

Curriculum Of Islamic Education in The Context of Free Learning: A Critical Study

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the integration of the Islamic Education Curriculum in the context of the Merdeka Learning curriculum applied in Indonesia. The Free Learning curriculum, launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture, aims to give freedom and flexibility to schools and teachers in designing learning that matches the needs and potential of students. In this study, we explore how the principles and values of Islamic education can be aligned with the Free Learning approach. The methodology used is the study of critical literature involving analysis of policy documents, textbooks, and scientific articles related to the Curriculum of Free Learning and Islamic Education. To facilitate the process of analysis of research data, in this study data analysis using content analysis. The results of the research show that, that an effective integration between the Islamic Education Curriculum and the Freedom of Learning curriculum requires close cooperation between government, schools, and the community. A holistic and inclusive approach can help ensure that students not only gain academic knowledge, but also develop a strong character in line with Islamic values.

Keywords: Curriculum, Islamic Education, Free Learning, Curriculum Integration, Learning Flexibility

A. INTRODUCTION

Education serves as a pivotal element for governmental efforts in nation-building and state development. The 1945 Constitution distinctly articulates that the establishment of the Indonesian government is intended for multiple objectives, one of which is the enhancement of the educational quality of its populace. Article 3 of Law Number 20 of 2003 regarding the National Education System underscores that the primary objective of education is to cultivate competencies and to instill a commendable national character and civilization, thereby facilitating the advancement of the nation's life, as well as fostering students who possess faith in and reverence for God Almighty, who exhibit strong personality traits, maintain health, possess knowledge, demonstrate capability, exhibit creativity, embrace independence, uphold democratic values, and exhibit a sense of responsibility (Sarumpaet, 1963). The swift advancement of technology has concomitantly escalated the necessity for diverse enhancements within the educational sector. Technology not only affects the way of teaching and learning, but also creates new needs in curricula that are more adaptive and relevant to the times. Educational innovations, such as the Independent Learning Curriculum, are present as a response to this dynamic, providing space for flexibility and creativity in the learning process. The integration of this curriculum with local and religious values, such as those contained in Islamic Education, is a challenge as well as an opportunity to produce a generation that is not only superior in knowledge, but also strong in character and morals (Alfiyanto, et al., 2023; Alfiyanto, et al., 2023; Ikhwan et al., 2023; Rashed & Tamuri, 2022).

Law Number 20 of 2003 delineates that the curriculum encompasses a comprehensive framework of plans and structures pertaining to content, subject matter, and prescribed methodologies that serve as foundational guidelines in the execution of the pedagogical process. Within the curriculum, one can identify learning plans, material content, instructional materials, and educational processes, which constitute the most critical components in the attainment of educational objectives. (Yuliatin, 2023) The curriculum also regulates evaluation models used to determine benchmarks for student learning success, as well as setting assessment standards for educators and students. Thus, the curriculum ensures that education takes place in an orderly and structured manner. To realize an effective curriculum, it is necessary to conduct further studies to determine the right curriculum for certain educational units. Therefore, curriculum development is essential. As time goes by, human needs for knowledge continue to evolve and change, and rapid technological developments also affect the curriculum. In its development, the right foundation or principle is needed as the foundation for the curriculum. This curriculum principle provides guidance on how the curriculum is created, arranged, and developed (Alexander & Pallas, 1984).

In the domain of curriculum development, these principles serve as guiding frameworks to ensure that the curriculum evolves in alignment with established educational doctrines. By adhering to this principle, the curriculum establishes a robust foundation, facilitating both general education and Islamic religious education. Islamic religious education is characterized by an aspirational vision and mission, encapsulated in the concept of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*, while the fundamental tenets of Islamic education encompass a wide array of life's multifaceted challenges. Islamic education is inherently linked to the responsibilities associated with human stewardship, or the role of being a caliph, aimed at fostering a world that is prosperous, dynamic, harmonious, and sustainable, as alluded to by Allah in the Qur'an. Consequently, Islamic education assumes a pivotal role in cultivating the character and ethical values of students, in alignment with Islamic principles, whilst simultaneously addressing the exigencies of contemporary advancements and technological progress. The incorporation of Islamic values within a responsive and adaptable curriculum, such as that proposed by the Independent Learning Curriculum, has the potential to yield substantial benefits in the realm of holistic and balanced education (Mutiani & Mardiah, 2022).

