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**Analysis of Philosophical, Psychological, and Sociological  
Foundations in the Development of Islamic Religious Education  
Curriculum at MtsS Fahmussalam Al-Aziziyah**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to analyze the implementation of philosophical, psychological, and sociological foundations in the development of the Islamic Education (PAI) curriculum at MTsS Fahmussalam al-Aziziyah and its implications for curriculum effectiveness. These three foundations are essential elements in designing a holistic and contextual curriculum. The study employed a qualitative descriptive approach using observation, interviews, and document analysis as data collection techniques. The findings reveal that the philosophical foundation has been conceptually integrated into the curriculum objectives; however, its practical application remains limited and has not yet fully shaped the students' internalization of values. The psychological foundation has begun to be considered through learning approaches that take into account students' developmental characteristics, although there is still a need to strengthen the alignment of strategies with learners' needs. Meanwhile, the sociological foundation is visible through community-based religious activities but is not yet fully embedded in the curriculum content to address contemporary social issues. These three foundations significantly influence the effectiveness of curriculum development. A curriculum that is not holistically grounded in these dimensions risks losing its ideological direction, social relevance, and pedagogical meaning. Therefore, the development of the PAI curriculum should be more integrative, reflective, and responsive to students' development and the dynamic challenges of the surrounding society.

*Islamic Religious Education Curriculum, Philosophical Basis, Psychological Basis, Sociological Basis*

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**INTRODUCTION**

One aspect that influences the success of national education is the curriculum. The curriculum is a component that plays a strategic role in the education system. The curriculum is a system of learning programs to achieve instructional goals in educational institutions, thus the curriculum plays a crucial role in realizing quality schools. The discourse on the educational

curriculum is always interesting and relevant for the academic community. This is because, in the discipline of education, the curriculum plays a role as an essential element whose existence greatly helps realize educational goals effectively and efficiently. Without the existence of the curriculum, it is difficult for stakeholders and education practitioners to achieve educational goals appropriately. The curriculum is one of the tools that must be present in an educational institution. The curriculum plays a strategic role in achieving educational goals, both general education and religious education (Marliana, 2013).

The goal of Islamic religious education is to create a perfect human being who has integrity of faith, morals, and deeds, a unity between the physical and spiritual, the world and the hereafter. In other words, Islamic religious education must touch three domains, namely the heart (heart) or affective, mind (head) or cognitive, physical (hand) or psychomotor. All three must run simultaneously, integratively and holistically. Thus, the curriculum that is considered good for achieving the goals of Islamic Religious Education is one that is integrated and comprehensive, encompassing the knowledge needed in worldly life and the knowledge needed in the afterlife (Nata, 1997).

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum development is an activity to produce a new curriculum through curriculum development steps based on assessment results conducted over a specific period (Fauzi, A. (2017). Education providers always carry out the process of improvement, modification, and evaluation of the curriculum used. In the quality control process, the curriculum is a very important tool because it serves as the basis for ensuring educational competency. The curriculum must always be revised periodically to adapt to the dynamic needs of users over time.

Islamic Education is an educational system deliberately established and implemented with the desire and intention (a serious plan) to embody Islamic teachings and values, as stated or embodied in the vision, mission, objectives, program activities, and in the implementation of educational practices. The development of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum is one manifestation of the development of the Islamic education system. The curriculum is dynamic because it is always changing according to developments and challenges of the times. The more advanced a nation's civilization, the more formidable the challenges it faces. Human life always has ideals and desires.

In other aspects, curriculum development also needs to be carried out through the process of curriculum development management with the process of planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating (Baharun, H. (2017).

Curriculum Development: Theory and Practice (Concepts, Principles, Models, Approaches and Steps for Developing Islamic Religious Education Curriculum). Yogyakarta: Cantrik Pustaka.) Therefore, to realize the ideals of Islamic Religious Education material must be given top priority, Islamic Religious Education implemented in schools which so far tends to be very theoretical and is felt to have no relevance to the environment in which students live. Providing religious education to students means developing the basic human nature that they have carried since they were born (M'arif, 2018).

Philosophical foundations provide the basic direction and fundamental values that serve as the primary foundation for curriculum development. In the context of Islamic education, educational philosophy emphasizes not only cognitive aspects but also character development, spirituality, and moral integrity. This philosophy determines the vision and mission of education and answers the fundamental questions: "What is education for?" and "What kind of person does education want to shape?" A PAI curriculum based on Islamic philosophy will refer to the values of monotheism, morality, and social responsibility, so that learning not only transfers knowledge but also instills wisdom and a sense of meaningful life (Alismail, 2016).

