



Curriculum Policy and Practice in Strengthening Islamic Character at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Hubulo Tapa

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze curriculum policies and practices in strengthening Islamic character at Hubulo Tapa Islamic Junior High School (MTs). The focus of the study is directed at how curriculum policies are translated into learning practices, madrasah culture, and co-curricular and extracurricular activities in shaping students' Islamic character. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews with the madrasah principal, teachers, and students, observations of learning activities and madrasah culture, and documentation studies of curriculum documents and madrasah policies. The results show that curriculum policies at MTs Hubulo Tapa are aligned with national education policies and the uniqueness of madrasahs, particularly in the integration of Islamic values. Curriculum practices are realized through values-based learning, teacher role models, religious habits, and character strengthening through Islamic boarding school activities. The implications of this study indicate that consistency between curriculum policies and practices is a key factor in the success of strengthening Islamic character in madrasahs.

INTRODUCTION

Character education is a central issue in educational development in Indonesia, particularly in the context of the increasingly complex challenges of globalization and social change. Educational institutions are not only required to produce students who excel academically, but also possess strong character, morals, and spiritual values. In this context, madrasahs, as Islamic educational institutions, play a strategic role in integrating Islamic values into the formal education process.

As the heart of education, the curriculum plays a crucial role in determining the direction and quality of the learning process. Curriculum policies designed by the government and implemented at the educational unit level are the primary instruments in shaping student competencies and character. However, curriculum policies do not necessarily guarantee the achievement of educational goals if they are not implemented contextually and consistently in daily learning practices.

Madrasah Tsanawiyah Hubulo Tapa, one of the Islamic educational institutions in Gorontalo, is unique in its integration of general education and religious education. As a madrasa within an Islamic boarding school (pesantren), MTs Hubulo Tapa has a significant opportunity to develop curriculum practices oriented toward strengthening Islamic character. Values such as religiosity, discipline, responsibility, honesty, and social awareness are integral to the madrasa's vision and mission.

However, the implementation of curriculum policies to strengthen Islamic character is not without challenges. Teachers are required to translate curriculum policies into meaningful learning strategies, while madrasas need to build an institutional culture that supports the sustainable internalization of Islamic values. Therefore, it is crucial to thoroughly examine how curriculum policies and practices are implemented in madrasas.

This research is relevant because it attempts to bridge the gap between normative curriculum policies and empirical curriculum practices. By examining MTs Hubulo Tapa as a case study, this research is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of strategies for strengthening Islamic character through the curriculum.

Based on this description, this research focuses on analyzing curriculum policies and practices for strengthening Islamic character at MTs Hubulo Tapa. The results are expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to the development of character education in madrasas.

Formulation of the problem

1. What is the curriculum policy in strengthening Islamic character at MTs Hubulo Tapa?
2. How is the curriculum practiced in strengthening Islamic character at MTs Hubulo Tapa?
3. What are the implications of curriculum policies and practices for the formation of students' Islamic character?

Research purposes

This study aims to describe and analyze curriculum policies and practices in strengthening Islamic character at MTs Hubulo Tapa.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Curriculum Policy

Curriculum policy is a set of strategic decisions that form the basis for the implementation of education in an educational system or unit. From an educational policy perspective, the curriculum is understood not only as a technical document containing learning objectives, materials, and

evaluations, but also as a representation of the values, ideology, and direction of human development that the state seeks to achieve. Ball, Maguire, and Braun (2012) emphasize that education policy is dynamic and contextual, as it constantly undergoes a process of interpretation and adjustment when implemented at the school or madrasah level.

In the context of Islamic education, curriculum policy has a more complex dimension, as it must accommodate the demands of national education standards as well as Islamic values. Madrasahs occupy a strategic position as educational institutions that integrate general knowledge and Islamic studies. Therefore, madrasah curriculum policy cannot be separated from the role of the Ministry of Religious Affairs as regulator, as well as the Islamic vision that characterizes the institution.

Theoretically, Tyler (2013) states that an effective curriculum must be based on clear educational objectives, relevant learning experiences, systematic learning organization, and ongoing evaluation. In madrasahs, curriculum objectives are not only directed at achieving academic competencies but also at developing students' character and morals. This demonstrates that madrasah curriculum policies have a holistic orientation.

A curriculum policy oriented toward strengthening Islamic character requires the integration of Islamic values into all subjects and educational activities. Lickona (2012) emphasized that effective character education cannot be separated from the curriculum, as character values must be internalized through a systematic and continuous learning process. Therefore, madrasah curriculum policies need to be consciously designed to support the internalization of Islamic values.

