

Readiness of PGMI Lecturers to Integrate the 21st-Century Curriculum into Learning at Islamic Religious Colleges Case Study of STIT Makrifatul Ilmi, South Bengkulu

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the readiness of lecturers in the Primary School Teacher Education (PGMI) Study Program to integrate 21st-century curriculum into learning at Islamic Religious Higher Education Institutions (PTKI), with a case study conducted at STIT Makrifatul Ilmi Bengkulu Selatan. The 21st-century curriculum demands educators to master critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, and digital literacy skills that align with the rapid development of the times. This research employs a qualitative approach with a phenomenological method to deeply understand the subjective experiences and meanings constructed by lecturers regarding the implementation of the curriculum. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis, then analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The results reveal that most lecturers possess a good conceptual understanding of the 21st-century curriculum. However, they face various obstacles at the implementation level. The identified challenges include limited technological infrastructure, lack of professional development and training, as well as an academic culture that still tends to favor conventional teaching methods. Despite these challenges, the lecturers demonstrate high motivation and awareness of the importance of transforming learning approaches to align with the demands of the 21st century. This study recommends stronger institutional support in the form of continuous training, curriculum enhancement based on 21st-century competencies, and the provision of adequate digital learning infrastructure. Successful integration of the 21st-century curriculum is believed to be essential in producing PGMI graduates who are adaptive, innovative, and competent in facing the challenges of the global era.

Keywords: *Lecturer Readiness, 21st-Century Curriculum, PGMI, Islamic Religious Higher Education, Phenomenology*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of technology, science, and information in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0 and society 5.0 has had a significant impact on various aspects of life, including education. In the 21st century, the educational paradigm has shifted from merely transferring knowledge to developing critical, creative, collaborative, and

communicative thinking skills, technological literacy, and character (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). This change requires a curriculum transformation at all levels of education, including in the context of Elementary Madrasah Teacher Education (PGMI), which is under the auspices of Islamic Religious Colleges (PTKI).

As prospective educators in Elementary Madrasahs, PGMI students need to be equipped with a curriculum that integrates 21st-century competencies to enable them to create contextual, adaptive, and Islamic-based learning. This is where the strategic role of PGMI lecturers is key in designing, implementing, and evaluating a curriculum that aligns with current demands. Lecturers function not only as instructors but also as curriculum innovators and professional mentors capable of instilling life skills values based on religious moderation, digital literacy, and social skills (Day & Sachs, 2004).

However, the reality on the ground shows that PGMI lecturers' readiness to integrate a 21st-century competency-based curriculum is still far from optimal. Many lecturers still adopt conventional learning models, focusing on lectures and memorization, and minimally utilizing technology and active-participatory methods (Suyanto, 2021). Furthermore, some lecturers do not fully understand the essence and application of 21st-century learning approaches such as the flipped classroom, project-based learning, or the integration of TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge). This impacts students' ability to develop higher-order thinking skills and digital literacy, which should be essential for facing the dynamic world of education.

Theoretically, this research refers to the Teacher Professionalism Theory framework (Day & Sachs, 2004), which views teacher and lecturer readiness not only in terms of knowledge and skills, but also commitment, self-confidence, and capacity to implement sustainable change. Furthermore, the Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) framework emphasizes the importance of a curriculum that fosters critical, collaborative, and creative thinking skills, as well as character building. This theory is relevant for understanding how the readiness of PGMI lecturers can influence the quality of graduates and curriculum implementation in madrasahs.

There is a significant research gap: most studies related to the 21st-century curriculum still focus on elementary and secondary education levels, as well as general study programs in universities. While studies on the readiness of PGMI lecturers in PTKI (Institute of Islamic Education) environments are still very limited and have received little academic attention (Widodo, 2022). Yet, strengthening the capacity of PGMI lecturers is a key foundation for

producing professional, adaptive, and Islamic-characterized madrasa teachers amidst the challenges of globalization.

The novelty of this research lies in its attempt to integrate a 21st-century curriculum approach with a moderation-based strengthening of Islamic character, which is highly relevant to the needs of contemporary Islamic education in Indonesia. This research also provides a new perspective on the importance of collaboration between technology, pedagogy, and Islamic values in the development of the PGMI curriculum at PTKI.

This research aims to describe the readiness of PGMI lecturers to understand and implement the 21st-century curriculum in the learning process, identify factors that support and hinder the integration of the 21st-century curriculum in the PGMI environment, and provide strategic recommendations to strengthen lecturer professionalism and the relevance of the PGMI curriculum in facing the dynamics of the 21st century. Through this research, it is hoped that a paradigm shift in learning in PGMI will occur, from teacher-based learning to student-centered, technology-based learning that integrates Islamic values within a global competency framework.

METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach with phenomenological methods to gain a deeper understanding of the readiness of lecturers in the Elementary Madrasah Teacher Education Study Program (PGMI) to integrate the 21st-century curriculum into learning within Islamic Religious Higher Education (PTKI). The phenomenological approach was chosen because it allowed researchers to explore the subjective meanings, personal experiences, and perceptions of lecturers regarding the dynamics of the curriculum transformation they face (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This study sought to capture the phenomenon of lecturer readiness in the context of curriculum change, not only at the cognitive level but also encompassing emotional, social, and professional aspects.

The research location was one of the PTKIs with a PGMI study program, with the research subjects being PGMI lecturers directly involved in curriculum design and implementation. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, with the following criteria: permanent lecturers at the Indonesian Teachers' Training College (PGMI), at least three years of teaching experience, and prior involvement in curriculum development or training based on the 21st-century curriculum. The number of informants was adjusted to meet data needs until saturation was reached, the point at which the information obtained no longer yields significant new findings.

Data collection was conducted through three main methods. First, semi-structured in-depth interviews were used to explore lecturers' understanding, perceptions, and experiences in integrating 21st-century curriculum elements into the learning process. Second, non-participatory observations of lecture activities were conducted to obtain a concrete picture of the methods, media, and learning approaches used by lecturers. Third, documentation of learning tools such as syllabi, Semester Learning Plans (RPS), and teaching materials was used to assess the extent to which 21st-century skills had been integrated into the curriculum. The data obtained were then analyzed using thematic analysis, as developed by Braun & Clarke (2006). The analysis steps included repeated reading of the data, initial coding, identifying key themes, reviewing and refining the themes, and systematically writing a narrative of the findings. This approach enabled researchers to capture the deeper meanings hidden within the lecturers' narratives.

To maintain data validity (trustworthiness), this study employed source triangulation techniques (using multiple informants), method triangulation (using interviews, observations, and documentation), and member checking by seeking informant confirmation of the data generated. Furthermore, an audit trail was used to ensure that each data collection and analysis process was scientifically sound (Nowell et al., 2017).

The types of data collected included primary data in the form of interviews, observations, and learning documents, as well as secondary data in the form of scientific literature, books, and related journals. This research is grounded in the theory of Teacher Professionalism, which emphasizes the importance of continuous professional development and reflective commitment (Evans, 2019), and the theory of 21st Century Learning, which focuses on mastering critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, communication, and digital literacy competencies (Bialik & Fadel, 2018). This theoretical framework is highly relevant in assessing the readiness of PGMI lecturers to face the challenges of education in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0.

Thus, this research method is expected to provide a comprehensive, in-depth, and applicable picture of PGMI lecturers' readiness to integrate the 21st-century curriculum. This research is also expected to serve as a strategic reference in policy development, training, and improving the quality of lecturers within PTKI (Institute of Islamic Education), enabling them to produce adaptive, innovative, and character-based madrasah teacher graduates.

Table 1 Interview Instrument

No.	Research Focus	Indicators	Interview Questions (Guiding Questions)
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1	Perception of the 21st-Century Curriculum	- Lecturer's understanding of the 21st-century curriculum concept - Perception of the importance of the 21st-century curriculum	- What is your understanding of the 21st-century curriculum? - Why do you think it's important to integrate the 21st-century curriculum in PGMI?
2	Experience Integrating the 21st-Century Curriculum	- Experience implementing the 21st-century curriculum - Learning methods used	- Can you share your experience in integrating the 21st-century curriculum into your teaching? - What methods do you usually apply in the classroom?
3	Lecturer Readiness and Competence	- Pedagogical, digital, and mental readiness - Skills in using technology and media	- To what extent do you feel ready to apply the 21st-century curriculum in your teaching? - Do you feel capable of using technology to support your lessons?
4	Challenges and Obstacles	- Barriers in implementing the 21st-century curriculum - Internal and external influencing factors	- What challenges do you face in integrating the 21st-century curriculum? - Are there any factors affecting the success of its implementation?
5	Support and Lecturer Development Needs	- Need for training and development - Institutional support for curriculum change	- What kind of support do you expect from the institution to ensure effective implementation of the 21st-century curriculum? - Have you attended any training related to the 21st-century curriculum? If yes, what was the benefit?
6	Hopes and Recommendations	- Hopes for curriculum development - Recommendations for improving learning quality	- What are your hopes for the future development of the PGMI curriculum? - What suggestions do you have to make the 21st-century curriculum easier to implement at PTKI?

