



## Philosophical reasons for choosing the IB Programme for the internationalization strategy at the Al Firdaus Educational Institution Foundation

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to find out the philosophical reasons for choosing the International Baccalaureat (IB) programme as an internationalization strategy at *Yayasan Lembaga Pendidikan Al Firdaus* (YLPAF) and find out the preparation using the IB curriculum. This research is qualitative research with action research methods. Data collection techniques with observations, interviews, and documents. Those studied were YLPAF directors, principals and teachers. Data analysis used interactive analysis. Data validity methods used with triangulation of data sources. The results of this study are the philosophical reasons why YLPAF chose the IB curriculum because the IB program teaches character and IB does not change the initial concept of Al Firdaus as an inclusive and Islamic school. The preparations made by YLPAF in preparing for IB authorization are as follows: improving human resource skills at YLPAF, especially in the fields of IT and English, train all stakeholders towards the IB programme, carry out all activities recommended in the IB programme so that the concept of IB is more quickly recognized and absorbed by YLPAF.



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## INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of national education are now changing rapidly. The main cause of this change in education is to improve the quality of education. Various efforts and breakthroughs on a national and local scale have been made. One of them is by changing the curriculum. In the past, the curriculum used was school-based, competency-based and community-based. Meanwhile, in the scope of learning, it used to use a teacher-centered basis has now begun to shift to student-centered, problem-based, and various labels of the learning process that place students as centers of activity, teachers as dynamicators and facilitators. Now the use of learning resources is no longer only from books but also from sources such as the internet as a support for learning activities.

Although changes have been made, these have not been able to boost the quality of education in Indonesia. Now it is starting to be thought of carrying out strategic management by internationalizing education in Indonesia. This is also because education has become global and interconnected. In addition, because it is known that several schools in the world are proven to have shown more advanced quality education. For this reason, education in Indonesia now has two challenges at once, namely local-national challenges and global challenges. At the global level, there has been a wave of information and interaction challenges that now have a lot of impact on Indonesian education. Several international curricula began to color educational institutions in Indonesia.

In Islamic educational institutions, the idea has emerged to internationalize Islamic educational institutions and build relations between Islamic countries and western countries, either taking western curricula or education that is in accordance with Islam or also contributing to Islamization in the Western world. This is a logical consequence of the growing Muslim communities in Europe and America (Mu'ti, 2010). In Europe Muslims began to engage in education. As Muslims they are responsible for socializing and helping others and as the color of the European movement also have an

obligation to be involved in education (Ramadan, 2009). For this reason, people in Muslim countries in general, especially in Indonesia, have a greater responsibility.

This is a strategic step to internationalize education. The mission also contains a hidden mission in the form of saving this world from disputes, wars and the destruction of a nation. Because in fact, education is 'a means of saving the world' or an instrument to save a world full of political, social, economic and cultural upheavals. By internationalizing education, relations between nations in the world will be established that work together. Education in Indonesia has also transcended territorial boundaries or to Indonesia, although domestic problems in education are also still the biggest homework. This fact can be both an opportunity and a challenge for the internationalization of education in Indonesia.

The concept of 'internationalization' here can be interpreted as the process of reaching the 'international' stage which means: 'agreed on by all or many nations' or 'used by people of many nations' (Soanes & Stevenson, 2006). So that the 'internationalization' of education is an effort to improve the quality of education that can be carried out in all countries and in accordance with the future needs of students everywhere.

The current reality, from the results of several studies, the internationalization of education has not been able to improve the quality of education in Indonesia. For example, in the International Scale School Pilot (RSBI), there are still many protests. One of the protests is that this national-scale project is alleged to be commercialization and the emergence of social disparities between communities that can access international classes and those who can only attend regular classes. The government and private sector should find the right pattern, manage and follow up this internationalization project so that it is clear the basis for the reasons and the internationalization process in this educational institution (Widodo, 2013). In addition, the internationalization of education has not been studied from all aspects and is still a hands-on project, so without a long process.

Therefore, the process and practice of internationalization of education in Indonesia should be examined both in the scope of primary, secondary and higher education along with the disadvantages and advantages, as well as opportunities and challenges in the future. It is worth studying again the philosophical reasons for doing so and the reasons for choosing an international curriculum. In addition, it is necessary to do a long process before receiving an international curriculum into a school. What is also important is to prepare the tools, facilities and infrastructure as well as human resources needed within the scope of educational institutions to lead to internationalization. One of the programs developed by educational institutions is to carry out institutional cooperation both on a national, regional and international scale. Developing the curriculum of an educational institution is a must for an institution in order to provide good education.

