

## Implementation of the Saudi Muqarrar Curriculum in Aqidah Learning to Form the Religious Character of Students at the Imam Syafi'i Islamic Boarding School in Tulungagung

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**Abstract:** *This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Saudi Muqarrar curriculum in Aqidah (Islamic creed) education and its contribution to shaping the religious character of students at Imam Syafi'i Islamic Boarding School, Tulungagung. The Muqarrar curriculum, based on the Middle Eastern educational system and focused on Arabic-language classical Islamic texts, is applied to strengthen a comprehensive and solid understanding of Aqidah. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method, using data collection techniques such as observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The findings indicate that the curriculum's implementation is supported by competent instructors who are alumni of Islamic universities in the Middle East, an effective preparatory program (I'dad) that bridges the educational gap among students, and strong parental support. However, challenges such as diverse educational backgrounds, limited Arabic proficiency, and external environmental influences serve as obstacles that must be addressed. Nevertheless, Aqidah learning through the Muqarrar curriculum has proven effective in instilling values of faith, monotheism, and spiritual discipline, significantly shaping students' religious character. With an integrated approach and a conducive learning environment, this curriculum serves as a strategic tool in nurturing a generation of students with strong moral integrity and readiness for religious outreach in society.*

**Keywords:** *Muqarrar curriculum, Aqidah, religious character, Islamic boarding school, Islamic education.*

## Introduction

Islamic education in Indonesia, particularly in institutions such as Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), plays a strategic role in shaping the character and morals of the younger generation. Beyond simply imparting knowledge, Islamic boarding schools also focus on personality development, particularly in religious and moral aspects. In this regard, the subject of Aqidah (belief) is a crucial pillar, providing the foundation for a Muslim's belief in Allah, angels, prophets, holy books, and the Day of Judgment. However, reality shows a decline in ethics and morals among the younger generation, influenced by various factors such as family environment, education, culture, and the negative influence of technology. This situation demands serious attention, particularly in strengthening aqidah education, which can instill deep religious values.<sup>1</sup>

Islamic education plays a crucial role in shaping a Muslim's character and personality. It focuses not only on developing knowledge but also encompasses spiritual, moral, and social development, derived from the Quran and Hadith.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the history of Islamic civilization, education has been a key pillar in developing individuals with faith, knowledge, and good morals. In the modern era, rife with challenges such as globalization and technological advancement, Islamic education is required to innovate to continue guiding the younger generation continuously. The goal is to produce individuals who are intellectually intelligent and firmly grounded in Islamic values. Therefore, Islamic educational institutions need to design curricula that not only keep pace with current developments but also remain grounded in Islamic principles in fostering moral development.<sup>3</sup> With a comprehensive and sustainable Islamic education system, it is hoped that a generation of Muslims will emerge who will play an active role in bringing benefits to society, uphold the values of goodness, and be able to become pillars in building an ethical and noble civilization.

In response to these challenges, a number of Islamic boarding schools have begun adopting proven effective foreign curricula, one of which is the Muqoror Curriculum from Saudi Arabia. This curriculum

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<sup>1</sup> Y. Anggraini, "Character Education Program in Overcoming Moral Crisis in Schools," in *Basicedu Journal*, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> NN Febriani et al., "Islamic Education Curriculum as a Learning Guide in Forming Religious Character from the Perspective of the Qur'an and Hadith," ... *Education ...*, ejournal ..., 2025.

<sup>3</sup> M. Judrah et al., "The role of Islamic religious education teachers in building students' character as an effort to strengthen morals," ... *of Instructional and ...*, journal.iel-education.org, 2024.

is known for its systematic and in-depth approach to teaching Islamic faith and emphasizing divine values. The Imam Syafi'i Islamic Boarding School in Tulungagung is one institution that implements the Saudi Muqarrar Curriculum with the aim of producing religious and knowledgeable students. However, implementing this curriculum certainly faces its challenges given the social and cultural differences between Indonesia and Saudi Arabia.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, according to the researcher, it is very important to research the implementation of the Saudi Muqarrar Curriculum in learning Aqidah at the Imam Syafi'i Islamic Boarding School in Tulungagung. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum in shaping students' religious character and its contribution to improving the quality of religious education amidst the dynamics of the times.<sup>5</sup> Thus, this study was titled "Implementation of the Saudi Muqarrar Curriculum in Learning Aqidah to Form the Religious Character of Students at the Imam Syafi'i Islamic Boarding School in Tulungagung."

