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Relevance of Islamic Religious Education
Curriculum to Socio-Cultural Dynamics in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the relevance of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum to the socio-cultural dynamics developing in Indonesia. The PAI curriculum has a strategic role in shaping the character and morals of students, so it must be able to respond to social changes, culture, and religious values in society. This study used a qualitative approach with document analysis methods and in-depth interviews with education stakeholders, such as teachers, students, and education experts. The results showed that the PAI curriculum in Indonesia has tried to keep up with socio-cultural developments, but there are still some challenges in its implementation. These challenges include the gap between teaching materials and community needs, lack of teacher training in dealing with contemporary issues, and resistance to curriculum innovation. This study suggests the need to strengthen the integration of local and global values in the PAI curriculum, the active involvement of the community in curriculum formulation, and the improvement of teacher competence to be able to teach PAI contextually and relevant to Indonesia's socio-cultural conditions. Thus, PAI curriculum can be more adaptive and contributive in facing the challenges of globalization and multiculturalism.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis relevansi kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) dengan dinamika sosial budaya yang berkembang di Indonesia. Kurikulum PAI memiliki peran strategis dalam membentuk karakter dan moral peserta didik, sehingga harus mampu merespons perubahan sosial, budaya, dan nilai-nilai keagamaan yang ada di masyarakat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode analisis dokumen dan wawancara mendalam terhadap pemangku kepentingan pendidikan, seperti guru, siswa, dan ahli pendidikan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kurikulum PAI di Indonesia telah berupaya mengikuti perkembangan sosial budaya, tetapi masih terdapat beberapa tantangan dalam implementasinya. Tantangan tersebut meliputi kesenjangan antara materi ajar dan kebutuhan masyarakat, kurangnya pelatihan guru dalam menghadapi isu-isu kontemporer, serta resistensi terhadap inovasi kurikulum. Penelitian ini menyarankan perlunya penguatan integrasi nilai-nilai lokal dan global dalam kurikulum PAI, pelibatan aktif masyarakat dalam perumusan kurikulum, serta peningkatan kompetensi guru agar mampu mengajarkan PAI secara kontekstual dan relevan dengan kondisi sosial budaya Indonesia. Dengan demikian, kurikulum PAI dapat menjadi lebih adaptif dan kontributif dalam menghadapi tantangan era globalisasi dan multikulturalisme.

PRELIMINARY

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is an important component of the education system in Indonesia. As a country with the largest Muslim population in the world, religious education plays a strategic role in building the nation's morals, ethics, and character. Therefore, the PAI curriculum in schools must be designed in such a way that it is relevant to the needs of society that continue to develop along with social and cultural changes. Indonesia is a country rich in socio-cultural diversity. Each region has unique cultural characteristics, customs, and local values. This condition makes education, including PAI, face the challenge of being able to accommodate this diversity without losing the essence of universal Islamic values. The PAI curriculum must be able to bridge religious values with the dynamics of multicultural society.

Along with the development of the times, globalization has had a significant impact on the mindset and lifestyle of the Indonesian people. The influence of globalization not only affects the economic and technological aspects, but also affects the social and cultural aspects. The Islamic Religious Education curriculum is required to respond to this dynamic by instilling relevant religious values without neglecting local and national identities. In the context of education, the curriculum is a living document that continues to develop according to the needs of the times. The Islamic Religious Education curriculum, as part of the national education system, not only functions as a medium for transferring religious knowledge, but also as a means of character formation and habituation of moral values in accordance with Islamic teachings. However, the relevance of this curriculum is often questioned, especially when faced with complex socio-cultural issues.

The socio-cultural dynamics in Indonesia include various complex phenomena such as urbanization, digitalization, pluralism, globalization, and changes in the lifestyle of the younger generation. These phenomena not only influence the way people view religious and cultural values, but also challenge the relevance of religion as a guide to life in a modern context. Therefore, the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum must be able to provide concrete solutions to these challenges, so that religion remains a relevant and meaningful guide to life for students amidst various changes in their lives (Dayusman, 2023).

