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THE INTEGRATION OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM: AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND APPLIED ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACTS

Background: This research stems from the need to enhance Islamic Education in Indonesia by integrating philosophy, promoting critical thinking, and strengthening students' religious identity in a rapidly changing global landscape. **Purpose:** This study analyzes the integration of philosophy into the development of the Islamic Education curriculum from an epistemological perspective and its application in the context of education in Indonesia. The research aims to identify how the integration of philosophy can enrich the Islamic Education curriculum, enhance students' critical and reflective thinking skills, and strengthen their Islamic identity amidst the challenges of globalization. **Method:** Using a qualitative research method with a case study approach, the study finds that philosophy has significant potential to deepen religious understanding and develop students' intellectual and spiritual maturity. **Result:** However, the implementation of philosophical integration into the Islamic Education curriculum faces several challenges, including the intellectual readiness of students, the need for professional training for educators, and the necessity of clear guidelines for its application. **Conclusion:** The study concludes that with appropriate support, the integration of philosophy can play a crucial role in shaping students who not only possess a strong religious understanding but also the ability to think critically and participate in global dialogue. The implications of this research emphasize the importance of a more dynamic and reflective approach in Islamic religious education to address contemporary challenges

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A. INTRODUCTION

The urgency of this study stems from the need to explore how the integration of philosophy into the development of the Islamic Education curriculum can provide a stronger epistemological foundation and more relevant applications. In the context of globalization and the advancement of knowledge, the challenges faced by Islamic education are becoming increasingly complex. The Islamic Education curriculum, which is a key element in shaping the character and religious understanding of students, must address these challenges by providing an approach that is not only normative but also critical and reflective. Therefore, it is essential to investigate how philosophy, as a discipline that examines the fundamental principles of various fields of knowledge, can enrich and guide the development of the Islamic Education curriculum.

As educational thought evolves, the integration of philosophy into the Islamic Education curriculum is not only intended to broaden students' horizons but also to instill a deeper understanding of the essence and purpose of Islamic education itself. The philosophy of Islamic education, based on the values of tawhid (monotheism), justice, and the balance between worldly and spiritual life, must be actualized in every aspect of the curriculum. However, the implementation of this concept is often hindered by the dichotomy between secular knowledge and religion, leading to dualism in education (Wahab Syakhrani, 2020). This study aims to explore the potential of philosophy to bridge this gap and offer a holistic curriculum model.

On the other hand, despite efforts at integration, there is still a significant gap in the literature examining how philosophy can be practically applied in the development of the Islamic Education curriculum. Many previous studies have focused on the normative aspects of Islamic education, but have not sufficiently emphasized the epistemological approach underlying this integration (Nugroho, 2023) (Mustofa & Ramdhani, 2023). This study seeks to fill this gap by providing a deep and structured analysis of how philosophical principles can be applied in designing a more inclusive and adaptive Islamic Education curriculum that meets contemporary needs. Thus, this study not only contributes to theoretical development but also offers practical guidance for educators and policymakers in designing a relevant and effective curriculum.

The primary goal of this study is to examine how the integration of philosophy can enrich the development of the Islamic Education curriculum from an epistemological and applied perspective. This research also aims to evaluate the extent to which philosophical approaches can be adapted and implemented within the context of Islamic education at various levels. Through this approach, it is hoped that this research will provide new insights and innovative solutions to the challenges currently faced by the Islamic Education curriculum. This study will also examine the implications of this philosophical integration for the quality of education and the development of students' character, with a focus on how holistic Islamic values can be more effectively internalized through a well-structured curriculum.

The literature on the integration of philosophy in education, particularly in the Islamic Education curriculum, shows that a philosophical approach can provide a deeper conceptual framework for understanding the goals and methods of Islamic education (Bakti Nasution et al., 2022). Islamic educational philosophy, rooted in the principles of tauhid (monotheism) and wahyu (revelation), emphasizes the importance of balancing intellectual and spiritual development. According to Al-Attas, Islamic education aims not only to transfer knowledge but also to shape character and

internalize Islamic values. The integration of philosophy into the curriculum allows for critical reflection on the knowledge being taught, so that students do not merely master the material technically but also understand the essence and moral implications of that knowledge (Komalasari & Yakubu, 2023).