## Method

This research is a case study and field research that explores real-life phenomena. The goal is to intensively understand the background, situation, and social interactions of a social unit. The method used is an intrinsic case study, an approach to understanding a particular case in depth based on the researcher's intrinsic interests, not due to external factors.<sup>6</sup> This research uses a qualitative method of data analysis that aims to organize and sort data into patterns, categories, and basic descriptive units so that themes can be identified and working hypotheses can be formulated as suggested by the data.<sup>7</sup> The data analysis process that the researcher will use is data reduction. Data reduction is summarizing information sourced from things that are important to be discussed or concluded.<sup>8</sup> The data analysis technique uses Miles and Huberman's analysis, namely interactive data analysis, consisting of three activity flows that occur simultaneously, namely: (a)

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<sup>4</sup> N. Anisyah et al., "Character Education Amidst the Rampant Morality Crisis in the Millennial Era," *Mikraf: Journal of Education*, jurnal.iim-jambi.ac.id, 2023.

<sup>5</sup> N. Anisyah et al., "Character Education Amidst the Rampant Morality Crisis in the Millennial Era," *Mikraf: Journal of Education*, jurnal.iim-jambi.ac.id, 2023.

<sup>6</sup> FR Fiantika et al., "Qualitative research methodology," in ... *Technology Executive*, researchgate.net, 2022.

<sup>7</sup> U. Suparman, *How to analyze qualitative data*, repository.lppm.unila.ac.id, 2020

<sup>8</sup> SH Sahir, "Research Methodology. Yogyakarta: KBM Indonesia Publisher," in Sari, R., Fadli, M., & , 2021.

data reduction, (b) data presentation, and (c) drawing conclusions/verification.<sup>9</sup>

## Result and Discussion

### A. Saudi Muqarrar Curriculum implemented in learning? Creed at the Iman Syafi'i Islamic boarding school in Tulungagung?

Imam Syafi'i Islamic Boarding School in Tulungagung (ISTA) is known as a tahfizh Islamic boarding school that prioritizes religious knowledge, with 20% of its curriculum adopting the Saudi Muqarrar Curriculum. This curriculum was chosen based on the results of comparative studies and the need to prepare students to continue their studies at Islamic universities in the Middle East. In addition to academic equality, this curriculum excels in strengthening faith with a systematic, monotheism-based approach. Saudi Muqarrar is considered effective in fortifying the younger generation against secular and liberal currents of thought. Teachers are selected from alums of renowned Islamic universities in the Middle East who are competent in their fields. The implementation of this curriculum includes methods: evidence-based learning, critical discussions, instilling practical values, and teaching role models.

The main textbooks include Kitab at-Tauhid, Syarh Tsalatsatul Usul, and others, which are taught using the talaqqi method, memorizing evidence, discussing doubts, and practicing worship. Evaluations are carried out through written exams, tasmi' evidence, observation, and munaqasyah. Despite obstacles such as limited books and diverse student backgrounds, the results show a significant increase in understanding of tauhid and academic success. Overall, the Saudi Muqarrar Curriculum has proven effective at ISTA in shaping the religious character of students through the reinforcement of applicable and contextual beliefs. In its implementation, the Saudi Muqarrar curriculum is integrated with character-building methods, such as:

1. Evidence-Based Learning

Santri are educated to understand the faith on the basis of verses from the Koran and authentic hadiths. This trains them to hold fast to revelation in interpreting faith.

2. Critical Discussion and Clarification of Questions

Students are invited to discuss and understand the widespread deviations from faith, as well as how to answer doubts scientifically and politely.

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<sup>9</sup> Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Hubberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis* (Sage Publication, 1994).

## 3. Instilling Practical Values in Life

The faith taught is not only to be known, but to be lived and practiced. The teacher emphasizes the link between belief and behavior, for example, fear of Allah gives birth to honesty, and trust in the heart gives birth to peace of mind.