However, the reality on the ground shows a significant gap between the content of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum and the real needs of society. Most of the material taught tends to be theoretical and abstract, without direct relevance to contemporary issues faced by students, such as issues of diversity, ethics in the digital world, or moral challenges of the younger generation. As a result, religious education has the potential to lose its role as an effective tool in building national character. Therefore, a more adaptive, applicable, and contextual curriculum update is needed, so that religious education can answer the challenges of the times and become a vehicle for forming students' morals and insights that are in accordance with the needs of the modern era.

In addition, another challenge in implementing the Islamic Religious Education curriculum is the readiness of educators. Islamic Religious Education teachers are often faced with limited resources, lack of training to deal with current issues, and pressure from an environment that is not always supportive. Therefore, the role of teachers is crucial in bringing the curriculum that has been designed to life. The process of learning Islamic Religious Education (ISE) in schools is often limited to the delivery of religious doctrine formally without opening space for critical discussion and exploration of deeper values. In fact, students need critical and reflective thinking skills to understand religious values in the context of the social and cultural dynamics of modern life. Therefore, a more contextual and dialogical learning approach is important so that students can see the relevance of religion in everyday life.

In addition, the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum needs to be designed in such a way that it can integrate local and global values harmoniously. Local values rooted in Indonesian cultural wisdom, such as cooperation, respect for parents, and customary values, can be a strong moral foundation and function as a filter against the negative influences of globalization, such as excessive individualism or moral degradation due to exposure to foreign cultures that are not in accordance with the nation's noble values. On the other hand, positive global values, such as tolerance, diversity, openness, social justice, and respect for human rights, also need to be adopted and internalized into the curriculum. These values can enrich students' perspectives, help them understand the dynamics of global life, and form an inclusive attitude in facing an increasingly multicultural society. By integrating these local and global values, students not only understand religion as something normative, but also as a guide to life that is able to answer the challenges of the modern world.

To realize this integration, a more inclusive, adaptive, and contextual curriculum update is needed. The curriculum must be able to accommodate the various needs of students in facing the realities of today's life, such as technological developments, religious pluralism, and ethical challenges in the digital era. The curriculum also needs to encourage students to think critically and reflectively, so that they not only memorize religious teachings, but are also able to apply them relevantly in everyday life. With this approach, the PAI curriculum can equip students with a relevant, applicable, and contributive understanding of religion in building a civilized society amidst the flow of global change (Umam, 2021).

This study aims to analyze the extent to which the PAI curriculum in Indonesia is relevant to the developing socio-cultural dynamics. The focus of this study is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current PAI curriculum, as well as to provide recommendations to improve its relevance in the future. This study also seeks to answer fundamental questions, such as, Is the PAI curriculum able to accommodate socio-cultural diversity? How does this curriculum respond to the challenges of globalization?

This study is expected to contribute to the development of a more relevant and contextual Islamic Religious Education curriculum. Thus, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum is not only a tool for religious education, but also an effective medium for building social and cultural awareness in students. This is important to create a generation that is not only religious, but also able to adapt to changing times. The relevance of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum to the socio-cultural dynamics in Indonesia is also related to how religious education can be a tool to prevent social conflict. Inclusive and tolerant religious education can be a pillar in maintaining religious harmony amidst Indonesia's diversity. Therefore, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum must be designed in such a way as to support this goal.

In addition, it is important to involve various stakeholders in the process of developing the PAI curriculum. Participation from the community, religious leaders, and education experts will ensure that the curriculum designed truly reflects the needs and expectations of the community. This will also increase the sense of ownership of the curriculum. In closing, this introduction underlines the importance of research on the relevance of the PAI curriculum to the socio-cultural dynamics in Indonesia. This research is expected to provide new insights that are useful for the development of religious education in Indonesia, so that it can make a real contribution to the progress of the nation (Sapura et al., 2024).