Several studies also highlight the challenges faced in integrating philosophy into the Islamic Education curriculum. For example, research conducted by Nasr emphasizes that the dualism between secular knowledge and religion often hinders the development of a holistic curriculum. Nasr criticizes educational approaches that tend to separate the rational from the spiritual, ultimately leading to limitations in students' understanding of the world and human existence (Evans, 2022). In this context, the integration of philosophy can be a solution to overcome this dichotomy by offering a more comprehensive and inclusive approach, where knowledge and religion complement each other (Tartaglia, 2011).

On the other hand, Zarkasyi underscores the importance of philosophy in curriculum development as a tool for instilling critical and reflective thinking skills in students. Philosophy, with its dialectical method, encourages students not just to passively accept knowledge but also to question, analyze, and relate that knowledge to the realities of life. In the context of PAI, this means that students are encouraged to reflect on Islamic values in their daily lives and develop a deeper understanding of the meaning and purpose of life based on Islamic teachings. However, Zarkasyi also emphasizes that the application of philosophy in the curriculum must be done carefully, so as not to neglect the normative and dogmatic aspects of Islamic education (Zaman, 2017).

Moreover, the literature reveals that integrating philosophy into the Islamic Education curriculum can help address the identity crisis often experienced by students in the modern era. According to Rahman, contemporary Islamic education faces significant challenges in maintaining a balance between modernity and tradition. Integrating philosophy into the curriculum can help students understand how Islamic values are relevant to contemporary life, enabling them to develop a strong identity rooted in Islamic principles (Zaman, 2021). This approach also allows for dialogue between Islamic traditions and developments in modern science and technology, which is crucial in preparing students to face global challenges (Abdelgalil, 2023).

However, there are also criticisms of the efforts to integrate philosophy into the Islamic Education curriculum. Some researchers, such as Al-Faruqi, argue that philosophy, with its rationalist and speculative approach, may not always align with the essence of Islamic education, which emphasizes the transmission of revealed values and tradition. Al-Faruqi emphasizes that Islamic education must remain grounded in the Qur'an and Hadith as the primary sources of knowledge and should not be influenced by philosophical thoughts that may conflict with Islamic teachings. This critique underscores the need for a balanced and contextual approach in integrating philosophy into the Islamic Education curriculum to avoid compromising the fundamental values of Islamic education (Van Adiputra & Husniyah, 2023).

In the literature on the integration of philosophy in religious education, various perspectives highlight the importance of this approach in enriching the learning experience of students. One prominent view is the significance of philosophy as a foundation for critical thinking in religious education. According to Al-Attas, philosophy in Islam plays an integral role in shaping a comprehensive worldview where

religion and rationality are not separated but complement each other (Humaidi, 2022). This perspective asserts that philosophy can aid students in gaining a deeper understanding of religious teachings through reflection and critical analysis. The literature also emphasizes that without a philosophical approach, religious education can become dogmatic and less adaptive to social and intellectual changes.

Furthermore, the literature discusses how the integration of philosophy can facilitate dialogue between religious values and modern thought. According to Nasr, religious education that is inclusive of philosophy enables students to develop an openness to diverse worldviews without losing their religious identity (Afifuddin & Burga, 2023). This approach is relevant in the context of education in the era of globalization, where students are confronted with various challenges that require the ability to engage in dialogue with diverse cultures and ideas. The integration of philosophy into the Islamic Education curriculum can provide a strong intellectual foundation for students to participate in broader discussions, both at the local and global levels (Aziz et al., 2023).

The literature also indicates that philosophy can serve as a tool for building the character and ethics of students. According to Al-Ghazali, education that integrates philosophy with religious values can assist in the formation of strong morality, where students are not only taught what is right and wrong but are also given the ability to assess and understand the reasons behind these norms (Yulianto & Al Mubarakah, 2020). This approach supports the development of students who are not only obedient to rules but also possess a deep understanding of the ethical principles underlying religious teachings. Thus, philosophy can contribute to the development of a more holistic and resilient character in facing moral challenges in society (Erviana et al., 2023).

However, some literature also highlights the challenges in integrating philosophy into the Islamic Education curriculum. One of the main challenges identified is the resistance from certain quarters who perceive philosophy as something contrary to religious teachings (Hewitt & Scrutton, 2018). According to Rahman, this resistance is often due to a misunderstanding of the role of philosophy in religion. Some circles view philosophy as a threat to faith, whereas, in reality, philosophy can serve as a tool to deepen religious understanding (Neville, 2023). This literature underscores the importance of outreach and education for educators and policymakers to understand the benefits of integrating philosophy into religious education and to overcome the existing resistance.