Based on the above explanation, there are several studies that have been carried out with a variety of theoretical approaches, methods and analysis. Some of these studies include; Satria Kharimul Qolbi and colleagues. The Application of Fundamental Principles of Curriculum Development to the Advancement of Islamic Religious Education Curriculum (Qolbi & Hamami, 2021). The findings of the research indicate that there exist five fundamental principles that underpin the development of the PAI curriculum. These principles encompass theological, philosophical, psychological, socio-cultural, as well as scientific and technological dimensions. Examples of the application of these principles are as follows: theology uses the Qur'an and Hadith, philosophical combines ideas from various schools of philosophy, psychology assesses ability by level, and socio-cultural emphasizes cultural recognition. This research elucidated that the implementation of principles pertaining to curriculum development plays a significant role in the theoretical and practical enhancement of the Islamic religious education curriculum. Then the research conducted by Ramdhan, Tauhid-Based Islamic Education Curriculum Design (Ramdhan, 2019).

The results of the study show that, learning monotheism and morals must be prioritized, so that students are introduced to monotheism first rather than worship materials and skills. In addition, other subject matter must be colored with monotheism in each basic competency or achievement indicator. Also a research conducted by Canifudin, Reconstruction of the Islamic Education Curriculum (Analysis of Islamic Education Development and Materials) (Canifudin et al., 2020). The results of the study show that, (1) The curriculum includes a variety of subjects that must be studied by teachers and students in accordance with their goals to achieve certain goals, namely to improve students' knowledge and skills, both inside and outside the classroom; (2) Islamic educational philosophy functions as a determinant of the general purpose of education, so that the curriculum contains the values believed in Islamic education.

Meanwhile, in this study, the study will focus on analyzing implementation challenges and appropriate strategies to implement the Independent Learning Curriculum. The goal is to relate the principle of Freedom of Learning to Islamic education, which is often considered to be rigid and religiously inclined learning, and to emphasize aspects of learning that contain religious studies. This includes the study of classical books and religious studies that do not contradict the principles of religious law. This research will explore how the principles of flexibility and creativity in the Independent Learning Curriculum can be integrated with traditional approaches in Islamic education. It is important to ensure that students not only get a balanced education between general science and religion, but are also able to adapt to the times and technology. Thus, the strategies to be analyzed include more innovative teaching methods, the use of technology in learning, and the development of a curriculum that is able to accommodate Islamic values while encouraging critical and creative thinking. This research will also identify the main challenges in the implementation of this curriculum, as well as offer solutions to overcome these obstacles, so that Islamic education can be more relevant and dynamic in accordance with the principle of Freedom of Learning.

B. METHOD

This investigation employs a qualitative methodology utilizing a critical analytical framework (Moleong, 2017). This methodology endeavors to conduct a comprehensive examination of the multifaceted dimensions associated with the amalgamation of the Islamic Education Curriculum and the Independent Learning Curriculum. The data sources utilized in this investigation comprise primary data, acquired through an extensive review of numerous scholarly texts, journals, and articles that elucidate the implementation of the independent learning curriculum within both general education institutions and Islamic educational settings. Secondary data sources are gathered from a variety of policy documents, academic textbooks,

peer-reviewed journals, articles, and pertinent research reports (Sugiyono, 2017). The data collection technique in the research is in the form of a documentation study. Analysis of policy documents, curriculum, textbooks, articles, and other literature related to the Islamic Education Curriculum and the Independent Learning Curriculum (Moleong, 2017). The methodologies employed for data analysis warrant significant consideration, particularly the application of content analysis methodologies, wherein documentation is subjected to examination through content analysis methodologies. This process encompasses the encoding of data, the identification of salient themes, and the interpretation of data within both theoretical frameworks and practical applications (Krippendorff, 2022). Through this research method, it is hoped that a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and strategies in implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum in the context of Islamic Education can be obtained, as well as providing constructive recommendations for related parties.

C. RESULTS OF THE DISCUSSION

General Ideas of the Independent Learning Curriculum

The curriculum comes from the Latin word "currere" which means a place to run. (Irsad, 2016) The traditional definition of curriculum is the subject or subject studied. The term curriculum was originally popular in the world of sports as "curriculae," which refers to the distance that a runner or carriage must cover in a race from start to finish (Zuhri, 2012). From this concept, the curriculum enters the world of education and then is interpreted as a number of subjects in school or courses in higher education that must be taken to obtain a diploma.

