



Curriculum Design Based on Pesantren Values and Learning Models at MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah Pati and SD Daarul Quran Semarang

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Keywords:

curriculum design, learning management, madrasah ibtidaiyah, international school, primary education

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Received – July 11, 2025

Revised – July 21, 2025

Accepted – July 28, 2025

Published Online First

- August 4, 2025



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Abstract

Curriculum and learning management are two strategic components in determining the quality of primary education. Each educational institution develops its curriculum model according to its institutional vision, socio-cultural context, and long-term learning objectives. The differing characteristics between traditional Islamic schools and internationally based primary schools reflect a diversity of approaches in designing and managing learning processes. In this context, this study examines the curriculum design models and learning management implemented at MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah Pati and DaQu Primary School, Semarang. Using a qualitative approach with a comparative case study method, data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The findings show that MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah Pati integrates the National Curriculum with a local curriculum based on Islamic values, employing a character-based learning approach and habitual worship practices. Meanwhile, DaQu Primary School Semarang adopts the National Curriculum and the Cambridge International Curriculum with an orientation toward 21st-century skills and technology-based learning. Significant differences are observed in curriculum orientation, teacher roles, evaluation methods, and classroom management systems. However, each institution possesses contextual strengths that can serve as inspiration for developing a hybrid curriculum model. This study recommends a collaboration of religious values and global approaches in designing adaptive and holistic primary education.

To cite: Sholihah, H., & Zaenurrosyid, A. (2025). Curriculum design based on pesantren values and learning models at MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah Pati and SD Daarul Quran Semarang. *As Sibyan: Jurnal Kajian Kritis Pendidikan Islam dan Manajemen Pendidikan Dasar*, 8(1), 53-76. Doi: https://10.52484/as_sibyan.v8i1.934

Introduction

Primary education holds a strategic role in character formation, literacy enhancement, and the development of children's intellectual foundations. Curriculum and learning management serve as the two main pillars in ensuring the success of the educational process. The curriculum functions not only as a set of plans and arrangements regarding objectives, content, and instructional materials, but also reflects the value orientation and educational philosophy of an institution. On the other hand, learning management involves the systematic, effective, and sustainable organization of the teaching and learning process—from planning and implementation to evaluation (Nazri et al., 2022).

In the context of Indonesian education, the diversity of primary education institutions—whether religious-based, national, or international—has led to the dynamic development of various curriculum and learning management models. One manifestation of this diversity can be observed in MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah Pati and Primary School Semarang. MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah is a traditional Islamic educational institution that integrates the national curriculum with local Islamic content. In contrast, Primary School Semarang is a primary school that adopts a global approach through the Cambridge Curriculum combined with the national curriculum (Sari et al., 2023).

Reason for Selecting the Research Locations. The selection of MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah Pati and SD Daarul Quran Semarang as research sites is based on their shared commitment to integrating pesantren values into formal education, while differing in terms of institutional type, infrastructure, and curriculum implementation strategies. MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah Pati represents a traditional Islamic elementary school located in a rural area, where pesantren values are preserved through conventional teaching methods and community-based religious activities. SD Daarul Quran Semarang (SD Daqu), situated in an urban setting, combines modern pedagogical approaches and digital tools with intensive *tahfidz*-based education rooted in pesantren culture. This comparative selection allows the study to explore how contextual factors such as location, resources, and institutional vision influence curriculum design and implementation of pesantren values.

The Humanistic Learning Theory—as developed by theorists such as Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow—emphasizes the holistic development of learners, focusing on self-actualization, emotional growth, and individual autonomy (Nabilla Puteri Syafira et al., 2024). In the context of Islamic education, especially pesantren-based curricula, this theory is especially relevant because it aligns with the tarbiyah approach that prioritizes character formation (*akhlaq*), self-discipline, and spiritual development. It encourages student-centered learning, personal meaning-making, and respectful relationships between teacher and student—core tenets of *adab* in pesantren education. In curriculum management, humanistic theory encourages educational leaders to design programs that support students' potential and interests. Foster supportive learning environments that value empathy, reflection, and moral reasoning. Integrate individualized learning pathways that accommodate spiritual and emotional growth.

Table 1. Indicators for Exploration Based on Humanistic Theory

Aspect	Humanistic Indicator	Potential Application in Research
1. Curriculum Objectives	Emphasizes personal growth, moral development, and learner autonomy	How do curriculum goals reflect spiritual and moral growth alongside academic achievement?
2. Learning Environment	Safe, empathetic, non-threatening, emotionally supportive	How do the schools create supportive environments that reflect pesantren's values?
3. Teacher's Role	Facilitator of personal growth, empathetic guide rather than authoritarian figure	Do teachers serve as mentors who foster holistic development in students?
4. Student Agency	Encouragement of self-initiative, reflection, and ownership of learning	To what extent are students involved in self-directed or collaborative learning?
5. Instructional Strategy	Experiential, dialogic, reflective, and personalized	How are learning models aligned with personal meaning-making and life application?
6. Assessment and Evaluation	Formative, non-judgmental, focuses on personal improvement and internal motivation	How are assessments used to measure growth in character, emotion, and social interaction?

In the discussion chapter, these indicators can be used to analyze how the curriculum at both institutions embodies pesantren values not only through content (e.g., *tahfidz*, *fiqh*, and *akhlak*) but also through pedagogical approach and school culture. You may structure the discussion by comparing: Whether both schools align more with behaviorist, constructivist, or humanistic educational models. How each school's practices reflect (or lack) humanistic principles in managing learning and shaping student identity. The balance between cognitive-academic development and spiritual-emotional growth.

This phenomenon is particularly interesting to study, as both institutions employ different approaches while sharing the same goal of improving the quality of learning. The differences in curriculum design and learning management between the two schools offer valuable insights for developing educational models that are adaptive to both local contexts and global demands. Therefore, it is essential to conduct an in-depth examination of how each institution designs and manages its learning processes, as well as to explore the potential integration of both value systems in developing a more inclusive and transformative curriculum and learning management model (Wicaksana & Rachman, 2018).

In several previous studies, the focus of curriculum and learning management research has generally centred on the implementation of the national curriculum in public schools or madrasahs using a single approach, whether religious-based or modern. For example, Supriyadi (2020) highlighted the effectiveness of character-based learning management in Islamic senior high schools (*Madrasah Aliyah*), while Wulandari's (2021) study emphasized the integration of the Cambridge Curriculum with the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in international private schools. However, few studies have comparatively examined two contrasting approaches – namely, the traditional Islamic school model and the international-based school model – within the context of primary education in Indonesia.