## 4. Providing Exemplary Behavior

The religious teachers who teach the faith also serve as role models in daily life. This exemplary behavior is crucial for instilling the values of faith in a concrete and consistent manner. Essentially, the Saudi Muqarrar curriculum, when adapted at the Imam Syafi'i Islamic Boarding School in Tulungagung, proved effective as a framework for teaching the faith. The combination of standard texts, the *talaqqi method*, the boarding environment, and the teachers' exemplary behavior enables students not only to memorize the texts but also to practice them in their daily lives.<sup>10</sup>

In this study, the researcher obtained data on the subjects of faith and books taught, methods, assessments, and others at this Islamic boarding school as follows:

Textbooks	Learning methods	Assessment & Monitoring	Supporting Factors	Constraint	Measurable Impact
The Book of Tawhid	Talaqqi and sharh matan	Written theory test	Boarding environment	Variation of student backgrounds	Students pass the faith test
, Syarh Tsalâtsatul Usul	Memorizing the arguments	Tasmi' dalil (verbal)	Middle East alum teacher	Limited access to original books	Increasing understanding of monotheism
al - Qawa' id al - Arba'	Discussion of doubts	Behavioral observation	My dad's Lughawi Program	Arabic for beginners	Awareness of carrying out sunnah practices
al - ' Aqidah al - Wasithiyah	Faith-based worship practices	End of year <i>munaqasyah</i>	Extracurricular activities (dauroh)		

### B. What are the benefits of using the Muqarrar Saudi curriculum to teach aqidah to students at the Imam Syafi'i Islamic boarding school in Tulungagung?

The structure of learning aqidah in *the* Saudi Muqarrar Curriculum at the Imam Syafi'i Islamic Boarding School in Tulungagung is designed in stages and systematically according to grade level. In class 10, the material taught focuses on basic beliefs, such as getting to know tauhid

<sup>10</sup> <https://psb.ponpesimamsyafii.or.id/> "PSB Online, accessed May 19, 2025

*rububiyah*, *uluhiyah*, and *asthma wa shifat*.<sup>11</sup> The goal at this stage is to build a strong and straight foundation of belief based on the Quran and Sunnah. Allah, the Highest, says:

ذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ

"Those who believe and do not mix their faith with injustice (shirk), these are the people who feel safe and receive guidance." (Al-An'aam/6: 82).<sup>12</sup> Then, in grade 11, although the theme of faith taught is still in the basic realm, the approach is more in-depth and analytical, so that students begin to be trained to understand theological concepts more critically and systematically. This material is an important bridge to a more complex discussion of faith. In class 12, the focus of learning shifts to discussing deviations from faith, such as shirk, heresy, liberal thought, secularism, to modern forms of deviation that emerge in contemporary society. This learning not only emphasizes identifying forms of deviation but also provides a scientific basis for how to respond and correct them politely and argumentatively.

Furthermore, it was stated that efforts to strengthen faith do not only begin at the senior high school level but are introduced from the elementary school level (SD) with an introduction to simple yet contextual concepts of monotheism. This is a form of early education that provides a foundation for faith from an early age.<sup>13</sup> It is hoped that through this tiered curriculum, students receive early faith immunization, namely internal strength to fortify themselves from outside thoughts and influences that contradict the values of monotheism and shape religious character and become a characteristic of Islam itself. In addition, they are also prepared to become da'wah leaders who can convey the truth of faith wisely, scientifically, and with wisdom to the wider community, especially in facing the challenges of globalization and the growing confusion of thought. One of the advantages mentioned regarding the implementation of the Saudi Muqarrar curriculum at the Imam Syafi'i Islamic Boarding School in Tulungagung is its ability to prepare students for university entrance exams in the Middle East, such as the Islamic University of Medina, Al-Azhar, Egypt, and other International Islamic Universities.

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<sup>11</sup> AT Tanjung, "Understanding the Essence of Tawhid Through the Qur'an," *Al-Kauniyah*, jurnal.stain-madina.ac.id, 2023, <https://jurnal.stain-madina.ac.id/index.php/alkauniyah/article/view/1669>.