Psychological foundations relate to understanding the developmental characteristics of students, including cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Learning theories such as behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism are used to determine learning approaches appropriate to the students' age and developmental stage. In the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum, it is important to design methods and materials relevant to the students' internal worlds to help them more easily understand and internalize Islamic values. For example, contextual approaches and direct experiences are more effective for MTs-aged students because they are in the concrete to abstract developmental stage (Eggen, P., & Kauchak, D. (2012).

Sociological foundations ensure that the curriculum is developed in accordance with social realities, societal needs, and the challenges of the times. Education cannot be separated from the socio-cultural context in which it is implemented. In developing the Islamic Religious Education curriculum, the sociological aspect demands that religious learning be not only theoretical but also contextual, relevant to social issues, and able to prepare students to become active and ethical members of society. A curriculum that is sensitive to social change and able to address societal problems will be more effective in instilling Islamic values in a concrete way (Banks, J. A. (2008).

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is a key pillar in the character and moral development of students in madrasahs. As an Islamic educational institution,

MTsS Fahmussalam al-Aziziyah has the responsibility to develop an PAI curriculum that emphasizes not only cognitive aspects but also fosters individuals with faith, noble character, and the ability to face the challenges of the times. To achieve this goal, PAI curriculum development must be grounded in a strong foundation, namely philosophical, psychological, and sociological.

However, in practice, the development of the PAI curriculum at MTsS Fahmussalam al-Aziziyah still faces various challenges. One of the main issues is the lack of integration between Islamic values and students' real-life experiences. PAI learning materials tend to be presented textually and theoretically, while students require an applicative and contextual approach so they can internalize Islamic teachings in their daily lives (Sutrisno, 2020).

Furthermore, teacher involvement in the curriculum development and evaluation process remains limited. Many teachers still refer to national curriculum documents normatively without adapting them to the local needs and characteristics of students. This results in learning that lacks innovation and responsiveness to the social dynamics developing in the madrasah environment (Zuchdi, 2011). Teachers, as the primary actors in education, should not only implement but also design curriculum that is sensitive to changes and student needs.

Furthermore, teacher professional development through training and curriculum coaching has not been optimal. Yet, to produce an adaptive and transformative curriculum, teachers are needed who have a deep understanding of the philosophical, psychological, and sociological aspects of education (Glatthorn et al., 2018). Limited access to training, especially in private madrasas, is one obstacle to innovation in curriculum development.

Therefore, an in-depth study is needed to examine how the three foundations—philosophical, psychological, and sociological—have been and should be implemented in the development of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum at MTsS Fahmussalam al-Aziziyah. This study is crucial to encourage the development of a curriculum that is not only academically relevant but also meaningful for the lives of students and their communities.

Based on the background that has been explained, the problem formulation in this article is as follows:

1. What is the form and application of the philosophical foundation in the development of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum at MTsS Fahmussalam al-Aziziyah?
2. How are the psychological aspects of students taken into account in the development and implementation of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum at MTsS Fahmussalam al-Aziziyah?

3. How do sociological foundations influence the content and strategies for developing the Islamic Religious Education curriculum at MTsS Fahmussalam al-Aziziyah?
4. What are the implications of these three foundations for the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education curriculum development at MTsS Fahmussalam al-Aziziyah?

## RESEARCH METHODE

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, with the aim of in-depth describing how philosophical, psychological, and sociological foundations are applied in the development of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum at MTsS Fahmussalam al-Aziziyah. This approach was chosen because it allows for a holistic and contextual exploration of the meanings, values, and social and cultural contexts underlying the curriculum formulation process (Creswell, J.W. (2013).

This research was conducted at MTsS Fahmussalam al-Aziziyah, a private madrasah in North Sumatra. The research subjects included: Madrasah principal, Islamic Religious Education teacher, Students as supporting informants.

Data were obtained through the following techniques:

In-depth interviews with madrasah principals and Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers to explore their understanding of the implementation of the curriculum foundations.

Participatory observation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning activities and curriculum documents (syllabus, lesson plans). Documentation studies, such as analysis of the madrasah's vision and mission, teaching materials, and curriculum policy documents. The data obtained were analyzed using the interactive model by Miles and Huberman, which consists of three stages: Data reduction: filtering relevant data from interviews, observations, and documentation. Data presentation: organizing information in the form of narratives, matrices, or thematic tables.

Conclusion drawing/verification: formulating important patterns and findings related to the three curriculum foundations (Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014).

