



EDUCATION A PESANTREN BASED CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT MODEL FOR ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS: A CASE STUDY AT MI AL-AZHAR MENGANTI

Barudin¹, Mulyadi²

¹ Affiliation (S2 Pendidikan Agama Islam, Universitas Islam Al Azhar Gresik),

² Affiliation (S2 Pendidikan Agama Islam, Universitas Islam Al Azhar Gresik)

*Corresponding Author : barudin88@gmail.com

Abstract : This study aims to analyze the curriculum development model of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in a pesantren-based madrasah and to identify the gap between the ideal curriculum model and pedagogical reality in the field. A qualitative case study approach was employed at MI Al-Azhar Menganti, Gresik, which operates under the Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School Foundation. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with the Curriculum Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator, then analyzed thematically and mapped onto three curriculum development models: the Tyler model, the Taba model, and the Grass Roots model. The findings indicate that the development of the PAI curriculum in this madrasah follows a hybrid pattern: the curriculum structure is top-down, following Tyler's logic and referring to the Merdeka Curriculum and the Minister of Religious Affairs Decree; pesantren-based content such as Qur'anic reading and writing, akhlak (morals), and ubudiyah (worship practices) reflects the spirit of the Grass Roots model, while a systematic student-needs diagnosis in the manner of Taba has not yet been formally institutionalized. The most prominent gap was found in the utilization of technology and artificial intelligence (AI), which teachers have begun to explore informally but which remains constrained by limited internet infrastructure, uneven digital competence among senior teachers, and pesantren concerns over the displacement of talaqqi (direct teacher-student transmission of values). The study recommends strengthening annual needs-diagnosis mechanisms, developing a gradual AI-integration roadmap, providing differentiated digital-literacy training, and systematically documenting curriculum evaluation on an ongoing basis.

Keywords : PAI Curriculum; Pesantren Based Madrasah

Abstrak : Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis model pengembangan kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) pada madrasah berbasis pesantren serta mengidentifikasi kesenjangan antara idealita model kurikulum dan realitas pedagogis di lapangan. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus di MI Al-Azhar Menganti, Gresik, yang berada di bawah naungan Yayasan Pondok Pesantren Darul Ihsan. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan Koordinator dan Wakil Koordinator Kurikulum, kemudian dianalisis secara tematik dan dipetakan pada tiga model pengembangan kurikulum, yaitu model Tyler, model Taba, dan model Grass Roots. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penyusunan kurikulum PAI di madrasah tersebut berpola hibrida: struktur kurikulum bercorak top-down mengikuti logika Tyler dengan rujukan Kurikulum Merdeka dan Keputusan Menteri Agama, muatan kepesantrenan seperti Baca Tulis Al-Qur'an, akhlak, dan ubudiyah mencerminkan semangat Grass Roots, sementara prinsip diagnosis kebutuhan siswa secara sistematis ala Taba belum terlembaga secara formal. Kesenjangan paling menonjol ditemukan pada dimensi pemanfaatan teknologi dan kecerdasan buatan (AI), yang secara wacana mulai dijejaki guru namun masih terkendala keterbatasan infrastruktur, kesenjangan kompetensi digital guru senior, dan kekhawatiran pesantren terhadap tergesernya peran talaqqi. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan penguatan mekanisme diagnosis kebutuhan tahunan, penyusunan peta jalan integrasi AI secara bertahap, pelatihan literasi digital terdiferensiasi, serta pendokumentasian evaluasi kurikulum yang sistematis dan berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: Kurikulum PAI; Madrasah Berbasis Pesantren

INTRODUCTION

The Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in pesantren based madrasahs sits at the intersection of three demands that do not always move in a linear direction: national regulation in the form of the Merdeka Curriculum and the Minister of Religious Affairs Decree (KMA), 21st-century competency demands, particularly digital literacy and artificial intelligence (Directorate General of Islamic Education, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024; UNESCO, 2023), and the preservation of pesantren identity as the basis of values and character formation (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022). These three demands require madrasahs to engage in a curricular negotiation that is far from simple, balancing a nationally standardized formal structure against the local autonomy that is a defining characteristic of the pesantren.

Theoretically, curriculum development can be mapped onto several classic models that remain relevant for reading curriculum practice in the field. Tyler (1949) proposed a linear-rational model that formulates the curriculum through four fundamental questions objectives, learning experiences, organization of learning experiences, and evaluation resulting in a curriculum that is systematic and top-down in character. Taba (1962) revised Tyler's approach by positioning the diagnosis of student needs as the initial step that must precede the formulation of objectives, and by positioning teachers as active curriculum developers rather than mere implementers of documents. The Grass Roots model, meanwhile, positions teachers and educational units as holding high autonomy in designing local content suited to the needs and character of their community (Print, 1993; Sukmadinata, 2017).