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with a library research method. Library research is a type of qualitative research that is usually carried out without going into the field to find data sources, so this research is based on written works, such as books or journals. with its data collection method functioning as a tool for reviewing documents (Mendes, E., Wohlin, C., Felizardo, K., & Kalinowski, 2020). Literature searches can utilize sources in the form of journals, books, dictionaries, documents, magazines, and other sources without conducting field research. According to Apriyanti, et al., providing a new theory with the support of appropriate data collection techniques is a form of literature review (Apriyanti, 2019).

This approach was chosen to obtain more in-depth information about how the Relevance of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Curriculum to the Socio-Cultural Dynamics in Indonesia. With this approach, the study aims to explain the phenomenon systematically based on data taken from reliable literature sources. Researchers will collect various relevant and valid references, such as books, journals, articles, and other information from credible websites. Through literature studies, researchers can formulate the main components in the PAI curriculum, such as objectives, teaching materials, learning methods, and evaluation approaches, as well as evaluate the extent to which this curriculum reflects universal values and 21st century skills needed in the global world.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The Importance of Relevance of PAI Curriculum

The importance of the relevance of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum is increasingly pressing amidst the ever-changing socio-cultural dynamics in Indonesia. The relevance of the PAI curriculum means that the material taught does not only focus on religious teachings in the form of

theory alone but is also able to connect religious values with the reality of students' daily lives. In Indonesia, which is experiencing rapid development in terms of urbanization, digitalization, pluralism, and changes in the lifestyle of the younger generation, the PAI curriculum must be able to respond to these changes to continue to provide an understanding that is in accordance with the context of the times. Without this relevance, religious education can become ineffective and lose its role as a moral and ethical guideline in shaping the character of the nation.

The existing socio-cultural dynamics require the Islamic Religious Education curriculum to be more adaptive and responsive to the challenges of the times. For example, urbanization that causes a shift in people's mindsets and lifestyles, especially in big cities, requires a more contextual approach in teaching religious values. Likewise, digitalization and the development of information technology affect the way students access information, including in terms of religious learning. A relevant Islamic Religious Education curriculum must be able to utilize technology to convey religious teachings in a way that is interesting and easy to understand for the younger generation who grow up in the digital world (Audi & Hamami, 2024).

In addition, pluralism and cultural and religious diversity in Indonesia are also challenges for the Islamic Religious Education curriculum. In a multicultural society, religious education must teach the values of tolerance, mutual respect, and diversity, so that students can live side by side with a sense of mutual understanding. A relevant Islamic Religious Education curriculum must integrate these values of diversity, without sacrificing the basic principles of religion, so that students not only understand their own religion, but also appreciate other religions and cultures around them.

Thus, the relevance of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum is not only about updating teaching materials, but also about how to teach religion in accordance with social and cultural developments. A relevant curriculum will equip students with an understanding of religion that is not only theoretically deep, but also applicable in facing the challenges of the times. This is very important so that religious education remains an effective tool for shaping the character of the nation, as well as providing moral and ethical guidelines that can be applied in everyday life, especially in this increasingly complex era of globalization (Safarnaa et al., 2022).

Socio-Cultural Dynamics That Influence PAI

The socio-cultural dynamics that occur in Indonesia have a significant impact on Islamic Religious Education (PAI), which includes various phenomena such as urbanization, digitalization, pluralism, changes in the lifestyle of the younger generation, and the influence of globalization. The phenomenon of urbanization, for example, triggers a rapid migration of people from villages to cities, which brings changes in the lifestyle and values of society. In big cities, people tend to be more open to various outside influences, including modern culture and lifestyles that are not always in line with existing religious values. This is a major challenge for the PAI curriculum to be able to accommodate the differences in values that arise between rural and urban environments, as well as maintain the relevance of religious teachings in increasingly developing urban life. This urbanization also changes students' perspectives on religion, where they may be more influenced by the consumerist and materialistic values that develop in the city. Therefore, it is important for the PAI curriculum to instill an understanding of religion that is applicable and relevant to city life and can help students maintain a balance between the development of the times and religious teachings (Lubis, 2022).