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Research Results

Based on in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation with seven PGMI lecturers at STIT Makrifatul Ilmi, South Bengkulu, five main themes were identified that reflect the phenomenon of lecturers' readiness to integrate the 21st-century curriculum into learning within the PTKI environment.

1. Conceptual Understanding of the 21st-Century Curriculum

Almost all informants demonstrated a good understanding of the essence of the 21st-Century curriculum, particularly regarding the importance of developing the 4C skills (Critical Thinking, Creativity, Communication, Collaboration), digital literacy, and strengthening Islamic character. Informant I stated:

"The 21st-century curriculum is not just about technology, but about developing students who think critically and are able to adapt to changing times."

However, most informants acknowledged that this understanding has not been fully internalized in daily teaching practice.

2. Experience and Practice in Implementing a 21st-Century Curriculum

PGMI lecturers have attempted to implement a 21st-century curriculum by integrating simple digital media, using videos, interactive presentations, and problem-based learning. Observations indicate that the use of digital platforms such as Google Classroom and WhatsApp Groups has begun to support lectures. Informant II stated: "We have started to integrate religious material with the use of digital media, but it is still limited to the delivery level, not yet to projects or collaboration." These results indicate a transformation effort, but it has not yet fully reached the level of collaborative and project-based learning essential to a 21st-century curriculum.

3. Lecturer Readiness: Pedagogical, Technological, and Socio-Emotional Competence

There is a diversity of readiness among lecturers. Some informants feel quite confident in integrating digital technology into their learning, especially younger and digitally literate lecturers. However, most senior informants acknowledged their limited technological expertise and lack of formal training to support the implementation of a modern curriculum. As Informant IV stated:

"We are sometimes confused about how to use technology optimally. We need regular guidance or training so we can adapt to the needs of the times."

Affective readiness, such as motivation to change, is generally quite high, but technical and pedagogical readiness still need to be strengthened.

4. Challenges in Implementing the 21st-Century Curriculum

Informants revealed a number of challenges, including:

- a. Limited technological facilities and infrastructure on campus.
- b. Lack of professional training for lecturers related to the 21st-century curriculum.
- c. Barriers of an academic culture still dominated by conventional lecture methods.

Informant VI stated: "There are often ideas for creating interactive classes, but facilities such as projectors, internet, or training are still minimal." Observations

confirmed that interactive learning is only implemented in a small proportion of classes.

5. Expectations and Recommendations for Curriculum Development

PGMI lecturers expressed their hope that the institution would support the integration of the 21st-century curriculum through:

- a. Providing ongoing training based on technology and innovative pedagogy.
- b. Strengthening the digital literacy of lecturers and students.
- c. Developing a curriculum based on moderate Islamic values that aligns with global competencies.

Informant VII emphasized: "A 21st-century curriculum can work if we are given the space and facilities, while not forgetting the Islamic character in the process."

Table 2 key findings

Main Theme	Key Findings
Understanding of the 21st-Century Curriculum	Theoretical understanding is quite good, but weak in technical application
Implementation Practice	Basic technology integration has started, but not yet optimal
Lecturer Readiness	High motivation, but low skills in new technology and pedagogy
Implementation Challenges	Limited infrastructure, lack of training, traditional academic culture
Hopes and Recommendations	Requires training, facilities, and curriculum based on moderate Islamic values and 21st-century skills

Based on the analysis of interview, observation, and documentation data, five main themes emerged that illustrate the readiness of PGMI lecturers to integrate the 21st-Century Curriculum at STIT Makrifatul Ilmi Bengkulu Selatan. Each theme reflects the dynamics of personal, social, and institutional readiness, as illustrated in the Key Findings Table.

Understanding the 21st-Century Curriculum: The majority of informants demonstrated a good conceptual understanding of the 21st-Century Curriculum, particularly regarding the importance of developing the 4C competencies (Critical Thinking, Creativity, Communication, Collaboration) and digital literacy. Although they theoretically understand the urgency of this curriculum, in its implementation in the classroom, this understanding has not yet fully translated into innovative practices. This indicates a gap between understanding and application, which is a central issue in lecturer readiness.

Implementation Practice: Some lecturers have begun implementing the 21st-Century Curriculum by utilizing simple technologies such as digital presentations, videos, and

interactive discussions. However, approaches based on project-based learning, problem-based learning, or active collaborative engagement are still rarely used. Lecturers tend to be in the early stages of transitioning from traditional learning patterns to 21st-century learning.