Curriculum and instruction are two fundamental components in the field of education that are closely interconnected and play a crucial role in determining the overall quality of educational outcomes (Salsabila & Salika, 2025). The curriculum is not merely a formal document outlining objectives and subject content; it also reflects the educational philosophy of an institution (Fadli et al., 2025). As stipulated in Law Number 20 of 2003, the curriculum encompasses the planning and arrangement of objectives, content, and methods used in the learning process. On the other hand, instruction represents the direct realization of the curriculum through active interaction between teachers and students, aimed at achieving behavioural changes and the mastery of competencies (Dafid & Nuryadi, 2020).

In practice, various models of curriculum and instructional design have been developed to align with institutional needs, contextual factors, and the characteristics of learners. (Ma & Biantoro, 2025). Several commonly used models include the subject-centred curriculum, integrated curriculum, competency-based curriculum, social reconstruction, project-based learning, and the humanistic model. Each model has its own strengths and limitations, and their application is largely influenced by the institutional vision, the capacity of human resources, and long-term educational orientations (Mahrus, 2021).

In the context of this study, MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah Pati and Primary School Semarang demonstrate fundamentally different implementations of curriculum design and learning management models, yet each reflects the tendencies of specific educational approaches. MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah tends to apply a combination of the subject-centred curriculum and the humanistic curriculum, where the curriculum structure remains focused on core subjects with strong religious content, while emphasizing character and moral values through guided and spiritually oriented instruction (Zibbat & Hariri, 2024). Conversely, Primary School Semarang adopts more of a competency-based curriculum and project-based learning approach, integrated within the National Curriculum and the Cambridge Curriculum. In practice, learning at this school focuses on achieving specific competencies with measurable indicators, the use of modern educational technology, and the implementation of projects or case studies as part of strategies to develop 21st-century skills such as collaboration, communication, and problem-solving (Fikri et al., 2025).

This contrast illustrates that the subject-centred and humanistic models employed at MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah excel in character formation, spiritual discipline, and the reinforcement of Islamic moral values. However, these models are limited by a lack of interdisciplinary integration and suboptimal use of technology to support active learning. On the other hand, the competency-based and project-based approaches at Primary School Semarang provide students with greater autonomy to explore knowledge independently,

but may reduce the depth of religious value formation and emotional closeness between teachers and students. These findings reinforce the understanding that curriculum design cannot follow a one-size-fits-all model; rather, it must be developed contextually, taking into account institutional vision, the values to be instilled, and the evolving challenges of the times. Therefore, this study recommends exploring a hybrid curriculum approach—integrating the strengths of traditional, value-rich models such as that of MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah with the advantages of modern curriculum systems as implemented at Primary School Semarang.

The integration of Islamic values, discipline, and spiritual depth with 21st-century competencies, technological innovation, and critical thinking can offer a new direction in designing an adaptive and transformative primary education system. Thus, understanding curriculum theory and instructional design must not remain merely conceptual but should serve as an analytical foundation for evaluating and developing real educational practices in the field (Dayanti, 2023). The research gap concerns the limited exploration of the dynamics of curriculum design and learning management practices in two institutions that differ significantly in terms of cultural background, educational vision, and governance. Furthermore, few studies have examined the potential synthesis between local Islamic values and global pedagogical approaches as a means of formulating a contextual and internationally competitive educational model (Aditomo, 2024). The distinction of this study from previous research lies in its use of a comparative case study approach, which not only examines educational management practices in each school but also explores the integrative potential between different models. Rather than merely describing the differences, this study moves toward a conceptual analysis of opportunities for developing a hybrid model of curriculum and learning management.

The novelty of this research lies in its effort to formulate an integrative curriculum framework that combines traditional Islamic values with global educational approaches, which can be adapted by primary schools in Indonesia. Through an in-depth qualitative approach, this study contributes to enriching the discourse on contextual primary education development—bridging tradition and modernity—and offers inspiration for policymakers in designing a more holistic, inclusive, and transformative educational system.

This study employs a qualitative approach with a comparative case study design. This approach was chosen because the researcher aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the curriculum design process and learning management practices implemented within the context of two primary education institutions with distinct characteristics: one rooted in Islamic tradition (MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah Pati) and the other based on international education (Primary School Semarang). The qualitative approach enables the researcher to explore the phenomena contextually, comprehensively, and naturally, in accordance with the realities observed in the field (Ibrahim, 2018). The research was conducted at two locations: MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah, located in Pati Regency, and Primary School, situated in the city of Semarang. These schools were selected purposively based on the consideration that they represent two contrasting models of primary education: MI as a traditional Islamic education institution and the Primary School as one based on an international curriculum. The research subjects consisted of the school principal, vice principal for curriculum affairs, classroom teachers, academic administrative staff, and students as supporting informants (Hasanah, 2017).

Data collection was carried out using three main techniques: participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. First, participatory observation involved the researcher directly observing classroom learning processes, curriculum management activities, and the school's academic administrative systems. Observations were conducted in a non-interventionist manner to ensure that the data reflected authentic realities. The researcher recorded the dynamics of teacher-student interactions, the use of learning media, evaluation strategies, and school administrative practices. Second, in-depth interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format with key informants, including the principal, classroom teachers, and curriculum staff. These interviews aimed to explore perceptions, experiences, and institutional strategies in managing curriculum and instruction. Third, documentation study served as a supplementary method. Supporting data were obtained from official school documents such as Lesson Plans (RPP), curriculum structures, academic calendars, assessment reports, syllabi, and student portfolios. These documents were used to reinforce the findings from observation and interviews, as well as to trace the conceptual framework underlying each curriculum model. (Dr. H. Zuchri Abdussamad, S.IK., 2021).

Data analysis was conducted interactively and occurred simultaneously with the data collection process, referring to the qualitative analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which includes three main stages. The first stage is data reduction. Data obtained from the field were reduced through a process of selection, categorization, and coding based on key themes: (a) curriculum design, (b) learning strategies, (c) the role of teachers, (d) learning evaluation, and (e) academic management (Rahardjo, n.d.). The validity of the data in this study was ensured through four main techniques. First, source and method triangulation was employed to verify the consistency of information obtained from various informants and data collection methods. Second, member checking involved presenting preliminary findings to research subjects for confirmation and feedback. Third, an audit trail was maintained by systematically documenting all stages of the research process from beginning to end. Additionally, the primary instrument in this qualitative study was the researcher themselves (*human instrument*). As the main instrument, the researcher played an active role in designing the study, collecting data, conducting analysis, and interpreting the findings (Sidiq et al., 2019).

In analysing the data, the researcher employed a qualitative comparative analysis approach, namely by comparing the findings from the two schools based on several main dimensions: curriculum structure, which refers to how the design and integration of national, local, and international curricula are organized; learning strategies, which include teaching methods, media, and pedagogical approaches; and learning evaluation, which covers assessment techniques, reporting of learning outcomes, and student involvement (Muhadjir, 2018). Academic management: involving the role of the principal, the curriculum team, and the administrative system. Core values and educational vision: encompassing value orientation, learning philosophy, and institutional mission (Miles, M.B, Huberman, A.M, & Saldana, 2014). The results of the comparison are presented in a thematic table to facilitate the reader's understanding of the differences, similarities, and integrative potential between the models. The researcher also relates these findings to curriculum theory, educational management, and previous studies to strengthen the overall argumentation (Wahyudin, 2017).