In addition, digitalization and advances in information technology have changed the way people access information, including in terms of religious learning. Students are currently more exposed to social media, the internet, and various digital platforms that often spread information that is not always in accordance with religious values. The presence of this technology can make students more likely to receive information passively without deep understanding, which can confuse them in interpreting the correct religious teachings. In response to this phenomenon, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum needs to utilize digital technology wisely to convey religious teachings in a more interactive and interesting way, while teaching students to think critically about the information they encounter in cyberspace. The use of technology in Islamic Religious Education can also introduce students to new ways of understanding religious teachings that are more contextual and applicable in their lives.

Equally important, pluralism and diversity in Indonesia add challenges to the Islamic Religious Education curriculum. As a country with various ethnicities, religions, and cultures, Indonesia faces the

need to teach religious values in a context that respects differences. In a multicultural society, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum must teach students that although each religion has different teachings, the basic principles of these religions, such as peace, mutual respect, and compassion, can still be upheld. The Islamic Religious Education curriculum must be able to instill an attitude of inclusivity and tolerance among students so that they can live side by side with various other religious and cultural groups with mutual respect. In addition, in dealing with changes in the lifestyle of the younger generation influenced by globalization, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum must adapt in a way that is more interesting and relevant to students. Today's young generation is more open to foreign cultures and tends to adopt a modern lifestyle that often conflicts with the religious values taught. Therefore, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum must place more emphasis on the application of religious values in daily life, provide a clear explanation of how religion can help students in facing the challenges of the times, and instill the importance of maintaining morals and religious identity amidst the rapid flow of globalization.

Thus, the socio-cultural dynamics that are developing in Indonesia require adjustments in the PAI curriculum so that it remains relevant and able to answer the challenges of the times. The PAI curriculum is not only tasked with teaching religious teachings, but also to shape the character of students who can understand and apply religious values in an increasingly complex social context. In response to this change, a more inclusive, adaptive, and applicable PAI curriculum update is needed to ensure that religious education continues to function as a strong guideline for life in facing various social and cultural challenges (Irmawati, 2024).

The Gap Between Islamic Religious Education Curriculum and Socio-Cultural Needs

The gap between the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum and the socio-cultural needs that are developing in Indonesia is a deep problem. Although the main objective of the PAI curriculum is to shape students' character and morals through religious teachings, the current curriculum still tends to be theoretical and does not fully touch on the practical needs of students in the field. The materials presented are often too focused on doctrinal and ritual aspects without providing space for students to think critically and reflectively about the application of religious teachings in everyday life. As a result, students are less able to connect religious teachings with the social and cultural dynamics they face in their environment.

In the context of Indonesia's ever-changing socio-culture, especially with the rapid development of technology, globalization, and social diversity, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum does not seem to be fully adaptive to these changes. For example, the increasingly widespread development of digitalization affects the way of life of the younger generation, where they access more information from social media and other digital platforms. However, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum often does not teach how to use technology wisely from a religious perspective, or even does not equip students with the ability to think critically about the information they obtain. This creates a gap between what is taught in schools and the reality that students face in their digital lives.

In addition, cultural and religious pluralism in Indonesia also creates a gap between the Islamic Religious Education curriculum and social reality. Although Indonesia is known for its diversity of ethnicities, religions, and cultures, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum still tends to focus only on Islamic teachings without giving sufficient emphasis to the importance of tolerance, mutual respect, and appreciation of differences. Students may gain a deep understanding of religion, but they are not trained to live side by side with the diversity around them. These risks creating misunderstanding or even conflict in an increasingly pluralistic society. The Islamic Religious Education curriculum needs to include more values of tolerance, appreciation of pluralism, and inclusive attitudes so that students can understand and apply their religious teachings in the context of cultural and religious diversity in society.