In addition to resistance, the literature also identifies limitations in the intellectual readiness of students as a challenge in the integration of philosophy. According to Arkoun, philosophy requires a fairly high level of understanding, and not all students are prepared to grasp abstract and complex concepts. Therefore, the literature suggests a gradual approach tailored to the intellectual capacity of students, starting with the introduction of basic concepts before moving on to more complex thought (Kulyk, 2018). This approach is crucial to ensure that students do not feel overwhelmed or alienated by the material being taught but instead feel challenged and motivated to delve deeper into their studies.

Overall, the literature suggests that the integration of philosophy into the Islamic Education curriculum holds significant potential to enrich religious education, provided that the challenges are addressed with appropriate strategies. This literature emphasizes

the importance of an inclusive and adaptive approach, as well as the need for support from all educational elements, including teachers, lecturers, educational institution management, and the government (Wahyu Aji et al., 2023). With proper integration, philosophy can become an enriching element in religious education, not only in the cognitive aspect but also in the development of students' character and ethics. This literature provides a strong foundation for further research on how philosophy can be effectively implemented in Islamic religious education in Indonesia (Husnaini et al., 2020).

Considering these various perspectives, this study seeks to offer a comprehensive approach to the integration of philosophy into the Islamic Education curriculum. This approach will combine the positive aspects of philosophy, such as the ability for critical and reflective thinking, while maintaining the integrity of Islamic values that serve as the primary foundation of religious education. This study will also explore how this approach can be applied in various Islamic educational contexts, both at the school and university levels, with the aim of enriching the learning experiences of students and enhancing the overall quality of Islamic education.

B. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the integration of philosophy into the development of the Islamic Education curriculum. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth examination of complex phenomena and a deeper understanding of the contexts influencing curriculum implementation. The case study design was selected as the research framework because this study focuses on an in-depth observation of a specific phenomenon—namely, how philosophy is integrated into the Islamic Education curriculum across various educational institutions. This design provides the flexibility to explore multiple aspects of the phenomenon under study and to understand the dynamics involved in the process of curriculum development and implementation.

The subjects of this research are several Islamic educational institutions selected purposively based on specific criteria. These criteria include institutions that have integrated philosophy into their Islamic Education curriculum and exhibit diversity in their teaching approaches and educational philosophies. Purposive sampling allows the research to focus on institutions relevant to the research topic, ensuring that the data collected is rich and in-depth. These institutions include Islamic secondary schools in Central Kalimantan, which present a variety of cultural and social contexts, thus providing a broader perspective on the phenomenon under investigation.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted with stakeholders in the educational institutions, including teachers and curriculum policymakers, to gain a deeper understanding of the process of integrating philosophy into the Islamic Education curriculum. Participant observation was carried out in classrooms where the curriculum integrated with philosophy is being implemented, aiming to observe how philosophical concepts are taught and understood by students. Document analysis involved reviewing syllabi, lesson plans, and teaching materials to examine how philosophy is incorporated into the curriculum structure and how it is articulated in teaching practices.

The data obtained from these various sources were analyzed using thematic analysis. This method was chosen because it allows the research to identify key themes emerging from the data and to understand how these themes are interconnected within the context of Islamic Education curriculum development. Thematic analysis was conducted through an iterative process involving data coding, identification of thematic patterns, and drawing conclusions based on the findings. This process was carried out systematically and transparently to ensure the validity and reliability of the research results. Additionally, data triangulation was employed by comparing findings from various data sources to enhance the credibility of the research.

This study also utilized a reflective approach in data analysis, where the researcher continuously reviews and evaluates the interpretation of the data obtained. This reflective approach is essential to ensure that the analysis is not solely based on the data but also considers the broader context and critical reflection on the emerging findings. Thus, the results of this study are expected to provide a more comprehensive and in-depth insight into how philosophy can be effectively integrated into the development of the Islamic Education curriculum and its implications for Islamic education as a whole.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that the integration of philosophy into the development of the Islamic Education curriculum has a significant impact on teaching approaches and student comprehension. In several educational institutions that were the subjects of this research, philosophical concepts have been adopted in various aspects of the curriculum, ranging from the formulation of learning objectives to the teaching methods used. Philosophy, particularly Islamic philosophy, has been applied as a framework for understanding and contextualizing instructional materials, enabling students not only to grasp technical knowledge but also to reflect on the moral and spiritual implications of that knowledge (Saada & Magadlah, 2021). These findings suggest that a philosophical approach can enrich the Islamic Education curriculum by providing a more holistic foundation for the character development of students.