<sup>12</sup> Al Quran Surah Al An'aam verse 82

<sup>13</sup> R. Efendy and I. Irmwaddah, *The role of Islamic religious education in shaping students' religious character* (ejurnal.iainpare.ac.id, 2022) .

This is because the students are already accustomed to the Arabic language learning system and Islamic material structured similarly to the official curriculum in those countries, thus providing a significant added value in preparing for the selection exam. Furthermore, the primary benefit of this curriculum is providing a deep understanding of Islamic faith, starting from the fundamentals of faith to discussing various forms of deviation from faith that have developed in society. Through this gradual and systematic learning, students are equipped with a strong foundation of faith and critical insight into deviations from faith, enabling them to respond appropriately when faced with these phenomena in real life and to develop a high spiritual attitude regarding religious awareness in this era of globalization.

Although the curriculum may evolve and adapt over time, Islamic faith remains constant and unchanging, as taught by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions. Allah, the Highest, says:

... الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا ...<sup>14</sup>

Which means:

"... On this day I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed My favors upon you, and I have approved Islam as a religion for you ..." (Al-Quran surah Al-Maidah verse 3).<sup>15</sup>

The interpretation of the verse above explains that Islam is perfect in both its practices and beliefs.<sup>16</sup> One of the hallmarks of Muslims is their steadfast faith in addressing various social and cultural phenomena within society. Researchers also conducted interviews and observations with approximately 20 students, asking them questions related to their faith. The questions were randomly arranged and ranged in difficulty from easy to medium.

Based on the data collection results, it was found that approximately 90% of students were able to answer correctly, indicating a fairly good level of understanding of the material on faith that had been taught. Meanwhile, approximately 10% of other students were able to understand the meaning of the questions and provide relevant analogies but had difficulty explaining verbally. This was due to

<sup>14</sup> Al Quran Surah Al Maidah verse 3

<sup>15</sup>N. Batubara, "... In Islamic Religious Education and Character Education Lessons in Analyzing the Content of the Qur'an Surah Al-Maidah Verses 2 and 3 ...," *Cycle Journal: Classroom Action Research ...* , ejournal.edutechjaya.com, 2023,

<sup>16</sup> U. Sutopo and AH Basri, "Uncovering the Relationship between Religion and State in the State System in Indonesia," *Al-Syakhsiyah: Journal of Law & ...* , jurnal.iainponorogo.ac.id, 2023 .

limitations in conveying their understanding into appropriate language, even though conceptually they had grasped the core of the faith taught. In general, these results indicate that the learning of faith at the Imam Syafi'i Islamic Boarding School has made a positive contribution to the formation of students' religious character. Especially in the aspect of accepting basic faith concepts, 7th-grade students have shown readiness to understand and internalize the values of faith as a foundation for everyday attitudes and behavior. The following is a description of the learning of faith that emphasizes the formation of students' religious character.

Learning the creed is one of the main foundations of Islamic education, which aims to instill true belief in Allah Ta'ala and develop students' strong religious character.<sup>17</sup> Through a deep understanding of the pillars of faith, the attributes of God, and the values of monotheism, students are guided to have a strong and consistent faith in practicing Islamic teachings in their daily lives. In the learning process, the material on faith is not only presented theoretically, but also through a contextual and applied approach. Students are encouraged to reflect on the greatness of God through the kauniyah verses (signs of God's power in the universe), and to emulate the morals of the prophets and scholars in real life. Thus, learning faith becomes an effective means of developing attitudes of trust (taqwal), gratitude, patience, and sincerity, which are integral parts of religious character.<sup>18</sup>

This learning also instills a spiritual awareness that every action has a religious value, which encourages students to behave honestly, disciplined, responsible, and care for others. The religious character formed from a strong understanding of the faith is expected to be a moral bulwark in facing the challenges of the times and guide students to become pious and contributing individuals to society.<sup>19</sup> In essence, the resource person emphasized that guidance is the prerogative of Allah Ta'ala,<sup>20</sup> but human endeavor in equipping the younger generation with a correct understanding of the faith is a form of moral

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<sup>17</sup> MA Adib, "Actualization of Islamic Educational Values in Surah Al-Alaq Verses 1-5 in Islamic Religious Learning," *Islamic Review: Journal of Islamic Research and Studies*, journal.ipmafa.ac.id, 2022 .