Now there are many offers from each international curriculum that discuss the concept and the advantages and basis of each curriculum for everyone to recognize. One of them is the IB program. International Baccalaureat (IB) is one of the international curricula that bases its education on character building. Another idea of IB is to create an international outlook. The IB program develops people with an international perspective who have similarities in humanity and maintain peace on this earth. This international outlook is very complex including ways of thinking acting in an open mind and able to help each other (collaboration).

Currently, Indonesian students are considered to be less good in character. Politeness, honesty, cleanliness and discipline decreased. Likewise with open mind and risk taker. Today's younger generation is called the strawberry generation, which is beautiful from the outside but very vulnerable to destruction. The education that prevails in schools today is considered unable to educate all students to implement this properly. There is a view that there is a very real character shift from the child's face in the past to the present (Rizka, 2022). Around 1980 and below there was an assessment that the current of modernization and technology was the cause of this decline in character (Firmansyah, 2020). This is then the basis for the idea of including character education in the structure of the national curriculum (Rochmawati, 2017). Even though character education or civilization education should be taught earlier before other sciences. Character education is a necessity in the curriculum.

A study on the application of the Cambridge criteria found that implementing the Cambridge criteria has several advantages when applied to school learning. These include children becoming fluent in English, having access to international viewing, modern and up-to-date education, and preparing students to become future leaders (Ramadianti, 2021). Another study on the Cambridge curriculum compared to the independent curriculum in Indonesia is that the independent curriculum is better able to adapt to the cultural and social context of Indonesia.

The purpose of this study is, first, to determine the philosophical reasons for choosing the IB program for YLPAF and, second, how to prepare for it. The purpose of this study is limited to what only happens at YLPAF.

### **Internationalization Education**

Internationalization emphasizes relations among nations, societies, cultures, institutions, systems. Globalization is a process based on the flow of ideas, human resources, economy, values, culture, knowledge, goods, services, and technology that can be utilized throughout the world. While the internationalization of education is a process of integrating the international environment, local and global intercultural dimensions into the objectives, functions of teaching/learning, research and service in educational institutions or national education systems. The difference between internationalization and globalization is in the concept of 'global flow' in globalization and the concept of relations between countries in internationalization. So these two concepts are closely related to each other but at the same time different.

It is estimated that by 2025 the demand for international education will increase to 7.2 million students. This is a quantum leap from 1.2 million students in 2000. Although not necessarily this amount can also be met. For this reason, several educational institutions are competing to become international-scale schools. Some schools are beginning to transform students, teachers, and researchers into an international outlook. Programs in schools have now changed to become global in perspective.

In the practice of internationalization there are many challenges in initiating the internationalization of education. That challenge can arise from human resources and large investments when starting the internationalization of education. Not to mention the facilities and infrastructure that must be met. Usually at the beginning, educational institutions take care of more paper-based agreements and the quality of education has not been immediately felt. Then the task of the educational institution must maintain the agreement continues to run well in accordance with applicable regulations. It should work together with the chosen curriculum. Without the support of cooperation partners, educational institutions will experience difficulties when starting internationalization.

In his research, Widyastono (2010) explains that international-standard school curricula (such as RSBI) should integrate two approaches in curriculum development: adaptation and adoption. Adaptation means adjusting elements of national criteria to those of OECD member countries or developed countries, while adoption means adding components of international criteria not yet included in national standards—with the goal of producing graduates who hold national diplomas while meeting global standards.

### **Curriculum Character Education**

Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, states that what is meant by curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding objectives, content, and learning materials as well as ways used as guidelines for implementing learning activities to achieve certain educational goals. Many curricula now include international curricula that offer character education. This suggests that the curriculum should have clear tools to educate character to students (Widyastono, 2010).

