

The Impact of Effectiveness of PAI Decentralization Curriculum to Improve the Quality of Teachers and Students

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ABSTRACT

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a vital role in shaping students' character, morals, and concern for socio-cultural diversity and environmental sustainability. To address contemporary challenges and contextual needs, a decentralization policy in the PAI curriculum is applied. This policy grants regional authorities the flexibility to adapt teaching materials in line with local cultural values and community needs. The main goal is to enhance the relevance, effectiveness, and appeal of PAI education by making it more contextual and responsive to local conditions. Education is not only a medium for knowledge and character development but also a platform to cultivate students' awareness and responsibility toward preserving their environment and community. Curriculum innovation that integrates religious values, local wisdom, and environmental insight becomes a strategic approach to shaping a generation that is faithful, caring, and ecologically literate. This study uses a systematic literature review method, analysing 20 articles from Google Scholar published between 2020 and 2024, with the keyword's "decentralization" and "PAI curriculum." The findings indicate that curriculum decentralization can improve the contextuality and relevance of Islamic education but also encounters challenges such as disparities in regional capacities and limited coordination among policy stakeholders.



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A. INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a strategic role in shaping students' character and morals amid Indonesia's socio-cultural diversity and changing times (Masitah et al., 2024). To ensure contextual and relevant learning, the decentralization of the PAI curriculum allows regions to adapt materials based on local cultural values and community needs. This policy aims to make the curriculum more applicable to students' real-life contexts, not just tied to national standards. Furthermore, integrating environmental awareness and sustainability into the curriculum promotes students' ecological responsibility. By combining religious values, local wisdom, and environmental consciousness, PAI can become a transformative force in nurturing a faithful, ethical, and socially responsible generation (Madjid, Sutoyo, & Shodiq, 2021; Siti, 2023). In contrast to previous studies that predominantly emphasize decentralization as an administrative and policy-oriented approach, this study introduces a more integrative perspective by positioning the PAI curriculum as a medium for developing eco-theological literacy, which connects religious understanding with environmental responsibility within a

decentralized framework. With decentralization, the curriculum is not only an inflexible national reference but can be adapted flexibly to be more relevant to the socio-cultural context and the conditions of students in each region. So, this is in line with the school-based management (SBM) principle that places schools as the center of decision-making, encouraging the active participation of teachers, education staff, and the community in curriculum development. The Independent Curriculum, as an example of the implementation of decentralization, provides space for madrasas to innovate and simplify the learning process so that it is more effective and meaningful (Totoda et al., 2020).

The decentralization of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in Indonesia is present as a response to the need for education that is more contextual and relevant to local conditions. However, in practice, this decentralization still faces a number of problematic realities. First, there is still a capacity gap between regions, where not all regions have adequate resources and human resources to develop and implement curricula that are in accordance with local characteristics (Kamaliah, 2022). The role of teachers as curriculum developers is not optimal due to limited training and competence in innovating learning based on student needs (Zahrah et al., 2024). The existence of ambiguity in the role between the central and regional governments has resulted in a curriculum that should be flexible but still tends to be centralized in its implementation practice. The lack of coordination and collaboration between education stakeholders including local governments, schools, and communities makes it difficult to develop a contextual and integrative curriculum that is equally realized. These realities show that although conceptually the decentralization of the curriculum offers a lot of potential, its implementation still needs to be strengthened both from policy aspects, teacher training, and supervision of implementation in the field. The decentralization of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum is the process of handing over authority from the central government to local governments, schools, and teachers to design, compile, and implement the PAI curriculum. This process is adjusted to the needs of the region, the character of the students, and the local socio-cultural conditions, but still refers to the applicable national curriculum's standards. With decentralization, local governments and schools gain the freedom to determine materials and methods of teaching Islamic Religious Education that are more appropriate and adjusted to the conditions and needs of students in their respective regions (Achmad & Hartono, 2021).

The impact of the process of decentralization of the PAI curriculum includes increasing the relevance and diversity of teaching that is tailored to local needs and characteristics, so that learning becomes more contextual, effective, and engaging. In addition, this freedom encourages innovation and creativity of teachers and schools in developing learning materials and methods that are more in line with the culture of the local community. However, the challenges that arise are the inequality of capacity and resources between regions, which can lead to disparities in the quality of education and curriculum development in certain regions, as well as the need for strict supervision to maintain national standards. Thus, while decentralization brings great opportunities to improve the quality and relevance of PAI education, its success is highly dependent on effective management, training, and coordination at all levels so that the benefits can be felt equally and sustainably (Achmad & Hartono, 2021).

