Literacy" originates from the English word "literacy." It also comes from the Latin word "littera," which means letter, and its meaning involves the mastery of writing systems and the conventions that accompany them (M. Aronoff, 1994: 68).

Literacy is defined as the ability of students to be "literate in discourse." Initially, the emphasis is on the development of reading and writing competencies. Subsequently, its development takes the form of integrating listening, speaking, viewing, reading, writing, and critical thinking abilities. Literacy skills (reading and writing) form the foundation or basis for success in students' learning activities (Sri Triatri: 45).

The definition of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum is not significantly different from the general curriculum; the difference lies mainly in its sources of learning materials (Budiwiyatno, 2020). As expressed by Abdul Majid in his book "Competency-Based Islamic Education," the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum is a formulation of the objectives, content, methods, and evaluation of education that draws from the teachings of Islam (Ekawati et al., 2019).

According to Permendikbud No. 54 of 2013, the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum (PAI) is a set of plans and regulations concerning the objectives, content, materials, and learning methods used as guidelines for organizing learning activities to achieve educational goals. It encompasses a range of Islamic studies, including the Quran, Hadith, Aqidah, Akhlak, Fiqih, Islamic History, and Culture (Syafitri, 2019).

### **b. Curriculum Components**

Curriculum is a system that consists of several interconnected components aimed at achieving educational goals. The components of the curriculum are as follows:

#### **c. Objective Component**

The curriculum is essentially a tool to achieve educational objectives, and the objectives of the curriculum are the goals of every educational program that will be

instilled in students (Taufik, 2019). The hierarchy of educational objectives is formulated as follows (Siregar, 2017): 1) National Educational Objectives; 2) Cross-Curricular Competencies; 3) Graduate Competencies; 4) Subject Group Competencies; 5) Subject Competencies; 6) Basic Subject Competencies; 7) Learning Outcome Indicators.

#### d. Content Component

The content of the curriculum program is everything provided to students in the teaching and learning activities to achieve the objectives (Hidayani, 2017). There are several criteria for selecting the curriculum content for curriculum designers, as outlined by Nana Sudjana and cited by Syafruddin Nurdin, including (Syafitri, 2019):

- 1) The curriculum content must be appropriate, accurate, and meaningful for the development of students.
- 2) The curriculum content must reflect social reality, meaning it is in line with the demands of real-life in society.
- 3) The curriculum content must encompass comprehensive scientific understanding, meaning it contains intellectual, moral, and social aspects in balance.
- 4) The curriculum content must contain scientifically testable aspects.
- 5) The curriculum content must contain clear materials, theories, principles, and concepts rather than just factual information.
- 6) The curriculum content must support the achievement of educational objectives.

#### e. Curriculum Implementation Strategy Components

The method or learning strategy plays a crucial role in the curriculum as it contains tasks to be undertaken by students and teachers. Therefore, its development should be based on task analysis that aligns with the curriculum objectives and the initial behaviors of students. In this context, three alternatives can be used:

#### f. Implementation Strategy Components

Learning materials primarily originate from the subject matter. Delivery occurs through communication between the teacher and students, with the teacher as the message deliverer or communicator and students as message recipients. The subject matter is the message itself (Inah, 2013).

#### g. Student-Centered Approach

Learning is conducted based on the needs, interests, learning styles, and abilities of students. This approach emphasizes the use of methods for individualized learning, such as self-directed learning, modular learning, learning packages, and others (Ramadhani et al., 2020).

h. Community-Oriented Approach

This approach aims to integrate the school and the community and improve community life. The procedure involves inviting the community to the school or having students visit the community. Methods used include field trips, guest speakers, experiential work, surveys, community service projects, camping, and units (Ikhwan, 2014). However, there is no single method considered most effective. Therefore, teachers should be able to use multiple methods variably.

