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IMPLEMENTATION OF INDEPENDENT LEARNING CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT IN IMPROVING STUDENT COMPETENCE

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the administration of the Independent Curriculum at SMAIQu Al-Bahjah Cirebon, which includes elements of planning, organization, implementation, and evaluation. Data collection methods for this qualitative study include observation, interviews, and documentation, all of which are descriptive approaches. The findings indicate that curriculum development at the Islamic boarding school is carried out contextually by combining Islamic values and student characteristics. The Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) and intracurricular activities are used in the implementation of learning to combine academic and character development. However, during the evaluation process, challenges remain, especially those related to the distribution of teacher skills in developing learning materials and assessment systems. Therefore, the administration of the Independent Curriculum has been running quite well, but it needs to focus on improving the evaluation component and continuing to raise teacher skill standards.

Keywords: Curriculum Management, Independent Curriculum, Student Competencies.

Abstrak

Studi ini bertujuan untuk meneliti administrasi Kurikulum Mandiri di SMAIQu Al-Bahjah Cirebon, yang mencakup unsur-unsur perencanaan, organisasi, pelaksanaan, dan evaluasi. Metode pengumpulan data untuk studi kualitatif ini meliputi observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi, yang semuanya merupakan pendekatan deskriptif. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa pengembangan kurikulum di lembaga berasrama Islam dilakukan secara kontekstual dengan menggabungkan nilai-nilai Islam dan karakteristik siswa. Implementasi of Independent Learning Curriculum Management in Improving Student Competence

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Proyek Penguatan Profil Siswa Pancasila (P5) dan kegiatan intrakurikuler digunakan dalam implementasi pembelajaran untuk menggabungkan pengembangan akademik dan karakter. Namun, selama proses evaluasi, masih terdapat tantangan, terutama yang berkaitan dengan distribusi keterampilan guru dalam mengembangkan materi pembelajaran dan sistem penilaian pembelajaran. Oleh karena itu, administrasi Kurikulum Mandiri telah berjalan cukup baik, tetapi perlu difokuskan pada peningkatan komponen evaluasi dan terus meningkatkan standar keterampilan guru.

Kata kunci: Manajemen Kurikulum, Kurikulum Merdeka, Kompetensi Siswa.

A. Introduction

Education is a key factor for the government in developing the nation and state. As stated in the 1945 Constitution, Indonesia was founded for various purposes, including improving the nation's intelligence. This requires sound educational management in implementation, planning, and assessment. One effort the government has made is through curriculum changes, including the "Merdeka Belajar" (Freedom to Learn) curriculum currently implemented in Indonesia. The "Merdeka Belajar" (Freedom to Learn) curriculum aims to provide students with the freedom to learn without pressure, allowing them to develop their natural talents. Nadiem Makarim stated that this can help students explore their interests and talents (Susilowati, 2022).

Changes to the curriculum stem from changing times, addressing societal expectations for producing high-quality, competitive graduates. One way to produce high-quality students aligned with their competencies is through a curriculum-based approach. The learning process is designed based on the curriculum implemented by educational institutions, allowing it to be implemented in teaching and learning activities. The curriculum used is also tailored to the needs of students and their competency levels. The primary goal is to ensure optimal development of student competencies in line with current developments (Anas et al., 2023).

Transforming education through the independent learning policy is a crucial step in achieving superior human resources in Indonesia, embodying the characteristics of Pancasila students. The World Economic Forum (2016) identified 16 skills necessary for students in the 21st century, grouped into three categories: literacy, competence, and good character (Al Rosid, Wakhid, et al., 2025). Education today faces challenges in preparing students for a rapidly changing and uncertain world. Essential skills include creativity, collaboration, and the use of technology, as well as critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. Wagner (2010) and the Change Leadership Group at Harvard University highlight seven key skills essential for students: critical thinking and problem-solving, collaboration and leadership, agility and adaptability, initiative and entrepreneurship, effective communication, information analysis, and curiosity and imagination (Zubaidah, 2016).

Broadly speaking, student competency can be described as an integrated ability encompassing understanding, skills, attitudes, and values that enable a person to act effectively in various life situations and contexts. Competency assessment is not only

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based on mastery of academic material, but also includes the ability to apply that knowledge in real life through critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, and developing character and social responsibility. Student competency indicators generally consist of three main aspects: knowledge competency (understanding and reasoning), skills competency (creativity, communication, collaboration, and digital literacy), and attitude and character competency (independence, integrity, and social awareness) (Maulidya et al., 2024).