According to Kamaliah, the words Curriculum derived from Latin curly or corro, which means to run, rush, or accelerate. This word originally contained the meaning of a journey or path that must be taken to reach a destination. The purpose of the theme Decentralization of Islamic Religious Education Curriculum aims to examine the extent to which the transfer of authority from the central government to educational units affects

increasing the flexibility and independence of schools in designing and developing PAI learning materials (Kamaliah, 2022). According to Abdullah, in the development of a curriculum that applies the principle of decentralization, teachers play an important role as planners, compilers, developers, as well as implementers of the curriculum at the school level. With this role, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum is developed in a participatory manner and contextually adjusted to the needs of the school and the surrounding community. According to Zakiah Darajat, the Curriculum is seen as a program designed in the field of education and run to realize educational goals (Saputra et al., 2021).

The decentralization of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum aims to give authority to local governments and schools to develop a curriculum that is tailored to local needs and characteristics, so that the learning process becomes more effective and relevant. This approach also encourages the active involvement of teachers, parents, and the community in planning and implementing the curriculum to fit the local social and cultural context. In addition, decentralization accelerates decision-making and empowerment of educational resources at the regional and school levels, making education management more flexible, efficient, and responsive to local changes and needs. Another goal is to create a democratic and just education system by maintaining the cultural and social diversity of Indonesian society, as well as adapting the PAI curriculum to regional potential and the needs of students so that the goals of Islamic religious education can be achieved optimally according to the demands of the local community (Pokhrel, 2024). School-Based Management (SBM) has great potential in improving the quality of education, including in the implementation of curriculum decentralization, if implemented consistently and supported by quality human resources (Muliani et al., 2022).

The legal basis of the first decentralization of the Islamic religious education curriculum is, Law Number 20 (UU, 2003) about the National Education System (Sisdiknas) which contains about, regulates the right of every citizen to get education, including religious education, and emphasizes that religious education is an integral part of the national education system. Law Number 18 (UU, 2019) about Islamic Boarding Schools which contain the existence and importance of Islamic boarding school education within the framework of the national education system, as well as providing formal recognition of Islamic boarding school institutions and alignment with Islamic education in Indonesia. Government Regulation Number 55 (PP, 2007). What contains religious education is education that provides knowledge while shaping students' attitudes, personalities, and skills based on religious values. This regulation emphasizes that every educational unit in all paths, types, and levels is obliged to organize religious education, and its management is carried out by the Minister of Religion.

This paper, entitled "Decentralization of Islamic Religious Education Curriculum," provides a new perspective on the decentralization of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in Indonesia by integrating two contemporary perspectives, namely religious curriculum reform and environmental awareness, through a systematic review of the literature published between 2020 and 2024. Although curriculum decentralization has been widely studied in general education, its specific application to the PAI context, especially amidst recent national reforms such as the Independent Curriculum, presents a unique and relevant contribution to the needs. In addition, this study highlights how decentralization not only strengthens the relevance of contextual learning but also develops Eco theological literacy, namely religious understanding combined with ecological responsibility. By examining its potential and practical challenges, this study

provides valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and curriculum developers in strengthening the transformative function of PAI as a means of character building and environmental awareness amidst the diversity of education in Indonesia (Abdan, 2020).

B. METHODS

This study uses a systematic literature review method to analyse the current problems regarding the decentralization of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in the last five years (2020-2024). The data was obtained from Google Scholar, a highly reputable database. Using the keywords "decentralization" + "of Islamic " + "curriculum", the researcher found a number of articles that were then analysed using the PRISMA guidelines. The research process involves identifying, subjective assessment, and assessing the feasibility of articles based on specific criteria. After going through the process, 20 final articles were selected for further analysis.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Table Systematic Literature Review

Table 1. Systematic Literature Review

No	Author	Paper	Summary	Main findings	Methodology	Summary of discussion
1	Rahmi et al. (Rahmi et al., 2024)	Systematic Literature Review: The Effectiveness of the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Islamic Boarding Schools	This study evaluates the application of the Independent Curriculum in the pesantren environment by examining a number of relevant scientific articles.	The Merdeka Curriculum provides flexibility in learning and emphasizes strengthening students' character.	Systematic Literature Review	The Merdeka Curriculum provides space for students to develop according to their interests and talents.
2	Novianty et al. (Novianty et al., 2020)	The Influence of Learning Discipline on Student Learning Achievement in Islamic Religious Education Courses	This article examines the extent to which learning discipline affects student learning achievement in Islamic Religious Education courses.	The study found a significant positive relationship between learning discipline and student achievement.	This study uses a correlational quantitative approach.	Discipline in regularity, responsibility, and consistency strongly correlates with academic achievement.
3	Husen et al. (Husen et al., 2023)	The Influence of Teacher Competence and Infrastructure on the Quality of Learning in Private Ibtidaiyah Madrasah in	This study aims to find out how much influence teacher competence and infrastructure facilities have on the quality of learning.	Teacher competence has a positive and significant effect on the quality of learning.	Type of Research: Quantitative associative	Teachers' competencies include pedagogic, professional, social, and personality, which contribute to improving the quality of learning.

