

MANAGEMENT OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LEARNING OF THE MERDEKA CURRICULUM at ASA CENDEKIA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Silvana Izza Rahma Dewi¹, Istikomah²
^{1,2}*Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, Indonesia*

Email: silvanairdewi26@gmail.com¹, istikomah1@umsida.ac.id²

Abstract: Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning management in the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum emphasizes flexibility and creativity in teaching. This curriculum is designed to improve the quality of education, educators must be given the opportunity to develop more innovative and responsive learning methods that suit the needs of students. In this context, PAI learning in the Merdeka Curriculum focuses more on strengthening character education. Therefore, educators are expected to use learning management proportionally through the steps of planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating.

This study examines the learning management of Islamic Religious Education in the Merdeka Curriculum at Asa Cendekia Junior High School. This research was conducted using a qualitative method through data collection using interviews, observation, and documentation involving the principal and Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subject teachers. The results showed that the implementation of Islamic Religious Education learning management at Asa Cendekia Junior High School is well structured and integrated. This has a positive impact, not only on academic achievement, but also on the character building of students as noble individuals.

Keywords: Learning Management; Islamic Religious Education; Independent Curriculum.

Introduction

Education is the main pillar in nation building, because the value of high quality education is a measure of the increasing potential of the individuals involved in it. This, in turn, will determine the progress of the nation. Education is known as a series of processes to prepare human potential to live life and achieve its goals. (A. A. A. Istikomah., 2020) Therefore it is very important to pay attention and evaluate the condition of education at all times. In order to educate the nation as well as improve the welfare of society, so education is a national priority. However, education in Indonesia until now continues to develop and undergo various changes, none other than all the changes made to face the challenges of the times to come and the government has tried to improve the quality of education in recent years.

Education has one very essential aspect, namely the curriculum, the curriculum is a series of guidelines that cover the learning process from start to finish, and is the core of education that needs to be reviewed and evaluated regularly, both its development, and adapted to the times. Since 1947, the curriculum in Indonesia has been applied at all levels of education, ranging from kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school, high school, to college level, it has undergone various changes or revisions in its application (Manalu, J et al., 2022). According to Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the national education system, the curriculum is defined as a series of plans and arrangements that include objectives, materials, and learning materials, as well as how to use them so that students achieve predetermined learning objectives. (Habe, H. Ahiruddin, 2017).

Along with the regulations and changes in the Ministry of Education and Culture, Nadiem Makarim as the Minister of Education and Culture in 2020 has rolled out a new curriculum as a refinement of the previous curriculum, namely the K13 curriculum, the new curriculum is called the independent curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum that implements diverse learning and integrates various subjects. the characteristic

concept of theeka curriculum is that free learning allows students to explore their own talents and interests. Thus, students have sufficient time to understand concepts in depth and improve their abilities, while teachers can choose various learning methods that are aligned with students' needs and interests. The implementation of the applied curriculum design will have a significant impact on the character and morals of students, especially in the subject of Islamic Religious Education. (Rojii et al., 2019) Student character education is incorporated into the dimensions of the Pancasila Learner Profile which emphasizes the formation of the expected character. This curriculum, complemented by varied intracurricular learning, will be more effective because it gives students more time to understand concepts as well as hone their skills and does not leave out projects in all learning activities to strengthen the Pancasila learner profile designed based on specific themes. It does not aim to achieve specific learning objectives, so it is not tied to specific subject matter (Kemendikbudristek, 2022) This flexible curriculum aims to revitalize authority to schools and local governments. In an effort to address the learning loss that has occurred, this policy gives schools and local governments the freedom to plan and manage their programs independently. Each school has the right and responsibility to design a curriculum that suits its own needs and characteristics (Cholilah et al., n.d.).