<sup>18</sup> N. Puspitasari and R. Yusuf, "The role of Islamic religious education in the formation of students' religious character," ... *'dib Journal of Islamic Religious Education*, jurnal.iain-bone.ac.id, 2022 .

<sup>19</sup> R. Efendy and I. Irmwaddah, *The role of Islamic religious education in shaping students' religious character* (ejurnal.iainpare.ac.id, 2022) .

<sup>20</sup> MA Khalim et al., "The Tabligh Congregation's Approach in Spreading Da'wah to the Muslim Community in Malaysia: Preaching Approach of the Tabligh Congregation for Muslim ...," *Journal of Social ...*, publisher.uthm.edu.my, 2023 .

and educational responsibility. Through this approach, students are expected not only to be able to fortify themselves from deviations but also to become carriers of wise and scientific messages of da'wah in the wider community.<sup>21</sup>

**C. What factors support and hinder the use of the Saudi Muqarrar Curriculum in learning the faith at the Imam Syafi'i Islamic boarding school in Tulungagung?**

Saudi Muqarrar curriculum at this Islamic boarding school is supported by several important factors that strengthen the effectiveness and relevance of learning.<sup>22</sup> One key factor is the presence of asatidz (teachers) who are alumni of universities in Saudi Arabia. With educational backgrounds aligned with the Muqarrar curriculum, these teachers are well-versed in understanding and teaching the books and textbooks included in the curriculum. Their experience studying in Saudi Arabia facilitates the adaptation of the material and makes it more contextual. Furthermore, the enthusiasm of the students is also a strong driving force in implementing this curriculum. Many students are interested in continuing their studies at universities abroad, particularly in the Middle East, demonstrating a strong enthusiasm for learning the material based on the Muqarrar curriculum.

This curriculum is considered essential for adapting to the higher education system in the host country.<sup>23</sup> Equally important, the motivation for da'wah (Islamic preaching) also serves as a foundation that strengthens the students' commitment. Because students come from various regions, many of them desire to return to their hometowns and contribute to da'wah activities and Islamic teaching. This enthusiasm drives them to master Islamic knowledge in depth so they can convey it effectively within the community. The following are supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of the Saudi Muqarrar Curriculum in the teaching of Islamic faith at the Imam Syafi'i Islamic Boarding School in Tulungagung:

**1. Supporting Factors**

One of the key supporting factors in the successful implementation of the Muqarrar Curriculum in Islamic boarding schools is the *i'dad* (preparatory) class program, specifically designed to

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<sup>21</sup> S. Pasi, *The Border Da'wah Forum (Fdp)'s Da'wah Strategy in Increasing the Religious Understanding of Muslim Minorities in Suka Dame Village, Dairi Regency* (repository.ar-raniry.ac.id, 2024) .

<sup>22</sup> KA Hasibuan and N. Ginting, "Comparative Study of the Implementation of Islamic Religious Education in Saudi Arabia and in Indonesia," ... *SOCIAL SCIENCES AND ...* , jurnal.permapendis-sumut.org, 2025 .

<sup>23</sup> FE Dwi and R. Lauchia, "The Role of Curriculum in Education," *Jurnal Intelek Insan Cendikia* , jicnusantara.com, 2024 .

bridge the differences in students' educational backgrounds. This program is crucial, given that many students enter from public schools with limited basic Islamic skills.<sup>24</sup> Without this preparatory class, students may struggle to follow the lessons taught in the high-standard Muqarrar curriculum, which is based on Arabic texts. The I'd class is held for one year, with additional material focused on strengthening the Arabic language, the basics of Islamic knowledge, such as grammar and tafsir, and understanding the creed. Students in this program also live in a special dormitory to ensure optimal and personalized guidance.

