

Policy Implementation of the Head of Madrasah Education Section of the Sidoarjo Regency Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Madrasah Curriculum Development in Sidoarjo

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to examine the implementation of the policy of the Madrasah Education Section of the Sidoarjo Ministry of Religious Affairs in developing the madrasah curriculum, with a focus on the approach applied to align the curriculum with local, national, and global needs. This study also explores key policies such as the integration of religious and general education, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, and the strengthening of character education which are the core of the policy. In addition, this study analyzes how these policies have an impact on improving the quality of education in madrasahs in Sidoarjo, including in terms of compiling teaching materials, utilizing technology, and developing teacher professionalism. The results of the study indicate that the policy of the Head of the Madrasah Education Section of the Sidoarjo Ministry of Religious Affairs has succeeded in creating a more flexible and contextual curriculum framework, by prioritizing the development of holistic student competencies based on strong religious values. However, challenges in implementing the policy still exist, such as the need for ongoing training for educators and improving adequate learning support facilities. Overall, the policy of the Sidoarjo Ministry of Religion's Education and Training Section in developing the madrasah curriculum shows a strong commitment to improving the quality of education based on religion, local relevance, and readiness to face global challenges.

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INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia, especially in madrasah, plays a very important role in producing young people who are smart, have character, and have life skills that are relevant to the challenges of the times. In an effort to achieve these goals, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemenag) through the Directorate General of Islamic Education continues to develop strategic policies in the field of education, especially in terms of developing madrasah education curriculum.

The education curriculum is one of the important components in efforts to improve the quality of education in Indonesia, including in madrasah. As an educational institution that integrates general and religious knowledge, madrasah has a strategic role in producing the next generation who are not only academically superior, but also have strong morals and character. For this reason, it is very important to develop

a relevant and quality madrasah curriculum. The Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) of Sidoarjo District, through the Section Head of Madrasah Education, plays a key role in directing and implementing education policies in madrasahs, especially in developing a curriculum that is in accordance with national education standards, as well as local needs and characteristics.

MoRA's policy on curriculum development aims to harmonize religious and general education to produce individuals who not only excel in academics but also have good character, a strong understanding of religion and skills that are relevant to the needs of society. The curriculum of madrasah education, which covers education levels from Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) to Madrasah Aliyah (MA), must accommodate the needs of the development of science, technology, and moral and social values that develop in society (Yuniarti, Khodijah, & Suryana, 2022)

In recent years, the Ministry of Religious Affairs has continued to make adjustments to the curriculum to deal with the dynamics of global education. One of the main policies introduced is the Merdeka Curriculum, which gives madrasahs the freedom to adapt learning materials to the local context and learners' needs, while emphasizing a competency-based learning approach. This policy allows madrasahs to be more flexible in managing time and learning methods, emphasizing the strengthening of 21st century skills and character development that is balanced between science and religious values (Wahid & Hamami, 2021).

The Ministry of Religious Affairs also focuses on strengthening character education, using technology in learning, and improving the quality of teachers, as part of its efforts to ensure that the curriculum is effective and efficient. These policies not only aim to improve academic quality, but also to ensure that madrasah education is able to produce graduates who are ready to compete at the national and international levels, without forgetting the nation's religious and cultural identity (Miswanto, et., all., 2024).

The policy implemented by the Sidoarjo District Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs aims to improve the quality and relevance of education in madrasahs, focusing on several important aspects, such as specialization, increasing access and competitiveness of madrasah education. To achieve this, various efforts are made, one of which is through organizing training for teachers at the city, provincial and national levels. This training aims to improve teachers' competence in managing and delivering learning materials effectively, so that they can produce a more qualified generation.

In addition, the Sidoarjo District Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs also organizes various academic competitions for students, which not only aim to measure academic abilities, but also to motivate students to achieve more and develop their potential. These competitions provide a platform for students to compete healthily and demonstrate their excellence in various fields.

The success of the madrasah's achievements is inseparable from the policies issued by the Sidoarjo District Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, especially in terms of curriculum management and management. This policy ensures that the curriculum implemented in madrasahs is not only relevant to the needs of the times, but can also foster high competitiveness among students, so that madrasah education can continue to develop and contribute to the progress of the nation.

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the policy of the Head of Madrasah Education Section of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Sidoarjo in developing madrasah curriculum, as well as to identify factors that support and hinder the successful implementation of the policy. It also provides recommendations for future policy improvement and development.

METHOD

This study aims to analyze the policies implemented by the Ministry of Religious Affairs in an effort to develop the education curriculum in madrasahs, with the main focus on madrasahs located in the Sidoarjo area. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach as described by (Hanyfah, Fernandes, & Budiarmo, 2022), where data collection was conducted through direct observation techniques in the field and in-depth interviews with relevant parties. The research location focused on the Sidoarjo District Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, with special attention to the implementation of policies carried out by the Section Head of Madrasah Education within the office in order to support madrasah curriculum development in the Sidoarjo District area.

