

NAVIGATING THE IMPLEMENTATION AND CHALLENGES OF LOCAL CONTENT CURRICULUM FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT MADRASAH IBTIDAIYAH

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Abstract

In the context of Indonesian education, particularly at the Islamic elementary school (MI) level, there is a paucity of innovation in local curriculum development, with the majority of institutions adhering to the national curriculum. To maintain relevance and establish a distinctive identity, MI must implement innovative curriculum strategies. This study examines the implementation and challenges of a Diniyah-based local content curriculum. A qualitative single-case study approach was adopted, with data collected through in-depth interviews with five Diniyah teachers and the head of the madrasah, along with classroom observations. The analysis of the data was conducted through a process of condensation, display, and verification. The findings reveal that the curriculum integrates ten key components: (1) rationale or vision, (2) aims and objectives, (3) content, (4) learning activities, (5) teacher roles, (6) materials and resources, (7) student grouping, (8) learning location, (9) time allocation, and (10) assessment. While the majority of these components are aligned with the needs of students, the community, teachers, and the school committee, challenges persist in the domains of learning activities and teacher roles, particularly with regard to pedagogical competence. To address these challenges, it is recommended that pedagogical training be provided to Diniyah teachers, with a focus on understanding students' learning styles and the adoption of effective teaching methods to enhance learning outcomes. Future research should

further explore pedagogical competencies in schools implementing formal Diniyah education

Keywords: *local content curriculum; Diniyah education; Islamic elementary school; curriculum implementation; pedagogical competence*

Abstrak

Dalam konteks pendidikan di Indonesia, khususnya pada tingkat Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), inovasi dalam pengembangan kurikulum muatan lokal masih minim, dengan sebagian besar institusi lebih banyak berpegang pada kurikulum nasional. Untuk tetap relevan dan memiliki identitas yang khas, MI perlu menerapkan strategi kurikulum yang inovatif. Penelitian ini mengkaji implementasi dan tantangan kurikulum muatan lokal berbasis diniyah. Pendekatan penelitian kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus tunggal digunakan, dengan data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan lima guru diniyah serta kepala madrasah, serta observasi kelas. Analisis data dilakukan melalui proses kondensasi, display, dan verifikasi data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kurikulum ini mengintegrasikan sepuluh komponen utama: (1) rasional atau visi, (2) tujuan, (3) konten, (4) aktivitas pembelajaran, (5) peran guru, (6) materi dan sumber daya, (7) pengelompokan siswa, (8) lokasi pembelajaran, (9) alokasi waktu, dan (10) asesmen. Meskipun sebagian besar komponen tersebut telah selaras dengan kebutuhan siswa, masyarakat, guru, dan komite sekolah, masih terdapat tantangan dalam aspek aktivitas pembelajaran dan peran guru, khususnya terkait kompetensi pedagogik. Untuk mengatasi tantangan ini, disarankan adanya pelatihan pedagogik bagi guru diniyah, dengan fokus pada pemahaman gaya belajar siswa dan penerapan metode pengajaran yang efektif guna meningkatkan hasil pembelajaran. Penelitian lebih lanjut perlu dilakukan untuk mengeksplorasi kompetensi pedagogik guru di sekolah yang menerapkan pendidikan diniyah formal.

Kata Kunci: *kurikulum muatan lokal; pendidikan diniyah; madrasah ibtidaiyah; implementasi kurikulum; kompetensi pedagogik*

A. INTRODUCTION

The Curriculum of formal *Diniyah* Education is a relatively new initiative in Indonesia (Zainuri, Yunita, Ibrahim, Hadi, & Epilia, 2023). The policy governing the formal *Diniyah* education curriculum was only introduced in 2021. The term formal *Diniyah* education refers to religious education managed by formal educational institutions such as Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI)/Elementary Schools (SD), Junior High Schools (SMP), and Senior High Schools (SMA) (Nizah, 2016). It is a pesantren-based education system implemented within the formal education pathway, characterized by a structured and tiered approach centred on classical Islamic texts (kitab kuning) (Decree of the Director-General of Islamic Education No. 2670 of 2021 on Technical Guidelines for the Establishment of Formal *Diniyah* Education Units, 2021). Consequently, in the implementation of Formal *Diniyah* Education within schools and madrasahs, there has been an integration between the

national school curriculum and the Formal *Diniyah* Education curriculum to ensure alignment with both national educational standards and the distinct characteristics of pesantren education.

The integration of the Formal *Diniyah* Education Curriculum within formal educational institutions in Indonesia has been the subject of various studies. According to (Ulil Abshor, 2021), the implementation of this curriculum remains overly advanced, as it prioritises competency attainment without clearly distinguishing between lower and higher levels of Kitab study. In a similar vein, (Mastur, 2022) found that the curriculum consists of approximately 70% religious studies and 30% general education. This finding is consistent with Husnul Yaqin's research, which indicates that the implementation of the Formal *Diniyah* Education Curriculum in South Kalimantan allocates 75% of the curriculum to religious studies and only 25% to general education (Yaqin & Norlaila, 2023). (Arifin, 2024) study examined curriculum integration using the grassroots model and Beauchamp's approach, emphasizing the role of school leadership and educators in curriculum formulation. In light of these findings, it is imperative that Formal *Diniyah* Education, when integrated into formal educational institutions, develops its curriculum framework. This curriculum framework should be aligned with government-mandated educational standards while also preserving the fundamental principles of pesantren-based religious education.