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is one of the subjects that must be taught, starting from the basic education level to higher education. It is explained that the position of Islamic religious education in the independent curriculum is included as compulsory content, which is in accordance with the Education Law no. 20 of 2003 Chapter X Article 37. This curriculum contains Islamic religious materials in the form of activities, knowledge, and experiences that are given to students deliberately and systematically to achieve the objectives of Islamic education. Islamic religious education subjects in the independent curriculum are given the opportunity of 72 hours to 108 hours, which in one week gets 2 hours of learning and then can be added 1 hour of learning for Islamic religious projects. There are several aspects of the Islamic religious education curriculum in schools: Al-quran hadith, aqidah akhlak, Fiqh and History of Islamic culture. The purpose of the Islamic education curriculum is to ensure that students acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to behave in accordance with Islamic values, learn the teachings of Islam, and assist students in understanding, appreciating and practicing Islamic teachings or fostering Islamic values. The principles that must be applied in the Islamic education curriculum include the basic principles of Islam, principles that focus on achieving goals, and principles of integrity, among others. The curriculum must lead to the desired goal (Alhadad, M, 2023).

Educators in conducting Islamic Religious Education learning activities, especially in the independent curriculum which emphasizes character education, students must use learning management in a proportional manner. With the steps of planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating. According to Ujang Saefullah (2012), "management is organizing, managing, and managing."¹ According to Endin Narudin's (2010) opinion in his book "management is the art of implementing and organizing."² Management is a series of activities that aim to coordinate work activities through certain steps, so as to achieve optimal results. It is a process to maximize the utilization of available resources by involving the cooperation of others. Management is a series of activities that aim to coordinate work activities through certain steps, so as to achieve optimal results. It is a process to maximize the utilization of available resources by involving the cooperation of others. (H. B. (2021) Istikomah, 2021).

Learning management is managing learning effectively. To achieve this goal, the components of learning management must be optimized with a focus on teacher actions from before the lesson, during the lesson. Therefore, learning management is an important element in an independent curriculum to achieve learning objectives, improve the quality of education, and facilitate learning freedom for students. With proper teaching management, teachers can establish a conducive learning atmosphere, motivate and support students in achieving their full potential. In every educational institution, of course, it will always go hand in hand with learning management in the independent curriculum that is currently being used. Including Islamic Religious Education learning subjects which strengthen the character of students. Asa Cendekia Junior High School is quite interesting in structuring the management of Islamic Religious Education learning in an independent curriculum, where they carry out management functions intensively and encourage projects to active religious practices in everyday life.

Research related to the title of Islamic religious education learning management in the independent curriculum has already been carried out including: first, research conducted by Diana Nasution (2022) published by *guau*, a journal of professional education for Islamic religious teachers entitled "Islamic religious education learning management in SMP Negeri 07 lebong" using qualitative research type, with case study design. the results of this study indicate that Islamic religious education learning management in Smp negeri 07 lebong is carried out

systematically, focusing on planning and implementing Islamic religious education learning activities, but does not directly discuss Islamic religious education learning management in the independent curriculum. (Nasution, 2022) Furthermore, the second research was conducted by Nurmahani Tanjung, Farid Wirda and Irwansyah, (2023) published by Innovative: Journal of Social Science Research entitled "Islamic Education Learning Management at Al-Azhar Medan Junior High School". Using qualitative research and the results of this study present examples of effective Islamic Education learning management. However, this study does not provide details on how Islamic Education learning is carried out systematically. (Tanjung, N. Irwansyah, F, 2023).

Third, research conducted by Ahyun Rofiah, Farid Setiawan, Ema Fidiatun Khasanah, Yusril Muhamad Anjar and Elitawati (2022) published in the ink journal, a journal of teacher education and education entitled "management of PAI learning at Bojong State School". Using qualitative research and data collection. The results of this study present examples of effective PAI learning management in managing various series of activities. However, it does not provide details of PAI learning management. (Rofiah et al., 2022) While the fourth, research conducted by Muh. Ikhrum (2023) published by Edium, Journal of Islamic Education Management with the title "implementation of independent learning curriculum management at SMP Negri 2 Parepare". Using qualitative research with field research. The results of this study present the organization of the curriculum well, including the division of learning hours to the success of the teaching and learning process. However, this research has the disadvantage of not discussing the practical implications of the independent curriculum, only explaining how the learning management of the independent curriculum is at SMP Negri 2 Parepare. (Ikram, 2023).