The shift in the lifestyle of the younger generation to be more individualistic and materialistic is also a major challenge. Many students are exposed to consumerist values and modern lifestyles that conflict with religious teachings. However, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum does not always provide sufficient emphasis on how religion can be a guide in dealing with the temptations of this modern lifestyle. The material taught focuses more on the obligations of worship and ritual aspects without connecting them to the strengthening of moral and social character needed by students in the modern era. Thus, there is a gap between what is taught in the classroom and what students face outside the classroom.

Overall, this gap shows that the Islamic Religious Education curriculum needs to be revised and adjusted to the growing socio-cultural demands. A more relevant and contextual Islamic Religious Education curriculum must be able to answer these challenges, such as by integrating religious values that are applicable in everyday life, teaching attitudes of tolerance and mutual respect in a pluralistic society and utilizing technology to convey religious teachings more effectively. For religious education to function as a tool to shape the character and morals of the nation, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum must be able to balance theoretical and practical aspects and bridge the gap between religious values and existing socio-cultural needs (Minabari et al., 2024).

More flexible PAI curriculum updates

Updating the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum to be more flexible is an urgent need to address the increasingly complex socio-cultural challenges in the modern era. A flexible curriculum not only focuses on teaching religious theory, but also provides space to adapt to ever-evolving dynamics, such as digitalization, globalization, pluralism, and changes in the lifestyles of the younger generation. In this update, the integration of local and global values is an important element. Local values based on Indonesian cultural wisdom, such as cooperation, politeness, and respect for parents, can be a filter against the negative influences of globalization. Meanwhile, global values such as tolerance, diversity, and openness can enrich students' perspectives and prepare them to interact in a global society. A flexible curriculum must also implement a more contextual and applicable approach, where the material taught is relevant to students' lives and can be applied in real situations, such as learning about the wise use of social media according to religious values or how to deal with moral challenges in modern life (Sanusi, 2021).

In addition, the use of technology is an important element in updating the Islamic Religious Education curriculum. Technology can be used to deliver material in a more interactive and interesting way, such as through learning applications, educational videos, or online platforms. By utilizing technology, Islamic Religious Education learning can be more flexible and in accordance with the needs of students in the digital era. A dialogic and participatory approach must also be applied, where students are not only passive listeners, but are also actively involved in discussions, reflections, and case studies. This allows students to think critically and connect religious teachings with the situations they face every day. A flexible Islamic Religious Education curriculum must also be inclusive and adaptive to the socio-cultural diversity in Indonesia. As a country with various ethnicities, religions, and cultures, Islamic Religious Education learning needs to teach respect for differences and instill an attitude of tolerance, so that students can live in harmony with others.

In addition, the PAI curriculum update must emphasize strengthening students' character and morals, such as through practical activities that help students internalize religious values in their lives. Religious education is not only about memorizing verses or understanding theories, but also about how these values shape students' personalities into honest, disciplined, responsible, and caring individuals. The flexibility of this curriculum also needs to be supported by periodic evaluation and updates so that it is always relevant to the times. With continuous updates, the PAI curriculum can continue to be adjusted to meet dynamic socio-cultural needs, without losing the essence of religious teachings. This more flexible PAI curriculum is expected to be a relevant and effective guideline in guiding students to face the challenges of modern life while still upholding religious values (Adam, 2023).

Discussion

The Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum is an integral part of the national education system that has a strategic role in shaping the character of students in accordance with Islamic and Indonesian values. As the main guide in learning Islam in schools, the PAI curriculum not only aims to teach religious teachings, but also to shape students who have noble morals, tolerance, and high social awareness. However, in the context of Indonesian society that continues to change, the PAI curriculum faces major challenges to remain relevant. Socio-cultural dynamics, including globalization, digitalization, pluralism, and moral challenges, force the PAI curriculum to continue to adapt to meet the educational and social needs of the community.