These three models are relevant to revisit in the context of pesantren-based madrasahs, since institutions of this kind manage two sources of curricular authority simultaneously: state authority through Ministry of Religious Affairs regulation, and pesantren authority through the kyai (religious leader) and the foundation (Hamalik, 2011). The question that then arises is the extent to which the PAI curriculum development process in pesantren-based madrasahs genuinely accommodates a systematic diagnosis of student needs (the Taba dimension), the extent to which local pesantren autonomy is accommodated within the formal structure (the Grass Roots dimension), and how prepared the madrasah is to meet the demands of digital literacy and AI utilization in PAI learning, given that this issue has become a major concern of national Islamic education policy (Directorate General of Islamic Education, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024).

Building on this framework, this study aims to (1) describe the process of developing and evaluating the PAI curriculum in a pesantren-based madrasah, (2) examine the pattern of integrating local/pesantren wisdom values into the formal curriculum structure, and (3) analyze the readiness for and obstacles to utilizing technology/AI in PAI learning, by mapping these findings onto the Tyler, Taba, and Grass Roots models in order to identify the gap between the ideal curriculum model and pedagogical reality in the field.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of PAI curriculum development practices at a single institution (Sukmadinata, 2017). The research site was MI Al-Azhar Menganti, Gresik, an Islamic elementary madrasah operating under the Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School Foundation, purposively selected because it represents the character of a pesantren-based madrasah that combines the national curriculum with pesantren-specific religious content.

Primary data were collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews with two key informants: the Curriculum Development Coordinator (Lailil Rahmawati, S.Pd.) and the Deputy Curriculum Coordinator (Lidya Septiani, S.Pd.), each lasting approximately 45 minutes and conducted in the madrasah head's office. The interviews focused on three main aspects: (1) the process of developing and evaluating the PAI curriculum, (2) the integration of local/pesantren wisdom values, and (3) the utilization of technology and AI media in PAI learning.

Interview data were analyzed thematically through the stages of data reduction, categorization of responses into the three interview aspects, and mapping of findings onto three curriculum development models—the Tyler model (1949), the Taba model (1962), and the Grass Roots model (Print, 1993). This mapping was used to identify the correspondence and gaps between the theoretical idealities of each model and the curriculum practice reality found in the field, as presented in the results and discussion section.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Process of Developing and Evaluating the PAI Curriculum

The interview results show that the PAI curriculum at MI Al-Azhar Menganti is developed by a small team consisting of the madrasah head, the curriculum coordinator, and PAI teacher representatives, and is then consulted with the pesantren's religious leader (kyai) before being ratified by the foundation. The main references for curriculum development are the Merdeka Curriculum and the Ministry of Religious Affairs Decree (KMA), modified with additional hours for Qur'anic Reading and Writing (BTQ), akhlak (morals), and ubudiyah (worship) practices. Curriculum evaluation is conducted once a year ahead of the new academic year, based on teacher evaluation meetings and input from the pesantren's religious leader, with revisions generally being technical adjustments to scheduling and material emphasis rather than comprehensive structural changes.

This pattern shows partial correspondence with the Tyler model (1949), which formulates the curriculum systematically from objectives toward learning experiences, organization, and evaluation. Reference to national documents (the Merdeka Curriculum and KMA) indicates that curriculum objectives are formulated top-down, following the policy framework (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022). However, evaluation that remains annual and has not been documented in detail indicates that the Tyler-style evaluation-revision cycle has not yet operated optimally, and that the systematic student-needs diagnosis process emphasized by Taba (1962) has

not yet become a formal, scheduled mechanism, but instead remains closer to a top-down pattern that follows national documents.

Integration of Local Wisdom and Pesantren Values

Pesantren values are deliberately integrated into the PAI curriculum through daily habituation, such as congregational dhuha prayer, memorization of short surahs and asmaul husna, and weekly religious activities that instill adab (manners) and ta'dzim (respect) toward teachers. This integration is formally incorporated into the schedule as a religious local-content subject and co-curricular activity. The main obstacles faced are the limited formal teaching hours constrained by the national curriculum structure, and the fact that some senior teachers are not yet accustomed to active-learning approaches. Nevertheless, parental support is considered high, since pesantren content is viewed as the madrasah's primary selling point compared with surrounding public schools.

These findings represent the spirit of the Grass Roots model, which positions teachers and educational units as having high autonomy in designing local content suited to the needs and character of their community (Print, 1993; Sukmadinata, 2017). This autonomy is fairly evident in religious content such as BTQ, akhlak, and ubudiyah, yet it remains positioned as a supplement to the core structure of the national curriculum and still requires the foundation's approval, meaning the Grass Roots autonomy exercised is bounded rather than the full autonomy envisioned by the ideal model.

Utilization of Technology Media and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The use of technology in PAI classroom learning so far remains limited to projectors, digital murattal applications for tilawah (recitation) practice, and WhatsApp groups as a communication medium for assignments with parents, without a dedicated Learning Management System (LMS) for the PAI subject. Regarding generative AI, some teachers have begun exploring its use for preparing test items and lesson plans (RPP), but this remains an individual initiative rather than a madrasah policy. At the student level, there is no official use of AI, given the age of MI students and pesantren concerns about excessive screen time. Identified obstacles include limited internet infrastructure, uneven digital competence among senior teachers, and concern that technology may displace the teacher's role as a direct role model (talaqqi) in value-based learning.