Seeing from some of the research that has been described, my research is different from the research above, because my research emphasizes more on learning management, especially on learning Islamic Religious Education at the junior high school level, The focus or problem formulations that are proposed are 1. how is the management of Islamic Religious Education learning in the independent curriculum. 2. What obstacles occur in the implementation of this learning management. With the existence of education which contains a series of activities in order to achieve common goals, it certainly requires proper management such as planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating. These various steps are expected to be in accordance with the common goal.

Method

The type of research applied in this research is qualitative, qualitative is used to examine an object or a real situation by showing the process, and is natural without engineering and is descriptive. (Somantri, G, 2005) This research explores the phenomenon of learning management of Islamic Religious Education in the independent curriculum at Asa Cendekia Junior High School. The data sources used are divided into two types, namely primary data sources: this data source can be generated from the observation of interview data involving the principal and Islamic Religious Education teachers at Asa Cendekia Junior High School. While secondary data sources: are data taken as references such as books related to learning management, and previous research journals.

Data collection techniques in this study include observation, interviews and document review. The observation technique used in this research is by directly observing the learning management of Islamic Religious Education that has been implemented at Asa Cendekia Junior High School. The interview technique was conducted with the principal and the board of teachers who teach Islamic Religious Education subjects to obtain in-depth data. Documentation study technique is used to collect data related to learning management.

Qualitative data analysis is a data analysis technique used, which includes data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data reduction is done by summarizing, focusing, and abstracting the data that has been collected, data presentation aims to provide information in a structured manner, and the last stage, namely drawing conclusions, is used to describe the overall results of data analysis based on the phenomena that are happening in the field. (Kurniati, 2017).