In practice, madrasah curriculum policies are also influenced by local social and cultural contexts. National policies often require adaptation to be relevant to student needs and the characteristics of the madrasah environment. Therefore, madrasah curriculum policies need to be understood as the result of a dialogue between formal regulations, Islamic values, and the social realities faced by educational institutions.

Curriculum Practice

Curriculum practice refers to the process of implementing curriculum policies and documents in actual classroom learning activities and in the daily life of the madrasah. This practice involves various educational actors, especially teachers, who play the primary role of implementing the curriculum. Fullan (2007) states that the success of curriculum implementation depends heavily on teachers' ability to understand, interpret, and adapt curriculum policies to the learning context.

From the perspective of the sociology of education, curriculum practices are not neutral, but rather influenced by the values, culture, and power relations prevailing within educational institutions. Bernstein (2000) explains that pedagogical practices reflect how knowledge is selected, organized, and conveyed to students. In madrasahs, curriculum practices are heavily influenced by the institution's Islamic vision and deeply rooted religious traditions.

Curriculum practices in madrasahs are not limited to formal classroom learning but also encompass religious practices, co-curricular activities, and madrasah culture. Activities such as congregational prayer, Quran recitation, and moral development are integral parts of the curriculum,

which aims to shape students' Islamic character. Thus, the curriculum is implemented contextually and comprehensively.

Teachers play a central role in curriculum implementation because they serve as primary role models for students. Teachers' exemplary Islamic attitudes and behavior serve as an effective means of internalizing character values. This aligns with the Islamic educational perspective, which places role modeling as the primary method in the learning process and character formation.

Thus, curriculum practice can be understood as a bridge between normative curriculum policies and the realities of madrasah education. Consistency between curriculum planning and practice is a determining factor in the success of strengthening Islamic character through madrasah education.

Islamic Character Education

Islamic character education is an educational process aimed at developing Muslim individuals who are faithful, pious, and have noble morals. From an Islamic educational perspective, character is understood not only as a set of moral values, but as a manifestation of faith reflected in an individual's attitudes, behavior, and way of thinking. Al-Attas (1993) emphasized that the primary goal of Islamic education is the formation of civilized individuals, namely those who understand and practice Islamic values in their entirety.

Islamic character values are derived from the Quran and Hadith, encompassing honesty, discipline, responsibility, hard work, social awareness, and humility. These values cannot be instilled instantly, but rather through a continuous and integrated educational process. Therefore, Islamic character education requires a comprehensive and systematic approach.

Muhaimin (2015) stated that character education in Islam must be implemented through three main strategies: role modeling, habituation, and internalization of values. These three strategies are interrelated and must be implemented consistently in all educational activities. Madrasahs, as Islamic educational institutions, have the structural advantage to implement these strategies through their curriculum and institutional culture.

The madrasa curriculum plays an important role in Islamic character education because it is the main means of internalizing religious values. Character education is not taught as a separate subject, but is integrated into all madrasah subjects and activities. In this way, students not only understand Islamic values cognitively, but also appreciate them in everyday life.

Thus, Islamic character education is a fundamental goal of madrasah education. Strengthening Islamic character through the curriculum requires synergy between curriculum policies, learning practices, and madrasah culture so that Islamic values can be effectively and sustainably internalized in students.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design, as it focuses on an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of curriculum policy and practice within the natural context of a

madrasah. The case study was chosen to comprehensively explore the dynamics of curriculum implementation and the strengthening of Islamic character at MTs Hubulo Tapa, an educational unit with religious and cultural characteristics.

The research subjects included madrasah principals, deputy principals for curriculum, general and religious subject teachers, and students. Subjects were selected purposively, considering their roles and involvement in curriculum planning and implementation. Thus, the data obtained is expected to fully represent curriculum policies and practices.

Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies. Interviews were used to explore informants' perspectives, experiences, and interpretations regarding curriculum policies and practices. Observations were conducted to directly observe the learning process, religious practices, and madrasah culture. Meanwhile, documentation studies included analysis of curriculum documents, the madrasah's vision and mission, learning tools, and madrasah guidelines and regulations.

Data analysis was conducted interactively and continuously, following the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and techniques, ensuring that research findings are highly reliable and academically accountable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Curriculum Policy in Strengthening Islamic Character at MTs Hubulo Tapa

The research results show that the curriculum policy at MTs Hubulo Tapa is systematically designed, placing the strengthening of Islamic character as the primary goal of madrasah education. This is reflected in the formulation of the madrasah's vision, which emphasizes the formation of a devout Islamic generation with noble morals, diligent worship, and excellence in knowledge and skills. This vision is not merely symbolic but serves as the normative basis for all curriculum planning and decision-making.