A significant challenge in implementing the curriculum in educational institutions, particularly at the primary school (SD/MI) level in Indonesia, is maintaining a balance among various components. The curriculum objectives in Indonesia follow a hierarchical structure, comprising national educational goals, institutional goals, curricular goals, and learning objectives, all of which are interconnected and inseparable (Harmita & Aly, 2023). The achievement of national educational goals aims to cultivate an Indonesian generation that is morally and religiously upright, knowledgeable and skilled, physically and mentally healthy, of strong character, and responsible (Setiyorini & Setiawan, 2023). Institutional goals, which are set by individual educational institutions, play a crucial role in shaping the learning process. The absence of clearly defined curricular objectives within schools has been demonstrated to have a significant impact on the effectiveness of teaching and learning (Adistiana & Hamami, 2024). It is therefore essential for educational institutions to establish clear curricular goals to ensure the successful attainment of short-term, medium-term, and long-term educational objectives.

Another essential component of the curriculum is instructional content and teaching strategies, both of which must be mastered by teachers. Currently, instructional content presents a challenge, particularly in fostering students' critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills—key competencies required to achieve curriculum targets (Utari & Muadin, 2023). A lack of proficiency in implementing creative and innovative teaching methods further complicates this issue, as it hinders the attainment of curricular objectives established by schools (Wuwur, 2023). Another challenge in the implementation of the curriculum is curriculum organisation, which serves as the foundation for educational institutions in determining learning outcomes. A well-structured curriculum organisation provides teachers with essential guidelines for the adoption and development of instructional materials in the classroom (Burns & Squires, 1987). At the institutional level, curriculum organisation must be conceptualised to ensure the achievement of learning outcomes (Utomo & Azizah, 2019). Furthermore, curriculum organisation plays a pivotal role in determining both the attainment of learning objectives and the selection of appropriate instructional models to be implemented in schools (Hutomo & Hamami, 2020).

Another challenge in curriculum implementation today is evaluation. Curriculum evaluation encompasses not only student learning outcomes but also all components of the curriculum. This includes the pedagogical competencies of teachers in the classroom and the role of the government in providing learning resources in response to curriculum policy changes (Umam & Hamami, 2023). A significant obstacle in curriculum evaluation is teachers' understanding of assessment practices, the preparation of administrative tasks, and the learning process itself (Wardi, Aqodiah, & Ali, 2023). To ensure the effective realisation of educational goals, curriculum evaluation should be conducted in a continuous, comprehensive, and objective manner (Laksono & Izzulka, 2022).

A curriculum must be dynamic, and able to accommodate contemporary needs and demands; therefore, educational institutions such as Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) and elementary schools (SD) must be able to develop their curricula (Wahid & Hamami, 2021). A curriculum implemented within an institution faces the ongoing challenge of continual improvement to ensure that its various components function in a balanced and consistent (Jan van den Akker, 2007). Jan van den Akker's Spider Web curriculum model comprises ten key components: 1) rationale or vision, 2) aims and objectives, 3) content, 4) learning activities, 5) teacher role, 6) materials and resources, 7) grouping, 8) location, 9) time, and 10) assessment. The rationale outlines the mission and purpose of student learning, while aims and objectives

specify the goals to be achieved. Content refers to the instructional materials, and learning activities describe how students interact with this content. The teacher role focuses on how educators facilitate learning, and materials and resources encompass the tools available to students. Grouping determines whether learning occurs individually, in small groups, or as a whole class. Location identifies where learning takes place, and time denotes the duration allocated for activities (Jan van den Akker, 2007). Lastly, assessment measures students' learning outcomes. Each component is essential and interdependent within the curriculum (Khoza, 2015).

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, which operates under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, is encouraged to innovate and develop its curriculum, particularly by integrating local content (Nafi'ah & Fitri, 2022). This study highlights that madrasahs have implemented a tahfidz Al-Qur'an (the process of memorizing the Quran) curriculum by balancing objectives, content, and curriculum organization. However, significant challenges remain, particularly in curriculum evaluation, which lacks standardized assessment criteria, and the use of instructional strategies, which are not yet optimally effective (Nafi'ah & Fitri, 2022).

Several studies have examined the implementation of local content curricula. For example, (Aripin, 2024) found that religiously oriented instructional materials contribute to shaping students' religious culture. However, Islamic education faces challenges in simultaneously meeting national education standards while equipping students with the necessary competencies for the global era. Similarly, (Rouf, Said, & Hs, 2020) concluded that while local-content curricula align with educational needs, they remain suboptimal in terms of teaching materials, infrastructure, teacher readiness, and time allocation. Another study by (Mulyah & Aly, 2023) found that local-content curricula are implemented through both intracurricular and extracurricular activities; however, there is no established framework for curriculum evaluation.