Educational curriculum management plays a crucial role in improving the quality of learning in Islamic schools and madrasas. In the era of the Independent Learning Curriculum, this approach has become more flexible, adaptive, and oriented toward developing skills that meet current demands. The implementation of effective curriculum management will help Islamic schools and madrasas achieve more relevant, high-quality, and competitive educational goals (Yustiasari Liriwati et al., 2024).

Curriculum management is a form of collaborative effort to facilitate the achievement of teaching objectives, particularly efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning interactions. These efforts require evaluation, planning, and implementation, which are inseparable components. Curriculum management is one aspect that influences the success of learning in national education. Furthermore, the curriculum is a system of learning programs to achieve institutional goals in educational institutions, thus playing a crucial role in realizing high-quality schools. To support the success of the curriculum, empowerment efforts in the field of curriculum management are necessary (Sulfemi, in Maulidia et al., 2023).

At the high school level, including at SMAIQu Al-Bahjah, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum requires an effective curriculum management system, from planning, organization, implementation, and evaluation. However, the reality of implementation at SMAIQu Al-Bahjah shows that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum still faces several obstacles. In the planning process, for example, not all teachers understand teaching materials such as teaching modules, CP, ATP, and the flow of learning objectives equally. As a result, the preparation of learning materials is often not uniform and requires intensive guidance. Problems also arise at the learning evaluation stage. Documentation, monitoring, and reflection on learning are still not carried out systematically, so schools do not yet have strong data on the effectiveness of learning or its impact on improving student competencies (Al Rosid, Ina NM, et al., 2025). This condition indicates a real challenge in curriculum management that can impact student learning outcomes.

Furthermore, there is a research gap, with most previous studies focusing solely on teachers' understanding of the Independent Curriculum or the technical aspects of its implementation. Few studies have comprehensively examined how the curriculum management process itself is implemented in educational institutions implementing the Independent Curriculum, particularly in Islamic boarding schools like SMAIQu

Al-Bahjah, which have distinctive school cultures, values, and institutional structures that differ from those of mainstream schools. Studies on the contribution of curriculum management to improving student competency in this context are also very limited.

SMAIQu Al Bahjah Cirebon, an educational institution committed to strengthening academic competence and Islamic character values, is an interesting example to study. The institution's goal is to produce a generation of Quranic scholars who are professional in science and who grow and develop according to the abilities and needs of the community. Therefore, the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum Management at SMAIQu Al Bahjah Cirebon is very significant. This not only serves to meet national education demands but also serves as a strategy to ensure that the learning process improves students' overall competencies in accordance with Islam. With good, planned, and organized curriculum management, along with proper evaluation, schools can integrate the values of manners, knowledge, and character into the Independent Curriculum. This makes learning more relevant, adaptive, and has a real impact on student development. This importance demonstrates that success in improving student competency depends heavily on the quality of curriculum management, which is consistently and sustainably implemented at SMAIQu Al Bahjah. This research uses a case study approach at SMAIQu Al-Bahjah Cirebon to examine in depth the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum management and its contribution to improving student competency.

Based on the background above, the research was conducted to determine how the independent learning curriculum management planning at SMAIQu Al Bahjah, the organization of independent learning curriculum management at SMAIQu Al Bahjah, the implementation of independent learning curriculum management at SMAIQu Al Bahjah, the evaluation of independent learning curriculum management at SMAIQu Al Bahjah, and to find out how the implementation of the independent learning curriculum impacts on improving student competencies at SMAIQu Al Bahjah.

B. Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study research type at SMAIQu Al Bahjah Cirebon to describe and understand in detail how the Independent Curriculum is managed in a real context, and how these practices impact the improvement of student competencies in the aspects of knowledge, skills, and attitudes and character (Al Rosid et al., 2024). The study was conducted at SMAIQu Al Bahjah Cirebon in December 2025. Data sources were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document collection. The subjects in this study

included the principal, vice principal in charge of the curriculum, subject teachers, P5 coordinators, and students.

Data analysis is carried out systematically to identify patterns and key themes from the collected data. Noeng Muhadjir (in Rijali, 2018) explains that data analysis is the process of systematically finding and organizing notes from observations, interviews, and other sources. Data analysis is carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions interactively and continuously. To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, source triangulation techniques are used by comparing and verifying data obtained from various informants such as principals, teachers, and students. The application of source triangulation is in line with the views of Miles and Huberman, who argue that the validity of qualitative data can be improved by cross-checking data from various sources and data collection methods to obtain consistent and reliable results (Sapitri, 2024).