RESULTS

A. Madrasah Education Section Policy

1. Alignment of Madrasah Education (Pendma) Head Policy with National Education Standards (SNP)

Adjusting the policy of the Head of Madrasah Education (Pendma) to the National Education Standards (SNP) is very important to ensure that the education provided in madrasahs is in accordance with the regulations and standards that apply in Indonesia. This adjustment is done by adapting existing policies in madrasahs to be in line with the principles and provisions stated in the National Education System Law (UU Sisdiknas) No. 20 of 2003, as well as Government Regulations (PP) that govern the implementation of education in Indonesia, including PP No. 32 of 2013 on National Education Standards.

According to the Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation (PMA) No. 58/2017 is one of the important regulations governing the Madrasah Education Curriculum in Indonesia. This PMA covers various aspects that aim to improve the quality of education in madrasahs, by integrating religious and general education, and ensuring standards are in line with national policies (Khakim, 2019).

According to the Head of the Pendma Secretariat, adjusting the policy of the Head of Madrasah Education to the National Education Standards (SNP) is a very important strategic step to ensure better quality and standardized madrasah education. In this narrative, the Head of the Pendma Secretariat explained that in an effort to adjust the policy, there are several things that need to be considered.

First, the adjustment process focuses on integrating the vision and mission of madrasah education with the standards set by the SNP. This includes various aspects, from the curriculum, learning process, to the evaluation of student learning outcomes. The Head of the Pendma Secretariat emphasized the importance of ensuring that policies implemented in madrasahs can cover all SNP components, such as graduate competencies, content standards, process standards and assessment standards (Alfani et al., 2024).

In addition, this policy adjustment also focuses on increasing the capacity of teaching and education personnel in madrasahs. The Head of the Pendma Secretariat said that teachers and education personnel need to be given training and a deeper understanding of the SNP in order to implement policies that are aligned with these standards. Thus, the education process in madrasahs does not only follow formal rules, but also prioritizes quality and relevance in learning.

Furthermore, policy adjustments also include improving infrastructure and educational facilities in madrasahs to support the achievement of the SNP. The Head of the Pendma Secretariat mentioned that in many cases, some madrasahs require the development of adequate facilities and infrastructure so that learning activities can take place optimally in accordance with the established standards.

Overall, the Head of the Pendma Section emphasized that adjusting policies to the SNP is not an instant process, but requires collaboration between various related parties, including the government, madrasahs, educators, and the community. With seriousness in adjusting this policy, it is hoped that education in madrasahs can continue to develop, produce quality graduates, and be able to compete at the national and international levels.

2. Competency-Based Curriculum Development

Competency-Based Curriculum Development (KBK) is an approach in designing a curriculum that emphasizes mastery of competencies that must be possessed by students, both in aspects of knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Mubarak, 2016). This approach aims to prepare students with abilities that are relevant and applicable in real life, both in the world of work and in the evolving social context of society.

One of the main advantages of the KBK is the improvement of the quality of education (Sitika et al., 2023). With a focus on competencies, the curriculum is not only oriented towards the achievement of material that must be completed in a certain time, but rather on the ability of learners to apply the knowledge they learn. This provides a new experience for students, who are not just memorizing information, but also learning how to use that knowledge in a context that is more practical and relevant to real-world challenges.

KBK also plays a role in creating more professional educators. Teachers are expected to not only master the subject matter, but also have skills in designing and implementing learning that focuses on developing student competencies. In this case, teachers are expected to master learning methods that are active, innovative, and in accordance with the characteristics of students and the times. As a result, this competency development does not only happen to students, but also to educators, who are increasingly able to provide quality learning.

Furthermore, with this competency-based approach, students will be better prepared to face future challenges. In the midst of rapid technological development and dynamic changes in the world of work, a competency-based curriculum prepares students to have relevant skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving skills, creativity, and the ability to work in teams. In addition, the KBK also emphasizes learning based on character values, so that students are not only academically prepared, but also morally and socially (Firdaus, 2017).

Overall, the development of the Competency-Based Curriculum (KBK) is an important step in efforts to improve the quality of relevant and competitive education, which not only equips students with knowledge, but also with the skills and character needed to succeed in the future.

B. Madrasah Curriculum Development

1. Teacher Counseling and Training

The Sidoarjo district office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs is committed to improving the quality of education in madrasahs through teacher counseling and training. This program aims to support the development of a madrasah curriculum that is more relevant to the needs of the times, both in academic aspects and student character.