Etymologically the character comes from the Greek, *charassein*, which means to carve. The main property of carving is that it is firmly attached to the carved object (Munir, 2010). Engraving it does something that is not easily worn by time and worn out by friction. Removing the engraving is the same as removing the object because the engraving has merged with the object. This engraving is very different. This is different from ink writing which is only applied over the surface of objects that are

easily lost and leave no marks if erased. Hidayatulah (2010) who suggests that character comes from the Latin root word which means “chiseled”. Literally, character means his mental or moral qualities, moral strength, name or reputation. In the dictionary of psychology, it is stated that character is personality or moral. Which includes characters such as honesty, blinking and cleanliness (Hidayatulah, 2010). Usually very related to the typical characteristics of a person who usually settle in a person. If a person has a bad characteristic, despite having been given advice hundreds of times, input from anywhere, his nature does not change, may change briefly when given advice but will appear again in the not too distant future. The trait is inherent and difficult to change, that is character (Munir, 2010). Habits that are carried out continuously and repeatedly that are preceded by awareness and understanding will become a person’s character. In this case, genetics has little effect, but the environment will have a big influence in terms of character formation.

If an institution chooses character education as its curriculum choice, the consequence must be to review the current curriculum when it will be crossed, because the existing curriculum is already very heavy for students (Asmani, 2011). With the dense material load and current class hours, it will be difficult for character education to be enforced if it is not carefully thought out. To build a school culture will take a minimum of the first three months of each school year. If these three months the teacher is already burdened with various subject matter, the opportunity to build character will be lost. Providing character education aims to cultivate positive character, because character actually has two sides, positive and negative. By providing character education, the two sides of the character will only explore the positive side, while the negative side will be dull and even not develop.

Character education applied to students requires a systematic process or stage, in accordance with the phase of growth and development of students. According to Agustian (2003), character building is not enough to just start and end with mission setting. However, this needs to be continued with a process that is carried out continuously throughout life so that it becomes a habit and character (Agustian, 2003).

The classification of character education in several stages, based on the Hadith of the Prophet SAW is as follows **first**, the stage of cultivation adab (age 5-6 years). **Second**, stage of cultivation of responsibility (age 7-8 years). **Third**, caring planting stage (age 9-10 years). **Fourth**, stage of cultivation of independence (age 11-12 years). **Fifth**, the stage of cultivation is important for society (age 13 years and over). In character education there are five phases of character education. These five phases become a solid foundation in digging, giving birth, sharpening, and developing students’ unique talents and abilities. This is essential to face the cataclysmic and spectacular challenges of globalization.

The choice of an international curriculum such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) involves not only academic considerations but also an educational philosophy that emphasizes the development of positive character and global competencies in students. Character education is a critical component in fostering a school culture that supports holistic development. Asmani (2011) argues that if an institution chooses character education as part of its curriculum, it must carefully review existing programs, since dense subject matter and limited class hours can hinder the effective integration of character development. Ideally, building a school culture that nurtures positive character requires at least the first three months of the academic year, if this period is consumed by other academic content, opportunities to instill essential values may be lost (Asmani, 2011).

Character education aims to cultivate the positive aspects of students’ personalities while minimizing negative tendencies. For instance, self-confidence is guided to develop courage rather than arrogance, fear is directed toward prudence rather than cowardice, shame is channeled into politeness rather than inferiority, and risk-taking is nurtured to promote alertness rather than recklessness (Munir, 2010). Philosophically, character education is closely tied to moral values concerning right and wrong, aligning with the IB curriculum’s goal of fostering critical, reflective, and globally responsible students. Furthermore, character development requires a systematic and continuous process appropriate to students’ growth stages. Agustian (2006) emphasizes that character education cannot merely start with mission statements, it must be reinforced through consistent practice so that values become habits and integral aspects of student character.

Implementing an international curriculum such as IB also demands strategic preparation and systematic planning. According to Hayden, M., & Thompson (2013), schools must begin by conducting a thorough needs analysis, evaluating human resources, infrastructure, and the cultural context of the student body. Teacher readiness is essential, as educators must understand the philosophy, pedagogical approaches, and assessment methods unique to the IB. Professional development, workshops, and collaboration with experienced IB practitioners are critical to equipping teachers for effective curriculum delivery (Hayden & Thompson, 2008).

Additionally, curriculum adaptation must align with local educational standards and cultural expectations without compromising the integrity of the international program. Phased implementation, including pilot classes, continuous evaluation, and iterative improvement, is recommended to ensure sustainability and effectiveness. School leadership also plays a central role in facilitating the transition to an international curriculum. Leadership strategies include fostering a shared vision, securing necessary resources, monitoring implementation, and engaging all stakeholders (parents, teachers, and students) to build commitment to the program.