C. Results and Discussion

Independent curriculum planning at SMAIQu Albahjah Cirebon

The Independent Curriculum planning at SMAIQu Al-Bahjah Cirebon began with a thorough understanding of the government-issued Independent Curriculum policy. Before its implementation, the principal and his deputy studied the existing official guidelines and then communicated them to teachers through internal meetings and discussions. They also conducted in-school training to improve their knowledge and readiness to implement the new curriculum. As explained by the deputy principal for curriculum, the development of the independent curriculum at SMAIQu Al-Bahjah began with understanding the central policy. After that, discussions were held with teachers because not all teachers were immediately ready and had a deep understanding of the independent learning curriculum policy and conducted training. Based on the interview results, the independent learning curriculum planning at SMAIQu was carried out well and this step is very important because curriculum planning, according to Tyler, is a systematic process that must begin with an understanding of educational objectives before being implemented into planned learning experiences . Curriculum development is a systematic process that begins with establishing educational objectives, selecting learning experiences, organizing those experiences, and evaluating their achievement (Ni'matul 'Izzah et al., 2025) . In this way, understanding among teachers becomes the main requirement for implementing the curriculum successfully (Fendik Aditya et al., 2025) .

In addition, the approach taken by SMAIQu Al-Bahjah is also relevant to Hilda Taba's view, which emphasizes the importance of teacher involvement in the curriculum planning process so that implementation runs effectively and is appropriate to the context of students (Taba, 1962) . According to the vice principal of curriculum, the preparation of learning tools, including Learning Outcomes, Learning Objective Flow, teaching modules, and the Pancasila Student Profile

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Strengthening Project plan, is carried out by referring to the national guidelines for the Independent Curriculum and is adapted to the character and circumstances of SMAIQU Al-Bahjah students. This is in accordance with the principles of the Independent Curriculum which emphasize the importance of flexibility and curriculum context with the needs of schools and students (Nengsih et al., 2024) . However, research shows that in practice, the creation of teaching tools is not fully independent because some teachers are still adapting to the new format and approach of the Independent Curriculum, teachers still need assistance, as stated by the vice principal of curriculum who said that the teaching modules are prepared by teachers, but still need assistance because the format is different from the previous curriculum. This shows that curriculum planning has been running well but still faces obstacles or challenges, namely the creation of teaching materials whose format is different from the previous curriculum, so that teachers who have not yet mastered this need special assistance to understand and create learning materials.

The findings at SMAIQU Al Bahjah in its curriculum planning process include the Merdeka Curriculum with the school's vision and mission at SMAIQU Al Bahjah which aims to produce a Quranic generation carried out by incorporating Islamic values and pondok values in learning and P5 activities. The values of religiosity, ethics, discipline, and responsibility are emphasized in every lesson such as the integration of diniyah curriculum and tahfidzul quran as well as projects that strengthen character. This approach is in line with the concept of an integrated curriculum, which emphasizes the relationship between academic competence and character building in accordance with the values and culture of the educational institution (Lukum et al., 2024) . The vice principals who handle the curriculum emphasized that although the Merdeka Curriculum is implemented, the distinctive character of SMAIQU Al-Bahjah as a Quranic school is maintained through the integration of moral values and worship habits in learning and P5 activities.

The Independent Curriculum planning at SMAIQU Al-Bahjah Cirebon involved the principal, vice principal for curriculum, teachers, and the P5 coordinator. This was conveyed by the vice principal for curriculum who stated that the curriculum development involved many parties including the principal, curriculum team, teaching teachers, and also the P5 coordinator. The P5 coordinator was also involved because the independent curriculum includes a project for character development. The involvement of these various parties reflects the principle of curriculum management that involves participation, where planning is carried out together to reach the right decisions that are in accordance with the needs of the school. With collective involvement, a sense of ownership of the curriculum that has been designed arises.

In the Independent Curriculum, the P5 program is a co-curricular activity aimed at strengthening student character through project-based learning methods (Muthoharoh et al., 2024). It aims to develop the six dimensions of the Pancasila

Student Profile, which include faith and piety in God Almighty as well as good morals, independence, mutual cooperation, global diversity, critical thinking skills, and creativity (Yani et al., 2024)

The implications of curriculum management for the sustainability of P5 are that curriculum management acts as an operating system. If the system (planning, organization, implementation, and evaluation) is well-organized, P5 will become a school identity. However, if management is weak, P5 will only become an administrative burden that is prone to being discontinued or run haphazardly. According to an interview with the P5 coordinator, at SMAIQu Al-Bahjah, P5 planning begins with selecting themes that are appropriate to the character of students and the Islamic boarding school culture, such as strengthening morals, independence, mutual cooperation, and social awareness. The theme is determined through teacher discussions, taking into account the academic calendar, student readiness, and resources available at the school.

