



Competency-Based Islamic Education Curriculum Development Policy

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ABSTRACT

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In the context of curriculum transformation, Islamic education in public schools is challenged to remain relevant by integrating religious values with 21st-century competencies. This study aims to examine the policy of competency-based Islamic Education curriculum development, focusing on value integration strategies, the role of teachers as curriculum designers, and the structural challenges in affective and spiritual assessment. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. The findings reveal that schools implement progressive curriculum policies by empowering teachers to contextualize religious learning and promote critical, ethical, and collaborative competencies. However, assessment of spiritual and affective domains remains a significant challenge due to limited instruments and teacher training. This study contributes to the discourse on Islamic education reform by highlighting the need for authentic assessment models and teacher capacity building to ensure curriculum effectiveness in public school settings.

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INTRODUCTION

Education plays a crucial role in shaping a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also has a strong moral and spiritual character. In addressing the global challenges of the 21st century, the competency-based learning approach is a key strategy in education reform (Munadi, 2020; Reksiana et al., 2024; Tobroni et al., 2024). This approach emphasizes the achievement of comprehensive abilities, including aspects of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Amid globalization and technological advances, Islamic religious education is also required to develop in line with the needs of the times through a curriculum that is not only normative but also applicable and contextual (Munadi, 2020; Ritonga et al., 2020; Roy et al., 2020). Therefore, the development of a competency-based Islamic education curriculum policy is an urgent need to

ensure that students gain a deep understanding of religion while being relevant to real life.

However, in its implementation, the development of a competency-based Islamic education curriculum still faces various challenges. Several obstacles often arise, including the mismatch between policies and classroom learning practices, limited learning resources, and educators' readiness to understand the competency approach as a whole (Akrim et al., 2022; Ozgen & El Shishtawy Hassan, 2021; Winoto, 2022). This condition indicates that, although the direction of the policy has been outlined nationally, its implementation still requires strengthening at both the technical and operational levels. This situation highlights the need for a more in-depth examination of how the policy is implemented in practice and the factors that influence its effectiveness in supporting meaningful Islamic religious learning (Assa'idi, 2021; Lafrarchi, 2021).

The phenomenon that occurs shows a gap between the design of curriculum policies and their actual implementation in the field. Many teachers still rely on traditional approaches in religious learning, while the emphasis on competency development often focuses solely on the cognitive aspect (Haddade et al., 2024; Sidik et al., 2024). An ideal Islamic education curriculum should be able to integrate Islamic values into all dimensions of learning, both through character development, life skills training, and instilling tolerant and inclusive attitudes (Amalia et al., 2024; Saparudin & Salim, 2023). This study focuses on how the curriculum policy is developed and implemented systematically and to what extent it can form a profile of students who are religious, competent, and have good morals.

Previous studies have discussed the importance of the competency approach in education in general; however, there are still few that highlight aspects of Islamic education curriculum policies within the context of formal education (Fitri et al., 2020; Mumtaz et al., 2024; Usman et al., 2021). This study aims to fill this gap by highlighting how the Islamic religious curriculum development strategy is designed, implemented, and evaluated based on a competency framework that is tailored to the needs of students. Aspects that will be reviewed include policy formulation, the role of teachers, and assessment instruments used to measure competency achievement in Islamic Religious Education subjects.

The uniqueness of this study lies in its focus on developing an Islamic education curriculum that is oriented towards competency as a whole. This study provides a critical analysis of the policy's effectiveness, while also offering strategic recommendations for policymakers and education practitioners on developing an adaptive and relevant curriculum model that aligns with the

socio-religious context of students. Thus, the results of this study are expected to make a significant contribution to enhancing the quality of Islamic religious education in light of 21st-century competencies.

The temporary argument in this study is that a policy of developing competency-based Islamic education curricula will be more effective if it is designed in a participatory and contextual manner, taking into account the characteristics of students in the general education environment. Teachers, as policy implementers, must be involved from the beginning in the formulation process to ensure synchronization between the curriculum vision and the reality of learning. The original contribution of this study lies in the in-depth analysis of the dimensions of Islamic curriculum policy in the context of general education, which has so far received little attention. This study also presents an integrative perspective on the relationship between the public policy approach and pedagogical practice, which is expected to serve as a reference for formulating Islamic religious curriculum policies that are more adaptive, measurable, and relevant to contemporary needs.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to understand the policy of developing a competency-based Islamic education curriculum at SMAN 74 Jakarta. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to dig up in-depth information about the dynamics of the policy, curriculum implementation, and the perceptions of stakeholders in the school environment. The case study design was used so that researchers could contextually explore how the competency-based curriculum is formulated, implemented, and evaluated in the practice of Islamic religious education in public schools (Haryono, 2023).