Data validity testing is conducted through: Source triangulation: comparing interview results, observations, and documentation. Member checking: confirming findings with interviewees. Peer debriefing: discussing data with fellow researchers to maintain objectivity in interpretation.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Philosophical Foundations in Islamic Religious Education Curriculum Development

Based on interviews with the madrasah principal and Islamic Religious Education teachers, as well as an analysis of curriculum documents (vision, mission, syllabus), it is known that the development of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum at MTsS Fahmussalam al-Aziziyah is generally based on an Islamic philosophical foundation oriented toward the formation of a perfect human being. The madrasah's vision reflects the philosophical ideals of Islamic education, namely to produce students who are faithful, pious, possess noble character, and are able to contribute positively to society.

This philosophical foundation is evident in the formulation of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum objectives, which emphasize not only the cognitive aspect (mastery of material) but also the affective aspect (appreciation of values) and psychomotor (practice in life). This aligns with the principles of integral Islamic education, which view humans as holistic beings: physical, spiritual, intellectual, and spiritual (fitrah), which must be developed in a balanced manner (Al-Attas, S.M.N., 1999).

However, in classroom practice, this philosophical foundation has not been fully implemented. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers focus more on delivering teaching materials textually and normatively, without connecting these values to the realities of students' lives or developing their philosophical awareness. For example, learning about Islamic faith and worship is more informative than reflective. This results in students understanding Islamic teachings theoretically, but not being encouraged to rationalize and internalize these values in depth.

According to the principles of Islamic educational philosophy, the learning process should guide students to understand the essence of life, the purpose of creation, and their responsibilities as caliphs on earth. A curriculum built on a philosophical foundation must foster students' spiritual and intellectual awareness of the interconnectedness of divine and human values (Halstead, J. M., 2004).

Furthermore, the application of philosophical foundations has not been widely reflected in learning strategies and methods. Most teachers have not used philosophical-reflective approaches such as value discussions, moral case studies, or the integration of revelation and reason. The lack of values-based and reflective pedagogical training is one factor contributing to the curriculum's philosophical vision not being optimally realized in practice (Zajda, J. & Davies, L., 2009).

Thus, although the Islamic Religious Education curriculum at MTsS Fahmussalam al-Aziziyah contains a strong philosophical foundation, its implementation still needs to be strengthened through teacher training, adjustments to teaching methods, and fostering philosophical awareness in daily learning practices.

### **Psychological Foundations in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Curriculum Development**

The development of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum at MTsS Fahmussalam al-Aziziyah has partially considered the psychological aspects of students, particularly in terms of cognitive and emotional development. MTs students are in the early adolescent age range (12-15 years), which, according to Piaget's developmental theory, is in the formal operational stage. At this stage, students begin to think abstractly, logically, and reflectively, so they require a learning approach that encourages the exploration of ideas, in-depth understanding, and discussions of values and meaning.

In practice, some teachers have attempted to adapt their teaching styles to student characteristics, for example through the use of discussion methods, educational games, or question-and-answer sessions. However, based on observations and interviews, the application of psychological foundations in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning remains sporadic and unstructured in curriculum planning. Many teachers have not conducted a systematic psychological analysis of students before developing lesson plans.

An ideal curriculum should take into account individual differences in learning styles, interests, motivations, and student maturity levels. However, in the case of MTsS Fahmussalam al-Aziziyah, learning remains predominantly one-way, with an emphasis on memorization and written assignments. This indicates that the principles of differentiation and a developmental psychology-based learning approach have not been fully internalized in curriculum development and the teaching-learning process (Eggen & Kauchak, 2012).

Furthermore, aspects of students' basic psychological needs, such as the need for recognition, safety, and social relationships (based on Maslow's theory), have not been a primary focus in curriculum design. Yet, fulfilling these needs plays a significant role in fostering student motivation and engagement in meaningful and valuable religious learning (McInerney & McInerney, 2010).

The lack of teacher training in educational psychology and the absence of specific guidelines related to developing learning based on student developmental characteristics are contributing to the weak implementation of this psychological foundation. Therefore, it is crucial for madrasahs to develop

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning guidelines based on developmental psychology and provide teacher training to better understand humanistic and needs-based learning approaches (Woolfolk, 2016).

### **Sociological Foundations in Islamic Religious Education Curriculum Development**

The sociological foundation in the development of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum at MTsS Fahmussalam al-Aziziyah is reflected in the school's efforts to respond to the social needs and challenges of the environment in which students live and learn. This is evident in various co-curricular and extra-curricular religious activities, such as short-term Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren kilat*), community service programs, Prophet Muhammad's birthday celebrations, and Islamic holiday commemorations, which aim to foster students' social and spiritual awareness.

However, structurally, within the Islamic Religious Education curriculum and syllabus documents, the sociological foundation has not been fully internalized into the learning materials and delivery strategies. The curriculum remains largely text-based and memorization-oriented, with little connection to current social issues such as free association, social media ethics, interfaith tolerance, or the environmental crisis facing the surrounding community. As a result, students are not fully equipped with applicable and contextual Islamic social competencies.