This approach aligns with project-based learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of real-world context and social relevance in developing students' competencies and character (N & Saputra, 2024) . Therefore, P5 themes such as Sustainable Lifestyle, Local Wisdom, Entrepreneurship, Building One's Soul and Body, and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity) are designed not only to fulfill the requirements of the Independent Curriculum but also to strengthen SMAIQu Al-Bahjah's identity as an Islamic boarding school-based institution.

Organizing the management of the independent learning curriculum at SMAIQu Al Bahjah Cirebon

Based on an interview with the Vice Principal for Curriculum, the curriculum at SMAIQu is organized by adjusting the division of teacher duties based on the subjects taught and their respective competencies. Teachers are responsible for implementing classroom learning, developing teaching modules, and implementing learning assessments in accordance with the principles of the Independent Curriculum. Curriculum management is a crucial aspect of curriculum implementation, aiming to ensure that all learning programs run in a directed and coordinated manner. This organizational aspect relates to the division of tasks, authority, and responsibilities among school elements in managing intracurricular learning and the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) (Terry, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2022).

This division of tasks demonstrates the clarity of the teacher's role as the primary implementer of learning. The Vice Principal for Curriculum serves as the primary coordinator in organizing the Independent Curriculum at SMAIQu Al Bahjah Cirebon. This role includes setting the learning schedule, coordinating teachers, supervising learning implementation, and appointing a coordinator for the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5), which is carried out with the

principal's knowledge and approval. This demonstrates that the curriculum is organized structurally and within a single school management system (Mulyasa Permendikbud, 2020). Curriculum organization also includes managing P5 activities to align with intracurricular learning. Interviews with the P5 coordinator indicate that the coordinator's duties include coordinating project mentor teachers, preparing and organizing activity schedules, and overseeing project implementation to ensure it aligns with established planning. Thus, the implementation of P5 does not occur in isolation but is integrated within the organizational structure of the Independent Curriculum (Kemendikbudristek, 2022).

Based on the description of the research results, it can be emphasized that the organization of the management of the Independent Learning Curriculum at SMAIQU Al Bahjah Cirebon has been implemented in a structured manner through a clear division of tasks and authorities between the Vice Principal for Curriculum, subject teachers, and the coordinator of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5). The Vice Principal for Curriculum acts as the main coordinator who integrates intracurricular learning and P5 in one curriculum management system. Thus, the formulation of the research problem regarding how the management of the Independent Learning Curriculum is organized at SMAIQU Al Bahjah Cirebon can be answered that the organization of the curriculum has been carried out in an integrated, coordinated manner, and supports the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in accordance with educational goals and school characteristics (Fattah, 2019).

Implementation of independent learning curriculum management at SMAIQU Al Bahjah Cirebon

Based on interviews with the curriculum vice principal, learning at SMAIQU utilizes a student-centered approach. Within the curriculum, teachers employ diverse, contextual, and flexible learning methods, such as discussions, problem-based learning, project-based learning, and reflection. The learning process emphasizes not only academic achievement but also the strengthening of character, attitudes, and Quranic values. This practice aligns with a study (Putri et al., 2024) that found the Independent Curriculum supports learning that focuses on active student participation and character development through project-based learning and reflection.

Meanwhile, according to the P5 coordinator, the P5 project is implemented on a schedule and integrated with the school program. The P5 project is implemented in the form of collaborative activities across subjects, raising themes relevant to the Pancasila Student Profile and the vision of the "Quranic Generation." Students are actively involved in the process of problem exploration, group work, concrete actions, and reflection. Teachers act as companions and facilitators, not as the center of learning, so that students can develop creativity, independence, and social

awareness. This is in line with research findings that show that the P5 project is implemented as part of the curriculum to develop academic competencies and student character through a project-based and collaborative approach (Putri et al., 2024).