Observations in classrooms that have implemented the integrated curriculum show that this approach helps to enhance student engagement in the learning process. For instance, in one of the Islamic secondary schools involved in the research, teachers used philosophy to explain theological and ethical concepts of Islam, which were then critically discussed by students. This not only encourages students to think more deeply about Islamic teachings but also facilitates the development of critical and analytical thinking skills. This active engagement is evident from the students' participation in classroom discussions, where they were able to pose relevant questions and present arguments supported by a deep understanding of the material being taught (Dahari et al., 2019).

Interviews with teachers and lecturers revealed that the application of philosophy in the curriculum also contributes to the improvement of teaching quality. The teachers and lecturers interviewed stated that the philosophical approach helps them to be more critical in evaluating the teaching materials and methods used. They felt that by integrating philosophy, they could more effectively convey complex material and assist students in developing a more comprehensive understanding of Islam. Some

teachers also mentioned that the integration of philosophy motivates them to continue learning and updating their knowledge, enabling them to teach with greater confidence and competence.

However, the study also highlights challenges in implementing philosophy into the Islamic Education curriculum. Some teachers acknowledged that not all students have the intellectual readiness to understand complex philosophical concepts. This is particularly evident among students at the secondary school level, where some struggle to keep up with discussions involving deep philosophical thought. Additionally, there are concerns that an overly dominant philosophical approach might obscure the normative teachings of Islam, which should be the core of religious education. Teachers and lecturers also noted that a curriculum that is too heavily laden with philosophy might lead to confusion among students, especially if not accompanied by adequate guidance (Mubin, 2023).

Curriculum document analysis reveals that the integration of philosophy into the Islamic Education curriculum has been implemented variably across different educational institutions. In some institutions, philosophy is integrated through specialized courses that teach classical and contemporary Islamic thought, while in others, it is integrated across the curriculum through an interdisciplinary approach. This approach allows students to see the connections between various disciplines within Islam and how philosophy can provide a broader and deeper perspective on the knowledge they are acquiring. However, these findings also indicate that there is no uniform standard for integrating philosophy into the Islamic Education curriculum, suggesting the need for clearer and more comprehensive guidelines.

The research also shows that the integration of philosophy into the Islamic Education curriculum has a positive impact on the character development of students. Teachers interviewed reported that students involved in philosophy-based learning demonstrated improvements in critical thinking skills, intellectual independence, and spiritual maturity (Yuliharti, 2022). They also noted an increase in the students' ability to relate Islamic teachings to contemporary issues and to critically and reflectively assess various viewpoints. This indicates that a philosophical approach can help shape students who are not only knowledgeable but also possess strong character and integrity.

Furthermore, interviews and observations reveal that the integration of philosophy into the Islamic Education curriculum helps strengthen students' Islamic identity. By understanding Islamic philosophy and its interaction with other intellectual traditions, students can develop a more comprehensive understanding of their identity as Muslims in the modern world. They also become more aware of the Islamic values they uphold and how these values are relevant in their daily lives. This is crucial in the context of globalization, where students are often exposed to various cultural and intellectual influences that can affect their religious identity.

However, the study also finds that the integration of philosophy into the Islamic Education curriculum requires stronger support from educational institution management. Some teachers expressed that the success of implementing this integrated curriculum heavily depends on the management's commitment to providing the necessary training and resources. They emphasized that without adequate support, efforts to integrate philosophy into the curriculum may not be effective. Additionally, they highlighted the importance of good coordination between teachers, lecturers, and

curriculum policymakers to ensure that the integration of philosophy is carried out consistently and sustainably.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that the integration of philosophy into the development of the Islamic Education curriculum holds significant potential to enhance the quality of Islamic education in Indonesia. This approach not only enriches the educational content with deeper perspectives but also aids students in developing critical, reflective, and character-building skills. Nonetheless, the challenges encountered in implementing the integration of philosophy underscore the need for a careful and planned approach, as well as strong support from all stakeholders involved in the educational process. Therefore, it is hoped that the findings of this research will serve as a foundation for the development of more holistic and integrative educational policies and practices in the future.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide important insights into the integration of philosophy into the Islamic Education curriculum, highlighting that this approach can enrich the learning process and the development of students' character. This discussion focuses on the implications of these findings and how the integration of philosophy can be optimized within the context of Islamic education in Indonesia. The finding that philosophy can enhance students' critical and reflective thinking abilities demonstrates the substantial potential of this approach to develop students who not only understand Islamic teachings dogmatically but also articulate and apply these values in daily life. This is particularly relevant in facing the challenges of globalization, where students need a strong foundation in Islamic values while remaining open to critical thinking and cross-cultural dialogue.