### **International Baccalaureat Programme**

The IB program philosophizes to shape the character of students through its programs while also philosophizing to improve the academic ability of its students. The IB program develops ten characters during learning in line with the maturity development of each student. It is aimed at helping create a better world. The ten characters are called IB learner profiles. The ten characters are inquiry, knowledgeable, thinker, caring, principle, open mind, balance, risk taker, communicator and reflective. The IB curriculum has a pattern that can make it easier for teachers to educate students with good character building education and directed and well documented.

Based on many theories offered, the IB curriculum is a framework, which is able to improve the knowledge and ability of teachers. This curriculum can be combined with other curricula or inserted values from a school. By using the IB program, it is hoped that it can also develop the human resources of teachers in schools.

The IB organization promises programs that encourage students to learn lifelong with compassion and understanding differences. In 1968 IB opened its inaugural program, the Upper Level Program (PTA). This program philosophizes to provide a good education by exploring the cultural richness that exists by preparing qualified students to be able to enter university.

In 1994 the IB organization opened the Intermediate Level Program and in 1997 opened the Elementary Level Program for students ages 3 to 19. It wasn't until 2012 that the IB Organization opened the Career Program Introduction at ages 16 to 19. IBO also educates its students to learn with five skills that are always taught to students, namely **first** thinking skills, including areas such as critical thinking, creative thinking and ethical thinking. **Second** research skills, including skills such as comparing, contrasting, validating and prioritizing information. **Third** is communication skills, including skills such as written and oral communication, effective listening, and formulating argument, the fourth is social skills, including areas such as forming and maintaining positive relationships, listening skills, and resolving conflicts and the fifth is self-managing skills, including organizational skills, such as managing time and tasks, and also affective skills, such as managing thoughts and motivation.

The IB teaches five essential elements in the IB curriculum. The five important elements are knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes and actions. Knowledge here is expected by the teacher to be able to provide knowledge content that is relevant to the theme presented, the concept given by the teacher must be able to make his shiva continue to explore information, skills are to awaken the skills possessed by students, the teaching method used must be able to create a good character and it is expected that students are able to take good action.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a type of qualitative research with action research methods. Data collection techniques in this study were carried out in the following ways **first**, observation. This observation is used to obtain data directly and systematically on the object to be studied, by visiting directly the research location, namely the Exemplary school. **Second**, interview. In this method, researchers and respondents face to face to get information orally with the aim of obtaining data that can explain the research problem. This study took data through interviews with YLPAF directors, principals and teachers at YLPAF (Sugiyono, 2013). **Third**, documentation. Documentation in this study is used to collect data from various types of information, such as official letters, meeting notes, developing reports relevant to the research studied. When data collection is carried out on October five to seven, 2023 at YLPAF. Data validity checks are triangulated so that the data obtained is strong enough. The selected triangulation is the data source triangulation. Data analysis is carried out data collection, data reduction, data presentation and conclusions called interactive analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the results of interviews, observations and documentation, the following research results were obtained YLPAF consists of several units. Before joining IB, these units were Pre-school Education Parks (TPP) such as kindergarten (TK), then elementary school (SD) and secondary school (SM). Since joining the IB programme, the units have been divided into Primary Years Programme (PYP) and Middle Years Programme and High school (MYP and HS). PYP itself is divided into two more, namely Early Years (EY) PYP or kindergarten level and Elementary (EL) PYP or elementary level. Included in MYP and HS are grade seven to grade twelve students. MYP and HS Al Firdaus have been authorized since May 1, 2021. Since now, it means that YLPAF has officially used the IB program. Previously, YLPAF had IB candidacy status, meaning schools that were in the process of obtaining IB authorization. Even though it is IB certified, the national curriculum is still used. When students graduate from Al Firdaus schools, students will have two diplomas. One diploma from the government and the other IB programme diploma (interview with YLPAF director, 5 October 2023).