SMAN 74 Jakarta was chosen as the research location because this school is one of the secondary education institutions that implements a competency-based learning approach, including in the subject of Islamic Religious Education. This school also shows a commitment to the integration of Islamic values in the education process through various policies and supporting programs. By choosing SMAN 74 Jakarta, this study obtains a concrete picture of how the Islamic religious curriculum policy is designed and implemented in a pluralistic and competitive state public education environment.

Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation studies (Assyakurrohim et al., 2022; Harahap, 2020). Interviews were conducted with Islamic Religious Education teachers, vice principals for curriculum, and several students as key informants to gain a comprehensive understanding. Observations were

conducted to directly observe learning practices, teacher teaching methods, and student involvement in the competency-based learning process. Meanwhile, documentation studies were used to examine related documents such as the curriculum at the education unit level, lesson plans, syllabus, and internal school policies related to the development of Islamic education. Data analysis was conducted using data reduction techniques, data presentation, and thematic conclusion drawing, in order to find patterns and meanings behind the competency-based Islamic education curriculum development policy at school.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Integrative Alignment of Islamic Values and 21st Century Competencies

While the implementation of a competency-based Islamic Education curriculum in SMAN 74 Jakarta marks significant progress in educational reform, this study reveals key structural and pedagogical complexities that affect the depth and consistency of value integration. The curriculum has indeed evolved from a normatively oriented approach toward an integrative model, aligning religious values with 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, digital literacy, and communication. However, ensuring the systematic and sustainable fusion of these elements remains a multi-layered challenge.

A central issue lies in the varying degrees of teacher readiness to translate Islamic values into applied competencies across diverse learning contexts. Although some educators demonstrate innovation in project-based learning and contextual problem-solving rooted in religious principles, others remain anchored in conventional instructional patterns. This unevenness affects the holistic development of students, particularly in internalizing abstract spiritual values through measurable competency outcomes. Moreover, the current documentation and lesson planning practices reveal that the mapping of affective, cognitive, and psychomotor domains is often descriptive but lacks operational clarity in implementation.

Another complexity arises from the institutional demand to balance national curriculum standards with the philosophical foundation of Islamic education. While the school encourages creativity, teachers face time constraints and limited platforms for collaborative curriculum design. As a result, integrative planning often depends on individual teacher initiative rather than institutional strategy. This limits the scalability of good practices and reduces the potential of Islamic Education to function as both a character-building mechanism and a platform for global skill acquisition. Figure 1 below synthesizes these challenges:

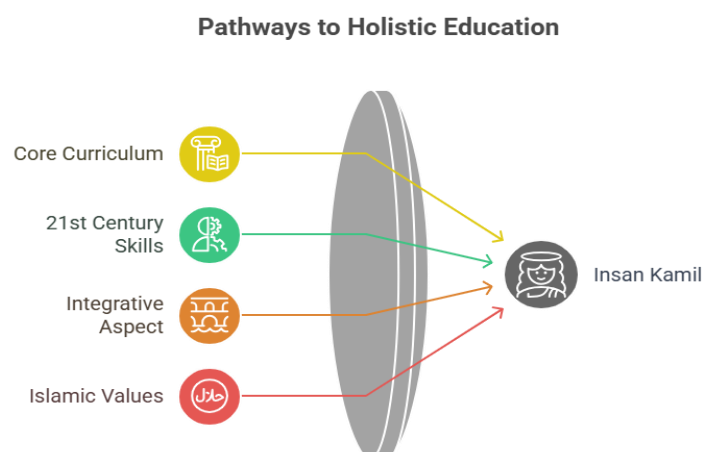


Figure 1. Dynamics of Curriculum Integration: Islamic Values and 21st Century Skills

The data reflected in Figure 1 indicate that while the shift toward integration is conceptually strong, the process requires more structured support. Without adequate training, shared instructional models, and collaborative planning tools, the risk remains that integration may become superficial embedded in rhetoric but not fully realized in classroom practice. To address this, the school would benefit from sustained professional development, a framework for interdisciplinary collaboration, and institutional monitoring mechanisms that ensure competency-based outcomes are consistently anchored in Islamic ethical values. This alignment is essential not only for meeting curriculum goals but also for shaping learners who are spiritually grounded, socially responsive, and globally competent.

