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Principles of Islamic Education Curriculum Development in Madrasah

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ABSTRACT

Background: The development of globalisation and technological revolution has brought significant changes to the field of education, including the development of Islamic Education curriculum in madrasahs. Curriculum must adapt to advances in science and students' needs without neglecting Islamic values as the foundation of education. **Objective:** This study aims to analyse the principles of Islamic Education curriculum development in madrasahs and their relevance to the challenges of modern education. **Method:** The study employed a descriptive qualitative approach using a library research method. Data were collected from books, scientific journals, curriculum documents, previous studies, and relevant Islamic sources, then analysed using content analysis techniques. **Result:** The findings indicate that the development of Islamic Education curriculum in madrasahs is based on the principles of relevance, flexibility, continuity, effectiveness, efficiency, and the integration of Islamic values. These principles play an important role in shaping students who are intellectually, spiritually, and socially competent. **Conclusion:** The study concludes that Islamic Education curriculum should be developed adaptively and integratively to address the challenges of 21st-century education. **Contribution:** This study contributes to strengthening the discourse on Islamic Education curriculum development grounded in Islamic values and contemporary educational needs.

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of globalisation and the technological revolution have brought significant changes across various aspects of life, including education (Sunita et al., 2025). These conditions require educational institutions to continuously innovate and reform to produce learners who are not only academically competent but also possess strong character, moral values, and the ability to adapt to changing times. In the context of Islamic education, madrasahs play a strategic role in shaping generations of faithful, knowledgeable, and noble individuals. Madrasahs function not only as institutions for the transmission of knowledge but also as centres for character formation and the cultivation of Islamic values (Kirana et al., 2025). Therefore, madrasahs need an educational system capable of integrating scientific knowledge, technological advancement, and students' moral development (Anas & Astutik, 2021). One key component in achieving these objectives is the curriculum.

The Islamic education curriculum in madrasahs should ideally serve as an educational framework that emphasises not only the acquisition of knowledge but also the balanced development of students' character, spirituality, and morality (Ahmadi et al., 2021). A well-designed curriculum should integrate Islamic values with advancements in science and technology, enabling students to develop intellectually, morally, socially, and spiritually. In the context of modern education, madrasahs are expected to produce generations who are faithful, possess noble character, have

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broad scientific insight, and are capable of facing the challenges of globalisation and contemporary developments (Ulfah & Suyadi, 2021).

The curriculum serves as the primary guideline for implementing the educational process because it determines the direction, objectives, content, strategies, and evaluation of learning (Nasution et al., 2025). It provides the foundation for developing all educational activities within madrasahs (Rivaldi et al., 2024). Through the curriculum, educational processes can be systematically designed to achieve the intended educational goals (Junaedi et al., 2021). Therefore, curriculum development must be conducted in a planned, dynamic manner that aligns with students' needs and societal developments.

The history of curriculum changes in Indonesia demonstrates that curriculum continuously evolve in response to the demands of the times and educational needs. Since the country's independence, Indonesia's curriculum has undergone numerous revisions and improvements as part of efforts to enhance the quality of national education (Cholilah et al., 2023). These changes indicate that the curriculum is not static but must adapt to developments in science and technology and to sociocultural transformations within society (Setyaningsih, 2017). In Islamic education, curriculum development must also address the challenges of modernisation while maintaining Islamic values as the foundation of education (Latifa & Arifmiboy, 2023).

Fundamentally, Islamic education is not solely focused on cognitive mastery but also emphasises the development of students' character, spirituality, and morality (Munawir et al., 2024). This perspective aligns with Islamic teachings, which place knowledge as an essential component of human life. The Qur'an, particularly Surah Al-'Alaq, verses 1–5, highlights the importance of reading and seeking knowledge as the foundation for the advancement of human civilisation. Furthermore, Islam regards education as a means of nurturing individuals who are faithful, pious, and possess noble character. Consequently, the Islamic education curriculum in madrasahs must be comprehensively designed to integrate students' intellectual, spiritual, social, and moral dimensions (Mahrus, 2021).