Indonesia is a country with a very high level of cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity. Each region has its own local wisdom and cultural values, which are part of the national identity. Therefore, the

development of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum must consider the aspect of multiculturalism, where learning materials not only focus on Islamic teachings but also teach the importance of respecting diversity. In this way, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum can play its role as a tool to build social harmony in a pluralistic society. In addition, local wisdom from various regions can be used as a filter to ward off the negative impacts of globalization, such as radicalism, intolerance, and moral degradation (Zazkia & Hamami, 2021).

Globalization and advances in information technology have brought about major changes in the mindset and behavior of society, especially among the younger generation. With unlimited access to information, students are exposed to various global values that are not always in line with local religious and cultural values. In this context, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum must be able to provide relevant guidance for students to face these challenges. The implementation of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum needs to include learning materials that are applicable, contextual, and relevant to students' daily lives. For example, learning about the ethics of using social media, tolerance in community life, and strengthening character based on Islamic values.

Renewal of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum must be carried out continuously to remain relevant to current developments. This includes aspects of learning methods, teaching materials, and assessment systems. The learning methods used must be more interactive and actively involve students in the learning process, such as through discussions, case studies, or simulations. Teaching materials also need to be arranged dynamically, covering contemporary issues such as religious moderation, peace, and diversity, without forgetting the essence of religious teachings. The assessment system must also be able to measure not only cognitive understanding, but also students' attitudes and skills in applying religious values in their lives (Khamim, 2024).

The role of teachers in the implementation of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum is very important. Teachers are not only required to have competence in the field of religion but must also understand the socio-cultural dynamics in society. Teachers must be able to be facilitators who guide students to understand the relevance of religious teachings in their lives. In addition, teachers must also develop critical thinking skills and problem-solving skills in students, so that they can face various challenges in the modern era while still adhering to Islamic values. Strengthening religious moderation in the Islamic Religious Education curriculum is very relevant to maintaining harmony in a pluralistic Indonesian society. Learning materials need to emphasize the importance of tolerance, mutual respect, and cooperation between religious communities. Students must be taught to see differences as wealth, not threats. This inclusive attitude is important to prevent the emergence of social conflict and build a peaceful and harmonious society.

In addition, the development of the PAI curriculum must also consider the psychological aspects and developmental stages of students. Learning materials need to be arranged systematically and gradually, according to the cognitive and social-emotional abilities of students at each level of education. At the elementary level of education, for example, the material focuses more on introducing basic religious values, while at the secondary level of education, students are invited to think more critically and reflectively about religious teachings.

The Islamic Religious Education curriculum must also encourage the development of student character in accordance with Islamic values and Indonesian culture. This includes strengthening noble morals, such as honesty, responsibility, social concern, and the spirit of cooperation. With relevant and applicable learning, students are expected to be able to become individuals who are not only religious, but also contribute positively to society. Through a relevant, flexible, and adaptive curriculum, Islamic Religious Education can be an effective instrument for building a generation with character, integrity, and is ready to face global challenges while still upholding the values of religion and Indonesian culture (El Widdah, 2024).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this research and discussion, the author can draw the following conclusions: (1) The Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum must be relevant to the dynamic social and cultural developments in Indonesia. Learning materials need to connect religious teachings with the realities of students' daily lives so that they can remain applicable and effective in shaping the nation's character. (2) Urbanization, digitalization, pluralism, and changes in the lifestyles of the younger generation influence the

way students view and access religious learning. The PAI curriculum needs to be adaptive to these challenges with a more contextual approach, such as utilizing technology and instilling values of tolerance in diversity. (3) The current PAI curriculum still tends to be theoretical and less relevant to students' lives in the modern era. This gap includes the lack of integration of religious values with the context of digitalization, pluralism, and modern lifestyles faced by students. (4) The PAI curriculum requires continuous renewal that is flexible, interactive, and applicable. This approach includes technology integration, an emphasis on local and global values, and dialogic teaching to help students face the challenges of globalization. (5) The Islamic Religious Education curriculum must instill the values of moderation, tolerance, and harmony in diversity to maintain social cohesion. In addition, religious education must emphasize character development based on Islamic values and Indonesian culture that are relevant to the challenges of the times.

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