The curriculum policy is then outlined in the mission and objectives of madrasah education, which emphasize the integration of Islamic values with mastery of academic competencies. The curriculum document demonstrates that Islamic character aspects are positioned alongside academic achievement, so that educational success is measured not solely by cognitive achievement but also by the development of students' attitudes and behaviors.

Furthermore, the curriculum policy at MTs Hubulo Tapa demonstrates a process of adaptation between national madrasah education policies and the local context of the institution. This adjustment is made to ensure the curriculum meets the needs of students and the religious social environment of the madrasah. Thus, the curriculum policy is not implemented rigidly but is contextualized according to the characteristics of the madrasah.

The curriculum policy also emphasizes the strategic role of madrasahs as Islamic educational institutions responsible for developing students' morals. Madrasah principals and teachers view the

curriculum policy as a guiding instrument that integrates Islamic values into all learning activities and practices within the school environment.

This finding aligns with Ball, Maguire, and Braun's view that education policy acquires meaning through enactment at the school level. The curriculum policy at MTs Hubulo Tapa does not stop at the document level but is brought to life through the madrasah's practices and culture, which are oriented toward strengthening Islamic character.

Table 1. Curriculum Policy and Direction of Strengthening Islamic Character

Policy Aspects	Forms of Curriculum Policy	Targeted Islamic Character Values
Planning	Integration of madrasah vision into the curriculum	Religious, noble morals
Regulation	Academic rules and guidelines	Discipline, responsibility
Program	P5RA and religious programs	Social concern, moderation

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that the curriculum policy at MTs Hubulo Tapa is consciously directed toward strengthening the Islamic character of students. The policy is not merely understood as an administrative document, but as a normative framework that provides value direction for the implementation of madrasah education.

The policy direction that places the madrasah's vision and mission as the basis for curriculum development demonstrates alignment between institutional goals and educational practices. This aligns with Ball et al.'s (2012) assertion that educational policy gains meaning when translated and implemented in the actual school context.

Furthermore, policies related to academic rules and guidelines serve as instruments for developing students' character, discipline, and responsibility. These regulations are part of the process of consistently instilling values in daily madrasah life.

Thus, Table 1 shows that the curriculum policy at MTs Hubulo Tapa has been designed to support the formation of Islamic character in a systematic and directed manner, while also being a foundation for curriculum practices implemented at the learning level.

Curriculum Practices in Strengthening Islamic Character

The curriculum at MTs Hubulo Tapa is implemented through learning that integrates Islamic values into both general and religious subjects. Teachers play an active role in linking teaching materials to moral messages and Islamic values, ensuring that learning is not solely focused on transferring knowledge but also on developing students' attitudes and character.

Curriculum implementation is also evident through the Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5RA). This program is structured for all grade levels, with themes and topics tailored to student development. Through P5RA, students are involved in project activities that emphasize collaboration, social awareness, and strengthening Islamic values.

Project-based curriculum practices enable students to learn contextually and reflectively. Activities such as social campaigns, simple entrepreneurship, and the use of creative technology serve as means of internalizing Islamic character values through hands-on experience. This approach strengthens students' role as active participants in the learning process.

Furthermore, the curriculum practices at MTs Hubulo Tapa are reinforced through religious practices integrated into the daily life of the school. Congregational prayer, Quranic recitation, and communal prayer are part of the school's culture, serving as a hidden curriculum for character formation.

This holistic curriculum practice aligns with Fullan's view that effective curriculum implementation requires the involvement of all school components. A conducive and religious learning environment strengthens the success of strengthening students' Islamic character.

Table 2. Curriculum Practices in Strengthening Islamic Character

Forms of Curriculum Practice	Learning Activities	Developed Character Values
Intracurricular	Integrated learning of Islamic values	Religious, disciplined
Co-curricular	P5RA Project	Responsibility, cooperation
Extracurricular	Religious and social activities	Social concern, morals

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that the curriculum practices at MTs Hubulo Tapa are implemented through various learning activities integrated with Islamic character values. This practice demonstrates that character building is not limited to specific subjects, but rather encompasses all educational activities at the madrasah.

Intracurricular learning that integrates Islamic values into teaching materials serves as a means of internalizing religious values and discipline in students. Teachers play a crucial role as curriculum implementers, translating policies into meaningful learning practices.

Furthermore, co-curricular activities through the P5RA project provide space for students to develop attitudes of responsibility, cooperation, and social awareness. This practice aligns with Fullan's (2007) view that effective curriculum change requires active student involvement in authentic learning experiences. Therefore, Table 2 confirms that curriculum practices implemented consistently and contextually can be a strategic tool in shaping students' Islamic character holistically.