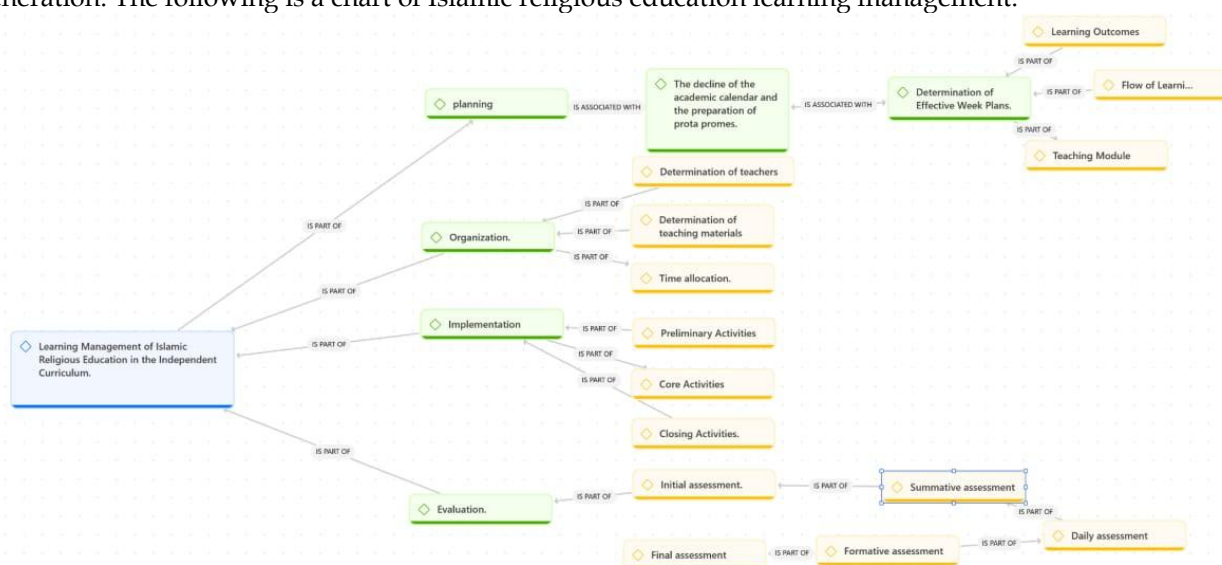
Findings and Discussion

Findings

Education is a very important process in preparing children to become individuals who are able to live life and achieve their life goals. For a developing country like Indonesia, education is a necessity that must continue to be developed gradually in accordance with the demands of generational development. Education is not only the obligation of the government and society, but also of all citizens, who are required to follow the compulsory education program. However, the quality of education in Indonesia still faces various challenges. Curriculum development, for example, is strongly influenced by globalization, structural transformation of government, and advances in science and technology. The success of curriculum development is strongly influenced by the quality of human resources (HR). Therefore, development and coaching for educators also need to be carried out

consistently. The results of interviews with school principals and Islamic Religious Education subject teachers, he said that: "there are several efforts made to improve learning processing competencies in accordance with the curriculum. Such as participating in subject teacher deliberation activities (MGMP) at the district level every month. There is also a school subject teacher meeting (MGMPs) forum that facilitates the association of teachers in professional development. A lot is gained from these activities such as interesting learning media, newer learning methods, not only knowledge but teaching practice assignments. Of course this is a form of support given to educators in improving competence in managing learning that has been supported by the school and the government."

Not only development and coaching for educators are considered in educational institutions, there is a school management system or learning management that must be managed properly. This management includes the utilization of educational resources, the use of available learning media, monitoring the implementation of learning in the classroom, and efforts to improve the overall quality of education. All of these require continuous solutions and innovations. Religious education not only supports moral formation, but also becomes the foundation in building a superior personality and integrity. Islamic education is the process of instilling Islamic knowledge and values through various means such as teaching, habituation, guidance, nurturing, and supervision, with the aim of achieving harmony in life in the world and the hereafter. (Febriani. et al., 2022) Thus, the synergy between education management and strengthening religious values can be the key to creating a quality and noble generation. The following is a chart of Islamic religious education learning management.



Picture: Learning Management

Discussion

1. Islamic Religious Education Learning Management in the independent curriculum.

a) Planning for Islamic Religious Education Learning Management in the Independent Curriculum at Asa Cendekia Junior High School

Planning is the process of selecting a series of activities and planning the actions to be taken, including determining what to do, when to do it, how to do it, and who is responsible. (Silmi et al., 2024) The word "plan" refers to the process of determining decisions in order to achieve certain goals. According to Ely cited by Sanjaya, planning is a method of thinking and a process that plays a role in achieving the expected results (Sanjaya, 2006). Whereas learning, derived from the term instruction, is also influenced by anticipated technological developments that can help students learn anything, and the educator's share changes to that of a guide in the learning process. Sanjaya (2006) concluded that, based on the two meanings of the terms "planning" and "learning", learning planning is a process of making wise decisions about specific learning objectives by utilizing all existing learning resources.

Good planning must have clear objectives to ensure that the learning process takes place efficiently and effectively, taking into account various conditions that may occur in the future. In the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, learning plans are prepared in more detail, so that they can serve as a guide for educators in carrying out the learning process.