Result

The Dynamic Historical MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah at Winong Pati Central Java

MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah Pecangaan is an Islamic primary education institution located in Dukuh Pecangaan, Winong Village, Winong Subdistrict, Pati Regency, Central Java. This institution was founded upon the noble aspirations of local religious leaders who, from the outset, showed a deep commitment to promoting Islamic education in rural areas. Each leadership period brought innovations and improvements in management systems, instructional practices, and religious development programs. Institutionally, MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah has been accredited with an "A" rating based on the latest accreditation results from BAN-S/M in the 2021/2022 period. The madrasah has a well-structured and professional organizational system, comprising the Principal, Vice Principal for Curriculum Affairs, Vice Principal for Student Affairs, Administrative Staff, and a team of educators including homeroom teachers, subject-specific teachers, and tahfidz instructors. Currently, the Principal is Joko Siswanto, S.Pd.I., assisted by Ahmad Saifuddin, S.Pd.I. as Vice Principal for Curriculum Affairs, and Susilowati, S.Pd.I. as Vice Principal for Student Affairs. Administrative duties are managed by Wiko Sancoko, while the tahfidz program is coordinated by Ahmad Zubaedi, S.Pd.I., along with other tahfidz instructors such as Siti Khumaiyah, Nor Sa'id, Mustiatul Khasanah, and M. Thaiqur Rohman (Danuwara & Maghribi, 2023).

In terms of human resources, the madrasah employs 25 teachers and 2 administrative staff members. The majority of the teachers hold a bachelor's degree, particularly in the fields of education and Islamic religious studies. Although some of the *tahfidz* instructors have not yet completed their undergraduate studies, they possess substantial experience and competence in Qur'anic education. The institution remains committed to enhancing the quality of its teaching staff through continuous professional development, including training programs, participation in *Musyawarah Guru Madrasah* (MGM), and regular mentoring provided by the foundation (Puspitorini et al., 2021a).

The appeal of MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah is also reflected in its steadily growing student enrolment. In the 2021/2022 academic year, the madrasah recorded a total of 398 students, consisting of 202 male and 196 female students. These students come from various hamlets within Winong Village and surrounding areas, with diverse socio-economic backgrounds, although most are from religiously devout families. The madrasah is equipped with adequate facilities and infrastructure to support the teaching and learning process. It has permanent classrooms, a library, a teachers' room, prayer facilities, as well as learning aids such as student worksheets (LKS), projectors, and basic digital teaching media. The availability of these facilities plays a crucial role in the effective implementation of the curriculum and supports a range of extracurricular activities, including *tahfidz*, scouting, *hadrah* (Islamic musical art), and other religious programs (Puspitorini et al., 2021b).

Geographically, MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah is situated in a strategic and conducive location for education. Located approximately 17 kilometres from the centre of Pati Regency, the madrasah is nestled in a quiet and religious rural environment. Positioned in Pecangaan, RT 04 RW 03, Winong Village, Winong Subdistrict, the school is surrounded by residential areas, rice fields, and public spaces such as a sports field. The boundaries of

the madrasah include rice fields to the north and west, residential homes to the east, and the village sports field to the south. This supportive environment contributes to MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah's reputation as a well-regarded centre for Islamic primary education, trusted and favored by the local community.

The Collaborative Learning Approach in the Indonesian Language Class for Grade IV at MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah

The teaching of Indonesian language at MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah Pecangaan, Winong, Pati—particularly in Grade IV—has undergone various methodological developments, one of which is the implementation of the discussion method as part of an active learning strategy. This method was chosen by the Indonesian language teacher because it is considered effective in encouraging active student participation, fostering confidence in expressing opinions, and training students in critical thinking and oral communication skills. The implementation of this method is also aligned with the thematic-integrative learning approach of the 2013 Curriculum, which emphasizes student participation and collaboration in the construction of knowledge (Ainy et al., 2024).

Implementation of the discussion method in the classroom. The application of the discussion method is carried out in stages, starting from the planning stage, followed by implementation, and ending with evaluation. In the planning stage, the teacher prepares the *Lesson Plan (Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran or RPP)*, which outlines the learning objectives, instructional materials, discussion procedures, and the forms of assessment to be used. Themes in the Indonesian language subject—related to listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills—are developed into discussion materials that are relevant to students' daily lives. For example, when discussing fable texts, the teacher asks students to engage in discussions about the moral message of the story and its relevance to real-life situations.

In the implementation stage, the teacher begins by explaining the rules of discussion, the objectives of the activity, and the group arrangements. Each group consists of 4–5 students with heterogeneous academic abilities and personal characteristics. The teacher facilitates the selection of a spokesperson and a note-taker for each group. During the discussion, the teacher acts as a facilitator and observer, monitoring the flow of the activity without excessive interference, but still providing guidance when the discussion begins to stray from the topic (Hanik, 2020). The discussion is conducted during the core learning session, with a duration of approximately 15–20 minutes. After the discussion, each group presents the results of their discussion in front of the class. The teacher then provides feedback, reinforces the concepts discussed, and links the outcomes of the discussion to the predetermined learning objectives (Zaenurrosyid et al., 2020). Core learning activities using the discussion method. The core learning activities in the Grade IV Indonesian language class begin with an *apersepsi* (introductory activity), which involves connecting new material with the students' prior knowledge or experiences. The teacher then communicates the learning objectives for the day and motivates the students to actively participate in the lesson (Jannah, 2020).

After a brief presentation of the initial material, the teacher proceeds to divide the students into discussion groups. During this activity, students are encouraged to exchange

ideas, express their opinions, and listen to the perspectives of their peers (Puspitorini et al., 2021b). Student engagement in the Indonesian language learning process. In general, Grade IV students at MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah demonstrate a good level of engagement in Indonesian language learning activities that utilize the discussion method. Students appear enthusiastic when participating in group discussions, especially when the topics are closely related to their daily lives. This is evident from their involvement in speaking, taking notes on key points, and asking questions. Even students who were previously passive or shy have begun to show participation, although still primarily within the context of small group settings (Isnawati et al., 2023).

Students also benefit from improved analytical thinking skills through discussion activities, as they are required to provide reasoning for each opinion they express. The presence of group responsibilities encourages students to collaborate, share information, and learn to resolve minor conflicts independently. The teacher has also observed an increase in student engagement during class discussions, particularly in responding to other groups' presentations by offering relevant comments or questions (Hanik, 2020). However, there are also several challenges encountered during the implementation, such as differences in students' thinking speed, the dominance of certain students within groups, and the need to strengthen basic listening and note-taking skills. To address these issues, the teacher periodically rotates group members and provides targeted guidance for students who are less active. Student participation is evaluated through direct observation, teacher journals, and peer assessment (Habibah et al., 2025).