The training and counseling was provided to madrasah teachers in the Sidoarjo area, with a focus on improving their competence in managing an adaptive and innovative curriculum. The trainees were given an understanding of various learning approaches that can be applied in accordance with the latest curriculum developments, including the Merdeka Curriculum, which prioritizes competency- and character-based learning (Amanulloh & Wasila, 2024)

During the training, teachers not only learn about the technical implementation of the new curriculum, but are also introduced to various evaluation methods that are more effective in assessing student learning outcomes. The training also emphasized the importance of using technology in the learning process, as well as developing teaching materials that can support the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

Through this counseling and training, it is hoped that madrasah teachers in Sidoarjo can be better prepared to face the increasingly complex challenges of education, and be able to provide quality education and prepare a generation that is not only smart, but also noble. This program is a concrete step in creating better education in madrasahs, which is in line with the vision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs to create madrasahs that are superior, moral, and technology-based.

2. Monitoring and Evaluation of Curriculum Implementation

The development of the madrasa curriculum at the Sidoarjo District Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs is a complex and ongoing process that requires serious attention in terms of implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring and evaluation are two important components to ensure that the curriculum implemented can run effectively and in accordance with the educational objectives that have been set.

Curriculum monitoring is conducted regularly to monitor the implementation of learning in madrasahs (Diana Sari, Saputra, Idris, Nelson, & Ngadri, 2024). This involves collecting data on how the curriculum is implemented in the classroom, whether the teaching methods used are in line with the established standards, and whether the teaching materials are well received by students. Through this monitoring process, the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Sidoarjo can identify challenges or obstacles faced by teachers and schools in implementing the new curriculum.

In addition, the evaluation was conducted to assess the extent to which the curriculum had a positive impact on student learning outcomes. This involves not only assessing students' academic performance but also other aspects such as character development and social skills. The results of this evaluation are then used to make improvements and refinements to the curriculum to make it more effective in achieving educational goals.

Evaluation and monitoring also involve feedback from teachers, students and parents. The involvement of all these parties is important to create synergy in developing quality education (Ramatni, Anjely, Cahyono, Rambe, & Shobri, 2023). MoRA Sidoarjo also uses the evaluation data to design further training and counselling programs for teachers so that they can be better prepared for the challenges of implementing a more dynamic and relevant curriculum.

This continuous monitoring and evaluation process is expected to improve the quality of education in madrasahs, ensuring that the curriculum is in line with national standards and that every student has the best learning experience possible.

3. Challenges in Madrasah Curriculum Development

Madrasah curriculum development faces various challenges that affect the effectiveness and relevance of education. Along with the changing times and community needs, curriculum development must be able to accommodate various internal and external factors that play an important role in the quality of education (Alfani et al., 2024).

First, Limited Human Resources (HR) One of the main challenges in developing the madrasah curriculum is limited human resources, especially in terms of teacher qualifications and training. Many teachers in madrasahs still need training in teaching methodologies, the use of technology in learning, and an in-depth

understanding of the latest curriculum. Therefore, more intensive and continuous training is needed so that they can implement the curriculum effectively.

Second, Lack of Supporting Infrastructure. In addition to limited human resources, lack of infrastructure is also a major challenge in implementing a more modern curriculum. Many madrasahs, especially those in more remote areas, face problems in terms of adequate facilities, such as laboratories, internet access, or comfortable classrooms. This hinders the implementation of technology-based curriculum and more interactive learning.

Third, Curriculum Mismatch with Local Needs. Another challenge is the difficulty in developing a curriculum that accommodates the local needs of madrasah students in Sidoarjo. Although the national curriculum is implemented, student characteristics and local contexts often differ. Developing a curriculum that is relevant to local cultural values and the social and economic needs of students is important but not always easy to achieve.

Fourth, competition with other formal education. Madrasahs in Sidoarjo also face challenges in terms of competition with other formal education institutions, especially public schools. Many parents tend to choose public schools because of their perception that education in public schools is superior, especially in aspects of science and technology. Therefore, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Sidoarjo needs to work hard to demonstrate the superiority of madrasah education that not only prioritizes academic aspects, but also character building and religious education.

Fifth, rapid curriculum changes. Frequent curriculum changes made by the central government, including the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, often cause confusion for madrasahs. Many madrasahs still have difficulties in adjusting their curriculum to the latest policies, especially if there is no careful preparation from the local government or the Ministry of Religion in providing guidance or socialization about these changes.

Sixth, the use of technology in learning. The use of technology in education, although very important, is also a challenge. Not all madrasahs in Sidoarjo have sufficient resources to support technology-based learning. This creates an imbalance between madrasahs that have technology facilities and those that do not, making it difficult to implement a technology-based curriculum equally in all madrasahs.