Based on the data obtained, planning for Islamic Religious Education learning at Asa Cendekia Junior High School in the Merdeka Curriculum begins with the decline of the education calendar, structuring the annual program (prota), and semester program (promes). This step is followed by determining the Effective Week Plan (RME), which aims to organize learning activities productively in one week. The next step is to determine the Learning Outcomes (CPs) that must be achieved by learners in each phase, as well as identifying specific learning objectives based on the learning outcomes that have been set for each lesson period. In addition, the development of the Flow of Learning Objectives (ATP) is the next important step. The ATP contains a series of learning objectives that are designed in a structured and sustainable manner. After the ATP is completed, the process continues with the development of a flexible and simple teaching module. This module contains teaching materials, learning methods that have been chosen, and evaluation strategies that will be used. These stages are designed in such a way that they cover all aspects of planning, including time guidance, evaluation, and the preparation of a report on the final results of student learning in the form of a report card. With careful planning, educators have clear guidelines before teaching. This ensures that learning activities run as planned, so as to increase the effectiveness and standard of Islamic Religious Education learning at Asa Cendekia Junior High School.

b) Organizing Islamic Religious Education Learning Management in the Merdeka Curriculum at Asa Cendekia Junior High School

Curriculum organization is the process of preparing the design of teaching materials, the purpose of this is to make it easier for students to understand learning materials and support the implementation of learning activities so that learning objectives are realized with optimal results. (Nasbi, 2017) According to Razali M. Thaib and Irman Siswanto, organizing curriculum elements is very important to determine the sequence of material taught and how it is delivered in order to increase educational effectiveness. (Anastasya, W, 2023) Meanwhile, Muhammad Ansyar defines curriculum organization as the grouping of elements such as content, activities, and learning experiences arranged into subjects or learning units. The aim is to present the teaching material in a more structured manner so that students can easily master the material. (Thalib, R, M. Siswanto, 2015) Curriculum organization is closely related to the arrangement of learning materials contained in the curriculum. Therefore, there are several important factors that must be considered in the process. Such as the relevance of the material, the order of presentation, and its suitability to the needs of students.

At Asa Cendekia Junior High School, organizing learning is a complex process and includes several important stages. These stages involve planning, organizing, and implementing which aim to achieve effectiveness in learning. The organizing process begins with teacher assignment and class allocation. The next step is to determine the subject matter, especially for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects, which are divided into several aspects, such as the history of Islamic education, Arabic language, tahfidz, Al-Qur'an, hadith, fiqh, akidah, and morals. Determining this material is a very crucial step, because the selection of material must not only be in accordance with learning objectives but also relevant to the context and needs of students, with good organization, the learning process can run in a directed manner. Thus the quality and effectiveness of learning at Asa Cendekia Junior High School will continue to increase.

c) Implementation of Islamic Religious Education Learning Management in the Merdeka Curriculum at Asa Cendekia Junior High School

Learning implementation is a further stage after planning and organizing learning that has been completed by educators. This stage is the process of realizing the learning plan that has been designed to achieve the desired educational goals. According to Law Number 20 of 2003, learning occurs in direct interaction between educators and students with learning resources. Good implementation also affects the quality of learning (Dakhi, 2022).