Evaluation and monitoring of independent learning curriculum management at SMAIQu Al Bahjah Cirebon

SMAIQu Albahjah oversees the implementation of the Independent Curriculum through academic supervision activities carried out routinely by the principal and the curriculum team. Monitoring is also carried out through evaluation meetings for teachers, inspections of teaching materials such as teaching modules, ATP, and CP, classroom learning observations, and reports on the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project. The school also utilizes teacher reflections and activity documentation as sources for ongoing monitoring. Academic supervision is a very important element in curriculum management. Its task is to supervise, assess, and improve the implementation of learning through various activities, such as observing classes, assessing teaching materials, monitoring learning outcomes, and providing feedback to teachers. In this way, schools can understand the strengths and weaknesses in curriculum implementation for continuous improvement. (Harly et al., 2024) stated that academic supervision plays a role in controlling and ensuring the quality of curriculum implementation through monitoring and evaluating the learning structure in schools. Interview findings indicate that SMAIQu Al-Bahjah conducts academic supervision routinely through learning observations, inspections of teaching modules, ATP, CP, and evaluation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project. This practice is in line with research results showing that academic supervision helps control the curriculum through evaluation of the learning process, classroom observations, and feedback to teachers so that the quality of learning can be maintained and continuously improved.

Evaluation of the curriculum's success in improving students' abilities at DI Smaiqu Albahjah is conducted through assessment results, student participation during the learning process, and the development of their attitudes and skills. However, this evaluation has not been well-structured, so the school continues to strive to improve the evaluation system to provide useful input for curriculum improvement. The results of this study indicate that the Independent Curriculum assessment can include evaluation of teaching methods, student engagement, and learning outcomes as benchmarks for curriculum success. This finding aligns with the Independent Curriculum evaluation at MAN 2 Palembang, which assesses curriculum effectiveness based on overall student participation and achievement. Successful curriculum evaluation not only highlights academic aspects but also observes student engagement and ongoing skill improvement. This type of assessment is crucial for providing the feedback needed for ongoing curriculum

improvement, as explained in the Independent Curriculum evaluation at MAN 2 Palembang (Ibrahim et al., 2024) .

The impact of independent curriculum management on student competencies

The impact of the implementation of the independent curriculum at SMAIQu Al-Bahjah Cirebon on improving student competencies, based on interviews with the curriculum vice-principal and teachers at the school, shows progress in several key competencies. One of the most visible competencies is independence in learning, where students become more active in seeking information, expressing opinions, and completing assignments. In addition, critical and creative thinking skills also improve, particularly through discussion activities, problem-solving, and project-based learning. The implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) provides opportunities for students to explore real-world issues. In line with research by (Cholilah et al., 2023) , it is stated that with the Independent Curriculum, the implementation of project-based learning is very influential in improving higher-order thinking skills and student independence. This occurs because students are required to find solutions to problems related to their surroundings.

Students' social and collaborative skills also showed positive development. This improvement is evident in students' increasing ability to work together, communicate effectively, and take responsibility for group assignments. According to (Rahayu et al., 2022) , the Independent Curriculum provides teachers with the freedom to use various collaborative methods, which makes students more capable of negotiating, sharing roles, and feeling responsible in groups. In line with school characteristics, students' spiritual abilities and Qur'anic moral attitudes are also increasingly evident through discipline, good learning methods, and the application of Islamic values in daily life. Although the Independent Curriculum is national, the curriculum structure gives schools the freedom to add local content and specific institutional visions, such as Qur'anic Morals. (*Sufyadi, S., et al. (2021)*) revealed that the core of the Pancasila student profile begins with the dimensions of "Faith, Devotion to God Almighty, and Noble Morals," which serve as the foundation for other characters.

In terms of behavior, students show higher self-confidence, dare to ask questions, and can express opinions in a polite and civilized manner. Research by (*Aliyyah, RR, et al. (2022)*) states that the implementation of an adaptive curriculum can strengthen religious character and communication ethics better, because there are examples and regular habits. Students' discipline and sense of responsibility in participating in the learning process also increase. Changes in students' attitudes who are more confident, dare to ask questions, and are able to express opinions well illustrate the success of character strengthening. regarding students who are more confident and polite is in line with the results of research (Susilowati, 2022). She explained that the Independent Curriculum offers freedom that allows students to

learn in a comfortable atmosphere. This allows them to express themselves, which encourages the courage to give opinions without fear of making mistakes. In terms of abilities, students show better skills in analytical thinking, collaborating in teams, and completing project-based assignments, especially in the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5). They are also better able to manage time, plan activities, and reflect on learning outcomes they have achieved. The findings on analytical and collaborative skills in the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) are supported by research (Rachmawati et al., 2022). This study shows that the project provides hands-on experience that naturally develops students' abilities in group problem-solving and critical thinking.