Lecturer readiness consists of three aspects: pedagogical, technological, and socio-emotional. Most lecturers feel highly motivated and enthusiastic about change, but face obstacles in mastering technology and innovative learning strategies. Limited digital skills and minimal training contribute to low practical readiness, even though affective readiness is beginning to develop. Implementation Challenges: Informants revealed several challenges in integrating the 21st-Century Curriculum. These include:

- a. Limited technological facilities such as the internet, projectors, and digital laboratories.
- b. Lack of innovative pedagogical and ICT training for lecturers.
- c. The continued dominance of a conventional learning culture that emphasizes one-way lectures. These challenges are major obstacles in the process of transforming learning toward a more modern, creative, and collaborative model.

Hopes and Recommendations: All informants expressed their hope that the institution would provide stronger support through the provision of facilities, strengthening lecturer competencies, and adapting the curriculum to align with 21st-century needs while remaining grounded in Islamic values. Lecturers hoped for ongoing training, collaboration between lecturers, and the development of a curriculum based on moderate Islamic character and global skills.

Research Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the readiness of PGMI lecturers to integrate the 21st-Century Curriculum at STIT Makrifatul Ilmi, South Bengkulu, is still in the developmental stage towards full readiness. This is indicated by a fairly good conceptual understanding of the 21st-Century Curriculum, but not yet accompanied by optimal implementation practices.

These research findings align with a study conducted by Nurhalimah (2024), which stated that 21st-Century curriculum transformation at Islamic Religious Higher Education Institutions faces challenges in terms of strengthening lecturer competencies and systemic support from the institution. The lecturers involved in this study demonstrated enthusiasm and a good understanding of the importance of 4C skills and digital literacy. However, in terms of implementation, they still experienced difficulties in implementing innovative learning strategies such as project-based learning or collaborative learning.

One factor hampering this readiness is the lack of professional training relevant to curriculum developments and educational technology. This aligns with research by Medinah (2024), which asserts that the successful integration of the 21st-century curriculum depends heavily on improving the pedagogical and digital competencies of educators.

Furthermore, limited infrastructure and a relatively conventional academic culture are also inhibiting factors. This challenge was also identified in a study by Firdausiyah et al. (2024), which highlighted that curriculum changes at PTKI require the support of facilities and a strong culture of innovation for effective implementation. Nevertheless, lecturers' expectations for strengthening the integration of the 21st-century curriculum remain high. They recognize that Islamic education cannot be separated from modern developments, and therefore, strengthening critical thinking skills, collaboration, and the use of technology is crucial for producing competent and adaptive graduates. This supports the theory of 21st-Century Learning (Bialik & Fadel, 2018), which emphasizes the need for future-skills-based education.

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the readiness of PGMI lecturers at STIT Makrifatul Ilmi Bengkulu Selatan to integrate the 21st-Century Curriculum is quite good in terms of conceptual understanding, but they still face various practical implementation challenges. Although most lecturers understand the importance of 4C skills, digital literacy, and learning based on moderate Islamic values, the implementation of 21st-Century curriculum-based learning strategies remains limited due to limited pedagogical and technological competencies, as well as a lack of supporting facilities and ongoing training. Lecturers have a strong motivation to change and develop themselves, but require more optimal institutional support. Therefore, efforts to increase lecturer capacity through training, providing digital facilities, and strengthening the curriculum based on Islamic character and global skills require serious attention to ensure the effective implementation of the 21st-Century Curriculum within PTKI.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, conducted using a qualitative phenomenological approach, it can be concluded that the readiness of PGMI lecturers at STIT Makrifatul Ilmi, South Bengkulu, to integrate the 21st-Century Curriculum is at the stage of good conceptual understanding, but implementation is still limited. Most lecturers understand the importance of 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, and

digital literacy, but implementing these skills in the learning process still faces various obstacles.

Aspects of pedagogical readiness, technological competence, and emotional and social readiness show variation among lecturers. Despite high motivation and awareness of the need for curriculum change, many lecturers still experience limitations in their skills in using media and technology, and in implementing innovative 21st-century learning approaches.

The main obstacles faced include limited technological facilities, a lack of professional training, and a conventional academic culture. Lecturers hope for stronger institutional support, both in the form of training, relevant curriculum development, and adequate learning facilities. Thus, collaborative and sustainable efforts are needed between institutions, lecturers, and stakeholders to realize the implementation of the 21st Century Curriculum that is effective and contextual, so that it can produce PGMI graduates who are competent, adaptive, and able to face the challenges of education in the ever-evolving global era.

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