Facing these challenges, MoRA Sidoarjo needs to continue collaborating with various parties, including local government, communities and other educational institutions. In addition, a flexible and adaptive approach to change and providing full support to teachers and students are key to overcoming the obstacles in developing the madrasah curriculum.

C. Policy Implementation of Madrasah Education Section Head in Madrasah Curriculum Development in Sidoarjo

Sidoarjo district plays an important role in ensuring the development of an effective madrasah curriculum that meets the needs of the times. In order to improve the quality of education in madrasahs, the Head of Madrasah Education Section of the Sidoarjo Ministry of Religious Affairs seeks to implement policies that are not only oriented towards achieving academic standards, but also on building student character and competence.

The current policy implemented by the Head of Madrasah Education (Pendma) of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Sidoarjo Regency in curriculum development aims to strengthen the quality of education in madrasahs, integrate religious values with general science, and adapt the curriculum to the needs of the times. This policy is in line with the national vision to create a generation that is superior, characterized and ready to face global challenges.

First, Integration of Religious and General Education. One of the main policies implemented is the strengthening of integration between religious and general education. This aims to ensure that students not only have good academic skills, but also a solid understanding of religion. In this case, the curriculum implemented in madrasahs prioritizes a balance between these two aspects, with an emphasis on religious education based on moderate and scientific Islamic teachings.

Second, Implementation of the Independent Curriculum. The Head of the Sidoarjo Pendma Secretariat also supports the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which provides more freedom for madrasahs to design a more flexible curriculum based on student needs. This policy allows madrasahs to be more creative in teaching and adapt learning methods to the characteristics of students, as well as technological developments and innovations in the world of education. With this approach, students are encouraged to become more independent in learning, while optimally developing their potential.

Third, Strengthening Character Education. Curriculum development in madrasah also includes strengthening character education. The principal of Sidoarjo emphasizes the importance of instilling moral and ethical values in students' daily lives. Programs integrated with this curriculum include religious activities, hygiene, discipline, and respect for cultural diversity. Through strengthening character education, students are

expected not only to be intellectually intelligent but also to have good morals and be able to behave positively in society.

Fourth, Technology Utilization in Learning. One of the important policies in curriculum development is the utilization of technology in the learning process. In this digital era, technology is used as a tool to improve the quality of learning in madrasah. The Sidoarjo Pendma Secretariat encourages the use of digital learning media, such as e-learning platforms and other learning applications, to provide students with wider access to teaching materials. This policy also supports the implementation of Distance Learning (PJJ) which is increasingly relevant, especially post-pandemic.

Fifth, Curriculum Development that is Responsive to Local Needs. The next policy is to adapt the curriculum to local needs. Given the diverse social and cultural characteristics of the region, the Sidoarjo Pendma Secretariat provides freedom for madrasahs to develop local content that is relevant to the regional context. This includes an emphasis on local wisdom values, local languages and activities that support the development of students' potential at the local level.

Sixth, improving the competence of teachers and education personnel. The Sidoarjo school principal also prioritized improving teachers' competencies in implementing the new curriculum. Teachers are given ongoing training to improve their understanding of the new curriculum and skills in using technology in learning. This is expected to create a more effective and innovative learning environment.

Seventh, Holistic Evaluation and Assessment. The latest policy also emphasizes the importance of holistic assessment in measuring students' competency achievement. The assessment system is not only based on the final exam, but also involves continuous formative assessment, covering aspects of knowledge, skills and attitudes. With this approach, it is expected to create a more thorough assessment and describe student development more objectively.

CONCLUSION

The Sidoarjo Ministry of Religious Affairs' Madrasah Education Section Head's policy in developing the madrasah curriculum aims to improve the quality of education by adjusting the madrasah curriculum to be in line with the National Education Standards (SNP). This includes integrating the vision and mission of madrasah education with the graduate competencies, content, process and assessment standards set out in the SNP. Capacity building of teaching staff through training is also an important part of ensuring that teachers can implement a relevant and effective curriculum.

Another policy implemented is the development of a competency-based curriculum (KBK), which focuses on mastering knowledge, skills and attitudes that are relevant to the needs of the times. With this approach, the curriculum is expected to prepare students to face global challenges and contribute to the world of work and society. Teacher training and extension programs also support this curriculum development by providing an understanding of innovative learning approaches, the use of technology in education and more effective evaluations to assess student learning outcomes.

However, madrasah curriculum development in Sidoarjo faces several challenges, such as limited human resources, inadequate infrastructure and a mismatch between the national curriculum and local needs. Therefore, closer collaboration between the government, madrasahs and communities is needed to overcome these obstacles. With adaptive policies that focus on improving the quality of education, madrasahs in Sidoarjo are expected to produce graduates who are not only academically smart but also have strong characters and are ready to face the dynamics of changing times.

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