YLPAF is an Islamic education institute. This foundation has an inclusive education program, meaning that in this school children with special needs or ABK are given education together in one place. Sometimes there are times when ABK is given their own special lessons or taken which is given the term pull out. YLPAF has several locations. **The first** is the Foundation's location on Jl. Dr. Sopomo no 6A, Surakarta. **The second**, TPP on Jl Yosodipuro no 107, Surakarta. **The third**, elementary school is located at Jl Yosodipura no 56, Surakarta, and **the fourth** location is in junior high school and high school on Jl Al Kautsar, Mendungan, Pabelan, Kartosuro, Sukoharjo. MYP and HS Al Firdaus are located on Jl. Al Kautsar, Mendungan, Pabelan, Kartosura, Sukoharjo. Central Java, Indonesia.

The vision of the foundation that has been set is the realization of Islamic educational institutions that are quality, innovative, and adaptive to the demands of progress based on the Qur'an and As Sunnah. While the mission of the foundation **first** is organizing quality, innovative and adaptive Islamic education through formal, non-formal, and informal channels. **Second**, developing competitive and Islamic human resources and **third** developing research and studies to improve the quality of education. The vision and mission are set to achieve the goal of "realizing competitive and Islamic human resources and benefits for society based on the Qur'an and As Sunnah." (Documentation, October 6, 2023).

From studying the documentation at the YLPAF, the following data long-term strategic plans that have been made by the YLPAF that are in line with the vision, mission and goals that have been set. YLPAF has established a long-term strategic plan for the next 20 years (2014/2015-2034/2035) which is divided into four stages, namely, organizational structuring, management system and independence (2014/2015-2018/2019), strengthening Al Firdaus' competitiveness at the national level and positioning Al Firdaus in Europe (2019/2020-2023/2024), strengthening positioning at the European level and achieving positioning at the Asian level (2024/2025-2029/2030), and achievement International level positioning (2030/2031-2034/2035).

YLPAF is an educational institution that always keeps up with the times and has a clear plan both long-term and short-term plans. According to the work plan made, in 2018 YLPAF began to become an IB program candidate school. Various preparations and trainings are carried out to educate teachers to change according to the pattern taught by IB. In 2020 with a virtual model because it has entered the pandemic, YLPAF follows the IB authorization starting from the elementary unit and is entitled to hold a school title with the IB concept. This makes Al Firdaus increasingly establish itself as a world class Islamic school, a school with a global outlook.

Al Firdaus was founded with four foundations of superior education, namely the foundation of faith and piety, science and technology, life skills and entrepreneurship while still focusing on its Islamic elements. Al Firdaus has two curricula, namely the national curriculum and the IB curriculum. With this, Al Firdaus has fulfilled the mandate of its strategic plan to include an international curriculum in educating its students (interview with principal, October 7, 2023). This is according to the results of an interview with YLPAF teachers on October 5, 2023.

YLPAF has included curriculum development in its work plan. The spirit of bringing YLPAF to an international perspective with reinforcement in character development is interesting to be examined to find out the philosophical reasons for choosing this program and how to prepare towards the use of the IB program in its curriculum. YLPAF has previously been trusted to be a pilot for national inclusion schools. This is one of the big assets for YLPAF to re-transform its curriculum. Results of an interview with the director of YLPAF (October 5, 2023). The human resources owned by YLPAF are mentally strong and have been educated, easily adaptable to changes in YLPAF. This is a big capital to transform education in his school.

### **Philosophical Reasons for Choosing the IB Program**

The philosophical reasoning of the YLPAF comes from interviews with directors and principals at different times and places. The reason for choosing the IB program is because it adjusts to its goal that wants all graduates to have good Islamic character. Besides also in accordance with its vision and mission because it wants to provide quality education. The IB programme has demands to improve the skills of all students according to their interests and talents and all students are required to create a project at the end of each theme. In a year there are six themes to follow. Another philosophical reason for choosing IB is because it is in accordance with the type of Al Firdaus as an inclusive school that always provides achievement targets for each child differently according to their abilities. In IB each child has their own achievement targets that are made as a result of discussions between students, teachers and parents. This meeting is routinely held every time it changes a new theme called TWC (three way conference).

This is in line with research by Tresnawati (2025) which highlights the fundamental differences between the 2013 Curriculum and the International Curriculum (IB-PYP) at the elementary level. The national curriculum places greater emphasis on content mastery and final outcomes (grades), while the IB curriculum focuses more on the learning process and in-depth understanding, including student character development (Tresnawati & Nurhayati, 2023).