This approach has proven effective in improving students' readiness before they begin core learning alongside their peers who already have Islamic school backgrounds. In addition to program readiness, support from students' guardians is also a crucial factor. Many parents have responded positively to the I'dad class, recognizing the pesantren's commitment to educating and guiding students from diverse backgrounds. The trust and collaboration built between guardians and the pesantren contribute to a conducive learning environment. During this period, students receive additional materials and intensive guidance from the moment they enroll. They are also housed in a dedicated dormitory for more focused and structured guidance.

The good news is that this initiative has received positive support from many parents. They see the *i'dad class* as a manifestation of the pesantren's commitment to ensuring that all students can successfully follow the curriculum, without falling behind academically or spiritually. This support is further strengthened by the presence of competent ustadz (preachers) and ustazah (female religious teachers) who assist the students, including those from the "students" (santri khidmat) or alumni who choose to serve as "musyrif" (religious teachers) at the pesantren. With the synergy between the mentoring program, parental support, and the readiness of the teaching staff, the obstacles faced by students from diverse backgrounds can be minimized, ensuring that the Muqarrar Curriculum remains effective and comprehensive.

Furthermore, the presence of competent teaching staff, graduates of Islamic universities in various Middle Eastern countries and their affiliates, such as the Islamic University of Medina, King Saud University, Al Azhar University in Egypt, LIPIA, Madinah International University, STAI Ali Bin Abi Tholib, STDI Imam Syafi'i Jember, and other Indonesian universities, strengthens the implementation of this

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<sup>24</sup> IK Annas, "Language Club Development at Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School: Analysis of Challenges and Strategies for Improving Arabic Language Skills," *Journal of Community Service*, ejournal.darunnajah.ac.id, 2024 .

program. Many of the *ustadz* and *ustadzah* are alums of Islamic boarding schools who have completed their service period or even graduated from Islamic universities in Indonesia and abroad. They understand the character of students and appropriate teaching methods. They are highly dedicated to fostering students, especially in the early stages of character and knowledge formation, because they are also accustomed to using them or learned them while studying there.

Overall, the combination of the *I'dad* class program, support from parents, and qualified teaching staff is an important factors that enable the *Muqarrar* curriculum to be implemented effectively, comprehensively, and adaptively to the needs of students from various backgrounds. Competent teachers are the main key to creating an effective, meaningful, and long-term learning process for students. Teacher competence is measured not only by mastery of the material alone but also by pedagogical, personality, social, and professional abilities that are integrated into every aspect of their teaching activities.

A competent teacher is able to convey material clearly and systematically, adapt teaching methods to students' characteristics, and create a conducive, active, and enjoyable classroom atmosphere. They are not only a source of knowledge but also an inspiration, guide, and role model in the values of morality, discipline, and integrity.<sup>25</sup>

In the context of Islamic-based learning, such as the *Muqarrar* Curriculum, competent teachers are also required to have a deep understanding of classical texts, Arabic language skills, and sensitivity in guiding students in accordance with the values of faith and sharia. They are able to bridge between text and context, between scientific traditions and the challenges of the times. Equally important, competent teachers are also continuously in the process of self-development. They are open to evaluation, actively participate in training, and constantly update their insights to adapt to the dynamics of education and the needs of students. With the presence of competent teachers, learning is not only a means of transferring knowledge but also a process of character and spiritual transformation, which will ultimately produce a generation that is intelligent, moral, and ready to face global challenges with a strong Islamic identity.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> M. Andriyani, "Basic Teaching Skills That Must Be Mastered by Teachers to Increase Creativity & Effectiveness in the Learning Process," *Journal of Information Technology Education and ...* , journal.grahamitra.id, 2022 .

<sup>26</sup> I. Nur and S. Mannuhung, "Implementation of Teachers' Rights and Obligations Based on Law Number 14 of 2005 Concerning Teachers and Lecturers at UPT Sma Negeri 1 Luwu Utara," in *Andi Djemma Journal | Journal of Education* , academia.edu, 2022 .

## 2. Inhibiting Factors

In addition to various supporting factors that strengthen the implementation of the Muqarrar Curriculum, there are also a number of challenges that hinder the learning process. One major obstacle is the use of textbooks that are entirely in Arabic. Although the language in these textbooks has been simplified from the original classical versions, some students still experience difficulty in fully understanding the material. This is understandable, considering that students are faced with a gradual and complex learning process. They must not only understand the material but also master Arabic and basic linguistic skills such as grammar and syntax (*shorof*). This process requires perseverance and considerable time, as they are essentially learning three things at once.