The Impact of Curriculum Practices on Strengthening Islamic Character

The research results show that the implementation of curriculum practices at MTs Hubulo Tapa has had a significant impact on strengthening students' Islamic character. This impact does not emerge instantly, but rather through a process of habituation, role models, and ongoing learning

experiences throughout the madrasah. Curriculum practices integrated with Islamic values create a pedagogical environment conducive to the internalization of character values.

Religiously, students demonstrated increased awareness of obligatory and recommended religious practices, such as congregational prayer, Quran recitation, and the habit of praying before and after learning activities. These activities were no longer merely understood as formal routines but began to be understood as spiritual needs that shaped students' religious awareness. This demonstrated that curriculum practices served as a medium for developing substantive religious character.

In terms of discipline and responsibility, the research results show changes in student behavior in adhering to madrasah regulations, managing study time, and completing academic assignments and projects independently and in groups. Project-based learning and co-curricular activities encourage students to take responsibility for their roles and tasks, while also fostering collaboration and leadership.

Furthermore, the impact of curriculum practices is also evident in the development of social awareness and noble morals among students. Religious and social activities programmed into the curriculum, such as community service, group work, and activities based on the value of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (blessing for the universe), foster empathy, tolerance, and polite behavior in social interactions. The religious and conducive madrasah culture strengthens the internalization of these values in students' daily lives.

Overall, the impact of curriculum practices at MTs Hubulo Tapa reflects the school's success in integrating curriculum policies and practices as instruments for Islamic character formation. These findings demonstrate that a curriculum implemented consistently, contextually, and based on values can produce holistic and sustainable changes in student behavior.

Table 3. Impact of Curriculum Practices on Strengthening Students' Islamic Character

Aspects of Islamic Character	Forms of Curriculum Practice	Student Behavior Indicators	Observed Impacts
Religious	Worship habits, praying together, P5RA	Consistency of worship, humble attitude	Increasing religious awareness
Discipline	Madrasah regulations, structured schedule	Punctuality, compliance with rules	Disciplined behavior is formed
Responsibility	Project assignments, group activities	Completion of tasks, cooperation	Increased sense of responsibility
Social concern	Religious and social activities	Empathy, solidarity	Social sensitivity is growing

Noble morals	Teacher exemplary behavior and madrasa culture	Manners, communication ethics	Internalization of Islamic morals
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Based on Table 3, it can be explained that the impact of curriculum practices at MTs Hubulo Tapa encompasses a comprehensive dimension of Islamic character, encompassing religious, moral, social, and disciplinary aspects of students. Each aspect of character develops through planned curriculum practices that are consistently implemented throughout the life of the madrasah.

The improvement in students' religious character, as seen in Table 3, is influenced by the habituation of worship and the integration of Islamic values into learning. This practice aligns with Al-Attas' (1993) view that Islamic education aims to shape civilized individuals through the integrated strengthening of spiritual and moral dimensions.

Furthermore, the development of students' discipline and responsibility is reflected in their adherence to rules and active involvement in project assignments and group activities. This supports Lickona's (1991) theory, which emphasizes the importance of real-life experiences (moral action) in character education.

Meanwhile, the development of social awareness and noble morals among students demonstrates that curriculum practices impact not only individuals but also the quality of social relations within the madrasah environment. Teachers' exemplary behavior and social activities are crucial factors in internalizing these values.

Thus, the explanation based on Table 3 confirms that the curriculum practices at MTs Hubulo Tapa have a real and sustainable impact on strengthening students' Islamic character. This impact serves as empirical evidence that an effectively managed curriculum is capable of fulfilling the full function of Islamic education, namely, developing students who are faithful, moral, and socially responsible.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that the curriculum policy at MTs Hubulo Tapa is systematically designed, adhering to national education policies and Islamic educational values. This policy is not solely focused on academic achievement but also explicitly places strengthening Islamic character as the primary goal of madrasah education.

The curriculum practices implemented at MTs Hubulo Tapa demonstrate consistency between formulated policies and implementation. Integrating Islamic values into intracurricular learning, co-curricular activities, and the Pancasila and Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin (P5RA) Student Profile strengthening program is a key strategy in comprehensively shaping student character.

The research also shows that the curriculum practices have a positive impact on the development of students' Islamic character, reflected in increased religious attitudes, discipline, responsibility, social awareness, and noble behavior in daily life. This confirms that an effectively managed curriculum can be a strategic instrument in character education.

Theoretically, the findings of this study reinforce the expert view that the success of character education depends heavily on the synergy between policies, learning practices, and school culture. Therefore, madrasas need to continue developing curriculum policies and practices that are adaptive, contextual, and grounded in Islamic values to address the challenges of modern education.

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