In practice, the development of the Islamic education curriculum in madrasahs continues to face various challenges. The rapid advancement of information technology, the demands of twenty-first-century competencies, sociocultural changes, and the needs of a global society require madrasahs to continuously update their curriculum (Solihatudinayah & Suhendi, 2025). At the same time, madrasahs must preserve their identity and uphold Islamic values throughout the educational process (Arifin & Rizqiyani, 2025). These circumstances make the development of the Islamic education curriculum in madrasahs both important and strategic.

Moreover, several issues remain in the implementation of curriculum in madrasahs, including the imbalance between religious and general subjects, limited innovation in teaching and learning practices, and the less-than-optimal integration of Islamic values with developments in science and technology (Anas & Astutik, 2021). These challenges indicate that curriculum development in Islamic education should not focus solely on changes in learning content but also consider the fundamental principles of curriculum design to ensure the objectives of Islamic education are achieved effectively.

Several previous studies have examined the development of the Islamic education curriculum in madrasahs from the perspectives of implementation, approaches, and development strategies (Aulia et al., 2022; Adiyono et al., 2023; Sunita et al., 2025; Ubaidillah, 2024). However, comprehensive studies specifically addressing the principles of Islamic education curriculum development in madrasahs remain relatively limited. Most existing studies emphasise the technical aspects of curriculum development without thoroughly examining the foundational principles that underpin the development of the Islamic education curriculum.

The novelty of this study lies in its analysis of the principles of Islamic education curriculum development in madrasahs in relation to the challenges of modern education, advancements in science and technology, and the needs of twenty-first-century learners. This study also highlights the importance of integrating Islamic values into students' competency development throughout the madrasah curriculum.

This study aims to analyse the principles of Islamic education curriculum development in madrasahs and their relevance to contemporary educational challenges. This study is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the importance of developing adaptive, integrative, and valuebased curriculum grounded in Islamic principles to improve the quality of education in madrasahs.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach using a library research method. This approach was used to analyse and describe the principles of Islamic education curriculum development in madrasahs, drawing on

relevant literature. A qualitative approach was selected because the study focused on conceptual and interpretive understanding of Islamic education curriculum development rather than on the measurement of numerical data.

2.2 Data Sources

The data sources in this study consisted of secondary data from books, scholarly journal articles, curriculum documents, previous research findings, and various literature on the development of Islamic education curriculum in madrasahs. In addition, this study used Islamic sources, including the Qur’an and Hadith, relevant to the concepts of Islamic education.

2.3 Data Collection

Data were collected through a documentation study that identified, reviewed, understood, and categorised various literature sources related to the principles of Islamic education curriculum development in madrasahs. All sources were purposively selected based on their relevance and credibility to the study's focus.

2.4 Data Analysis

The data were analysed using content analysis techniques through the stages of data reduction, data classification, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The collected data were subsequently categorised into several themes, including the principles of relevance, flexibility, effectiveness, integration, and continuity in the development of Islamic education curriculum in madrasahs.

The trustworthiness of the data was established through source triangulation by comparing the various literature sources used in the study. This technique was intended to enhance the validity and consistency of the data, thereby ensuring that the research findings are academically credible and defensible.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

The findings indicate that the development of the Islamic education curriculum in madrasahs should be grounded in principles that integrate Islamic values with the demands of modern education. Based on the analysis of various literature sources, it was found that Islamic education curriculum development is not solely oriented toward the acquisition of knowledge but also emphasises the formation of students’ character, spirituality, and social competencies. The madrasah curriculum should be designed adaptively to address the challenges posed by globalisation, technological advancement, and societal changes while maintaining its Islamic identity.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that curriculum development principles play a crucial role in determining the direction and quality of Islamic education in madrasahs. These principles serve as the foundation for formulating learning objectives, instructional materials, teaching strategies, and educational evaluation. Appropriate curriculum development can help madrasahs create educational processes that are more effective, relevant, and responsive to learners' needs in the modern era.