The question often arises: Why aren't these textbooks translated into Indonesian for easier understanding? The answer is closely related to the curriculum's objectives. At this Islamic boarding school, the Muqarrar curriculum is designed to align with the Saudi Arabian secondary education system, with the primary goal of preparing students to continue their studies at universities in the Middle East. Therefore, maintaining the use of Arabic in the learning process is part of a strategy to familiarize students with the academic environment they will face in the future.

One significant challenge in implementing the Muqarrar curriculum is the influence of the external environment faced by students during their return home or holidays. While outside the Islamic boarding school, many students are exposed to popular culture such as anime animation videos, games, and other digital content, which often contain values that conflict with the principles of Islamic faith. Although the influence is not always immediate or significant, these external doubts (*syubhat*) can influence students' mindsets and attitudes when they return to the Islamic boarding school environment. This situation demands that teachers be more creative and adaptive in developing and delivering learning methods.

They must be able to design learning that is not only scientifically in-depth but also engaging in presentation to match the massive appeal of the outside world. The current digital era does indeed bring significant challenges, particularly in terms of the use of social media and free interactions outside the control of Islamic boarding schools, which can weaken students' focus and spiritual awareness if not properly anticipated. Nevertheless, the faith learning taken from the Muqarrar Curriculum continues to have a significant positive impact. Strong faith material serves as an important bulwark for students in

maintaining their understanding of their identity as Muslims. Despite the potential for influence from the external environment, this curriculum is generally successful in maintaining the foundation of students' faith. It remains steadfast and continues to lead them toward a straight and correct understanding of faith.

Specifically regarding the educational background of students, one of the most prominent challenges in implementing the Muqarrar curriculum in Islamic boarding schools is the diverse educational backgrounds of the students.<sup>27</sup> Many of them come from public schools with limited religious knowledge, and they lack a solid foundation in Islamic knowledge, such as understanding Arabic, grammar, or the fundamentals of faith. This presents a significant obstacle, especially when they must take the same classes as their peers who have previously received Islamic-based education. This disparity in basic skills often makes it difficult for some students to catch up. Furthermore, some students come from challenging social or personal backgrounds.

This undoubtedly impacts their mental and spiritual readiness to participate in the intensive and disciplined learning process within the Islamic boarding school environment. In an effort to improve the quality of Islamic education, it is necessary to select an appropriate curriculum that meets the needs of students. Two frequently compared curriculum models are the Saudi Muqoror Curriculum and the Indonesian Local Curriculum. Each has its own characteristics, strengths, and limitations. Therefore, this analysis was conducted to examine the strengths and weaknesses of both curricula as considerations in developing an ideal Islamic education system.

#### A. Strengths of the Saudi Muqarrar Curriculum

##### 1. Very Strong Quality of Islamic Materials

The Saudi Muqoror Curriculum emphasizes strengthening aqidah (belief), tauhid (monotheism), fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), tafsir (interpretation of the teachings of the Quran), and hadith (hadith) based on the Quran and Sunnah, in accordance with the understanding of the early scholars. The material is structured scientifically and in-depth, thus establishing a solid Islamic foundation for students.

##### 2. Systematic and Directed Curriculum Structure

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<sup>27</sup> M. Muhajir and AZA Dawwas, "Pre-Service Teaching and Obedience to Kyai in Developing the Sincerity of Students in Modern Islamic Boarding Schools," *Journal of Islamic Religious Education Al ...*, journal.uir.ac.id, 2022 .

Each subject has clear competency targets, structured in stages from basic to advanced levels. This facilitates the learning process and evaluation of student progress.

3. Arabic Language Strengthening

Arabic is the main focus of learning. Students are guided to understand original Islamic literature and classical texts, thus gaining direct access to sources of Islamic knowledge.

4. Islamic Character Building

This curriculum places a strong emphasis on etiquette, morals, disciplined worship, and the development of a Muslim personality with noble character.