In general, a curriculum can be defined as an overall plan that includes objectives, content, subject matter, and learning methods that are arranged to achieve certain educational goals (Yumnah et al., 2021). Here are some definitions of the curriculum according to education experts; Harold Albery and John Kerr, according to them, the curriculum is "the whole experience of a child in school under tutoring." (Subharani et al., 2014). This definition emphasizes that the curriculum covers all aspects of learning experienced by students in school, not only limited to subject matter but also the overall learning experience. Also, Hilda Taba explained, the curriculum is "a learning plan, which is prepared by considering various things about the learning process and individual development." (Demirel Dengeç et al., 2023). This definition highlights that the curriculum is not just a subject matter, but also a learning design or design that considers various factors such as the learning process, student development, and educational goals.

These differences in curriculum definitions illustrate different approaches to the concept and scope of the curriculum. The definition of Albery and Kerr emphasizes the overall student learning experience, highlighting the importance of learning experiences beyond the subject matter alone. Hilda Taba's definition highlights aspects of learning design or design that involve consideration of the learning process and individual development. This shows that the curriculum is not only about what is taught but also how to teach it by paying attention to the characteristics of students. By understanding the differences in these definitions, education decision-makers can develop a more holistic and effective curriculum, in accordance with the educational context and the goals to be achieved (Schauber et al., 2015).

The Independent Curriculum is a curriculum approach that emphasizes flexibility and freedom for educators in structuring learning (I. G. Pratama, 2023; Rahman et al., 2023). Here are some of the main points regarding the Independent Curriculum:

1. **Diverse Intracurricular Learning.** The Merdeka Curriculum offers a variety of options in intracurricular learning, allowing students to explore concepts and strengthen their competencies in various subjects.

2. **Content Optimization.** The main goal of the Independent Curriculum is so that the learning content can be optimally arranged, ensuring that students have enough time to understand the material well.
3. **Flexibility for Teachers.** Teachers are given the flexibility to choose various teaching tools and learning methods that suit the learning needs and interests of students. This allows for variations in teaching and learning approaches that are tailored to the characteristics of the class or individual.
4. **Customized Learning.** The Independent Curriculum focuses on learning that can be well adapted to the needs and learning environment of students. This approach pays attention to individual differences in learning abilities and allows educators to adapt learning strategies to real-world conditions in the classroom.
5. **Quality learning.** By giving educators the freedom to create an appropriate learning environment, the Independent Curriculum aims to improve the overall quality of learning (Noer et al., 2023). It involves using innovative and responsive methods that can spark students' interest and motivation to learn.

By employing this methodology, it is anticipated that the Independent Curriculum will afford educators enhanced opportunities to cultivate efficacious and pertinent pedagogical strategies, in alignment with the evolving dynamics and developmental needs of learners in the contemporary educational landscape. Curriculum development is very necessary because the applicable curriculum is often seen as ineffective or irrelevant to the development of the times. Therefore, the curriculum is systematically prepared and updated to meet the needs of the community. The development of the latest curriculum is carried out to ensure that education remains relevant and can support the needs and challenges that exist in society. Curriculum changes and developments have significant logical consequences, affecting the entire education system, including teaching methods, evaluations, and student learning outcomes. A well-structured curriculum can help create a better and relevant education, preparing students to better face the challenges of the future (Susilowati, 2022).

Curriculum development encompasses the comprehensive planning of all facets of the curriculum, commencing from the foundational elements, the architecture of the subject matter, the breadth of content, the sequence of instructional materials, the frameworks of the educational program, to the formulation of guidelines for effective implementation. This process is part of the planning that aims to produce better learning tools, based on the results of the assessment of the applicable curriculum, so as to create more optimal teaching and learning conditions. Curriculum development encompasses a sequence of processes designed to formulate an innovative curriculum through methodical preparatory measures, or alternatively, derived from the evaluations conducted over a specified timeframe. This means that the learning process has an important meaning in maintaining and improving the quality of human life (Hasim, 2020).