3.1.1 Principles of Islamic Education Curriculum Development in Madrasahs

Based on the literature review, several key principles emerged in the development of Islamic education curriculum in madrasahs: relevance, flexibility, continuity, effectiveness, efficiency, and the integration of Islamic values. These principles are interconnected in supporting the achievement of holistic Islamic educational objectives.

Table 1. Principles of Islamic Education Curriculum Development in Madrasahs

No.	Principle	Description
1	Relevance	The curriculum is aligned with students’ needs, contemporary developments, and societal demands.
2	Flexibility	The curriculum can be adapted to the conditions of the madrasah and the characteristics of learners.
3	Continuity	Learning materials are organized progressively and systematically across educational levels.
4	Effectiveness	The curriculum is designed to achieve learning objectives optimally.
5	Efficiency	Time, effort, and educational resources are utilized appropriately and effectively.
6	Integration of Islamic Values	Islamic values are integrated throughout the entire educational process.

Based on Table 1, the findings indicate that the development of the Islamic education curriculum in madrasahs should be comprehensive and integrated. The principle of relevance emphasises the importance of aligning the curriculum with developments in science and technology and with societal needs. The principle of flexibility emphasises that the curriculum should accommodate learners’ characteristics and educational contexts. Meanwhile, the principle of continuity underscores the importance of a coherent progression of learning materials across educational levels to ensure a systematic learning process. The principles of effectiveness and efficiency are also essential to ensure that educational objectives are achieved optimally through the appropriate use of resources. In addition, the integration of Islamic values constitutes the distinctive characteristic of the Islamic education curriculum in madrasahs, as all learning activities are directed toward the development of students’ character, spirituality, and moral conduct.

3.1.2 Implementation of Islamic Education Curriculum Development Principles

The findings show that implementing Islamic education curriculum development principles in madrasahs can be achieved through integrating Islamic values into teaching and learning, developing instructional materials, applying innovative teaching methods, and establishing a religious culture within the madrasah environment. The curriculum is directed not only toward achieving academic competencies but also toward strengthening students’ spiritual and social attitudes.

Madrasahs are also required to develop learning practices that are adaptive to technological advancements and the competency demands of the twenty-first century. Therefore, teachers play a significant role in developing creative, innovative, and value-based instructional strategies that enable students to develop both intellectually and morally in a balanced manner.

3.1.3 Challenges in Islamic Education Curriculum Development in Madrasahs

Based on the literature review, the development of Islamic education curriculum in madrasahs continues to face various challenges from both internal and external perspectives. These challenges are related to technological advancement, sociocultural changes, global competency demands, and the integration of scientific knowledge with Islamic values.

Table 2. Challenges in Islamic Education Curriculum Development in Madrasahs

No.	Challenge	Impact
1	Rapid technological advancement	Madrasahs are required to implement continuous instructional innovation.
2	Twenty-first-century competency demands	The curriculum must adapt to modern skill requirements.
3	Sociocultural changes	Strengthening character education and Islamic values becomes increasingly important.
4	Integration of science and religion	The curriculum must effectively integrate science, technology, and Islamic values.
5	Limited instructional innovation	The learning process becomes less effective and optimal.

Based on Table 2, the findings indicate that technological advancement and sociocultural changes constitute the primary challenges in developing Islamic education curriculum in madrasahs. Madrasahs are expected to design curriculum that not only keep pace with developments in science and technology but also preserve Islamic values as the foundation of education. Furthermore, the demands of twenty-first-century competencies require madrasahs to equip students with critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills. Another challenge is the limited innovation in teaching and learning practices and the insufficient integration of scientific knowledge with Islamic values in educational practice. Therefore, a more adaptive, innovative, and value-based curriculum is needed to enable madrasah education to respond effectively to the challenges of modern education.