These findings align with the direction of Islamic education's digital transformation policy, which encourages the gradual and contextual utilization of technology (Directorate General of Islamic Education, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024), while also reflecting the caution recommended by UNESCO (2023) regarding the application of generative AI at the basic education level, particularly concerning infrastructure readiness, educator competence, and the protection of the value-learning process. The gap evident here is not at the level of discourse, since teachers have already shown interest in exploring AI, but rather at the level of resource readiness and institutional policy, which has not yet consolidated these individual initiatives into formal madrasah policy.

Mapping onto Curriculum Development Models

To clarify the position of the findings relative to the three curriculum development models, the interview results are mapped in Table 1 below.

Table: 1 *Mapping of findings onto the Tyler, Taba, and Grass Roots curriculum development models*

Model	Ideal Principle	Field Reality
Tyler (1949)	Objectives are formulated systematically: objectives → learning experiences → organization → evaluation.	Partially achieved: objectives refer to the KMA/Merdeka Curriculum, but evaluation remains annual and has not been documented in detail.
Taba (1962)	Diagnosis of student needs precedes the development of curriculum content; teachers act as active developers.	Needs diagnosis is not yet formal or scheduled; decisions are more top-down from the madrasah head and foundation, rather than inductive from classroom data.
Grass Roots (Print, 1993)	Teachers and the madrasah have high autonomy to design pesantren-based local content.	Autonomy is fairly evident in religious content (BTQ, akhlak, ubudiyah), but is constrained by national formal teaching hours and still requires the foundation's approval.

Gap Between Ideal Principles And Pedagogical Reality

The first and most prominent gap lies between the discourse of technology/AI integration and classroom practice, which remains conventional. Interest in utilizing AI has already emerged among teachers, but implementation is held back by limited infrastructure, uneven digital competence among senior teachers, and value-based concerns over talaqqi. This shows that 21st-century curriculum transformation at the level of documents and policy discourse does not yet fully correspond to resource readiness in the field (Directorate General of Islamic Education, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024; UNESCO, 2023).

The second gap lies in the Taba dimension, namely that the curriculum process is not yet genuinely based on a systematic and scheduled diagnosis of student needs, but instead remains closer to the Tyler pattern of following national documents in a top-down manner (Taba, 1962; Tyler, 1949). The Grass Roots influence is evident only in pesantren based content, whose position remains supplementary to the core formal curriculum structure rather than an equal component in curricular decision-making (Print, 1993).

CONCLUSION

The PAI curriculum practice at MI Al-Azhar Menganti, Gresik shows a hybrid pattern across the three curriculum development models: the curriculum structure follows Tyler's top-down logic derived from national regulation, pesantren based content reflects a bounded form of the Grass Roots spirit, while Taba's principle of needs diagnosis has not yet been formally institutionalized. The main gap was found in the integration of technology/AI, which remains distant between individual teacher discourse and institutional madrasah policy, owing to limited infrastructure, uneven digital competence, and value-based concerns over the teacher's talaqqi role.

REFERENCES

- Directorate General of Islamic Education, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. (2024). Digital transformation of Islamic education. Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.
- Hamalik, O. (2011). Manajemen pengembangan kurikulum [Curriculum development management]. PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Lunenburg, F. C. (2011). Self efficacy in the workplace: implication for motivation and performance. *International Journal of Management, Bussisnes, and Administration*, 14 (1), 1-6.
- Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. (2022). Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 347 Tahun 2022 tentang Pedoman Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka pada Madrasah [Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 347 of 2022 on guidelines for implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in madrasahs].
- Mukhlas, A. A., & Barudin. (2025). Strengthening tasawuf materials for the community of Pakal Village, Surabaya. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR)*, 1(4), 206-211. <https://ojssulthan.com/ijmr/article/view/1097/686>.
- Nuruddin, A. R., Khusnan, A., & Barudin, B. (2025). Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Melalui Modul Nadhom Asmaul Husna Di MI. Bahrul 'Ulum Tambakberas Jombang. *Muróbbi: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 9(2), 321-330. <https://doi.org/10.52431/murobbi.v9i2.3966>.
- Print, M. (1993). Curriculum development and design. Allen & Unwin.
- Sukmadinata, N. S. (2017). Pengembangan kurikulum: Teori dan praktik [Curriculum development: Theory and practice]. PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Taba, H. (1962). Curriculum development: Theory and practice. Harcourt, Brace & World.
- Tyler, R. W. (1949). Basic principles of curriculum and instruction. The University of Chicago Press.
- UNESCO. (2023). Guidance for generative AI in education and research. UNESCO.
- Kemmis, S. and R McTaggart. (1988). Action Research - some ideas from The Action Research Planner, Third edition, ed. Deakin University.