Strategic Role of PAI Teachers as Curriculum Micro-Designers

The strategic role of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers in competency-based curriculum implementation transcends conventional instructional duties. At SMAN 74 Jakarta, teachers of PAI are not merely executors of centrally designed learning plans, but emerge as active curriculum micro-designers who craft and contextualize educational experiences. This micro-level curriculum innovation is carried out with attention to students' sociocultural backgrounds, contemporary societal issues, and spiritual development needs. Teachers engage in redesigning lesson plans (RPP) that integrate Islamic values with current global concerns such as environmental justice, digital literacy, and interfaith tolerance thus fostering religious learning that is both relevant and transformative.

Findings from interviews with PAI teachers and curriculum coordinators reveal that the school's policy framework grants pedagogical autonomy to subject teachers, particularly in value-driven subjects like religion. One teacher

shared, “We are given the space to adapt our approach to the realities of our students. Our curriculum is not just about memorizing verses, but also how students can live by those values in the real world.” This flexibility allows for adaptive planning that blends core religious teachings with problem-solving, critical thinking, and social engagement competencies that are essential for learners in a pluralistic society.

Observations from classroom activities further validate this strategy. Teachers were seen using case-based discussions, reflective journals, and collaborative projects as methods to embed moral reasoning into learning tasks. For instance, a unit on amanah (trustworthiness) was designed around digital ethics and online behavior, linking classical Islamic concepts with students’ daily digital interactions. Such instructional designs reflect a curriculum philosophy that is not static but alive, responsive, and aligned with the lived experiences of learners.

This model of teacher-driven curriculum design signifies a shift toward decentralized educational innovation, where frontline educators hold a key role in ensuring curricular relevance. The policy environment at SMAN 74 Jakarta supports this transformation by offering professional trust, peer collaboration forums, and space for pedagogical experimentation. In this context, the PAI teacher becomes not just a transmitter of values but a curriculum architect shaping future-ready, ethically grounded learners.

The implications of these findings highlight the value of empowering teachers as curriculum co-creators. By treating PAI educators as strategic agents in curriculum development, institutions foster educational experiences that are spiritually meaningful, socially aware, and pedagogically sound. This approach offers a replicable model for other general education schools seeking to elevate Islamic religious education through flexible, competency-oriented design strategies that honor both faith and relevance.

Structural Barriers in Assessing Affective and Spiritual Competence

One of the critical findings of this study is the structural limitation in evaluating affective and spiritual competencies within the competency-based Islamic Education curriculum. At SMAN 74 Jakarta, while policy directives support holistic education that includes spiritual growth, practical implementation reveals a gap particularly in how teachers assess values such as sincerity, discipline, empathy, and religious commitment. This gap highlights an imbalance in competency measurement, where cognitive skills are prioritized due to their easier quantifiability, while affective-spiritual aspects remain underdeveloped and inconsistently evaluated.

Through interviews and document analysis, it was found that teachers face challenges in designing assessment instruments that can objectively measure spiritual attitudes and behavioral outcomes. The absence of standardized rubrics, limited time for individual student reflection, and the dominance of written tests in classroom practice all contribute to the marginalization of affective domains. The following table presents summarized field data on these obstacles:

Table 1. Evidence of Findings: Barriers to Assessing Affective and Spiritual Competence

Data Source	Key Observation	Interpretation
Teacher Interviews	No structured rubric for evaluating sincerity, piety, or empathy	Indicates a need for concrete assessment models for abstract spiritual indicators
Lesson Plan Documentation	Focus on cognitive indicators (e.g., knowledge of Quranic content)	Shows that affective targets are underrepresented in planning
Class Observation	Assessment often limited to attendance and classroom demeanor	Suggests that spiritual behavior is reduced to surface-level compliance
Teacher Reflection Sheets	Teachers lack confidence in scoring student's inner attitudes	Reflects both skill gap and ambiguity in evaluation practices

Based on the data in Table 1, it can be concluded that, despite the curriculum's commitment to character and spiritual development, assessment practices in Islamic Education remain predominantly cognitive. The evaluation of affective-spiritual aspects is often subjective, anecdotal, or symbolic rather than grounded in observable and consistent criteria. As a result, competencies such as honesty, humility, and religious mindfulness, which are central to Islamic character education, are insufficiently captured in student assessments.

This pattern highlights the need for developing holistic and authentic assessment tools that are tailored to Islamic values. The school must invest in training programs that empower teachers with the skills to assess not only what students know but also how they internalize and apply Islamic teachings in authentic contexts. Additionally, integrating portfolio-based assessments, student self-reflections, and peer feedback mechanisms may offer more nuanced insights into students' moral and spiritual growth.