5. International Recognition

The Saudi Muqoror curriculum is recognized by many international Islamic educational institutions, making it easier for graduates to continue their studies at leading Islamic universities worldwide.

B. Weaknesses of the Saudi Muqarrar Curriculum

1. Lack of Local Context

Learning materials and examples often refer to Middle Eastern socio-cultural conditions, requiring adaptation to suit the context of Indonesian life.

2. Limitations of General Subjects

The portion of general subjects such as science, mathematics, technology, and life skills is relatively limited and therefore needs to be integrated with the national curriculum.

3. Learning Methods Tend to be Textual

The learning approach still relies heavily on memorization and text comprehension, necessitating enrichment with active and creative learning methods.

4. High Demands on Teacher Competence

Teachers are required to master Arabic and the unique learning methodology of the Muqoror curriculum, which is not always easily met by all educational institutions.

C. Strengths of the Indonesian Local Curriculum

The Indonesian local curriculum is more contextualized to the social life of the community, has a balanced portion of religious

knowledge and general knowledge, and encourages the development of 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and technological literacy.

D. Weaknesses of the Indonesian Local Curriculum

Islamic material is relatively lighter, Arabic language mastery is less in-depth, and faith formation is not as strong as in the Saudi Muqoror curriculum.

In conclusion, the Saudi Muqarrar Curriculum is superior in the formation of faith, Islamic character, and mastery of Islamic sciences, while the local curriculum is superior in developing academic skills, science, and relevance to the lives of Indonesian society. Therefore, the best education model is the integration of the two curricula so as to produce a generation of Muslims who have strong beliefs, broad knowledge, noble character, and are ready to face the challenges of the times. The implementation and development of a curriculum that integrates the Saudi Muqoror Curriculum with the Indonesian Local Curriculum has made a significant contribution to the overall advancement of Islamic education in Indonesia. This curriculum is not solely oriented toward academic achievement but also focuses on the development of character, morals, and a holistic Islamic personality.

Through the systematic strengthening of *aqidah* (faith), *tauhid* (monotheism), and an understanding of the Quran and Sunnah, students are nurtured into a generation of Muslims with a solid foundation of faith, sound thinking, and the ability to uphold Islamic values in various aspects of life. This is crucial for the future of Muslims in Indonesia, especially in facing the challenges of globalization, moral decadence, and the identity crisis of the younger generation.

Furthermore, the integration with the local curriculum enables students to maintain excellence in mastering general knowledge, science, technology, and life skills. Thus, graduates will not only be spiritually pious but also productive, independent, and capable of making a real contribution to national development.

This curriculum model also encourages the development of cadres of *ulama*, educators, preachers, and religious leaders who possess broad, moderate insights and are able to address contemporary issues in Indonesian society. In the long term, this education system will strengthen the quality of Islamic educational institutions, increase

public trust in Islamic education, and play a vital role in building an advanced, civilized, and competitive Islamic civilization at the national and international levels.

### Conclusion

Based on research results, the implementation of the Saudi Muqarrar Curriculum at the Imam Syafi'i Islamic Boarding School in Tulungagung has proven effective in producing students who excel in knowledge and are solid in Islamic faith. This curriculum, sourced from the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education, is systematically and gradually structured, and is oriented towards strengthening monotheism, building religious character, and preparing for further study at Islamic universities in the Middle East. This curriculum excels in the formation of faith, Islamic character, and mastery of Islamic sciences, while the local curriculum excels in the development of academic skills, science, and relevance to the lives of Indonesian society. Therefore, the best educational model is the integration of both curricula, thus producing a generation of Muslims with strong faith, broad knowledge, noble character, and ready to face the challenges of the times.

The successful implementation is supported by the competence of teachers who graduated from the Middle East, the I'dad class program, a conducive educational environment, and the support of parents and alumni. Despite obstacles such as the use of Arabic language books and differences in student backgrounds, this curriculum has succeeded in increasing religious understanding, forming a strong spirituality, and preparing students to become a generation of Muslims who are moral, knowledgeable, and ready to preach to face global challenges. This will produce prospective preachers who will preach in the community which is useful for increasing education in understanding the true religion of Islam for the community, this will be beneficial for the nation in producing a generation of religious Muslims in the future.

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