Academic performance is the result of a learning process that can provide significant benefits, but can also have a negative impact if not managed properly. Learning at least serves to maintain human existence by enriching the knowledge and skills needed to adapt to the changes and challenges of the times. In this context, good curriculum development not only emphasizes improving learning outcomes but also pays attention to the development of students' character and skills so that they are ready to face real life with all its complexities. (Rahmadayanti & Hartoyo, 2022)

Islamic Education Curriculum

At the beginning of Islamic civilization, the concept of curriculum had different meanings depending on the context in which it was used. Historically, in the context of education, the term "curriculum" tended to be interpreted as "maddah," which refers to the subject or content of the lesson that must be taught to students. In the Arabic dictionary, the term "curriculum" (Manhaj) is often defined as "the path of light" or "the path of light that man walks in various areas of his life." (Noorzanah, 2019). Omar Al-Shaibani, an Islamic scholar, explained that the curriculum (Manhaj) in the context of education is intended as a bright path taken by educators or teachers with those they are educated or trained, to develop their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In the classical period of Islam, the determination of the Islamic educational curriculum was in the hands of Ulama, namely a group of people who are experts in religious science and law, and are considered authoritative in religious matters (Nidawati, 2021).

Conservative views on religion and a strong belief in revelation as the main source of knowledge greatly influenced the development of the curriculum at that time. In the period after Al-Ghazali, there was a rejection of the influence of schools inspired by Greece philosophy, which influenced the direction of education in mosques, academies, and madrasas (Solihin, 2013). The learning model is adapted from halaqah-halaqah (scientific discussion) in the jami mosque. In preparation for studying the sciences of religion and fiqh, one must learn Arabic, including grammar and composition, as well as the basics of prose and poetry (Anwar & Mulyani, 2018). These early studies were often carried out with the help of a personal tutor or through attendance at halaqah in Arabic. Grammar (Nahwi) is considered an important part of education, as it helps in a better understanding of the sacred text.

Muslim pedagogy at that time also accepted the Greek view that the ability to think logically and clearly was directly related to the ability to speak and write properly. Therefore, tutors place a strong emphasis on exercises that help develop language proficiency. This understanding shows that the development of the curriculum in the early days of Islamic civilization was not only based on academic aspects alone, but also included the development of character and language skills that supported a deep understanding of religious teachings and practical applications in daily life (Alkouatli, 2018).

According to al-Ghazali, the Islamic education curriculum has a priority order that must be considered. The order is as follows (Barni & Mahdany, 2017):

1. Al-Quran and as-Sunnah. Studying the Quran and Sunnah ranks first in Islamic education. It includes religious sciences such as tafsir, hadith, and fiqh. A Muslim must study the Quran and Sunnah first as the main provision in carrying out his duties as a servant of Allah and caliph on earth.
2. Linguistic sciences (Arabic). The second is linguistics, especially Arabic, which includes nahwu, shorof, and fiqh lugah. Mastery of Arabic is important because it is a tool for understanding religious science, especially the Quran and Sunnah. The Quran was revealed in Arabic, and most of the hadith literature was written in this language.
3. The sciences are included in the category of mandatory kifayah. It includes medical science, arithmetic, and a variety of other expertise, including political science (*shiasah*).
4. Cultural Sciences. It covers poetry, literature, history, and branches of philosophy such as mathematics, logic, and medical science that do not address metaphysical, political, and ethical issues.

The essence of the Islamic education curriculum is a comprehensive guide designed to form a holistic Muslim individual, integrating spiritual, moral, intellectual, and social values. This curriculum is based on the principles of the Quran and Sunnah, with the main goal of forming kamil people, namely perfect individuals in devotion to Allah (abdun dimension) and

in carrying out their responsibilities as caliphs on earth (caliph dimension). The Islamic education curriculum includes four main components (Suhayib & Ansyari, 2023):

1. Purpose. Directing education to achieve the formation of individuals who have a balance between spiritual and intellectual dimensions, and are able to carry out their roles as servants of Allah and leaders in society.
2. Fill. The material taught includes religious sciences such as tafsir, hadith, and fiqh, as well as Arabic language science as a tool for understanding religious texts. In addition, it also includes sciences that include *farḍhu kifayah* such as medicine, mathematics, and cultural sciences.
3. Method. Diverse teaching approaches, both through traditional methods such as halaqah (group discussion) and memorization, as well as modern methods that are interactive and student-centered.
4. Evaluation. An assessment that measures not only cognitive aspects, but also affective and psychomotor aspects, to ensure the achievement of comprehensive educational goals.

In summary, the Islamic education curriculum aspires to cultivate individuals possessing a profound comprehension of religious tenets, practical competencies, and the capacity to make constructive contributions to society, consistent with the principles of Islam.