Comparison of the Collaborative Learning Approach: Indonesian Language Class (Grade IV)

At MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah, the collaborative learning approach in the Indonesian language class remains relatively conventional. The teacher facilitates activities such as small group discussions, turn-based reading, and dialogue practice, but these are more structured and teacher-directed. Collaborative activities are mostly used to reinforce reading comprehension or speaking practice. Evaluation is still largely based on individual written and oral tests, with limited group-based assessment.

SD Daqu integrates collaborative learning in Indonesian lessons through more modern, project-based approaches. Students work in groups to create illustrated stories, conduct peer interviews, or present short group videos. The teacher serves more as a learning facilitator, while students take ownership of their tasks through collaboration, role division, and shared responsibility. Assessments are authentic and performance-based, including portfolios, group presentations, and peer evaluations.

MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah applies collaborative learning in a more limited and teacher-centered way, focusing on cognitive outcomes. SD Daqu Semarang implements a more student-centered collaborative model, fostering active learning, creativity, and interpersonal skills. The key differences lie in the depth of implementation, the teacher's role, and assessment methods. SD Daqu demonstrates a more advanced application of collaborative learning supported by technology and project-based instruction.

Table 2. Comparative Analysis

Aspect	MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah Pati	SD Daarul Qur'an Semarang
Learning Objectives	To improve reading comprehension and oral communication through group activities	To develop 21st-century skills: communication, collaboration, and critical thinking
Classroom Activities	Small group discussions, reading poems in turns, basic conversation practice	Group storytelling projects, collaborative discussions, student presentations
Teacher's Role	Acts as the main instructor; actively guides discussions and provides direct feedback	Acts as a facilitator; allows students to work independently in groups using digital media
Assessment Methods	Written tests and group-based oral assessments	Project-based assessments, group reflections, and peer assessments

SD Daarul Qur'an Semarang

Learning strategies represent an integration process between new knowledge and the prior knowledge possessed by students. In the learning process, a problem-based approach is applied to encourage students to engage in knowledge exploration in a natural and meaningful way. Instruction is carried out cooperatively, fostering creative, innovative, and enjoyable interactions among students. Learning is also contextual, meaning that students are guided to experience learning through real-life situations. At SD Daarul Qur'an School Semarang, the instructional strategy for Islamic Religious Education for Generation Alpha employs a cooperative learning approach, supported by various learning aids. This strategy encourages students to think critically and creatively, and to develop problem-solving and decision-making skills through group discussions. Although Generation Alpha grows up in a digital environment and is familiar with technology from an early age, they are still able to participate effectively in the learning process and even demonstrate critical thinking skills through the cooperative learning approach (Ahmad, 2014).

A learning approach can be defined as a perspective or viewpoint regarding the learning process. Teacher-centred approaches often result in strategies such as direct instruction, deductive teaching, and expository methods. Conversely, student-centred approaches give rise to strategies such as discovery learning, inquiry-based learning, and inductive teaching. Learning methods are derived from approaches and refer to the systematic steps taken to achieve learning objectives. Teaching techniques and tactics are part of methods. Techniques involve how the method is implemented effectively and efficiently—for example, how to deliver a lecture in an engaging way to avoid student boredom.

A learning model represents the overall picture of the learning process from beginning to end, encompassing strategies, approaches, methods, and techniques. A learning strategy, specifically, is a structured plan designed to achieve specific educational goals. In the lesson plans (*Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran* or RPP) of the Islamic Religious Education teacher at SD Darul Qur'an School Semarang, instructional planning

for Generation Alpha has been thoughtfully developed, including: Subject Identity: Includes the educational unit, grade, semester, subject, and number of lesson hours. Competency Achievement Indicators: Appropriately aligned with the core competencies and formulated with accurate operational verbs. Learning Objectives: Clearly articulated to reflect both process and outcome expectations, aligned with basic competencies. Learning Materials: Selected according to the time allocation (35 minutes) and structured to support the systematic achievement of learning objectives. Learning Resources: Appropriately selected, such as the Islamic Religious Education textbook. Instructional Media: Tailored to the characteristics of Generation Alpha, using visual aids such as images and videos. Teaching Methods: Employs cooperative methods aligned with the learning goals. Assessment and Learning Scenarios: Cover introductory, core, and closing activities, and are arranged in accordance with the curriculum (Tarmizi & Mitrohardjono, 2020).

The implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning for Generation Alpha at SD Daarul Qur'an School Semarang consists of the following stages: Preliminary Activities: The session begins with a collective prayer, seating arrangement, attendance checking, review of previous material, and the presentation of the day's learning objectives. Core Activities: The teacher applies cooperative and contextual learning approaches. The stages include: Observing: The teacher presents the material to student groups. Experimenting: Students explore and solve problems collaboratively within their groups. Communicating: Students present the results of their discussions, fostering critical and creative thinking, as well as communication skills. Closing Activities: The teacher provides reinforcement, summarizes key points, assigns homework, and ends the lesson with expressions of gratitude (*hamdalah*) and greetings (*salam*). Careful planning of learning strategies is essential to creating an enjoyable and effective learning process that aligns with the specific needs of students, especially Generation Alpha. Well-prepared lesson planning not only facilitates student engagement but also motivates both teachers and learners to achieve the intended learning outcomes optimally (Fauzi & Fata, 2021).

The implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at SD Daarul Qur'an School in Semarang City has been carried out effectively and in accordance with the instructional plans designed by the teacher. This aligns with previous research findings which state that an effective learning process is one that is executed according to plan and is relevant to the characteristics of the learners – particularly Generation Alpha, who tend to favour cooperative and contextual learning approaches. To determine the effectiveness of the learning process, evaluation or assessment is essential. This evaluation must be aligned with the school's established policies. In practice, teachers conduct assessments through various methods, including oral, written, and observational assessments. For written evaluations, teachers employ essay tests as an assessment tool for Islamic Religious Education content. The purpose of using essay-type tests is to encourage students to think critically and to analyse real-life phenomena that are relevant to the learning material (Amrizal et al., 2022).

The cooperative learning strategy has proven effective as it enables students to actively participate, think critically, creatively, and innovatively within group work. Through this approach, students also learn to take responsibility for their tasks and the knowledge they acquire, particularly in understanding Islamic teachings. The results of implementing this strategy indicate that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) for Generation Alpha at SD Daarul Qur'an School in Semarang City has had a positive impact. Despite

being a generation familiar with technology from an early age, they are still able to engage well in the learning process and demonstrate significant cognitive development (Khanip et al., 2024).