The findings from these studies highlight key differences, particularly concerning the implementation of local-content curricula in Islamic education within formal institutions in Indonesia. Significant challenges persist, including defining clear objectives, optimizing instructional strategies, organizing curricula effectively, and establishing a standardized evaluation system. The development of the Madin Takmiliah curriculum in Jepara Regency has proven relatively effective, with indicators that the curriculum model is easy to translate, implement, and evaluate. However, this curriculum development occurs as an independent institution rather than under the auspices of SD/MI (As'ad, yusron Al-mufti, & Natsir, 2021). According to (Salahuddin, 2012), one factor contributing to the

success of Madin is the strength of its curriculum, which facilitates the achievement of its educational vision and mission. However, this research remains within a theoretical framework and has not yet reached the stage of curriculum model implementation. Another study by (Lutfia Maya, 2022) identifies three stages in the implementation of the Madin curriculum in SDIT: planning, execution, and evaluation. A limitation of this research is the difficulty in finding qualified educators and engaging in parental involvement.

This study contributes to existing research by exploring a local-content curriculum model rooted in *Diniyah* education at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI). In Purworejo Regency, the majority of MI institutions have developed local-content curricula that primarily emphasise tahfidz (the Quran memorisation) and pesantren-based studies. However, the integration of formal *Diniyah* education into the local content curriculum remains an underexamined area, largely because this policy was only recently introduced by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs. While the majority of studies on formal *Diniyah* education focus on its implementation in pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), this research takes a different approach by examining its application within formal educational institutions, offering fresh insights into its development and implementation. A particularly noteworthy case is MI Ma'arif Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Brunosari in Purworejo, which distinguishes itself by adopting a local-content curriculum centred on *Diniyah* education, with a strong emphasis on kitab kuning (classical Islamic texts). This approach is significant, as many Islamic schools in Purworejo prioritize Qur'anic studies over traditional texts commonly taught in pesantren.

In light of this context, the present study aims to address two fundamental research questions: (1) How is the local-content curriculum based on *Diniyah* education implemented at MI Brunosari? and (2) What challenges arise in integrating this curriculum within the framework of formal Islamic education?. The objective of this research is to contribute to the broader discourse on curriculum development in Islamic education, particularly within the Indonesian context, by addressing the following questions. The objective is to provide practical insights into the design, implementation, and challenges of integrating *Diniyah*-based curricula in formal primary education, thereby bridging the gap between pesantren traditions and structured academic learning.

B. METHDOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative methodology, utilising a single case study approach to examine the local-content curriculum model rooted in *Diniyah* (Islamic

religious) education at MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari in Purworejo Regency. The case study method was deemed the most appropriate research design given the study's objective—to explore the development and implementation of the *Diniyah* curriculum in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah from the perspectives of teachers. A case study is a qualitative, interpretative research approach that prioritises insight, discovery, and interpretation over hypothesis testing (Merriam, 1998; Yang E, 2005). This methodological approach enables researchers to examine a "problem of practice from a holistic perspective" (Merriam, 1998), thereby facilitating a comprehensive understanding of both the contextual factors and the lived experiences of those involved (Merriam, 1998; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). As (Merriam, 1998) emphasises, "the qualitative case study is particularly suited for addressing critical issues in practice and expanding knowledge in educational fields" (Preface, p. xiii). This methodological approach is well-suited for research questions that seek to enhance educational practice by providing deeper insights into curriculum development and implementation (Merriam, 1998).

Data collection for this study involved in-depth interviews and observations. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using a set of pre-prepared guiding questions, allowing for flexibility in exploring participants' perspectives. The study's participants included five teachers responsible for formal *Diniyah* education, along with the school principal. Observations were carried out to gain a deeper understanding of the practical implementation of formal *Diniyah* education at MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari.

Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model (Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, & Johnny Saldaña, 2014) which comprises three stages: (1) data condensation, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing and verification. During the data condensation phase, relevant information concerning the *Diniyah*-based local curriculum model at MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari was identified, selected, and categorized. The data were then systematically organized based on curriculum theory, including the classification of information related to educational objectives within the framework of curriculum planning for local *Diniyah* education..

During the data display stage, the researchers synthesised interview data and observations to form a coherent understanding of the *Diniyah*-based curriculum model at MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari, leading to conclusions. The collected data were then subjected to further analysis within the context of existing theories, with particular emphasis on those theories relevant to curriculum implementation. In this regard, components such as learning materials are required to adhere to specified criteria. The learning materials

were triangulated through repeated interviews with teachers until data saturation was achieved, further validated by observations and document analysis.

In the conclusion drawing/verification stage, findings were synthesised to address the research questions. This final stage allowed the researchers to synthesize the *Diniyah*-based local content curriculum model in terms of three main components: planning, implementation, and evaluation.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

This study examines the local content curriculum based on formal *Diniyah* education at MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari, analysing both its implementation and the challenges encountered in its application. The subsequent section herein presents a detailed description and analysis of the research findings.

Implementation of the Local-Content Curriculum Based on Formal Diniyah Education

The local content curriculum based on *Diniyah* education at MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari Purworejo is structured into three stages: design, implementation, and evaluation. The design stage comprises several key elements: (1) setting objectives, (2) determining graduate learning outcomes, and (3) recruiting educators. The implementation stage involves components such as (1) scheduling, (2) competency standards, (3) learning objectives, (4) teaching methods, and (5) learning resources. The evaluation stage includes the assessment of madin (religious) learning outcomes.