		Sukajadi District, Pekanbaru City				
4	Chen et al. (Chen et al., 2024)	Relationship Between Academic Stress and Mental Health Among College Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic	This study aims to find out the relationship between academic stress and student mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic.	Significant negative association between academic stress and mental health.	Correlational quantitative method	Online learning during the pandemic has triggered stress and academic burden for students.
5	Sucipta (Sucipta, 2024)	Theoretical Overview: Implementation of School-Based Management in Islamic Religious Education Learning	This article discusses SBM in Islamic education, specifically PAI, which gives schools autonomy to manage resources to improve the quality of education.	SBM improves educational efficiency, quality, and equity.	Qualitative Method with a Literature Study Approach	SBM is part of the decentralization of education that gives schools autonomy in managing resources.
6	Kamaliah (Kamaliah, 2022)	Development and Changes in the Islamic Education Curriculum in Indonesia	This article discusses changes in the PAI curriculum in Indonesia that are influenced by social, political, and economic developments.	Decentralization of education allows regions to adapt the curriculum to local needs.	Literature studies	The PAI curriculum continues to evolve following social, political, and economic dynamics. Curriculum changes are not only related to learning materials but also include evaluation systems and teaching methods.
7	Nasir et al. (Nasir et al., 2024)	Views of Higher Education Leaders on the Independent Campus Curriculum as Educational Reform in Indonesian Islamic Universities	Higher education has an important role in preparing graduates for the workforce.	Teachers carry out the curriculum and adapt it to local needs and student character.	Case study research	Cooperation between universities, industry, and the government must be strengthened.

8	Niyom & Ali (Niyom & Ali, 2021)	Implementati on of Islamic Curriculum in Public Schools Bangkok City Year 2020/2021	This article discusses how Islamic religious education is implemented in public schools in Bangkok.	Public schools only offer basic PAI with limited time allocation.	Qualitative exploratory with in-depth interviews	Islamic education in Bangkok public schools is quite good, but it still faces many challenges in its implementation in a predominantly Buddhist environment.
9	Zainiyati (Zainiyati, 2020)	Curriculum, Islamic Understanding, and Radical Islamic Movements in Indonesia	This article discusses how the educational curriculum in Indonesia can contribute to both tolerant and radical understandings	Schools have the potential to spread tolerance but can also spread radicalism.	Literature and analysis methods	Highlights the role of teachers in spreading radical ideas and the importance of re-spreading tolerant education to prevent radicalization in schools.
10	Listari et al. (Listari et al., 2023)	Implementati on of Quality Management in Islamic Religious Education Learning	The research aims to explore the application of quality management in Islamic religious education and the key influencing factors, focusing on lesson planning, media use, and evaluation.	Learning planning: creating a weekly plan and using engaging media is essential.	Qualitative method with case study design	The discussion focuses on the importance of quality management in education to produce qualified graduates.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECENTRALIZATION POLICY OF THE ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Madrasah schools and Islamic boarding schools have been given greater freedom in managing their curriculum, so that the curriculum is adjusted to the conditions, culture, and needs of each region (Rahmi et al., 2024). The role of teachers is also very important, teachers are not only delivering material but must also be able to develop a curriculum that is interesting, creative, and in accordance with the times. Therefore, teachers need to continue to improve their teaching skills, both in terms of pedagogy, professionalism, and mastery of learning technology (Husen et al., 2023; Muzaini, 2023). In the learning process of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), the values of tolerance, justice, equality, and democracy are actively incorporated into classroom materials and activities. The school holds group discussions and interfaith activities to familiarize students with diversity, prevent them from the influence of radicalism, and build an attitude of openness and mutual respect (Islamy, 2024; Zahrah et al., 2024; Zainiyati, 2020). The implementation of the curriculum also requires the cooperation of many parties, ranging from schools, the government, the business world, to the community. In higher education, for example, the

implementation of the Independent Campus program needs synergy with the world of work so that graduates can be better prepared to face job challenges (Islamy, 2024; Zahrah et al., 2024; Zainiyati, 2020).