Compatibility of the principle of freedom of learning with Islamic education

The doctrine of "Freedom of Learning," articulated by the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Makarim, seeks to enhance the autonomy of educational institutions, educators, and learners in the selection of pedagogical approaches and instructional resources that align with their individual requirements. This doctrine is profoundly pertinent to numerous dimensions of Islamic education, which underscores the importance of character development, self-sufficiency, and the acquisition of beneficial knowledge. (Sadat, 2022) In accordance with the findings derived from the analytical study, the tenet of autonomous learning exhibits a significant alignment with the principles of Islamic education within the educational paradigm. The following delineates several congruencies between the principle of Learning Freedom and the framework of Islamic education:

Independence in Learning

The notion of autonomous learning within the framework of contemporary education in Indonesia underscores the significance of learner autonomy throughout the educational process. This aligns with the objective of cultivating individuals who possess the capacity for critical and creative thought and who can exhibit initiative in the acquisition of knowledge. Within the autonomous learning curriculum, students are prompted to investigate and seek out information beyond the confines of the curriculum established by the educational institution. This initiative seeks to foster a learning ambiance that is more adaptable and tailored to the needs and interests of the learners.

On the other hand, in the tradition of Islamic education, the concept of lifelong learning (*thulab al-'ilm*) has long been known and appreciated. Islam strongly encourages its people to continue to seek knowledge without time or place. The phrase "Demand knowledge from the cradle to the grave" illustrates how important independence is in the learning process. This reflects that learning is an obligation that lasts a lifetime and is not limited to a specific age or situation (Hudri & Umam, 2022). Independence in learning, both in the context of independent learning and Islamic education, has several important aspects that are interrelated:

- a. Intrinsic Motivation. Both the independent learning curriculum and the concept of *thulab al-'ilm* emphasize the importance of intrinsic motivation. Students or individuals are encouraged to learn because of an internal drive to know and understand the world around them, not just because of external demands such as grades or exams.

- b. Continuous Learning. Both of these concepts recognize that learning is a never-ending process. Freedom of learning encourages students to continue to seek knowledge outside the classroom, while thulab al-'ilm emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning.
- c. Exploration and Creativity. In independent learning, students are given the freedom to explore topics that interest them, which encourages creativity and innovation. Islamic education also recognizes the importance of exploring various sources of knowledge and thought, including worldly and spiritual sciences.
- d. Personal Responsibility. Both of these approaches emphasize the importance of personal responsibility in the learning process. Students or individuals are encouraged to take the initiative and take responsibility for the development of their own knowledge.

Thus, independence in learning is at the core of these two approaches, which complement and enrich each other. The independent learning curriculum and Islamic education both emphasize the importance of the active role of individuals in the learning process, which ultimately aims to create a more knowledgeable, creative, and independent society.

Character Education

In every educational curriculum, including the Independent Learning Curriculum and Islamic Education, there is a significant emphasis on the formation of good, creative, and competitive student characters in various situations (Komalasari & Yakubu, 2023). It can be seen in several aspects, such as;

Character Formation in the Independent Learning Curriculum

The Independent Learning Curriculum emphasizes the importance of developing students comprehensively, not only focusing on academic aspects, but also aspects of character and life skills. This includes critical thinking skills, creativity, and adaptability. One of the main goals of the Independent Learning Curriculum is to form good student character. It includes values such as integrity, responsibility, cooperation, and social care. This principle is then seen in the learning method of the independent learning curriculum which is designed to be relevant to the real-life context of students, so that they can apply the knowledge and skills gained in daily life (Pattipawaej et al., 2023).

Moral Formation in Islamic Education

In Islamic education, character formation is then directed to the principle of tarbiyah which includes the development of a person's moral and spiritual aspects. The goal is to form individuals who have noble morals and strong faith. Islamic education emphasizes on teaching values such as honesty, simplicity, patience, and sincerity. Good morals are seen as the main foundation in the life of a Muslim. In addition, Islamic education also emphasizes holistic development, where academic, spiritual, and moral aspects are developed in a balanced manner. Students are taught to be individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have a kind heart and commendable behavior.

Flexibility in Teaching Methods

In teaching theory, both in free learning and in Islamic education, teachers have the opportunity to adapt their teaching process to the needs of students and foster their interest in learning. Giving teachers the freedom to use innovative and creative teaching approaches to meet the needs of students. Throughout the history of Islamic education, scholars have used a variety of learning approaches, ranging from halaqah (group meetings) to various classical books (Aji, 2023). This shows that flexibility in Islamic education has been used for a long time.