The Curriculum Structure of the daQu Method at Daarul Qur'an Elementary School in Semarang City

The daQu Method curriculum is a distinctive curriculum implemented at Daarul Qur'an Elementary School as part of a habituation program that differentiates SD Daarul Qur'an from other schools, especially in Semarang City. This curriculum emphasizes the development of daily habits imbued with Islamic values within the school environment. The core principle of the daQu Method curriculum is *Iqamatul Wajib wa Ihyaus Sunnah*, which means upholding obligatory duties and reviving the practice of sunnah (prophetic traditions). The enforcement of obligatory duties is realized through congregational performance of mandatory prayers at their prescribed times, such as the *Dzuhur* and *Ashar* prayers conducted together in the school mosque. Outside school hours, students are encouraged to continue these habits at home with their families. The expectation is that these positive habits will not only be maintained within the school environment but will also become deeply rooted in the daily lives of students and their families (Andy & Kardoyo, 2020).

According to Mr. Fatkhurahman, the daQu Method curriculum is designed to train both students and teachers to consistently fulfil Islamic obligations punctually and to cultivate the habit of practicing the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He explained that the lessons students receive in the classroom are then applied practically in their daily school life, ensuring that theoretical knowledge and practice go hand in hand. Thus, Islamic values are not only taught cognitively but are also instilled in attitudes and behaviors. Furthermore, Mr. Fatkhurahman emphasized that the practice of the Sunnah of the Prophet encompasses all forms of speech, actions, and decrees that are part of Islamic law. At SD Daarul Qur'an Semarang, this effort aims to revive community awareness about the importance of Sunnah, which has increasingly been neglected. Allah Almighty has affirmed in the Qur'an (Surah Al-Ahzab: 21) that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the best exemplar for Muslims, especially for those who hope for Allah's mercy and the Hereafter and constantly remember Allah (Tejamukti et al., 2018).

The verse highlights the close relationship between emulating the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the perfection of faith. The greater a person's enthusiasm in following the behaviour of the Prophet, the higher their level of faith will be. In line with this, Mrs. Sri Wardani, the homeroom teacher of Class 2 Al-Mulk, stated that the implementation of the daQu Method curriculum is strongly associated with the habituation of daily worship, especially the fulfilment of obligatory acts and the practice of the Prophet's Sunnah. She emphasized that all members of the Daarul Qur'an school community are required to participate in this habituation, which aligns with the vision of SD Daarul Qur'an. This curriculum is applied uniformly across all educational units under the Daarul Qur'an Foundation, making it a unique identity of the institution (Basyit et al., 2021). The implementation of the daQu Method curriculum in daily school life consists of seven main aspects, namely: performing obligatory prayers (*salat*) in congregation at the earliest prescribed time, participating in overnight Islamic boarding activities (MABIT), performing the *Dhuha* prayer as well as the Sunnah prayers before (*qabliyah*) and after (*ba'diyah*) the obligatory prayers, memorizing and reflecting on the

Qur'an (*tahsin and tahfiz*), giving charity (*sedekah*) and observing Sunnah fasting, engaging in teaching and learning activities, and habituating prayer and supplication. These practices are accompanied by attitudes of sincerity (*ikhlas*), patience (*sabar*), gratitude (*syukur*), and contentment (*rida*) (Rahmawati, 2018).

Obligatory Congregational Prayer at the Prescribed Time. Prayer (*salat*) is a fundamental act of worship for every Muslim that must be performed as long as one is alive. This worship serves as the primary means of direct communication between a servant and their Lord. Allah Almighty grants great rewards to those who perform prayers with sincere devotion, especially when done in congregation. According to Amin Syukur, congregational prayer is considered a Sunnah practice that, if performed, earns reward, and if neglected, does not incur sin. However, performing congregational prayer is not only about fulfilling the obligation but also serves to strengthen spiritual and social bonds among Muslims and to reinforce Islamic brotherhood (*ukhuwah Islamiyah*).

In practice, congregational prayer must be conducted by at least two people, with one acting as the imam and the others as followers (*makmum*). The virtue of congregational prayer is emphasized in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which states that praying in congregation is twenty-seven times more rewarding than praying alone. Scholars unanimously agree that congregational prayer is highly recommended and holds a superior status. At SD Daarul Qur'an, the habituation of performing congregational prayers at the earliest prescribed time is an integral part of the daQu Method curriculum. The practice focuses on the *Dzuhur and Ashar* prayers, both of which occur during school hours. This routine aims to instil strong worship values in students from an early age so that the habit continues within their family environment. Prayer, as the pillar of religion, is the first deed to be accounted for in the hereafter; hence, its timely and congregational performance is strongly encouraged. The benefits of this habituation not only strengthen the spiritual dimension of the children but also foster positive character development. Children learn discipline, orderliness, and become role models for others. During congregational prayer, students are also taught social values such as speaking kindly, behaving politely, respecting others, and building brotherhood within the framework of faith (Amalia et al., 2022).

Overnight Stay Program (MABIT), *Dhuha Prayer, Qabliyah and Ba'diyah* Prayers. Etymologically, MABIT means "overnight stay." In the context of Islamic da'wah and education, MABIT serves as a *tarbiyah* (spiritual training) medium aimed at nurturing the spiritual aspect (spirituality), softening the heart, purifying the soul, and habituating the body to obey worship obligations. This activity is one of the flagship programs at SD Daarul Qur'an Semarang designed to protect students from negative influences such as juvenile delinquency, neglecting worship duties, and other deviations. The series of activities during MABIT include congregational prayers and *tahajjud* prayer, recitation of at least *one juz of the Qur'an*, morning and evening dhikr (*al-ma'tsurat*), and delivery of religious sermons (*advise*).

In addition to MABIT, sunnah prayers such as the Dhuha prayer are also regularly practiced. The Dhuha prayer is a voluntary prayer performed after the sun has risen until just before the *Dhuhur* prayer, with the most recommended time being when the sunlight begins to feel warm. Based on the author's observations during the Dhuha congregational

prayer at SD Daarul Qur'an Semarang, the prayer is performed every morning from approximately 07:00 to 07:20 AM local time. All students are required to participate in the congregational Dhuha prayer, including teachers and education staff. This activity is conducted in the school mosque for students in grades 3 through 6, while students in grades 1 and 2 perform the prayer in the school auditorium. The separation of prayer locations is due to the limited capacity of the mosque and to better manage the younger students, who generally require more guidance and control (Habibie, 2019). All members of the Daarul Qur'an school community are encouraged to habituate themselves to practicing sunnah acts as a manifestation of love for the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Cultivating the habit of performing sunnah worship from an early age has a profound impact on shaping better personal character, earning spiritual rewards, facilitating sustenance, and promoting obedience in fulfilling religious obligations (Fauzi & Fata, 2021).