On the other hand, in terms of academic achievement, students' understanding of concepts becomes stronger because the learning methods used focus not only on the final result but also on the learning process itself. This is reinforced by research results (Cholilah et al., 2023), which show that the emphasis on essential material in the Independent Curriculum provides students with the opportunity to gain a deeper and more qualitative understanding, rather than simply pursuing material completion (the final result). Evaluations show that students are able to connect the subject matter to real-life situations and Qur'anic values, making the learning process more meaningful and sustainable. This is supported by (Rahayu et al., 2022), who stated that learning connected to real-life situations and character values from a region or religion will help students retain the knowledge longer.

Based on the existing explanations, interviews, and findings at SMAIQu Al-Bahjah Cirebon, it is clear that theoretically, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum has made a positive contribution to improving students' overall competencies. This encompasses academics, 21st-century skills, social collaboration, and spiritual and moral values derived from the Quran.

Typical challenges of SMAIQu Albahjah Islamic boarding school

As a high school located in an Islamic boarding school (pesantren) area, SMAIQu Al-Bahjah has its own unique characteristics that pose various challenges in managing and implementing the Independent Curriculum, particularly in the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5). These challenges arise from the school's efforts to strike a balance between the demands of the national curriculum and the deeply rooted values and traditions of the Islamic boarding school.

One of the main challenges faced is managing study time. At SMAIQu Al-Bahjah, students not only follow formal academic programs but also participate in Islamic boarding school activities, such as Quran memorization, book study, group worship, and moral development. This situation requires careful curriculum management so that P5 and intracurricular learning can run concurrently with the Islamic boarding school's agenda and remain effective and sustainable.

Another challenge relates to adapting P5 themes and activities to align with Quranic values and Islamic boarding school culture. While the Independent Curriculum offers schools flexibility in choosing themes and project types, in an Islamic boarding school environment, care is needed to ensure that each P5 activity aligns with the "Quranic Generation" vision, student behavior, and prevailing norms within the boarding school. This encourages teachers and the curriculum team to be creative in linking the Pancasila Student Profile with Islamic values.

Furthermore, teacher readiness and competence also pose a challenge. In Islamic boarding schools, teachers serve not only as academic educators but also as moral mentors and role models for students. Implementing the Independent Curriculum, which requires differentiated, project-based, and reflective learning, requires a shift in mindset from traditional learning methods to more flexible and student-focused ones, without diminishing the moral role of teachers as Islamic boarding school educators.

Another challenge is the P5 evaluation and documentation system. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, many character-building activities take place informally and daily, so not all of them are documented in a structured manner as part of curriculum evaluation. This presents a challenge for schools to create an evaluation system that can measure the progress of students' character, attitudes, and spirituality in a systematic manner, without diminishing the uniqueness of Islamic boarding school education.

Given the various challenges, SMAIQu Al-Bahjah is challenged to develop responsive and contextual curriculum management. This particular challenge for Islamic boarding schools also presents an opportunity for the school to more meaningfully integrate the Independent Curriculum with Islamic values, ensuring that the implementation of P5 not only adheres to national policy but also fosters the character of students with Qur'anic morals and global competencies.

D. Closing

Based on the research results, the management of the independent curriculum at SMAIQu Al-Bahjah Cirebon has been implemented systematically through management functions including planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating (POAC). In creating the curriculum, student characteristics, current demands, and the integration of Islamic boarding school ideals based on the Quran and high moral principles have been taken into account. The division of tasks and responsibilities was very successful throughout the organizational phase, with each component of the school playing a role in curriculum implementation. This is seen from how the leadership, instructors, and other departments work together well to carry out learning and activities under the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5).

SMAIQu Al-Bahjah's adoption of the Independent Curriculum demonstrates an effort to combine academic studies with the promotion of Islamic values and character development. The learning process prioritizes the development of students' attitudes, skills, and manners, alongside cognitive achievement. This is highly beneficial for the overall development of students. However, during the evaluation period, numerous challenges remained, including inconsistent understanding among teachers on how to create and implement Independent Curriculum learning resources, as well as inadequate systems for assessing and documenting learning. This suggests that monitoring and evaluation are still necessary for successful and sustainable curriculum implementation. Although the Independent Curriculum at SMAIQu Al-Bahjah Cirebon has been well managed overall, there are still several areas that need to be improved to ensure the best educational outcomes, both academically and in terms of student character development.

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