Contextual Learning

Adapting to the situation and social context of the community in providing teaching and understanding knowledge to students is an important action in the learning process. This approach ensures that learning becomes more meaningful, relevant, and effective for students.

In the context of independent learning, learning is encouraged to be more contextual and relevant to real life, and adapted to local needs. This concept emphasizes freedom and flexibility in the educational process, allowing teachers to adapt learning methods and materials according to the characteristics and needs of students. This aims to enable students to develop critical thinking skills, creativity, and problem-solving skills that are relevant to the challenges of daily life. Islamic education also emphasizes the importance of knowledge that is useful and relevant to daily life (Yaqin & Taufikin, 2023). In Islam, science is not only seen as an accumulation of theoretical knowledge, but also as a means to achieve the benefit of the ummah. Education in Islam integrates moral and spiritual values with science, encouraging the practical application of the acquired knowledge. This means that learning in Islam seeks to create individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also have strong moral and ethical integrity.

For example, in contextual learning, a teacher can relate math concepts to everyday activities such as shopping or managing finances, so students can see the immediate relevance of what they are learning. Likewise in Islamic education, teaching about zakat not only includes the law and its theory, but also teaches students how to calculate and distribute zakat in real life, fostering a sense of social responsibility. With this approach, education not only serves as a tool for transferring knowledge, but also as a means to develop practical characters and skills that will help students in their daily lives. The combination of independent learning and the principles of Islamic education that emphasizes useful knowledge can create a holistic education system that is oriented towards the development of the whole individual.

Inclusivity

Strengthening information and more inclusive teaching is an important essence in the knowledge transfer process between teachers and students. Through this approach, learning becomes more constructive, contributing to the formation of students' attitudes and viewpoints towards life and social problems in society. This approach is in line with the concept of Freedom of Learning applied in Indonesia, where teachers are directed to provide inclusive teaching. This ensures that all students, regardless of background, have the same opportunity to learn.

In an Islamic perspective, the principles of justice and equality are strongly emphasized, which encourages inclusivity in education. Islam teaches that all individuals, regardless of social, economic, or gender background, deserve a proper education (Aminah & Sya'bani, 2023). Thus, both in the concept of Freedom of Learning and Islamic teachings, inclusivity in education is a fundamental principle that must be carried out. This ensures that every individual gets his or her right to learn and develop, which will ultimately lead to a more just, knowledgeable, and prosperous society.

Active Student Participation

In an effective teaching and learning process, good teaching methods are the key to forming enthusiasm, bringing out a critical spirit, and courage in every student. One indicator of an educator's success is his ability to create an environment where learners feel safe and encouraged to demonstrate their abilities. Inclusive and participatory teaching methods are essential in this regard (HajAlizadeh & Khorasani Anari, 2016).

In the context of Freedom of Learning, students are directed to participate more actively in the learning process. This allows them to be more engaged in the material being taught, develop critical thinking, and take responsibility for their own learning. Educators act as facilitators who provide guidance and space for students to explore and innovate. This principle is also applied in Islamic education. Teaching methods in Islamic education often involve the active participation of students. One example is the tradition of halaqah, where students are invited to discuss and ask questions (Tubagus Syihabudin et al., 2023). In halaqah, the teacher acts as a moderator who facilitates discussions, encourages students to think

critically, and asks deep questions. This method emphasizes the importance of active participation of students in the learning process, in accordance with the principle that effective learning actively involves students.

Participatory teaching methods in Islam are not only limited to halaqah. History records that many great scholars in Islam use methods that encourage active interaction between teachers and students. For example, Imam Malik and Imam Shafi'i often teach in an interactive format, asking questions to their students and inviting them to ask questions back. Thus, both in the context of Freedom of Learning and Islamic education, teaching methods that involve the active participation of students are essential to form a critical attitude and courage (Rofiah et al., 2023). Through this method, students not only receive information passively but are also actively involved in the learning process, which will ultimately improve their understanding and ability to apply knowledge in daily life.

Thus, in this case, the learning principle in the independent learning curriculum indirectly represents the suitability with Islamic education in many aspects, both in terms of independence, character development, flexibility of teaching methods, contextual learning, inclusivity, and active participation of students. Both emphasize the importance of holistic development of individuals that includes aspects of knowledge, skills, and morals.