3.2. Discussion

The findings indicate that the development of Islamic education curriculum in madrasahs should be adaptive, integrative, and grounded in Islamic values to address the challenges of modern education. These findings are consistent with the purpose of this study, which was to analyse the principles of Islamic education curriculum development in madrasahs and their relevance to advancements in knowledge and the needs of twenty-first-century learners. Based on the literature review, the principles of relevance, flexibility, continuity, effectiveness, efficiency,

and the integration of Islamic values constitute the primary foundations for developing a curriculum that promotes the acquisition of knowledge while fostering students' character development and spirituality.

The principle of relevance in curriculum development holds that the Islamic education curriculum should be responsive to developments in science and technology and to societal needs. This finding is consistent with curriculum development theories that assert that curriculum should be aligned with learners' needs and social developments (Yusuf & Nata, 2023). In modern curriculum theory, relevance is considered a fundamental principle that enables education to respond effectively to the demands of social change (Khitom & Taufik, 2023). Within the context of Islamic education, curriculum relevance extends beyond academic needs to encompass students' moral and spiritual development (Butar et al., 2024). Therefore, madrasahs should develop curriculum that integrate modern scientific knowledge with Islamic values to ensure a balance between intellectual competence and moral character.

The findings also reveal that flexibility is a crucial aspect of Islamic education curriculum development in madrasahs. This result is consistent with progressive educational theory, which emphasises that education should adapt to learners' needs and changing social environments (Wasehudin et al., 2023). A flexible curriculum enables madrasahs to adjust instructional processes according to environmental conditions, student characteristics, and developments in educational technology. In Islamic education, curriculum flexibility is essential for maintaining the relevance of educational practices without compromising the fundamental values of Islam (Asmariyani, 2016). Consequently, the curriculum can become more contextual, innovative, and capable of fostering active and meaningful learning experiences.

Furthermore, the principle of continuity highlights the importance of maintaining coherence and progression in learning materials across educational levels (Adiyono et al., 2023). This finding aligns with continuity theory in curriculum studies, which emphasises that learners' educational experiences should be systematic and continuous. Islamic education should be designed progressively so that students acquire knowledge, spiritual experiences, and character development in a structured manner (Nasution et al., 2025). A continuous curriculum enables learners to develop a deeper understanding of subject matter while fostering stable moral and religious development.

The principles of effectiveness and efficiency identified in this study indicate that the Islamic education curriculum should be able to achieve learning objectives optimally through the appropriate use of resources (Zain & Sesmiarni, 2025). These findings are supported by educational management theory, which holds that effectiveness is associated with achieving educational goals. In contrast, efficiency concerns the optimal use of time, human resources, and educational facilities. In the context of madrasahs, curriculum effectiveness is essential for creating high-quality learning processes and for comprehensively improving students' competencies (Anas & Astutik, 2021). An effective and efficient curriculum can help teachers implement instruction more systematically and goal-orientedly (Tanjung et al., 2023).

The findings further demonstrate that the integration of Islamic values constitutes the defining characteristic of Islamic education curriculum development in madrasahs. This finding is consistent with Islamic educational theory, which holds that *tawhid* (the oneness of God) is the fundamental foundation of all educational processes. Such integration is implemented through the development of instructional materials, teaching methods, school culture, and religious practices. Islamic education is not solely intended to transmit knowledge but also to cultivate morality, spirituality, and religious consciousness among learners. The Qur'an, particularly Surah Al-'Alaq, verses 1–5, emphasises the importance of knowledge in human life. In contrast, Surah Al-Mujadalah, verse 11, highlights that Allah elevates the status of those who possess faith and knowledge. These verses reinforce the notion that knowledge in Islam is inseparable from faith and moral development.