i. Evaluation Component

To assess the extent of success in curriculum implementation, evaluation is necessary. Given that the evaluation component is closely related to other components, the assessment or evaluation method will determine the curriculum objectives, content or materials, and the teaching-learning process. In the book "The School Curriculum" followed by Oemar Hamalik, evaluation is defined as a systematic process of collecting and analyzing data systematically aimed at Assisting educators in understanding and assessing a curriculum, as well as improving educational methods (Syafitri, 2019). Evaluation is an activity to determine whether a program aligns with its original objectives. According to Oemar Hamalik, there are several requirements that an assessment instrument must meet, including validity, reliability, objectivity, practicality, and differentiation (Syafitri, 2019).

j. Curriculum and Learning

Curriculum, as stated by Sukmadinata, has several characteristics (Sukmadi Nata, 1997: 27), namely:

- 1) Curriculum as substance, which means that the curriculum is a plan for students' learning activities in school, including formulations of objectives, teaching materials, the process of learning activities, schedules, and evaluation of learning outcomes. This curriculum is a concept that has been developed by experts and approved by educational policy makers and the community as users of educational outcomes.

- 2) Curriculum as a system, which means that the curriculum is a series of concepts about various learning activities, with each unit of activity being coherent with others, and the curriculum itself is related to all elements in the entire education system.
- 3) Curriculum is a dynamic concept, which means that the curriculum is an open concept that is receptive to various ideas for change and adjustments to market demands or the idealism of human civilization development.

However, not avoiding the discourse on what the curriculum is, but by absorbing the public's understanding of the curriculum, it seems that the definitions put forward by Hilda Taba and Robert Gagne, as stated by Allan A. Glatthorn in his book titled "Curriculum Leadership" (Glatthorn, 1987: 2), are closer to a pragmatic understanding of the curriculum. According to Taba, the curriculum usually consists of statements about general objectives, specific objectives, indicating selected teaching materials, also stating models of the learning process implementation, and also includes the program for evaluating learning outcomes. Meanwhile, Robert Gagne emphasizes that the curriculum is a sequence of content and teaching materials. Described in such a way that the learning of each unit can be completed as a whole unit, and each unit also describes the capabilities (competencies) that students must master.

An ideal madrasah curriculum is one that is flexible, dynamic, and relevant. Flexibility means that the madrasah curriculum can be modified, expanded, or reduced according to the needs of the community and the business world. Dynamic curriculum means that it can be developed in line with the demands of the advancement of knowledge and technology as well as the changing times.

The implementation of madrasah education must adhere to and follow the national curriculum to meet national standards. Additionally, madrasahs are capable of absorbing and meeting local needs. Furthermore, in the development of syllabi and lesson planning in madrasahs, reference should be made to the curriculum documents currently in effect, namely the 2004 Curriculum.

In the learning process, teachers develop syllabi and lesson plans in accordance with the applicable curriculum. Teachers conduct the learning process with a variety of strategies, approaches, and teaching methods that are effective in educating students. Interaction between teachers and students occurs with enthusiasm, seriousness, and discipline. The learning process, as a series of activities consisting of planning,

implementation, and evaluation, runs smoothly, ensuring that the madrasah's education is of high quality.

The madrasah curriculum, especially at the primary level (madrasah ibtdaiyah), carries a heavier load compared to elementary schools due to the additional subjects such as Arabic Language, Al-Quran Al-Hadits, Aqidah Akhlaq, Fiqih, and Islamic Cultural History, which are mandatory for Islamic-characterized schools. With the addition of these subjects, there should be an increase in the number of learning hours for madrasah students, ranging from 10-14 hours per week. Therefore, despite the heavier subject load in madrasahs, the availability of sufficient learning time enables madrasah graduates to excel in their religious studies and compete in achieving educational quality in general knowledge fields such as mathematics, science, and others so that they have strong competitiveness in pursuing further studies at the local, national, and global levels.