In the design stage, MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari's *Diniyah* curriculum aims to instil strong character values in graduates by engaging them in the study of various classical Islamic texts and deepening their religious knowledge at each level. The formulation of this local curriculum is based on plenary discussions among class teachers and the *Madrasah Diniyah* principal, considering students' engagement, moral character, and academic outcomes (Hamdan, 2024a). The targeted learning outcomes for graduates include proficiency in studying key texts such as classical Islamic texts (Kitab) such as *Kitab Alala*, *Kitab Aqidatul Awam*, *Kitab Syifaul Jannah*, *Kitab Jurumiyah*, and *Kitab Safinatun Najah* (Hamdan, 2024a). MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari supports this curriculum with several components, including clearly defined learning outcomes, competency standards, qualified educators, allocated time, learning resources, facilities, and evaluation procedures. Educators are recruited from local pesantren, ensuring they are well-versed in religious

studies. Instructions are scheduled from Tuesday to Saturday, from 07:00 to 08:00. MI provides each student with relevant textbooks and ensures classrooms are adequately equipped for madin activities (Hamdan, 2024a).

During the implementation stage, the madin curriculum sessions begin at 07:00–08:00, with students engaging in *tadarus* (recitation of the Qur'an), reciting *Asmaul Husna* (the names of God), and performing *dhuha* prayer. At 08:00, they begin their studies of the classical texts. The learning outcomes for the *Madrasah Diniyah* curriculum at MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari are tailored to match the cognitive development stages of the students.

The competencies for first-grade students include: 1) the ability to read and write the Arabic letters (*hijaiyah*), to enable students to read the Qur'an as a foundational skill; 2) understanding the pillars of faith and recognizing the attributes of Allah, aimed at helping students grasp the basic tenets of Islamic belief (Endun Mujayanah, 2024). This foundational strengthening of the Islamic faith seeks to equip students with the capacity to navigate external cultural influences (Triandini, 2023). Additionally, *Madrasah Diniyah* teachers instil moral values such as honesty and respect for parents. 3) Another competency involves memorizing daily prayers, short surahs, Arabic poems, the *Asmaul Husna* (the attributes of Allah), and the rituals of worship, such as ablution and prayer. The objectives for this competency are: 1) to introduce the Arabic language, 2) to foster faith, 3) to instil a love for Islam, 4) to strengthen the students' spiritual connection with Allah through understanding His attributes, and 5) to encourage students to emulate the attributes of Allah in their daily lives.

The teaching method employed is the drill method, which allows students to repeat their memorization collectively. This practice aims to enhance students' memory (Wahyuni, 2023) and concentration (Lestari, Wahyudin, & Abidin, 2021). Another method used is storytelling, which conveys meaning in a manner that aids student comprehension. This storytelling approach is designed to leave a lasting impression on students and engage them more deeply (Arsyad, 2017). The learning resources utilized in the *Madrasah Diniyah* curriculum for first grade include a guidebook for memorization containing the text of the poems and *Asmaul Husna*. The teaching aids consist of a whiteboard for writing and explaining material to the students.

For second-grade students (Sukron Sani, 2024), the competency to be achieved is the memorization of the *Bait Alala* in its entirety. The *Bait Alala* contains teachings related to religious moral values, ensuring that students develop good character and gain beneficial knowledge (Khoir & Purnomo, 2022). The

objective of this competency is to enable students to pursue knowledge, understanding, and principles of learning within Islam that can be applied in daily life. The teaching method used is the *Setoran / Sorogan* method, where students present their memorization individually. Students also listen attentively to the teacher's explanations. The learning resource utilized is the *Kitab Alala* and its translation.

The competency for third-grade students (Muhammad Taufiq Sidiq, 2024) involves memorizing the *Kitab (classical Islamic textbook) Aqidatul Awam*, which introduces the concepts of faith and monotheism at a beginner level. Students study this book to understand the principles of belief and the foundational aspects of faith, serving as preparation for further religious education. Another goal is to strengthen students' faith from an early age. The objectives of studying this book include: 1) enabling students to understand the essential and impossible attributes of Allah; 2) enabling students to comprehend the essential and impossible attributes of the Prophet; and 3) helping students memorize the names of the prophets and messengers, as well as the names of angels and their respective duties.

For fourth-grade students (Alwi Abdul Aziz Al-Falaq, 2024), the competency is to memorize the *Kitab Syifaul Janah*. The objectives of studying this book are: 1) to differentiate between the rules of *Idhar*, *Idghom*, *Ikhfa'*, and *Iklab*, and 2) to read the Qur'an correctly. The method used for studying the *Kitab Syifaul Janah* involves testing students individually to check their memorization. The teacher reads while explaining the material, students copy it down, and they read the *Nadzoman* together, taking turns in front of the *Madrasah Diniyah* teacher. This reading is repeated several times, both before and after the teacher's recitation. The learning resource used in class is the *Kitab Syifaul Janah*.

For fifth-grade students (Hamdan, 2024b), the focus is on the *Kitab Jurumiyah*. The objectives of studying the *Kitab Jurumiyah* are: 1) to provide a foundation for reading classical Islamic texts, and 2) to understand the rules and techniques involved in learning to read these texts. The teaching method used for the *Kitab Jurumiyah* is the listening method, where the material is read together before class begins, and students memorize it individually each weekend. The learning resource employed is the *Kitab Nahwu Jawen*.