From the perspective of Islamic educational philosophy, curriculum development should be based on the principle of *tawhid*, which integrates the relationships between human beings and Allah, fellow human beings, and the environment (Hamdi, 2023). The findings indicate that Islamic education curriculum development in madrasahs is intended not only to produce academically competent learners but also individuals who possess religious character, social responsibility, and moral awareness. This perspective aligns with the theory of holistic Islamic education, which emphasises the balance of intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and social dimensions within the educational process (Karimullah, 2023).

The findings of this study are also supported by previous research demonstrating that Islamic education curriculum development should integrate scientific knowledge with Islamic values (Gasmi et al., 2025; Rambe & Albina, 2024; Zuairiyah et al., 2025). While previous studies primarily focused on curriculum implementation and development strategies, the present study emphasises the analysis of fundamental curriculum development principles that are relevant to the challenges of modern education. Therefore, this study contributes a distinct per-

spective by focusing on integrating curriculum principles with the educational demands of the twenty-first century and technological advancement.

The development of Islamic education curriculum in madrasahs continues to face numerous challenges, including rapid technological advances, sociocultural changes, demands for global competencies, and limited instructional innovation. According to theories of educational and social change, technological development and globalisation are among the primary factors influencing transformations within educational systems (Amalia et al., 2024). These challenges indicate that madrasahs must continuously revise and improve their curriculum to remain relevant to contemporary developments. At the same time, they must preserve their identity and uphold Islamic values throughout the educational process. Consequently, Islamic education curriculum development should be adaptive and innovative while maintaining the fundamental objectives of Islamic education (Sunita et al., 2025).

The significance of these findings lies in the need to develop an Islamic education curriculum that effectively integrates Islamic values with the demands of modern education. An adaptive and integrative curriculum can help madrasahs produce learners who excel not only academically but also in religious character, social competence, and readiness to face global challenges. Curriculum development grounded in Islamic values also represents a strategic effort to strengthen the identity of madrasah education amid rapid advancements in science and technology.

The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive analysis of the principles of Islamic education curriculum development in madrasahs in relation to the challenges of modern education, twenty-first-century competencies, and the integration of Islamic values into educational processes. This study extends beyond conceptual discussions of curriculum development by emphasising the importance of adaptive, flexible, and character-oriented curriculum that support learners' holistic development.

The significance of this study lies in its comprehensive integration of foundational curriculum principles, encompassing relevance, flexibility, continuity, effectiveness, efficiency, and Islamic value integration, with the complex challenges of twenty-first-century education within the madrasah system. Rather than treating religious values and modern scientific competencies as divergent paradigms, this research demonstrates that the principle of *tawhid* serves as an essential philosophical anchor that harmonizes cognitive mastery with moral and spiritual maturity. By shifting the discourse from technical implementation toward foundational curriculum philosophy, this study provides a crucial academic foundation that reinforces madrasah institutional identity amid rapid technological transformation and global socioeconomic change.

What the findings of this study substantively offer is an actionable conceptual framework and strategic roadmap for educational practitioners, curriculum developers, and policymakers in reforming Islamic education. The study offers concrete guidance on how to bridge the traditional dichotomy between religious and secular knowledge through value-infused pedagogical practices and collaborative learning environments. Furthermore, it provides madrasah administrators with an adaptable blueprint to modernize instructional strategies and integrate digital literacy while safeguarding character formation, ensuring that graduates are well-equipped with critical thinking skills and firmly grounded in noble ethical conduct.

4. IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

4.1 Research Implications

The findings of this study imply that Islamic education curriculum in madrasahs should be adaptive, integrative, and oriented toward students' character development to address the challenges of modern education. The curriculum should not focus solely on academic achievement but should also integrate Islamic values, spiritual development, social skills, and twenty-first-century competencies. Therefore, madrasahs need to develop innovative, contextually relevant, and value-based learning systems that enable students to respond effectively to advances in science and technology while maintaining their religious identity. Furthermore, this study highlights the importance of enhancing teachers' competencies in designing and implementing curriculum that are relevant to learners' needs and societal developments.