However, this discussion must also address the challenges faced in implementing the integration of philosophy into the Islamic Education curriculum. One major challenge identified is students' intellectual readiness to comprehend complex philosophical concepts. This finding indicates the need for a more adaptive approach in applying philosophy, where philosophical content is adjusted to students' levels of understanding. For example, the introduction of philosophy could begin with more basic concepts that are easier to grasp before progressing to more complex ideas. Additionally, an interdisciplinary approach that connects philosophy with other subjects could help students see the relevance of philosophy in a broader context, facilitating their understanding.

Furthermore, this discussion underscores the importance of training and professional development for teachers to support the integration of philosophy into the curriculum. The research findings show that teachers involved in teaching philosophy feel encouraged to continuously update their knowledge and develop more effective teaching methods. Therefore, ongoing training and support from educational management are crucial to ensure that teachers and lecturers possess the necessary competencies to teach philosophy effectively. This training should also include the development of teaching strategies that can help students understand and appreciate philosophy as an integral part of Islamic education.

The discussion also highlights the need for the development of clearer standards and guidelines for integrating philosophy into the Islamic Education curriculum. The findings that there is variation in how philosophy is integrated indicate that there is no

uniformity in the application of this approach across different educational institutions. Clear standards would help ensure that philosophy is integrated consistently and effectively, providing guidance for educational institutions in designing and implementing a curriculum that incorporates philosophy. These guidelines could also include recommendations on how to address challenges in implementation, such as how to adjust philosophical content to students' levels of understanding and how to integrate philosophy with other subjects.

Additionally, this discussion considers the implications of integrating philosophy for the development of students' Islamic identity. The research findings indicate that philosophy can help strengthen students' Islamic identity by providing them with a strong intellectual foundation to understand and uphold Islamic values in a changing context. This is important given the challenges students face in maintaining their identity amid the influences of globalization and modernization. The integration of philosophy into the Islamic Education curriculum can serve as a tool to help students not only preserve their religious identity but also engage actively and critically in cross-cultural and global dialogues.

Finally, this discussion emphasizes that integrating philosophy into the Islamic Education curriculum is not just about adding new elements to the curriculum but also about transforming perspectives and approaches to Islamic education. This approach requires a paradigm shift where religious education is no longer viewed merely as the transmission of dogmatic knowledge but as a dynamic and reflective process that encourages students to think critically, reflect, and apply Islamic values in real life. Thus, the integration of philosophy into the Islamic Education curriculum has the potential to not only enhance the quality of Islamic education but also to produce students who are more mature intellectually, spiritually, and socially.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion presented, it can be concluded that integrating philosophy into the development of the Islamic Education curriculum holds significant potential for enriching the learning process and the development of students' character. This approach allows students not only to gain a profound understanding of Islamic teachings but also to develop critical and reflective thinking skills necessary for facing the challenges of the modern world. Through this integration, Islamic education can become more relevant and adaptive to the social and intellectual dynamics present in today's global society.

However, there are several challenges that need to be addressed to optimize the implementation of philosophy within the Islamic Education curriculum. These challenges include students' intellectual readiness, the need for training and professional development for teachers and lecturers, and the necessity for clearer standards and guidelines in applying philosophy across educational institutions. Addressing these challenges requires a structured approach and support from all parties involved in the educational process, including educational institutions, government bodies, and the community.

Overall, integrating philosophy into the Islamic Education curriculum can make a meaningful contribution to shaping students with a strong Islamic identity while

remaining open to critical thinking and cross-cultural dialogue. An Islamic education that is integrated with philosophy functions not only as a means of transmitting religious knowledge but also as a framework for holistic intellectual and spiritual development. Therefore, this approach is expected to produce a generation of Muslims who are more mature, reflective, and well-prepared to face the challenges of globalization with a solid foundation in Islamic values.

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