School management runs effectively thanks to the empowerment of principals and teachers in school-based management (MBS). School principals are trained to manage budgets, organize learning programs, and develop teaching quality on an ongoing basis, so that schools are able to run curriculum programs optimally (Sucipta, 2024). In the digital era, madrassas and pesantren implement technology-based learning by providing internet access and digital devices. Teachers develop interactive learning media and e-learning platforms to support a dynamic and engaging teaching and learning process (Islamy, 2024). Islamic Religious Education also adjusts to the challenges of globalization through the integration of religious and general sciences in the curriculum. Some madrassas have developed study programs that combine religious studies with social sciences and science, so that students have broad insights but still adhere to religious values (Nuryakhman, 2021). To support all these programs, the government and schools are trying to improve facilities and infrastructure, such as classroom renovation, laboratory construction, digital library procurement, and increased internet access. This aims to make the teaching and learning process run smoothly and of high quality (Ghina et al., 2022; Madjid et al., 2021).

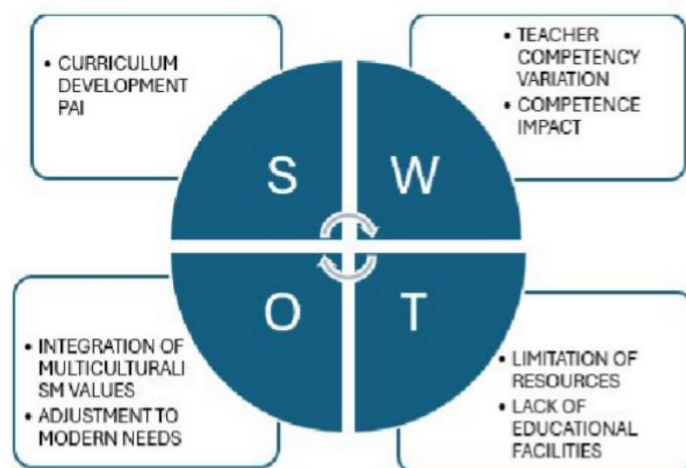


Figure 2. Analysis Swot

From the SWOT analysis above, the strength of this title is the development of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum based on multiculturalism in the Independent Curriculum in elementary schools. This curriculum is designed so that learning materials can be relevant to the diverse social and cultural conditions of students. In this context, teachers play a key role as facilitators and innovators. They are tasked with compiling learning materials that not only suit the needs of students but are also able to integrate important values such as tolerance, justice, and democracy into the learning process. Thus, teachers are not only the presenters of the material, but also as drivers of change that shape the character of inclusive and insightful students (Muzaini, 2023).

However, in the weakness of its implementation, there are variations in teacher competencies and educational facilities which are important factors that can cause an imbalance in the quality of learning in various institutions. The competence of teachers themselves includes professional, pedagogical, social, and personality abilities that must be possessed so that they can carry out teaching duties effectively and responsibly. Teachers with good professional competence can provide quality learning, motivate students, and become facilitators and innovators in the teaching and learning process. On

the other hand, teachers who are less competent often have difficulty in delivering material optimally, which ultimately has a negative impact on student learning outcomes (Husen et al., 2023).

The development of a multicultural Islamic education curriculum in Indonesia presents significant opportunities for the future of Islamic education. In addition to promoting values such as tolerance, equality, and justice, this approach can serve as a foundation for developing an inclusive national identity and strengthening social cohesion. Teachers play a central role in internalizing these values through contextual learning methods, enabling transformative educational change across the region. Furthermore, the synergy between formal schools and Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) offers a powerful model for integrating religious and general education, which benefits students' well-being (Islamy, 2024). In the long term, decentralization can foster innovation in curriculum design, teacher professional development, and the integration of digital-based learning. These aspects can stimulate future research on how local curriculum policies contribute to improving the quality and equity of education across Indonesia. Policymakers can also leverage these findings to design targeted support systems such as teacher training, facility improvements, and funding strategies to reduce educational disparities (Husen et al., 2023).

2. Sub Discussion

decentralization enables the PAI curriculum to become more flexible and responsive to local contexts. This flexibility encourages innovation in teaching and allows the integration of environmental awareness into religious learning. However, the implementation varies across regions due to differences in teacher capacity and institutional readiness. These variations show that decentralization requires not only policy support but also strong capacity building at the local level.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Decentralization of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum increases contextual relevance by allowing regions to tailor learning to local needs. Its success depends on teacher competence, the use of technology, and coordination across policy levels. However, challenges remain such as uneven regional capacity, limited teacher training, and overlapping central-regional authority. These limitations reduce the consistency and generalizability of results across Indonesia. Nevertheless, decentralization has strong potential to make Islamic Religious Education (PAI) more meaningful, inclusive, and responsive. Locally adapted curricula can integrate cultural and environmental values, fostering tolerance and responsibility. Effective supervision and equitable support are crucial for aligning regional innovations with national education goals. Decentralization of Islamic education offers equity and relevance but also creates gaps in capacity and coordination. If supported by teacher training, clear policies, and adequate facilities, decentralization can improve the quality of Islamic education and student character development.

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