4.2 Research Contributions

This study contributes to advancing Islamic education scholarship, particularly in the field of madrasah curriculum development, by providing a comprehensive analysis of the principles of Islamic education curriculum development. The primary contribution of this study lies in strengthening the integration of Islamic values with the demands of modern education in curriculum development. In addition, this study enriches the theoretical discourse on the principles of relevance, flexibility, continuity, effectiveness, efficiency, and the integration of Islamic values as

foundational elements of Islamic education curriculum development. The findings may also serve as a valuable reference for madrasah administrators, teachers, and curriculum developers in designing curriculum that are more adaptive, innovative, and capable of fostering students' intellectual, moral, social, and spiritual development.

5. LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

5.1 Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study employed a library research approach; therefore, the data were derived exclusively from literature sources, scholarly journals, books, and academic documents without direct observation of madrasahs. Second, the study focused primarily on the conceptual analysis of the principles of Islamic education curriculum development and did not examine in depth the implementation of the curriculum across different types and levels of madrasahs. Third, the study did not specifically investigate the impact of digital technological developments and recent educational policies on the development of Islamic education curriculum in madrasahs. Consequently, the findings are limited in their ability to comprehensively represent the empirical realities of curriculum implementation in Islamic educational settings.

5.2 Recommendations for Further Research Directions

Given these limitations, future studies are recommended to employ field-based research approaches using qualitative or mixed-methods designs to obtain empirical evidence on the implementation of Islamic education curriculum development principles in madrasahs. Future research may also focus on evaluating the effectiveness of Islamic education curriculum in fostering students' character development and twenty-first-century competencies. In addition, more in-depth investigations are needed into the integration of digital technologies and project-based learning, as well as into the promotion of religious moderation in madrasah curriculum development. Comparative studies across different types of madrasahs are also recommended to develop curriculum models that are more adaptive, innovative, and responsive to the demands of modern education.

6. CONCLUSION

The development of Islamic education curriculum in madrasahs is a crucial aspect of improving educational quality and addressing the challenges of contemporary society. The findings indicate that the Islamic education curriculum functions not only as a guide for teaching and learning but also as a means of fostering students' character, spirituality, and moral development. Curriculum development should be carried out adaptively and continuously to remain relevant to advancements in science and technology, and to the needs of modern society, while preserving Islamic values as the fundamental foundation of madrasah education.

This study found that the principles of Islamic education curriculum development in madrasahs include relevance, flexibility, continuity, effectiveness, efficiency, and the integration of Islamic values. These principles play a significant role in supporting the creation of a holistic educational process that balances students' intellectual, social, moral, and spiritual development. Furthermore, the implementation of the Islamic education curriculum should be supported by instructional innovation, the integration of educational technology, and the strengthening of a religious culture within the madrasah environment to ensure the optimal achievement of educational goals.

On the other hand, the development of Islamic education curriculum in madrasahs continues to face various challenges, including rapid technological advancement, the demands of twenty-first-century competencies, socio-cultural changes, and the integration of scientific knowledge with Islamic values. Therefore, collaboration among educational administrators, teachers, policymakers, and communities is essential in developing innovative, integrative, and value-based curriculum. Through effective curriculum development, madrasahs are expected to produce graduates who excel academically, possess strong religious character, and contribute positively to society and the advancement of modern civilisation.

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Author Contribution Statement

The author(s) actively contributed to all stages of the research process, including conceptualisation, data collection and analysis, preparation of research findings, manuscript writing, and article revision. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript for publication.

Declaration of Generative AI (GenAI) Usage in Scientific Writing

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The author(s) declare that there are no personal, professional, or financial conflicts of interest that could have influenced the research findings or the publication process of this article.

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