Islamic Education Development Strategy in the Independent Learning Curriculum

The Islamic education development strategy can involve several approaches that focus on integrating Islamic values, improving the quality of education, and adapting to the times (Akbar, 2023). These steps are a new effort to align Islamic education with all models of change in the modern learning system. Here are some strategies that can be implemented:

Integration of Islamic Values in Learning

In order to harmonize the principles of Islamic teachings in learning, synchronizing in the form of methods is the right strategy to be carried out in this case in the form of a character-based curriculum. A character-based curriculum is an educational approach that emphasizes not only academic mastery, but also on the development of students' character. In this context, integrating Islamic values such as honesty, justice, and compassion in every subject is one way to form students with good character and noble character. In addition, thematic learning is another step that can be taken. In this case, by using themes that are relevant to Islamic values in thematic learning to foster students' holistic understanding of Islamic teachings (Rustam et al., 2021).

Active and Participatory Learning Approach

Participatory learning is an educational approach that emphasizes the active involvement of students in the learning process. In this method, students are not only recipients of information, but also as active participants who contribute to every aspect of learning (Jarkiewicz, 2020). This is inversely proportional to the traditional teacher-centered approach, where the teacher dominates and the student plays a passive role. Characteristics of participatory learning;

- a. Students as Learning Centers. In participatory learning, students are at the center of the learning process. They are given the opportunity to actively participate in discussions, projects, and other activities that allow them to explore and develop their knowledge and skills (Könings et al., 2010).
- b. Teachers as Facilitators. The role of the teacher is more as a facilitator and mediator who helps students find answers to their own questions. Teachers provide the necessary guidance and resources, but students are expected to take the initiative and take responsibility for their own learning (Goodyear & Dudley, 2015).
- c. Diverse Learning Activities. Participatory learning involves a variety of learning activities such as group discussions, collaborative projects, presentations, and simulations that

- encourage students to think critically, work together, and solve problems (McCabe & O'Connor, 2014).
- d. **Interactive Learning Environment.** Classes are designed to create an interactive and dynamic environment where students feel comfortable sharing ideas and collaborating with classmates. Technology is often used to support these interactions and collaborations (Chen, 2005).
 - e. **Contextual Learning.** Students are encouraged to relate the subject matter to their own real life and experiences, making learning more relevant and meaningful (Hartnell-Young, 2003).
 - f. **Process-Based Evaluation.** Assessment in participatory learning does not only focus on the end result, but also on the learning process itself. Self-reflection, peer feedback, and formative evaluation are some of the methods used to assess student progress (Sari et al., 2021).

Overall, participatory learning puts students at the center of the learning process and transforms the role of teachers into facilitators who support students in exploring and developing their potential to the fullest. This method not only makes learning more meaningful, but it also prepares students with the skills necessary to face real-world challenges.

Teacher Professional Development

The development of the teaching profession is an effort to improve teachers' abilities by considering educational needs. The main focus is to improve the quality and performance of teachers in an objective and open manner, as well as to support their career development. The goal is to improve teacher competence, including in the pedagogic, personal, social, and professional fields. The basic principles of teacher professional development include justice and democracy, which respects human rights and cultural and religious values of the community. The process must be carried out systematically and openly, and be sustainable throughout the teacher's career. Professional development must also set an example and encourage teachers' innovation and creativity in learning (Postholm, 2016).

Collaboration with Communities and Religious Institutions

Collaboration between teachers and the community and religious institutions can have a significant impact on the development of the teaching profession and the improvement of the quality of education (Khasawneh et al., 2023). Here are some of the key aspects of this collaboration:

- a. **Additional Resources.** Communities and religious institutions often have resources that can support teaching in schools. This could be practical experience, an expert in a particular field, or access to facilities or libraries that are beneficial to students and teachers.
- b. **Cultural and Local Knowledge.** Collaboration with the community allows teachers to understand more deeply the values of the local culture and the social context in which their students grew up. This knowledge can help in designing relevant curricula and more meaningful teaching for students (Khasawneh et al., 2023).
- c. **Encourage student engagement.** Through cooperation with religious institutions or communities, teachers can organize extracurricular activities or learning projects that encourage active student engagement. Examples include volunteer programs, social activities, or research projects that focus on local or humanitarian issues.
- d. **Source of Inspiration and Motivation.** Collaboration with communities and religious institutions can provide teachers with an additional source of inspiration and motivation in their teaching. This can come in the form of moral support, inspirational stories, or motivational talks that rekindle the passion for teaching with dedication (Patton & Parker, 2017).
- e. **Networks and Connections.** Collaborating with communities and religious institutions also helps teachers expand their professional networks. This could open the door to an exchange

of ideas, discussions about best practices, or even an opportunity to engage guest speakers or mentors from outside the school (Penuel et al., 2020).