For sixth-grade students (Ahmad Tauhid, 2024), the competency is to memorize the *Kitab Safinatun Najah*. The objectives for students in memorizing this book are: 1) to help students retain the legal principles and rulings contained within it, and 2) to reinforce memory and foundational legal commands in Islamic

jurisprudence. The teaching methods used include *sorogan* (individual recitation), writing, reading, and summarizing.

The evaluation of the *Madrasah Diniyah* curriculum during the learning process employs various methods, tailored to the difficulty of the material and the characteristics of the students. First-grade evaluation is conducted through individual memorization tests, where students are asked to recite Arabic poems and *Asmaul Husna*. Teachers also conduct daily assessments by monitoring each student's memorization progress. Furthermore, evaluations are performed by observing students' recitations each morning before lessons begin. Second-grade evaluations involve one-on-one tests to reinforce previously learned material. Currently, third-grade evaluations indicate that 30% of students still struggle with reading Arabic script, indicating that the competencies in *Madrasah Diniyah* have not yet been fully realized. Fourth-grade evaluations are conducted through individual testing to reinforce learning. Fifth-grade evaluations involve periodic assessments after each material section. In sixth grade, evaluations include questioning students about what has been taught. Additional evaluations are conducted through daily quizzes, mid-term exams (UTS), final exams (UAS), and competency assessments (UKK).

After the *Madrasah Diniyah* curriculum activities, a semester-end evaluation is conducted to measure students' knowledge and understanding of the texts that have been taught. This evaluation includes two methods: formative assessments/tests and the *Akhirussanah* (End of School Year) ceremony such as summative assessment. The assessment of the texts comprises various evaluation aspects, including reading (Iqro'), memorization, writing, examination (*imtihan*), and moral evaluations. The *Akhirussanah* activities involve the memorization and completion of texts, with each class required to memorize the respective texts that have been taught. From the implementation of this *Madrasah Diniyah* curriculum, MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari has successfully produced graduates who continue their religious education at Pondok Pesantren, with nearly 50% of students from each cohort pursuing this path. Upon graduation, students receive a *Madrasah Diniyah* diploma certifying that they have studied the specified texts.

Challenges of the Local-Content Curriculum Based on Formal Diniyah Education

The first component, encompassing the Rationale or vision, pertains to the fundamental mission and underlying motivations that drive students' engagement in the learning process. At MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari, a well-defined rationale exists

for students pursuing formal *Diniyah* education, aimed at equipping them with a comprehensive mastery of religious knowledge through various classical Islamic texts. This component is not merely a statement of purpose; it functions as a critical foundation in curriculum development and serves as a guiding orientation that ensures coherence and alignment with other curriculum components (Jan van den Akker, 2007).

The Aims and objectives component delineates the specific goals that students are expected to achieve throughout their educational journey. At MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari, the effective implementation of this component is designed to ensure that students, upon graduation, embody the values and character traits inherent in their study of diverse religious texts and the deepening of their religious knowledge at each educational level. The principal harbours aspirations that a significant number of graduates from MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari will pursue further education at Islamic boarding schools, which underscores the school's commitment to fostering a robust religious foundation among its students (Jan van den Akker, 2007).

Furthermore, the Content component includes the diverse range of learning materials that students engage with throughout their studies. MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari has carefully developed its curriculum for formal *Diniyah* education to align with the cognitive and psychological development of students across different grade levels. The Learning Activities component outlines the instructional methodologies utilized by teachers, which encompass a variety of pedagogical approaches, including storytelling, drills, assessments, listening exercises, and memorization. This strategic diversity in teaching methods is specifically designed to correspond with the texts that students are expected to master, thereby enriching their overall learning experiences (Jan van den Akker, 2007).

The Teacher role component emphasizes the crucial function of educators in facilitating student learning. Teachers are tasked with monitoring students' progress in mastering the competencies outlined in the *Diniyah* curriculum. However, they often encounter significant challenges, including students' difficulties in grasping complex concepts. For example, topics such as *tajwid* (rules of recitation) and *Idhar Halqi* frequently necessitate repeated explanations for effective comprehension, a process that may extend over a week. Furthermore, students in grades 2-6, who are expected to memorize one text each year, face additional challenges related to their developmental stage, individual learning characteristics, and the limited variation in teaching methods employed. Consequently, it becomes apparent that an imbalance and inconsistency exist within

the curriculum components. Failure to address these issues may lead to detrimental effects on other components and overall instructional effectiveness (Jan van den Akker, 2007).

The Materials and Resources component encompasses the diverse range of learning resources available to students (Jan van den Akker, 2007). MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari has assembled a comprehensive collection of educational materials, including Arabic poetry, *Asmaul Husna (the attributes of Allah)*, *Kitab Alala*, *Kitab Aqidatul Awam*, *Kitab Syifaul Janah*, *Kitab Jurumiyah*, and *Kitab Safinatun Najah*. The Grouping component addresses the organization of students during learning activities, which can occur individually, in small groups, or as a whole class. The implementation of this component is tailored to address the specific needs of both students and teachers as they interact with various texts. For example, individual assessments may involve teachers evaluating students on a one-on-one basis during memorization tasks. In contrast, when presenting instructional content, teachers typically address the entire class, promoting collective engagement and participation.

The Location component pertains to the learning environment in which students engage with their studies (Jan van den Akker, 2007). MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari has established a dedicated classroom space that fosters a conducive learning atmosphere.