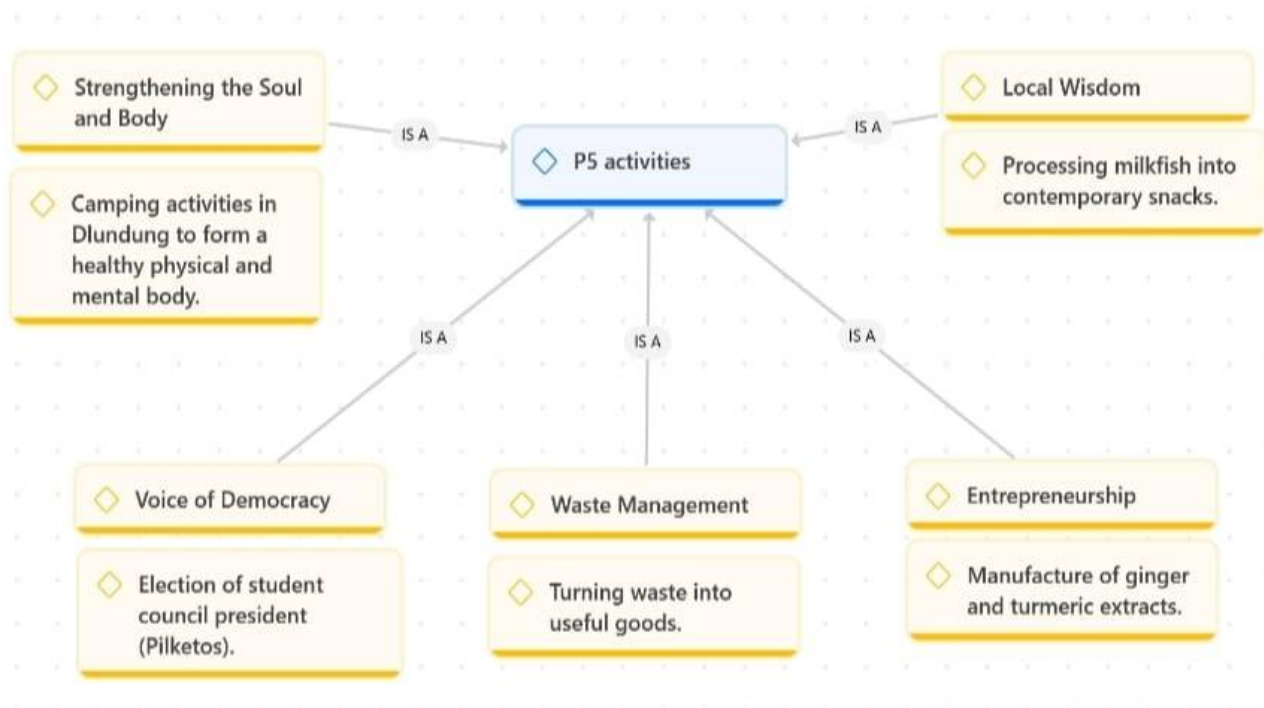
This implementation process begins with introductory activities that contain the introduction of material and efforts to build learning motivation in students. The core activities are a series of learning activities that have been prepared previously, connected through learning methods and relevant media. This process is a crucial moment in determining the success of learning. The importance of choosing the right teaching method is felt in the subject of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Inappropriate methods and strategies can make it difficult for educators to transfer knowledge as well as instill Islamic religious values to students so that they can be practiced in everyday life. An example in the theme of faith in the last day. In delivering this material, there are many aspects that need to be understood, such as the process of the last day, related terms (*such as Yaumul Mizan, Yaumul Ba'ats, and others*), and the wisdom behind faith in the last day. To optimize learning in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum, educators need to implement

strategies that involve various methods that can accommodate students' learning styles, both auditory, visual, and kinesthetic. For students who have a visual learning style, educators use image media, power point presentations or even show movies with the theme that the end of the world is near. For students with auditory learning styles, the delivery of material is sufficient through storytelling or short lectures after which they are asked to explain what they have heard. As for learners with kinesthetic learning styles, educators can use the mix and match method by dividing groups and preparing paper containing the terms of the last day with Arabic, the task of students is to match the terms and their meanings. The combination of several learning methods carried out at Asa Cendekia Junior High School in one theme ensures that all types of learning styles of students are well accommodated. With a variety of strategies, the material is delivered and provides an interesting and in-depth learning experience for them. In addition to methods, learning media also plays an important role as a means of stimulating students' interest and thinking, thus encouraging their enthusiasm to explore the subject matter. Closing activities are often filled with summarizing the material and giving feedback to students. Thus, the entire learning process can run effectively and achieve the expected goals.