In the learning process, all programs and activities should be directed towards achieving high-quality madrasah graduates. Therefore, teachers in madrasahs ideally possess the ability to analyze and develop the curriculum, create syllabi, develop unit lesson plans, and formulate appropriate lesson plans. They should have a good command of subject matter, choose and use various teaching methods. In addition, for the success of the learning process, teachers are required to have the ability to select and use appropriate teaching strategies, creating an active, creative, effective, efficient, and enjoyable learning process. This way, a monotonous and boring learning process can be avoided. An ideal madrasah teacher is one who can manage the classroom effectively, creating an environment that supports the success of the learning process. In assessing student learning outcomes, the domains assessed should be balanced and integrated, encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor assessments.

### **1. PAI Curriculum in Madrasah**

Islamic religious education (PAI) in schools aims to shape Indonesian individuals who are faithful and pious to the Almighty God and possess noble character, capable of maintaining peace and harmony in internal and interfaith relationships. Government Regulation Number 55 of 2017, Article 2 paragraphs (1) and (2), states that religious education aims to develop the abilities of learners in understanding, internalizing, and practicing religious values while harmonizing them with their mastery of science, technology, and the arts. PAI has noble functions and goals, encompassing beliefs, worship traditions, social culture, and even the development of patterns of national and state relations in diverse Indonesia.

The teaching of PAI in madrasahs demands a teaching model that touches on aspects of cognitive potential, spirituality, actions, and even patterns of social community relationships within a large nation. PAI requires the dedication of teachers to design comprehensive learning that nurtures and develops all aspects of humanity, so that they become complete individuals capable of practicing their religion in all aspects of life. In order for it to manifest in all aspects of human life, and the Muslim community will become the most ideal community on the face of this earth.

PAI learning, as emphasized in Government Regulation No. 55 of 2007 regarding Religious Education, serves to prepare students to be faithful, pious, morally upright, and capable of maintaining harmony. The criteria for being faithful, pious, and morally upright have already been established by Allah and His Messenger. Faith, piety, and good morals, essentially form a unified concept that is integral to a complete individual. Therefore, PAI instruction should be under the guidance of teachers who are well-versed in the goodness of religion and religiosity, and this experience should be imparted to the students to become like them or even better.

PAI instruction that relies solely on the accumulation of knowledge through memorization or the addition of knowledge without establishing connections between them will result in an abundance of knowledge that may be less beneficial, as these isolated pieces of knowledge do not contribute to a holistic understanding towards becoming a complete individual. Likewise, increasing discoveries, whether through reading books, modules, or even empirical research, will provide students with a wealth of information, but may not necessarily enable them to reconstruct their knowledge into a unified whole that can lead them to become complete individuals. It seems that the meaningful learning resulting from Ausubel's reflection greatly helps in reconstructing PAI learning by calling for the full involvement of teachers in the learning process, within the framework of active, collaborative, and cooperative learning between students and teachers.

PAI is once again finding its place, as religious studies with a deductive character, the Quran, and the Sunnah are now explained with the understandings gained by scholars. There are no religious norms derived from culture and social life. Norms of religious life are always derived from the holy scriptures. Even if they are derived from the culture of society, they will be referred back to the sacred texts to obtain validation for the logical conclusions drawn from the experiences of the community.



## **C. METHOD**

The method used in this discussion is a qualitative descriptive analysis method through reviewing various international and national journal articles as well as critical literature, utilizing critical thinking in analyzing discussions based on the discipline of religious studies. The method employed to gather data is a descriptive method through a literature study. This research is a library research (literature study).

The steps of this research essentially involve a process of data collection and information gathering through examination. The available data is then interpreted and theoretically explained. After collecting the data, it is analyzed to draw conclusions. The author uses descriptive analysis and deductive techniques by examining books related to the research topic.