In terms of the Time component, the school has delineated a specific schedule for its local *Diniyah* curriculum, designating morning hours for instruction prior to the national curriculum. This strategic timing aims to enhance students' comprehension of the material during periods of heightened concentration.

Within the Assessment component (Jan van den Akker, 2007), MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari has implemented standardized measures to evaluate students' competencies in mastering the presented materials. This assessment culminates annually in a final event known as *Akhirussanah*, which serves not only as an evaluative measure but also as a motivational platform for students to publicly showcase their academic achievements to parents and the local community.

DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Local-Content Curriculum Based on Formal Diniyah Education

The implementation of the curriculum can be seen as a reflection of the written document (Dahliah, 2022). The implementation of the curriculum is based on the Spider Web model, a proposal by Jan van den Akker, which consists of

several components: 1) rationale or vision; 2) content; 3) learning activities; 4) teacher role; 5) materials & resources; 6) grouping; 7) location; 8) time; and 9) assessment.

In the context of MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari, the rationale or vision is predicated on the objective that students should attain mastery of religious knowledge through the study of various Islamic religious texts (*kitab-kitab agama Islam*). This vision is not only documented in the curriculum but is also operationalised in the selection of content that aligns with this goal. According to E. Mulyasa, a seminal figure in the field, the establishment of a clear vision constitutes a pivotal step in the implementation of any curriculum (Salabi, 2020). The vision, as articulated by E. Mulyasa, plays a pivotal role in inspiring and motivating the school to provide quality service and achieve its educational objectives (Patmawati, Ma'arif, Toyibah, & Rasmanah, 2023). As stated by Mr. Hamdan, the school principal, many graduates of MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari have successfully been accepted into various pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) after completing their studies at MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari. This outcome is indicative of the efficacy of the curriculum in providing students with the religious knowledge and competencies that enable them to pursue further education in other institutions.

In terms of aims and objectives, MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari has developed a curriculum plan that is characterized by clearly defined goals for the implementation of the local content curriculum, which is based on formal *Diniyah* education. The overarching objectives of this curriculum are twofold: firstly, to instil a strong sense of character and values in graduates who study various Islamic texts, and secondly, to facilitate the deepening of their religious knowledge at each educational level. The objectives component plays a crucial role as it guides the entire curriculum implementation process. As (Harmita & Aly, 2023) have observed, these objectives are regarded as a benchmark that must be fulfilled within the curriculum framework. This assertion is further substantiated by Nona Komala Sari, who posits that the objectives function in synergy with all other components to ensure the success of the curriculum (Sari, 2021). This underscores the significance of clearly delineated objectives in ensuring the coherence and efficacy of curriculum implementation.

MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari employs a variety of teaching strategies adjusted to the student's grade levels for the implementation of learning activities (Septiana & Winangun, 2023). These strategies are meticulously aligned with the competencies and learning outcomes expected at each phase. For instance, in Phase A, first-grade students focus on memorising short surahs from the Qur'an. This

method is employed to enhance retention, which is a crucial factor in facilitating successful memorization of these short surahs(Rosyidatul & Faturrohman, 2021). Teachers also implement this method to ensure that students can apply their memorized surahs in everyday life, such as during prayers(Lutfiyyah, 2024).

In relation to the component of the teacher role, MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari provides specialised educators who are proficient in the study of kitab-kitab, or Islamic texts. It is important to note that not all teachers are responsible for teaching these texts; rather, educators who are specialized in this field are assigned to this task, in contrast to regular classroom teachers. This distinction between the national curriculum and the local content curriculum based on *Diniyah* education ensures that the professional competencies of educators are met. Another stated objective is to enhance the quality of both the process and the outcomes of *Diniyah* education (Ismail, Zainullah, & Tamam, 2022). In this component, teachers assume responsibility not only for the delivery of the curriculum but also for the monitoring of students' progress in mastering the competencies delineated in the *Diniyah* curriculum (Budiyono, 2013). This approach is reflected in the implementation of formal *Diniyah* education at MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari, where teachers assume a pivotal role in ensuring the quality of curriculum implementation and classroom learning (Pieters, Voogt, & Pareja Roblin, 2019).

In the material and resources component of the formal *Diniyah* education curriculum at MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari, textbooks and Islamic religious texts are provided according to grade levels. These learning resources serve as essential tools to support classroom instruction. This perspective aligns with the insights of Joke, who posits that materials function as a form of curriculum innovation, serving as instruments to assist teachers in the classroom and representing tangible applications of curriculum implementation(Pieters et al., 2019; Sabarudin, 2018). (Sabarudin, 2018) further emphasises the pivotal role of classroom materials in the realization of educational objectives(Adisel, Aprilia, Putra, & Prastiyo, 2022; Sabarudin, 2018) .

In the grouping component, the *Diniyah* curriculum at MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari employs varied grouping strategies, which are tailored to the learning needs of students. During lessons, students are often guided by the teacher, for example when using the memorization method known as "*setoran hafalan*" (memorisation deposit). This method is individualised and aims to enhance students' memorization. Research by Imam Mashud and Afidah indicates that regular memorization sessions significantly improve students' memorization capacity and help them achieve their learning competencies(Afidah & Anggraini,

2022; Mashud, 2019). To alleviate the potential monotony of conventional classroom learning, teachers may periodically form small or large groups. The utilization of both small and large groupings is consistent with the findings of Sukiman's research, which established a positive correlation between varied group learning activities and student motivation, thereby igniting interest and enthusiasm for learning(Sukiman, 2019).