Based on data obtained from Asa Cendekia Junior High School, the principal stated, *"So far, the context of the Merdeka Curriculum in learning Islamic Religious Education has been in line with what we teach. Student character development has become an important part that is applied every day. A small example is the habituation of smiles, greetings, greetings, the implementation of dhuha prayers, and other activities that have become daily practices in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. Thus, with the Merdeka Curriculum, the school has no difficulty in adjusting."*

The implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at Asa Cendekia Junior High School is not only limited to the classroom, but also includes habituation in daily activities. The activity begins with dhuha prayer in congregation, followed by the recitation of Asmaul Husna and reciting the Quran together. After that, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is carried out by applying various methods and strategies tailored to the character of students. Learning activities are closed with the recitation of sholawat and asr prayer in congregation. These habits, although seemingly simple, are an important part of forming the character of students in line with the mission of the Prophet Muhammad, which is to perfect human morals. With an integrated approach between classroom learning and daily habituation practices, learning Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at Asa Cendekia Junior High School has been running effectively in accordance with the values of the Merdeka Curriculum.

In the Merdeka Curriculum, the implementation of Islamic Religious Education materials is integrated into the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) program. This integration includes various aspects, such as entrepreneurship, local wisdom, waste management, strengthening body and soul, and democracy. All of these are designed to instill Pancasila values through various project activities. Some examples of P5 activities implemented in schools include:



Picture: P5 Activities

d) Evaluation of Islamic Religious Education Learning Management in the Merdeka Curriculum at Asa Cendekia Junior High School

Evaluation is one of the important components in the curriculum, which functions as a form of organizing and assessing the teaching and learning activity program. (Irwan et al., 2022) Evaluation of the education unit curriculum is a complex but essential process that involves various elements, from goals to curriculum implementation. The aim is to assess and improve the effectiveness of the implemented curriculum, ensure education is relevant to the needs of students and the times, and improve the quality of learning to optimally achieve educational goals.(Saputra, 2021).

The learning evaluation methods at Asa Cendekia Junior High School in the Merdeka Curriculum are designed to be diverse and structured. The evaluation process begins with an initial assessment, which aims to determine the basic abilities of students. For example, the learning theme "faith in the last day" can be related to a particular surah in the Qur'an. In the initial assessment, learners are expected to be able to read and understand the Qur'anic surah relevant to the theme, so they can ask simple questions to evaluate basic understanding. After the initial assessment, the evaluation moves on to formative assessment. In this stage, learners are invited to discuss in groups and make posters about the results of their discussions. This aims to deepen their understanding of the learning theme. Daily assessment is the next step, and this includes short quizzes consisting of multiple-choice or essay questions, which aim to test learners' understanding of Qur'anic verses and their application in daily life. Summative assessments are conducted every three months, where learners are assessed on their achievements during that period. Finally, final assessments are conducted every six months as part of the final exam. This exam covers all the material that has been taught, including understanding of Qur'anic surahs and their application to life. With this structured approach to evaluation, Asa Cendekia Junior High School strives to ensure that each learner has a comprehensive and meaningful learning experience.