Memorization and Reflection on the Qur'an (Tahsin and Tahfidz). Reading the Qur'an, whether through memorization or from the *mushaf*, brings abundant blessings into one's life. In a hadith narrated by Ibn Abbas, the Prophet Muhammad SAW described a heart empty of the Qur'an as a house devoid of inhabitants. This highlights the importance of making the Qur'an an integral part of daily life. Those who delight in reading the Qur'an experience profound joy and never grow weary, day or night. Just as wealth used in the righteous path by the pious brings great benefit, reading the Qur'an also yields immense rewards when rooted in love and deep understanding of its meanings. The habit of reading the Qur'an, if consistently maintained, will develop into a routine that is difficult to abandon and becomes a natural part of life (Tejamukti et al., 2018).

At SD Daarul Qur'an, the activities of memorizing and reflecting on the Qur'an are focused through the subjects of tahsin and tahfidz. These activities are integral to Daarul Qur'an's mission to cultivate a generation that upholds religious obligations and revives the practice of sunnah. Tahsin and tahfidz are core subjects with the highest number of instructional hours compared to other subjects. Before submitting their memorization to the teacher, students are required to conduct *muroja'ah*, or revision of their memorized verses, usually during free times such as before the teacher enters the classroom, before dhuha prayer, and after the *dhuhur* prayer. This practice aligns with Daarul Qur'an's vision of shaping a Qur'anic generation ready to become future leaders.

Charity (giving) and Voluntary Fasting. To become students who attain the pleasure of Allah SWT and His paradise, both physical and spiritual health are essential. Physical health is maintained through a healthy lifestyle, including proper diet, sufficient rest, and regular exercise. Meanwhile, spiritual health is achieved by increasing acts of worship such as obligatory and voluntary prayers, engagement with the Qur'an, voluntary fasting, and charity. Giving is a voluntary act of giving performed by Muslims without limitation on amount or timing. It is not restricted to monetary donations but can also take the form of other good deeds. Charity nurtures social empathy in children from an early age, making them sensitive to their surroundings and inclined to help others. For instance, at SD Daarul Qur'an Semarang, giving is a daily routine practiced by the entire school community. Its purpose is to purify the heart so students can more readily absorb their lessons. There is no fixed amount for giving; the important aspect is to cultivate the

habit of giving, whether in money or other forms, coordinated by each class teacher (Andy & Kardoyo, 2020).

Learning and Teaching. Learning activities are understood as interactions that can positively transform students' behaviour. The teacher's role is to create an environment that supports this transformation. At SD Daarul Qur'an, the concept of learning extends beyond the classroom to include habituation to worship practices such as the dhuha prayer, greeting others with *salam*, smiling and greeting, punctuality in prayer, and using polite expressions like "please," "sorry," "thank you," and "excuse me." All these behaviours are integrated into the learning process to help shape students' character. **Praying, Praying for Others, and Asking for Prayers.** Prayer serves as a means to draw closer to Allah SWT. Since it is unknown whose prayers will be answered, it is important to pray for one another. At SD Daarul Qur'an, students are trained to consistently pray after each prayer, including prayers for themselves, their families, teachers, and the school community. This habit cultivates patience, sincerity, and trust in Allah throughout the learning process. **Sincerity, Patience, Gratitude, and Acceptance.** Sincerity means accepting everything as the divine decree of Allah SWT, while patience refers to the ability to restrain oneself when facing trials and challenges. Gratitude involves recognizing and appreciating Allah's blessings, and acceptance (Rida) is the contentment with Allah's will in all circumstances (H, 2020).

Implementation of the daQu Method Curriculum. The implementation of the daQu Method curriculum at SD Daarul Qur'an is a series of daily habituation activities that support the school's vision, which is to perform obligatory worship and to revive the sunnah. Although it has not yet been systematically compiled into a syllabus or lesson plan (RPP), it will be documented in the future. Currently, its implementation runs quite well despite challenges such as limited facilities and less than optimal implementation at home because not all students have full awareness in practicing it. The daQu Method curriculum can be categorized as a hidden curriculum, meaning an educational program that is not written but has a significant influence on changing student behaviour. The principal explained that this curriculum is the distinctive characteristic of SD Daarul Qur'an that differentiates it from other schools because it focuses on character formation through habituation of worship from an early age. The school combines three curricula, namely International Curriculum (Cambridge): Applied to Math, Science, and English subjects, aiming to provide global-standard education. National Curriculum (KTSP and Curriculum 2013): KTSP is used for grades 3 and 6, while grades 1, 2, 4, and 5 use Curriculum 2013. DaQu Method Curriculum: Focused on habituating obligatory and sunnah worship as the school's flagship program.

The great ambition of SD Daarul Qur'an is to produce *hafidz and hafidzah* who make the Qur'an their life guidance. The learning process is only conducted five days a week (Monday to Friday) using a full day school system. Teachers play an important role in guiding students, and all school members are involved in learning as mandated by the foundation. Based on the author's observation, students at SD Daarul Qur'an have special characteristics in class division, where each class is limited to a maximum of 20 students. However, in this academic year, some classes only contain 15 students. This is done in parallel classes to overcome space limitations and improve the effectiveness of the learning process. The implementation of the daQu Method curriculum is scheduled in

every daily activity (Tejamukti et al., 2018). The detailed schedule for the habituation activities of the daQu Method curriculum is outlined in the following table.

Table 3. Schedule for the Habituation Activities of The Daqu Method Curriculum

No	DaQu Method Curriculum Activities	Implementation Schedule
1	Mandatory congregational prayers at the beginning of the time	Dhuhr and Asr prayers
2	MABIT	a. Odd semester: even classes, beginning of the school year b. Even semester: odd class, end of semester before class promotion
3	Dhuha prayer	Every morning at 07.00 WIB
4	The <i>Qabliyah</i> and <i>Ba'diyah</i> prayers	Before and after obligatory prayers
5	Memorizing and contemplating the Qur'an (<i>tahsin, tahfidz</i>)	Every day as a subject
6	Alms	Every day in class
7	Sunnah fasting	Monday and Thursday
8	Learning and teaching	Every day inside and outside the classroom
9	Prayer: praying and asking for prayer	Done anytime, pray for each other
10	Sincere, patient, grateful, content (character)	Applied in students' daily lives

However, the implementation of the daQu Method curriculum still faces several challenges, such as limited time allocated for MABIT activities, which only occur twice a year each semester, with grouping based on even and odd classes. Additionally, facility constraints pose difficulties, especially the mosque's limited capacity that cannot accommodate all students during congregational *Dzuhur* and *Dhuha* prayers, resulting in a lack of orderliness. Furthermore, there is no specific handbook or guidebook available for students to support the implementation of the daQu Method curriculum. Students carry out these habituation activities only based on daily instructions, without personal documentation or special notes. A systematic module has not yet been developed, and the curriculum currently refers only to the seven main points applied within the Daarul Qur'an environment. Nevertheless, the application of the daQu Method curriculum has shown positive outcomes, including producing Qur'an memorization achievers who are a source of pride. This has become a unique attraction for parents who hope their children can become *hafiz* or *hafidzah* through education at SD Daarul Qur'an (Rahmawati, 2018).