In terms of location, MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari provides classrooms that are both comfortable and appropriately sized for students of different grade levels. The availability of suitable classroom spaces is a crucial determinant of achieving educational goals, ensuring that classroom learning is both enjoyable and effective (Mutiaramses, Neviyarni, & Murni, 2021). The school has already designated classrooms, which helps prevent confusion among students and teachers during lessons, ensuring that the learning environment is conducive to effective instruction (Mutiaramses, Neviyarni, & Murni, 2021). This finding aligns with research indicating that positive classroom environments lead to increased student interest and motivation to learn(Maylitha et al., 2023).

In terms of time allocation, the formal *Diniyah* curriculum of MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari deviates from other *Diniyah* curricula by scheduling lessons in the morning rather than the afternoon, as is more common. The systematic allocation of time for local *Diniyah* education in the morning, prior to the national curriculum, is intended to foster student character development. This approach is supported by research from (Krissandi & Rusmawan, 2015), which suggests that clear time management leads to tangible actions in character-building efforts. Finally, in the assessment component, MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari conducts periodic assessments, such as mid-semester and end-of-semester exams. Assessments are recognized as being integral to the learning process, as they enable educators to assess students' progress in achieving the learning objectives. These evaluations provide crucial feedback regarding the effectiveness of the instruction and the students' understanding of the material, as noted in studies by (Budiono & Hatip, 2023)(Mujiburrahman, Kartiani, & Parhanuddin, 2023).

Challenges of the Local Content Curriculum Based on Formal Diniyah Education

The implementation of the local content curriculum based on formal *Diniyah* education at MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari has been systematic and meets all 10 components: 1) rationale or vision, 2) aims & objectives, 3) content, 4) learning activities, 5) teacher role, 6) materials & resources, 7) grouping, 8) location, 9) time,

and 10) assessment. However, several challenges may arise from curriculum implementation and the components described:

1. *Rationale or Vision*

MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari could enhance its rationale or vision by breaking it down into specific short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals. A clearly defined and structured vision is imperative for guiding the educational institution in enhancing its quality and achieving its stated educational objectives(Purba & Naibaho, 2023). By articulating its vision and mission with clarity, the school can maintain a focused approach, ensuring all efforts are aligned with its overarching goals and driving meaningful progress(Syafitri, Halimahturrafiah, Sucipto, & Sabandi, 2023). However, a significant challenge lies in ensuring that this vision is not only effectively communicated but also embraced by all stakeholders, including teachers, students, and the wider community. In the context of evolving educational landscapes, it is imperative for educational institutions to engage their communities in a continuous dialogue, ensuring their relevance and adherence to their vision. This necessitates sustained effort and adaptation.

2. *Aims and Objectives*

In the initial component, entitled 'Rationale or Vision', MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari has explicitly articulated the rationale behind students' participation in formal *Diniyah* education. The overarching objective is to facilitate the acquisition of a profound understanding of religious knowledge through the study of various Islamic texts. This component is pivotal as it establishes the foundation of the curriculum, providing the essential framework that guides the educational process. Serving as the core orientation, it ensures that all other components remain consistent and aligned with the broader mission of the madrasah(Jan van den Akker, 2007).

The "Aims and Objectives" component refers to the goals that students are expected to achieve. At MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari, the implementation of this component is intended to nurture the character values of graduates, who study diverse Islamic texts and deepen their religious knowledge at each educational stage. The school principal also anticipates that many graduates from MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari will continue their studies at pesantren (Islamic boarding schools).

3. *Content*

In the content component, MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari has clearly defined the curriculum content for each grade or phase. The school has established standardized content that students are required to learn. However, a key challenge lies in increasing student engagement and interest in understanding the content of the various texts(Krisman, 2022). This concern is echoed by Ilfi Nurdiana, who notes a decline in the reading and study of traditional Islamic texts, often referred to as kitab kuning, as they are perceived as difficult(Abadi Wijaya, 2023). In response to this, MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari has introduced an innovative approach by

integrating formal *Diniyah* education into the broader school curriculum. This initiative aims to help students not only engage with but also comprehend the contents of the Islamic texts they study.

4. Learning Activities

In the learning activities component of the formal *Diniyah* education curriculum at MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari, each class has distinct characteristics in its approach to teaching, tailored to the student's abilities and competencies. A key challenge in this component is that teachers need to understand students' learning styles to maximize learning outcomes. Research has shown that one effective way to improve the quality of education is by understanding students' learning styles (Telaumbanua & Harefa, 2024). Additionally, other studies indicate that a teacher's awareness of these learning styles leads to positive outcomes, resulting in more effective learning (Putri, Magdalena, Fauziah, & Azizah, 2021).