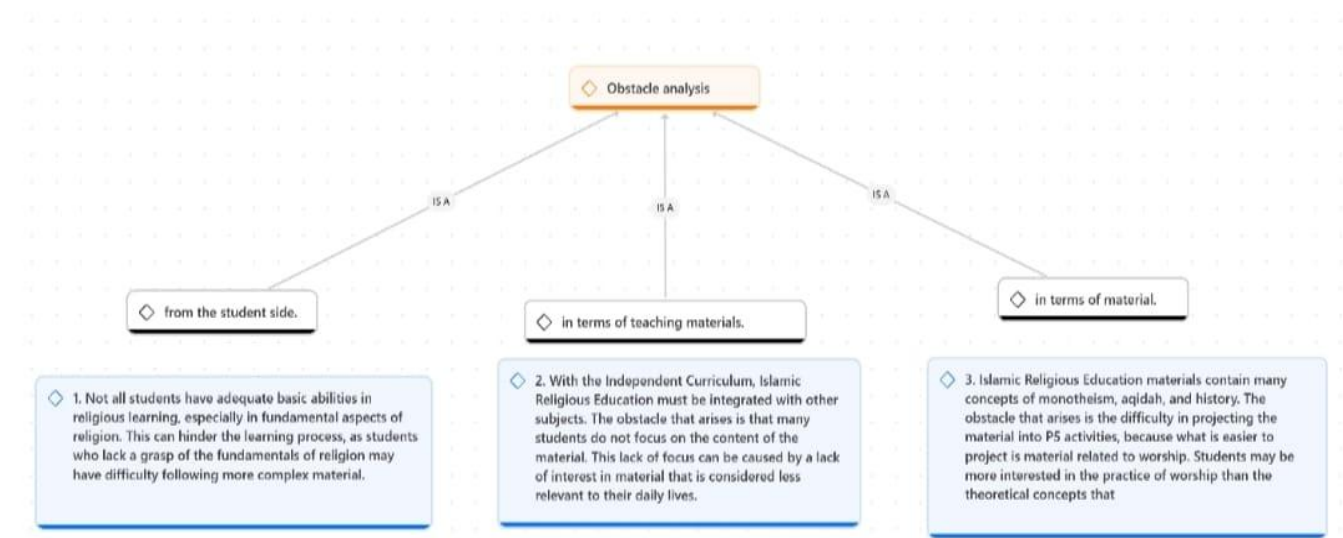
In the evaluation process, the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher at Asa Cendekia Junior High School said that evaluation activities require good linkages and cooperation, including monitoring he development of students. The teacher of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) gives an example that before students proceed to the next chapter, the evaluation is carried out orally, in the form of reflection questions to review understanding of the previous material. If in the initial assessment a student has not achieved the expected competencies, the focus of learning can be temporarily shifted to BTQ (Read and Write Al-Qur'an) learning with the BTQ teacher. This shows the importance of collaboration between teachers to ensure students understand the material before moving on to the next level.

Educators also emphasize that if students have not fully understood the material in the last semester, a review of the material is needed. There is no need to rush through all the material, but to focus on ensuring students' understanding. The evaluation process must be maximized for optimal results, with a target of at least 90% of students being able to understand and follow the learning well.

Structured and collaborative evaluation at Asa Cendekia Junior High School shows the school's efforts to ensure that learning Islamic Religious Education is not only theoretical, but can also shape the overall character of students. This is in line with the vision of the Merdeka curriculum, which aims to create education that is relevant, flexible, and focused on the formation of superior generations. Obstacles to the Implementation of Learning Management in the Merdeka Curriculum.

2. Barriers to the Implementation of Learning Management in the Merdeka Curriculum

Flexibility and freedom are emphasized in this independent curriculum, thus encouraging students to be actively involved in the learning process. This approach includes project-based learning and learner character development to build an effective and quality learning atmosphere, learning management plays an important role. However, in its implementation, various obstacles often arise and can interfere with the achievement.



Picture: Obstacle Analysis

Overall, the obstacles in the implementation of PAI learning management in the merdeka curriculum include students lack of basic abilities, unfocus on teaching material, and difficulties in integrating abstract concepts into learning practices. To overcome this problem, efforts are needed to increase students understanding of the materials, adjust teaching methods to make them more relevant to everyday life, and support training for teachers to understand and implement merdeka curriculum effectively.

Conclusion

Planning and implementing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at Asa Cendekia Junior High School in the Merdeka Curriculum is carried out systematically and integrated. The process starts from the decline of the education calendar to the development of flexible teaching modules. Organizing learning involves determining the teacher, class allocation, and selection of PAI materials which are carried out in a relevant manner and adjust to student needs, covering fundamental aspects of religion. The implementation of learning contains a series of activities from building motivation, followed by core activities that use diverse methods to accommodate students' various learning styles. Closing activities include material summarization and feedback, and evaluation is designed to support the achievement of learning objectives, with classroom approaches and daily habituation practices. Of course this will not escape the main obstacle lies in the diverse basic abilities of students, integrating with other subjects and the difficulty of projecting material into the P5 series. With this structured and integrative learning management, Smp asa Cendekia has succeeded in carrying out Islamic religious education learning in accordance with the principles of the independent curriculum, while encouraging the development of student

character.

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