This research is conducted using a qualitative approach that involves a literature study. Data collection techniques involve using documents such as literature books, journals, and previous research findings. The data analysis technique employed is qualitative descriptive by examining literature books and previous research journals that provide an overview of the importance, opportunities, and stages of developing religious literacy in the PAI curriculum at madrasahs in the era of globalization.

## **D. RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Islamic Religious Education**

Islamic religious education has a similar meaning to the implementation of Islamic education or Islamic values in the effort to instill Islamic values (Azis, 2019:5). Islamic religious education referred to in this study includes subjects such as the Qur'an, Hadith, Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), Aqidah (theology), Akhlak (morality), and Islamic Culture and Civilization (SKI) in accordance with the Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs (KMA) number 183 of 2019 concerning the Curriculum of Islamic Religious Education and Arabic Language (Madrasah et al., KMA 183 of 2019 Regarding the PAI and Arabic Language Curriculum). The content of this curriculum is explained in KMA number 184 of 2019 (Pendis, 2019:7; Tambak, et al., 2021).

Values in Islamic religious education can cultivate a sense of nationalism, which will eventually lead to generations with a deep love for their nation and state. They will have strong characters in line with the guidance from the Quran and Hadith, capable of utilizing their potential and expertise to contribute to their nation's independence (Amirudin, 2019:14).

## 2. Religious Literacy Learning

The understanding of school literacy, according to the Ministry of Education and Culture, is the ability to access, comprehend, and intelligently use something through various activities, including reading, viewing, listening, writing, and/or speaking (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016:2). Etymologically, the term "literacy" originates from the Latin word "literatur," which means a person who learns. In this context, literacy is closely related to the processes of reading and writing. This definition explains that if students engage in activities such as reading and writing, they are already involved in literacy activities.

Technology and Education are two equally sharp-edged blades, depending on how we utilize them to support each other (Sutarno, 2021:413). The current development in the field of education has removed the limitations of literacy. Teachers and books are no longer the sole sources of literacy as they were in the past. In the era of Industry 4.0, it is impossible to conduct learning without involving the internet and all the information related to the teaching material, including digital learning media platforms.

Multiliteracy is the ability to use various methods and strategies to learn, understand, and master various skills in all fields, based on one's creative ideas, making it enriching in one's life (Ginanjari & Widayanti, 2019:3). Currently, with various technologies available, it is still essential to pay attention to other literacies that involve the cultivation of cultural values (Abidin, 2015:50).

In the basic concept of multiliteracy, students need to become experts and understand the material being taught so that they can apply it in their daily lives. The results of this implementation are used as life skills that can fulfill their needs. Multiliteracy learning involves using more than one literacy in one subject (Afandi, 2019:34) This will make students far from blind fanaticism and enable them to keep up with the times (Dafit, 2017:4; Tambak, 2015).

The ability to read and write in the initial stages is intended as an effort to develop language and understanding in activities such as writing, listening, comprehending, reading, speaking, and critical thinking. In the next phase, literacy begins to extend to social situations and practices. In the third phase, literacy enters the world of information technology and multimedia. The situation in the fourth phase positions literacy as a social construct that is never neutral. The fifth phase in the development of literacy is then referred to as multiliteracy, which involves all aspects (Abidin, 2015:50; Tambak, 2016).

Literacy richness in learning can foster motivation and make students truly strong in terms of material, moral, and mental aspects. Digital literacy, numerical literacy, and cultural literacy are fundamental literacies for conducting balanced learning activities. These basic literacies are then developed into students' characters (Madrasah et al. 2019:5).

## **E. CONCLUSION**

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that the urgency and opportunities for curriculum innovation in madrasahs in the era of globalization include technological disruption, alignment of graduates with the workforce, and human literacy. Literacy in the madrasah Islamic education curriculum includes the understanding that the curriculum is not merely a list of subjects, as subjects are only a source of learning materials to achieve competence. It is based on the competency standards set for an educational unit, educational level, and educational program, and the curriculum is built upon a competency-based curriculum model.

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