5. Teacher Role

In the teacher role component, MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari faces the challenge of not all students fully comprehending the material presented by the teacher. Given the heterogeneity of student's ability to absorb the material, a greater investment of time is required to ensure the successful conceptualization of the taught concepts. A pivotal challenge confronting educators is the necessity to master a range of teaching methodologies. Research supports this, indicating that the use of varied teaching strategies can help prevent students from feeling bored while studying Islamic texts (Aprilia, Nelson, Rahmaningsih, & Warsah, 2020). Another study highlights the impact of pedagogical competence on learning outcomes (Permatasari, Attalina, & Widiyono, 2022). This analysis reveals an interconnection between the learning activities component and the teacher role component, suggesting that they cannot be separated. Consequently, teachers must receive comprehensive training in pedagogical competence, empowering them to comprehend students' diverse learning styles and proficiently utilize a range of teaching strategies to enhance learning outcomes.

6. Materials & Resources

In the material and resources component, MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari has established standardised resources for each grade level. Other studies also indicate that material and resources are critical factors contributing to the success of student learning (Hanifah, 2014). Additionally, research supports the notion that well-chosen materials and resources can enhance students' learning experiences in the classroom and significantly improve learning outcomes (Febrianto & Puspitaningsih, 2020). Furthermore, a study by (Samsinar, 2020) found that effective utilisation of learning resources can result in more efficient and productive educational outcomes. In light of these findings, MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari has effectively addressed the challenges associated with implementing a locally-based *Diniyah* formal education curriculum through the strategic use of material and resources.

7. Grouping

In the grouping component, MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari has established clear standards for classroom learning. When studying the yellow books, students are accompanied by educators who are well-versed in the texts being taught, as they come from pesantren backgrounds. As a result, the teachers demonstrate strong professional competencies. Additionally, educators employ a variety of grouping methods, such as individual, group, or whole-class learning. Research indicates that group learning can boost students' motivation and academic performance(Putriana, 2013). Other studies also suggest that group learning enhances collaboration among students(Zativalen, Tumardi, & Suhartono, 2022). Therefore, MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari has effectively addressed the challenges within the grouping component by adopting diverse models, ensuring that student motivation and cooperation in learning are consistently maintained.

8. Location

In the location component, MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari has established standardized learning spaces for classroom activities. Research shows that the availability of a dedicated classroom significantly influences students' learning success, as it facilitates effective interaction between teachers and students (Kadri, 2018).

9. Time

Regarding the time component, MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari schedules morning sessions specifically for the formal *Diniyah* education curriculum. Other studies suggest that morning is a productive time for learning, contributing to more effective classroom processes(Rachmat, Mujahidin, Tamam, & Alim, 2022) . Thus, in both the location and time components, MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari has effectively aligned its resources with the established curriculum, ensuring that the learning environment and time management are in accordance with standardized practices.

10. Assessment

In the assessment component, MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari has implemented standardized assessments, from the execution of assessments to their documentation for students(Munaroh, 2024). Research indicates that such assessments help teachers monitor students' progress, determine their graduation, and refine teaching methods in the classroom(Munaroh, 2024). Therefore, MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari has effectively balanced its curriculum, from planning to evaluation. This balanced and consistent curriculum enables MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari to achieve its vision, which has been developed in collaboration with both internal and external stakeholders.

D. CONCLUSION

An analysis of the implementation of the local curriculum, grounded in formal *Diniyah* education at MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari, has revealed several key findings

that require careful attention. To begin with, the curriculum's consistent application across its core components—including rationale/vision, aims and objectives, content, learning activities, teacher roles, materials, grouping, location, time, and assessment—suggests that its foundational elements are well-aligned with the institution's standards. This consistency reflects the school's commitment to maintaining a well-structured and coherent educational framework.

Furthermore, the curriculum appears to address several challenges inherent to local content and formal *Diniyah* education, particularly in the areas of rationale, objectives, content, and assessment. These components have been effectively implemented, with a clear rationale, well-defined objectives, and an inclusive approach to both content and assessment. As a result, the curriculum has achieved notable success in its application.

However, some critical areas still need focused attention, especially regarding learning activities and the role of teachers. The analysis highlights a pressing need for professional development in the area of learning activities. While the curriculum's aims and activities are well-structured, there remains a gap in teachers' pedagogical competencies, particularly in adapting to students' diverse learning styles. To address these gaps, the school could benefit from prioritizing the organization of workshops or training programs designed to enhance teachers' understanding of pedagogical strategies tailored to varying learning needs. By equipping educators with a broader repertoire of teaching methods, the school can create a more dynamic and inclusive learning environment. This, in turn, is likely to improve student engagement, comprehension, and retention of material, ultimately contributing to the overall success of the curriculum's implementation.

Additionally, the role of teachers should be acknowledged as a critical aspect requiring further attention. While their contribution is undeniably central to the success of the curriculum, there appears to be room for improvement in their engagement with both the content and their students. To address this, it may be beneficial for the school to consider implementing workshops aimed at refining teaching strategies and methods. These workshops could provide teachers with a broader repertoire of techniques to enhance student interest and participation. Strengthening pedagogical competencies is expected to offer dual advantages—not only improving instructional quality but also fostering more meaningful and impactful learning experiences for students.

In conclusion, while the local curriculum at MI Ma'arif NU Brunosari has made notable progress, addressing gaps in learning activities and teacher roles remains

essential for achieving a more integrated and effective framework. By prioritizing targeted professional development, particularly in pedagogical expertise and instructional strategies, the school may be better positioned to enhance both teaching quality and student outcomes. This approach could contribute to optimizing the curriculum's implementation, aligning it more closely with the institution's broader educational objectives.

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