A curriculum with a sociological foundation should be able to adapt its content and learning methods to the dynamics of the society in which students live. This aligns with Paulo Freire's view that education should liberate and guide students to become agents of social change who are aware and critical of their surrounding reality (Freire, 1970).

Interview results also indicate that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers recognize the importance of guiding students to become individuals who are not only obedient as individuals but also active and responsible in social life. However, time constraints, dense material, and the lack of specific sociological-based modules hinder its implementation.

Social-based learning, for example through community projects, field studies, or social problem-based learning, has not been utilized optimally. This method can strengthen the integration between Islamic teachings and social practices, which is highly relevant to the goals of Islamic Religious Education (Banks, 2008).

Thus, the implementation of a sociological foundation in the Islamic Religious Education curriculum at MTsS Fahmussalam al-Aziziyah remains supplementary (an additional activity), not yet an integral part of the learning



plan. For this reason, there needs to be strengthening of the social dimension in curriculum design, teacher training in contextual learning, and the preparation of materials that link Islamic values with the realities of students' lives today (Beane, 1997).

### **Implications of the Three Foundations for the Effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education Curriculum Development**

Based on an analysis of the philosophical, psychological, and sociological foundations of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum at MTsS Fahmussalam al-Aziziyah, it can be concluded that these three foundations play a strategic role in shaping the direction, content, and learning approach. The implications of the presence or absence of integration of these three foundations significantly determine the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education curriculum development.

First, the philosophical foundation provides normative and ideological direction for educational goals. When the curriculum is built on Islamic values such as monotheism, justice, and noble character, the educational process becomes more meaningful because it is oriented not only toward academic achievement but also toward character development. However, if the implementation of the philosophical foundation is limited to documents without being internalized in learning practices, these values will not be firmly embedded in students. A curriculum that lacks philosophical direction tends to become merely an administrative routine without transformative content (Ma'arif, M.A., 2017).

Second, a psychological foundation is crucial for ensuring the appropriateness of learning methods to the developmental needs of students. If teachers understand their students' cognitive and emotional developmental stages, learning can be designed appropriately—both in terms of approach, communication style, and evaluation model. A mismatch between teaching methods and students' psychological state will directly impact low learning motivation, participation, and appreciation of Islamic values. A curriculum that is not grounded in student psychology will struggle to achieve effectiveness, as it hinders the internalization of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) material (Ainiyah, N., 2013).

Third, a sociological foundation is crucial for ensuring that the PAI curriculum is relevant to societal dynamics and the challenges of the times. When teaching materials do not reflect students' social realities, there will be a disconnect between classroom learning and real-life practice. The curriculum becomes decontextualized and loses its effectiveness. Conversely, the application of sociological principles allows the curriculum to be responsive to

current issues, such as moral decadence, social conflict, and changes in cultural values. A sociologically grounded curriculum will equip students to live Islamically in a complex and multicultural society (Yamin, M., 2021).

Overall, the effectiveness of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum depends heavily on the integration and synergy of these three pillars. If they are fully integrated, the curriculum becomes not only a means of imparting knowledge but also a vehicle for personality formation, potential development, and social transformation. Conversely, if curriculum development is partial or ignores one of the pillars, educational outcomes tend to be incomplete and lose their relevance in society.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the development of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum at MTsS Fahmussalam al-Aziziyah, it can be concluded that the integration of the three foundations—philosophical, psychological, and sociological—has a significant impact on the curriculum's effectiveness.

1. The philosophical foundation has become the conceptual basis for developing the curriculum's vision, mission, and objectives, leading to the formation of students with noble character and faith. However, its application in practical learning remains limited, as it has not fully addressed the reflective dimension and value awareness within students.
2. The psychological foundation has begun to be addressed in the form of a teaching approach that is friendly to the characteristics of adolescents, but its systematic implementation remains weak. PAI teachers have not fully applied the principles of student cognitive and affective development in learning design, resulting in materials and methods often not aligned with students' needs and abilities.
3. The sociological foundation is evident in the form of community-based religious activities carried out by the madrasah. However, the PAI curriculum content has generally not been integrated with current social issues close to students' lives, so learning is not fully contextualized and relevant to their social reality.

From these three dimensions, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum development depends heavily on the level of integration between normative (philosophical) idealism, a humanistic (psychological) approach, and social sensitivity (sociological). An imbalance or minimal integration of these three foundations will result in weak

internalization of Islamic values and a reduced educational impact on character formation and students' social awareness.

Therefore, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum development at MTsS Fahmussalam al-Aziziyah needs to be improved through a more integrative, participatory, and contextual approach, involving teachers, students, and the social environment in its development and implementation on an ongoing basis.

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