- f. **A Collaborative Approach to Problem Solving.** Through collaboration, teachers can learn to use a collaborative approach in solving complex educational problems. It involves sharing knowledge, skills, and experience to achieve more effective solutions (Hendraswari et al., 2023).

Collaboration with communities and religious institutions not only enriches the learning experience of students, but also broadens teachers' horizons and skills in facing contemporary educational challenges. This reminds us that education is not only the responsibility of the school, but also a shared responsibility in the wider society.

Adapting Materials to Local Context

Adapting learning materials to local contexts is key to making learning more relevant and meaningful for students (Pratama & Sumardi, 2022). Here are some important strategies in adapting the material to the local context:

- a. **Understanding Local Culture and Values.** Teachers need to investigate and understand the culture, traditions, values, and norms that exist in their local communities. This includes knowing how local communities value education, parents' expectations of their children's education, and the values that are considered important in that context.
- b. **Integrating Case Studies or Local Examples.** Using case studies or examples from everyday life that are relevant to students can help them relate the material being taught to their own experiences. For example, in history lessons, studying local history or influential local figures (Mamasoatovna, 2022).
- c. **Using Local Language and Terms.** Using a language that is recognized and spoken by students in their community can help build a stronger relationship between students and the subject matter. This can also include integrating terms or phrases in the local language that are relevant to the topic being studied (Ferris-Fearnside et al., 2003).
- d. **Relating Materials to Local Social Issues.** Teaching material by relating it to social or environmental issues in the local community can increase students' motivation to learn. For example, teaching mathematics using data or statistics about local health or environmental issues (Rosenthal, 2003).
- e. **Invite Guests or Local Ressource Person.** Inviting guests from the local community, such as community leaders, local experts, or practitioners in related fields, can provide additional insight and hands-on experience to students. It also helps students see how their subject matter can be applied in real life in their communities (Edwards, 1998).
- f. **Invite Guests or Local Ressource Person.** Inviting guests from the local community, such as community leaders, local experts, or practitioners in related fields, can provide additional insight and hands-on experience to students. It also helps students see how their subject matter can be applied in real life in their communities (Kapucu, 2012).
- g. **Using local resources.** Utilizing local resources such as museums, historic sites, libraries, or local art centers to support learning can enrich students' learning experiences and provide deeper context for the material being taught. Adapting the material to the local context not only makes learning more relevant, but it also helps in building strong relationships between schools and communities. It encourages students to identify themselves as part of a wider community and build awareness of their responsibilities as citizens of society (Vare, 2021).

The implementation of these strategies requires commitment from all relevant parties, including the government, schools, teachers, parents, and the community. Thus, Islamic education in the Independent Learning Curriculum can develop optimally and make a positive contribution to the development of students' character and knowledge.

D. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the explanation of the above study, it can be briefly concluded that the Islamic education curriculum is indirectly relevant to the independent learning curriculum indirectly. It is based on several basic principles, including; Independence in Learning, Character Education, Flexibility in Teaching Methods, Contextual Learning, Inclusivity, Active Participation of Students, do not intersect with each other. These principles on the contrary support and strengthen each other, in this case the learning principles in the independent learning curriculum indirectly represent the suitability of Islamic education in many aspects, both in terms of independence, character development, flexibility of teaching methods, contextual learning, inclusivity, and active participation of students. Both emphasize the importance of holistic development of individuals that includes aspects of knowledge, skills, and morals. To strengthen these principles, there are several strategies that can at least be applied to maintain stability and compatibility between the Islamic education curriculum and the independent learning curriculum, including; Integration of Islamic Values in Learning, Active and Participatory Learning Approaches, Teacher Professional Development, Collaboration with Communities and Religious Institutions, Adjustment of Materials to Local Contexts. By implementing these strategies, it is hoped that the Islamic education curriculum can be more aligned with the principles of the independent learning curriculum, so as to produce students who are not only academically superior but also have a strong character and are ready to face the challenges of the times.

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