Implementation of the National and Local Curriculum at Daarul Qur'an Elementary School, Semarang City

Daarul Qur'an Elementary School in Semarang City implements various curricula, one of which is the distinguished daQu Method curriculum. Although not documented systematically, this curriculum has been implemented as a hallmark of the school to differentiate it from other educational institutions. Its purpose is to shape students' character by habituating them to perform obligatory prayers on time and to practice sunnah worship from an early age. According to the curriculum coordinator, there are three types of curricula applied at Daarul Qur'an Elementary School. First, the international curriculum known as the Cambridge curriculum, which is implemented in specific subjects such as mathematics, science, and English. Second, the national

curriculum, which includes KTSP and the 2013 Curriculum; classes 3 and 6 use KTSP, while classes 1, 2, 4, and 5 use the 2013 Curriculum. Third, the daQu Method curriculum, which is the school's strength, instils the habit of worship as part of character education. This curriculum focuses on discipline in performing obligatory prayers on time and habituating the practice of sunnah worship as part of daily life (Manajemen Kurikulum Fullday School di SD Daarul Quran, 2020).

The daQu Method curriculum at Daarul Qur'an Elementary School in Semarang City does not have a formal, systematically documented curriculum, yet its implementation runs smoothly and effectively. According to Mrs. Sri Wardani, each class is limited to a maximum of 20 students to optimize and enhance the learning process. In the previous academic year, some classes had as few as 9 students, which did not hinder the teaching and learning activities. Currently, the school occupies a rented building with limited facilities; however, it is planned to relocate soon to a new site on Jl. Dr. Cipto, Semarang. Despite the modest facilities, the spirit of learning remains high among both students and educators.

Learning activities at Daarul Qur'an Elementary School take place not only inside the classroom but also outdoors, as a strategy to prevent student fatigue. Outdoor learning facilities include a small shelter resembling a house, a clean courtyard, and a mosque used as a learning space. Before the teaching and learning activities commence, all students, teachers, and education staff are required to perform the dhuha prayer in congregation. Prior to this, they are encouraged to collectively recite selected Qur'anic chapters such as *Al-Waqi'ah* and *Ar-Rahman*. On Fridays, following dhuha prayer, students participate in morning exercise before returning to class for lessons. The school's curriculum covers both general subjects and Islamic religious education, taught by subject-specialized teachers. Learning is not limited to theoretical lessons inside the classroom but also includes practical experiences outside that can be applied in daily life. Students are also required to participate in various weekly, monthly, and semester activities as preparation for their future. From an early age, students gain meaningful experiences and habits that leave a lasting impression (Nabilla, 2022).

The daQu Method curriculum focuses on character building through habitual worship practices, which also influence other subjects, both general and religious. Key activities within this curriculum include performing obligatory prayers in congregation on time, the Faith and Piety Night (MABIT), dhuha prayer, *qabliyah* and *ba'diyah* prayers, memorizing and contemplating the Qur'an (tahsin and tahfidz), charity, sunnah fasting, as well as teaching and learning activities. Additionally, values such as collective prayer, sincerity, patience, gratitude, and acceptance are instilled in students' daily lives. One flagship program implemented is the MABIT activity, aimed at strengthening students' faith and piety. At Daarul Qur'an Elementary School in Semarang City, MABIT is held routinely twice a year: at the beginning of the odd semester and the end of the even semester before class promotion. The implementation is divided according to class groups, with even classes (grades 2, 4, and 6) participating in the odd semester, and odd classes (grades 1, 3, and 5) in the even semester. Student schedules are adjusted accordingly based on these groupings.

Besides MABIT, another habitual activity is the *dhuha* prayer, performed before the learning process begins. This prayer is conducted at 7:00 AM, when students are still energetic, thus making it more effective. Before dhuha prayer, all students first recite the Qur'an, particularly Surah *Al-Waqi'ah* and *Ar-Rahman*, daily. The *dhuha* prayer consists of

four *rakaat* with two salutations, and the imam is chosen from students in grades 5 and 6, rotating weekly according to each class schedule. At Daarul Qur'an Elementary School, *tahsin* and *tahfidz* Qur'an studies are integral parts of the daQu Method curriculum and are among the core subjects. The primary goal of this subject is for students to memorize up to five juz of the Qur'an over six years of study. Students who achieve this target receive awards and the opportunity to participate in a collective *khataman* (Qur'an completion) ceremony at the central Daarul Qur'an in Tangerang, alongside students from all Daarul Qur'an branches across Indonesia (Aceh, 2025).

The *tahsin* and *tahfidz* subject is conducted daily with a duration of approximately 90 minutes (two teaching sessions). Unlike general subjects or Islamic Religious Education (PAI), *tahsin tahfidz* does not have a fixed lesson plan (RPP) or syllabus because each student's memorization target varies according to their individual abilities. Therefore, the learning process is adapted flexibly to enable students to achieve the targets set by the school. Overall, the DaQu Method curriculum aims to instil optimism within students so that they have a bright future. The guiding principle of this curriculum is "dream, pray, and action," which serves as the main motto of Daarul Qur'an (Nabilla, 2022).

Every child must be encouraged to have big dreams. They should not be limited or instilled with fear of dreaming big, as this can hinder the extraordinary potential they possess. By providing full support, children can grow into remarkable individuals who contribute to leading the nation and the world. This aligns with the vision of SD Daarul Qur'an, which is to nurture a generation of righteous leaders with Qur'anic character and an entrepreneurial spirit to build the future of Islamic civilization (Rahmawati, 2018).

Discussion

Analysis of Curriculum and Learning Design Models at SD Daqu Semarang and MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah Pati

To broaden the scope and deepen the interpretation of curriculum design models and learning management at the Islamic elementary school level, this study also conducted additional research at two other educational institutions: SD Daqu Semarang and MI MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah Pati. These two institutions were chosen because they represent distinctive Islamic-based learning approaches with differing characteristics, thereby providing a more comprehensive comparative analysis. SD Daqu Semarang applies an integrated model combining the National Curriculum with a distinctive *tahfidz* curriculum, oriented toward shaping Qur'anic character and mastery of general knowledge. The curriculum design emphasizes a humanistic model and project-based learning, allowing students space for personal, creative, and collaborative development. Additionally, the school employs a strict tiered learning system in *tahfidz*, with memorization targets adjusted according to grade levels.