After obtaining IB authorization, PYP Al Firdaus has the right to use this international certificate. The IB program is an International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) program aimed at developing young people who are always inquiry, knowledgeable, and caring; which helps create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To achieve this, IBOs work closely with schools, governments, and organizations (International Baccalaureate, 2020).

The philosophy of the IB curriculum educates ten student characteristics called the IB learner profile. The character of the students to be shown is inquiry, knowledgeable, thinker, communicator, principled, open minded, caring, risk taker, balance, and reflective.

The philosophical IB programme is in accordance with the vision and mission of YLPAF in choosing its curriculum. The IB curriculum is an education that promotes character and student-centered education. Students are made subjects in learning. In IB students are expected to be active while learning. Teachers are expected to be facilitators only in teaching and learning relationships. In IB educational organizations are contextual. This is very different from the existing education system

which was still contextual. The previous education system had to be completely abandoned when using the IB program. Changing the HR mindset is difficult because the previous curriculum has been used for a long time.

The philosophy of character education consists of two words, namely education and character. According to Ki Hajar Dewantara education generally means efforts to promote the growth of ethics which is nothing but inner strength, character, and mind. In character education, children's growth and development towards maturity is also considered. Character education must use conditions that are in harmony with local culture such as cleanliness, discipline, order, and inner peace. Ethics character is that which comes from the movement of thoughts, feelings and will, which can later generate energy to act based on his conscience (Nata, 2005).

Character is a psychological, moral or ethical trait that characterizes a person or group of people. So character education can be interpreted as a system that instills values to students, which contains components of knowledge, one's awareness, determination, and action to carry out values, both towards God, oneself, and fellow humans (Aunillah, 2011).

In philosophy there are three broad theoretical frameworks, namely the theory of experience, the theory of nature, and the theory of value. The IB programme also defines experience, nature and value. In another character, value theory is also discussed in two branches of philosophy, namely ethical philosophy and aesthetic philosophy. Philosophy of ethics usually talks about issues in terms of good and bad, while aesthetics talks about beauty or unbeauty. Basically, ethics and aesthetics have a point in common, namely that both are included in the theory of value. Philosophically, this character education aims to humanize humans. In the IB program, the aim of educating character so that students truly become human beings. Character education should touch the fundamental roots of human life. So education is a foundation that changes and shapes the future of human beings. Education is purely aimed at teaching humans to be their essence in carrying out life in the natural world.

On the background of philosophy is required ontological basis of character education. The material object of character education is the whole person, the complete human being aspects of his personality. The formal object of character education is limited to the whole person in the educational phenomenon or situation. In the IB programme, the value system must be manifested in interpersonal relationships which are absolute requirements for the implementation of education and teaching. This happens because educators who have their own personalities as a whole treat students honorably as individuals as well. If educators do not have such a complete affective nature, then according to Gordon it will be the missing link on the factor of learner-educator relationships or between students and teachers. That way education will only occur quantitatively even though it is optimal, while the quality of human beings is not necessarily intact.

The epistemological basis is needed by character education or character education experts in order to develop their knowledge productively and responsibly. Character education does not only develop applied science but leads to theoretical studies and character education as an autonomous science that has its own formal object or its own problematics even though it does not only use quantitative or experimental approaches. Thus, the test of knowledge truth is needed correspondence, coherently and at the same time practically and/or pragmatically.

The IB programme educates students with a range of tools to prepare future students with skills to be used in the future. This is in accordance with the phenomenal philosophical basis derived from Kholifah Ali ibn Abi Talib regarding the education of children, namely "Teach your children according to their era, because they live in their time not in yours. Verily they were created for their time, whereas you were created for your time". This is the foundation adopted at YLPAF as a philosophical basis for choosing to use an international curriculum that is very open and focuses on children's education in the future according to the era students will live and work.