Ultimately, this finding confirms that spiritual development cannot be overlooked in a competency-based system. Without clear, fair, and actionable assessment models, the spiritual dimension risks being overlooked ironically in a curriculum intended to foreground it. This calls for a systemic realignment between curriculum intent and evaluation practices, ensuring that Islamic education remains both value-driven and educationally rigorous.

Discussion

The discussion of the results of this study will compare the findings in the field with relevant literature and explain the theoretical and practical implications of developing competency-based Islamic education curriculum policies. The first finding reveals the synchronization between Islamic values and 21st-century competencies in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum, where teachers actively integrate spiritual values with critical thinking, collaboration, and digital literacy skills. This aligns with Assalihee (2022), Al Maamari (2024), and Dabbagh et al. (2023), which state that modern Islamic education must be able to address global challenges while maintaining the substance of religious values. However, unlike most literature that emphasizes the importance of integration at the conceptual level, this study shows that teachers play a central role as micro-innovators in the classroom, not just implementers of central policies.

The second finding reveals the strategic role of PAI teachers as designers of adaptive micro-curriculums. This strengthens a previous study by Nisa (2024), Setiawan (2024), and Abdullah (2024), which stated that effective curriculum reform must involve teachers as agents of change. Teachers at SMAN 74 Jakarta have autonomy in designing lesson plans and teaching methods that are contextual to student needs and contemporary socio-religious issues. However, the novelty of this study lies in how teachers not only design content but also form a more inclusive and relevant Islamic learning narrative. This differs from the traditional approach, which creates a static curriculum document with limited room for teacher creativity.

The third finding is related to structural barriers in assessing affective and spiritual competencies. Literature, such as that presented by Sain (2025), Putri (2024), and Hina (2024), states that assessing the affective domain is the most challenging part of learning because it is subjective and requires a considerable amount of time. At SMAN 74 Jakarta, teachers face difficulties in compiling objective and standardized instruments for assessing spiritual attitudes. This shows a gap between the holistic curriculum vision and evaluation practices in the field. This study makes a theoretical contribution, suggesting that in religious education, there is a need for the development of an authentic evaluation system that not only assesses what students know but also how those values are internalized and lived.

From a theoretical perspective, this study broadens the understanding of how competency-based Islamic education curriculum policies are implemented in the context of general education (Katmon et al., 2020). Much of the literature focuses on Islamic education in formal religious institutions or madrasahs, but this study demonstrates that integrating religious values into the general

curriculum also requires an adaptive and participatory policy strategy (Athoillah et al., 2024; Mukhibat et al., 2024; Reksiana et al., 2024). In addition, the role of teachers as policy subjects is an important finding in bridging the macro vision of the curriculum and the micro-practices of learning.

The practical implications of this study indicate the need to increase teacher capacity in designing authentic and sustainable affective-spiritual assessments (Nasir et al., 2024; Thoyib et al., 2024; Zainal et al., 2022). Schools must also provide collaborative space for teachers to formulate indicators of attitude and spiritual competencies operationally, as well as compile measurable and contextual assessment rubrics. On the other hand, strengthening the role of teachers as micro curriculum designers needs to be supported through institutional policies that provide flexibility, training, and constructive supervision (Astuti, 2024; Gunaev, 2024).

Overall, the results of this study confirm that the development of a competency-based Islamic education curriculum is not limited to policy documents, but must also encompass aspects of full teacher involvement, a relevant assessment system, and the synergy of Islamic values with the demands of 21st-century competencies. Thus, curriculum policies will be more meaningful if translated through a participatory, reflective, and contextual approach. It is hoped that these findings will serve as a reference for educational policymakers in designing a religious curriculum that is not only normative but also transformative and applicable in the modern era.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the competency-based Islamic Education curriculum policy at SMAN 74 Jakarta represents a progressive effort to integrate Islamic values with 21st-century competencies. Teachers play a strategic role as curriculum micro-designers, adapting content to students' real-life contexts and promoting active, relevant learning in a religious context. The curriculum enables students to develop not only religious knowledge but also critical thinking, collaboration, and ethical awareness. However, challenges remain in assessing affective and spiritual competencies due to the lack of standardized instruments, limited training, and administrative burdens. These structural barriers risk reducing the spiritual dimension to a mere formality. Therefore, successful implementation of the curriculum requires systemic support through professional development and assessment reform. This study contributes to understanding how Islamic education in public schools can be both value-driven and competency-oriented. It also highlights the importance of empowering teachers and aligning policies with classroom realities to ensure the curriculum's goals are effectively achieved and sustained.

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