Meanwhile, MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah presents a more traditional integrative curriculum pattern that combines a subject-centred curriculum with local values. The curriculum is based on national standards but supplemented with local content such as basic *kitab kuning* studies, morals, and *fiqh* worship. Learning tends to be teacher-centred but is accompanied by a strong affective approach and habituation of religious values in students' daily activities. When compared with MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah Pati, shows similarities in curriculum structure and a conservative yet religious learning management style. Both emphasize strengthening moral values and learning based on classical Islamic texts. However, SD Daqu Semarang exhibits a more modern and open blend, similar to

the model adopted by SD Primary School Semarang, especially in thematic learning aspects, technology utilization, and project-based assessment.

SD Daqu Semarang adopts an integrated curriculum design that blends national education standards with pesantren-based values, particularly focusing on Qur'an memorization (tahfidz), digital literacy, and character building. In contrast, MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah Pati develops its curriculum based on the KMA 183 regulation, with a strong focus on classical Islamic subjects and alignment with local community values.

Learning at SD Daqu is conducted thematically, often using interactive and digital-based methods such as project-based learning and smart-class environments. The students engage in daily memorization targets along with general subject instruction. At MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah, learning tends to be more conventional, with a subject-by-subject approach. However, it incorporates local wisdom and religious routines, although it is less technologically integrated.

SD Daqu uses a combination of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor assessments, including weekly tahfidz evaluations and character monitoring by homeroom teachers. MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah applies standard assessments as regulated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, focusing on written exams, religious recitation evaluations, and semester reports.

The analysis of curriculum and learning design models at SD Daqu Semarang and MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah Pati involves a comparative study of three key stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation. Both institutions integrate Islamic values in their curriculum while adapting different approaches in aligning with the national curriculum and institutional vision.

Table 4. Comparison of Curriculum and Learning Design Models

Aspect	SD Daqu Semarang	MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah Pati
Planning	Integrated with pesantren-based tahfidz program; emphasizes character education and 21st-century skills	Traditional madrasah planning aligned with KMA 183; includes Islamic subjects and general education
Implementation	Thematic-integrative learning, blended with digital tools and Qur'an memorization routines	Subject-based instruction, teacher-centered with some co-curricular Islamic activities
Evaluation	Performance-based, combining academic scores, tahfidz targets, and daily behavior assessment	Summative and formative assessments based on government standards, with added religious oral exams

In terms of curriculum design theory, MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah tend to adhere to the subject-centred model, whereas SD Primary School lean toward competency-based and project-based approaches. Differences also appear in classroom management: pesantren-based schools emphasize nurturing and spiritual closeness, while international curriculum or modern tahfidz schools prioritize systematic, measurable, and digitalized systems. Findings from this comparative study provide several important implications for curriculum development and learning management at the SD and MI levels. First, the importance of curriculum flexibility that allows integration between the strengths of

traditional approaches (such as moral education and tahfidz) and modern approaches (such as 21st-century competencies and digital technology). Islamic elementary schools need to consider hybrid curriculum designs that blend spirituality and science, moral values and digital literacy skills.

Second, in terms of learning management, overly teacher-centred approaches should begin to open up by embedding skills in discussion, collaboration, and student reflective abilities. Schools like MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah can draw inspiration from practices at SD Daarul Qur'an or SD Primary School to develop active learning strategies, task differentiation, and the use of digital media. Third, this comparative result also highlights the importance of school leadership and teacher quality in effectively implementing curricula. Openness to innovation, teachers' ability to manage dynamic classrooms, and the role of foundations or school management institutions are crucial factors for the success of religious and professional basic education.

Thus, this study recommends that curriculum design and learning management in SD/MI institutions should not be developed exclusively or sectoral but should remain open to dialogue among models and contextualized to the needs of students and the dynamics of the times. A transformative integrative model is an urgent necessity in building a Muslim generation that is broadly knowledgeable, morally upright, and prepared to face global challenges.

Conclusion

This study aims to examine and compare the curriculum design models and learning management in two basic education institutions with different backgrounds, namely MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah Pati as a madrasah based on Islamic tradition, and SD Primary School Semarang as an elementary school based on the national and international curriculum. The study was conducted using a qualitative approach with data collection techniques including observation, interviews, and documentation. The results show that MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah Pati applies a curriculum model oriented toward strengthening religious values, morals, and Qur'anic memorization, with a teacher-centred and spiritual learning management style. The curriculum is internally developed by combining the national curriculum with local content based on Islamic teachings. The learning system focuses heavily on character building, worship, and mastery of core subject matter. Learning activities tend to be direct, verbal, and repetitive (drill-based). Meanwhile, SD Primary School Semarang adopts a modern curriculum model that integrates the National Curriculum and the Cambridge International Curriculum. The approach is competency-based, student-centred, and actively utilizes learning technology. Academic management is digital-based, employing diverse teaching methods such as project-based learning and discovery learning, with evaluations conducted periodically and rubric-based. The comparison reveals differences in curriculum philosophy, learning strategies, and management systems. However, each has contextual strengths: MI excels in moral and spiritual development, while the elementary school excels in cognitive development, 21st-century skills, and digital literacy. This study identifies opportunities to combine the strengths of both models to design a more adaptive, holistic, and visionary basic education system.

Declarations

Author contribution statement

Hidayatus Sholihah was primarily responsible for the formulation of the research problem, the development of research instruments, field data collection, and the initial drafting of the manuscript. She conducted in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and documentation related to curriculum implementation at both MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah Pati and SD Daarul Quran Semarang. A. Zaenurrosyid provided intellectual guidance throughout the research process, offering critical insights into the conceptual framework and ensuring alignment with pesantren-based educational principles. He also participated in the review and refinement of the manuscript, ensuring academic rigor, coherence, and clarity. Both authors collaborated in the analysis and interpretation of findings and jointly approved the final version of the article for publication.

Funding statement

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. The research activities, including field visits, data processing, and manuscript preparation, were fully supported by the authors' personal funding. All logistical and operational expenses were borne independently to maintain research autonomy and flexibility in accessing and engaging with the studied institutions.

Data availability statement

The data generated and analyzed during the course of this study are not publicly available due to institutional privacy policies and ethical considerations involving minors and school environments. However, specific data excerpts, interview transcripts, and observation notes that support the findings of this study can be made available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request and with permission from the relevant institutions. No proprietary or sensitive third-party data were used.

Declaration of interests statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the content or outcome of this research. All findings and interpretations are the result of independent inquiry and scholarly judgment.

Additional information

This study was conducted as part of the authors' ongoing academic interest in integrating Islamic educational values with contemporary curriculum design. The research highlights the distinct approaches of two Islamic educational institutions in Central Java in embedding pesantren-based values within formal learning structures. The findings are expected to inform curriculum developers, school leaders, and education policymakers on the importance of preserving local Islamic traditions while fostering innovation in teaching methods. Ethical approval was obtained from both schools involved in the study, and informed consent was granted by all participating teachers and administrative staff. The authors acknowledge the openness and cooperation of MI Tarbiyatul Islamiyah and SD Daarul Quran, which greatly contributed to the richness of the field data.

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