Currently, PYP and MYP Al Firdaus still use the national curriculum in addition to the IB curriculum. This is very possible because the IB curriculum is only frame work. So the framework is regulated in the IB programme but the content of the material is adjusted to each school. Besides this had advantages for the YLPAF but at the same time this was also a big obstacle for Al Firdaus because



the teachers were increasingly busy making a lot of administration at that time. By joining the international curriculum, units at Al Firdaus have to go through a long preparation. For two years YLPAF served as an IB programme candidate school. A lot had to be prepared at that time, especially the issue of human resource (HR) readiness. Preparation for its human resources in the form of improving skills in the field of IT and English for all Al Firdaus stake holders. Other preparations must change the teacher's mindset on how to teach the IB model in accordance with IB demands, change the mindset of parents to accompany IB school children and start educating and familiarizing students with thinking with the concept of unit of inquiry. Students must also be involved in learning because students are subjects. Learning in schools must use bilingual language. All existing stake holders including parents began to be introduced to the concept of studying at IB.

### **IB Programme Preparation**

Some of the steps taken by YLPAF are several types of training all human resources in YLPAF. The IB programme standardises that all human resources must be trained. Training can take IB training conducted in other countries or make in-house training. Both event is used by YLPAF. So human resources who enter the structural organization are sent to other IB schools outside the city and abroad. Then for all human resources, in house training was carried out in Surakarta. All trainers are from other countries and certified (interview with principal on October 7, 2023 and interview with teacher on October 6, 2023). In training its human resources, YLPAF chooses a professional development training model. The goal of professional development is to help HR learn how to tailor their teaching to the learning needs of their students through understanding why or the reasons behind pedagogical decisions are made or choices in relation to their teaching context.

Similar to other studies preparing to become international schools, such as the evaluative research conducted by Eka Putra et al. (2013) to assess the readiness of SD N 2 Gianyar in terms of context, input, and process. The results of the research is context (58.13) and input (56.46) indicate readiness, but the process component is still less ready (42.29). Implications of the research is before adopting international standards, schools need to strengthen the management of the learning process such as SOPs, supervision, and learning culture (Eka Putra et al., 2013). This is also in accordance with research that shows the importance of strategic planning, human resources and mature infrastructure as prerequisites for internationalization (Arthika, 2011). Another study was conducted to determine school readiness for the IB program, with ongoing teacher training and mapping of learning resources as the initial steps. The challenges faced were similar like adapting teacher pedagogy to the IB approach and limited resources (Agustin et al., 2024).

YLPAF in the candidacy period has several companions or visitors from IB. This accompanying task assists the YLPAF to prepare authorizations and prepare lessons as requested by the IB programme. The direction from these mentors is discussed by groups to be able to collaborate to learn concepts in IB. Existing documents from the IB are translated and then discussed together.

All IB programme activities began to be carried out as YLPAF became IB candidates. Activities in the form of exhibitions, personal programs, community projects, science fairs, three-way conferences containing meetings between teachers, students and parents to discuss the curriculum for the next six months. Create Student Led Conference (SLC) to show what children learn to parents. There is also a parent orientation that is carried out regularly every change of unit of inquiry (UOI) and parent workshop. The school also conducts study visits to IB schools. The involvement of parents in preparing international schools such as IB is the same as previous research which stated that schools need to prepare an ecosystem readiness that involves parents.

Research conducted at schools preparing the Cambridge curriculum is similar. The research at Al Irsyad Satya Islamic Elementary School focused on teacher training, adapting content to local contexts, and parent collaboration. This is relevant for faith-based schools seeking to internationalize without losing their identity (Maghfiroh et al., 2025). Likewise, research conducted by Indonesian schools that adopted Cambridge readiness factors is having a clear framework/syllabus, aligned lesson plans, and evaluations that support continuous improvement (Adilah et al., 2024). Ramadianti (2023), research emphasizes readiness in planning the learning process, the availability of frameworks, lesson

plans, and assessments as pillars of successful Cambridge implementation—which can be a checklist for school readiness.

## CONCLUSION

From this study it can be concluded that: the philosophical reason YLPAF chose the IB curriculum is because IB teaches character and IB is a framework so that it does not change the initial concept of Al Firdaus established about the foundation of Islam and schools of inclusion. The basic concept of education in the IB programme is a science that benefits all human beings.

The preparations made by YLPAF in preparing for IB authorization is improve HR skills in YLPAF in the field of IT and English. Train all stake holders to attend IB school training by studying with a companion and attending special training. Carry out all activities in the IB programme.

This study suggests that future researchers can explore how international curricula like IB can be aligned with an institution's foundational values and character education goals. Additionally, examining the effectiveness of HR development, stakeholder training, and program implementation strategies can provide practical insights for schools adopting international programs.

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