Implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Learning on Student Character in Merdeka Belajar Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

The current PAI learning orientation is monotonous, and the assessment is only cognitive. The study's goal was to describe the impact of PAI learning on student character and the responses of MA students in Kediri Regency, East Java, to the autonomous learning curriculum. The descriptive quantitative research approach is used, with research subjects from Prosperous Madrasah Aliyah Kediri in East Java. The population consists of Prosperous MA students, and a sample of 70 responses was chosen randomly using the Slovin formula. Data collection by observation is carried out directly with questionnaires and interviews. PLS-SEM data analysis, research findings 1) The adoption of Islamic Religious Education Learning has a favorable and significant impact on Character Education. These findings suggest that Islamic Religious Education learning has a positive effect on the development of student character. 2) Islamic Religious Education Learning has a beneficial and essential influence on the MBKM Curriculum. These findings suggest that learning PAI is beneficial for implementing the MBKM curriculum.

Keywords: PAI Learning, Character, Independent Learning Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

Freedom to Learn has recently gained attention in the educational discourse, marked by the Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Anwar Makarim, highlighting its significance. He identified two pivotal educational elements: Freedom to Learn and empowering teachers. Independent Learning allows teachers and students to innovate and learn autonomously and creatively. The Independent Curriculum introduces diverse intra-curricular learning, optimizing content exploration and competency reinforcement.

The policy's implementation encourages teachers to play a pivotal role in curriculum development and learning. Besides being knowledge sources, teachers act as learning facilitators, relying on professional, pedagogical, personality, and

social competence. These competencies enable teachers to realize the Freedom to Learn policy's objectives. One prevalent issue prompting the Freedom to Learn policy is teachers' busyness with administrative tasks, hindering optimal classroom instruction.

Implementing independent learning requires reflection on the teaching and learning process that may restrict students, such as teachers predominantly using lecture methods, making students bored. Students are often passive learners, focused on assignments and limited learning resources. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) delivery is considered monotonous, leading to student disengagement.

In response, PAI learning must be innovative to engage students positively. Teachers must adopt creative and innovative teaching methods, emphasizing character exploration. PAI learning should prioritize character development, instilling Islamic values in students to comprehend, live by, and practice them daily. This includes fostering religiosity, honesty, hard work, fairness, discipline, tolerance, responsibility, love of the motherland, creativity, independence, curiosity, peace, respect, environmental care, social responsibility, nationalism, and more.

The research focuses on "Implementation of PAI Learning on Student Character in the Free Learning Curriculum" to understand how PAI learning influences student character in the independent learning curriculum.

The Independent Curriculum offers new learning experiences, unifying divisions in the learning process. Evaluation of the implemented independent learning curriculum in Senior High Schools is necessary.

Islamic Religious Education Learning's implementation emphasizes character development, connecting with the psychomotor and affective domains. PAI learning should charm students, fostering character in adapting to contemporary challenges. Lack of character education is linked to moral crises among students. Effective education requires integrating character values from schools, families, and communities.

Character education dimensions include ethical, literacy, aesthetic, and kinesthetic aspects. These dimensions strengthen students' faith, academic excellence, moral integrity, and physical well-being. The role of character education in the learning process integrates with local culture through learning, extracurricular activities, and school management.

The 2013 curriculum emphasizes five character values, later improved with the Merdeka Curriculum, focusing on soft skills and student character development. The Independent Curriculum, a response to current challenges, offers flexibility, allowing schools and teachers to adapt based on available resources.

Implementing PAI learning within the independent learning curriculum faces challenges, including resistance to change and difficulty in assessment. However, despite obstacles, the "Freedom to Learn" concept enhances teacher preparation and evaluation efficiency.

According to Nasution (2021), the concept of "Freedom to Learn" has not determined a direction for educational goals in our country. Still, this concept is efficient and effective, providing teachers more time to prepare and evaluate the learning process. Marisa (2021) further emphasizes the importance of the Independent Curriculum, aiming to create a happy learning atmosphere for teachers, students, and parents.

In Susilowati's study (2022), obstacles were identified, such as resistance to change and difficulty in eliminating old habits, with lecture methods still dominating. Shofia Hattarina et al. (2022) stress the three keys to implementing the Independent Curriculum: choice, learning process, and a comprehensive approach. Arviansyah & Shagena (2022) highlight the role of teachers as activators in the Independent Learning Curriculum, requiring them to be active, passionate, creative, innovative, and skilled facilitators for driving change in schools.

Rifa'i et al. (2022) shed light on the relevance of the Independent Curriculum to PAI subjects, emphasizing the curriculum's flexibility and freedom. Boang Manalu et al. (2022) emphasize the need to evaluate the implementation of the independent curriculum in senior high schools. Nur Irsyadiah et al. (2023) advocate integrating character education with local culture in all subjects.

In conclusion, the Independent Curriculum, focusing on Freedom to Learn, has become a significant driver for educational change in Indonesia. Its emphasis on character education, especially in Islamic Religious Education, shapes students' holistic development. However, challenges persist, requiring continuous efforts to overcome resistance to change and enhance the effectiveness of character education implementation.

METHOD

This research is a quantitative study; the research subjects were students of the Prosperous Aliyah Madrasah, Pare Village, Kediri Regency, East Java. This research is related to implementing character learning in the Independent Learning curriculum. The population of this study was Prosperous MA students with a sample of 70 respondents who were taken randomly using the Slovin formula. The data collection technique uses observation of the research object, which is carried out directly with a questionnaire tool. (Sugiyono, 2019).

Besides that, it also uses interviews with teachers to strengthen the results obtained from the questionnaire. While analyzing research data using PLS-SEM, (Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling), (Dash & Paul, 2021)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Analysis of Influence Between Variables

Questionnaire data filled out by 71 respondents were processed using PLS-SEM. The stages of PLS-SEM analysis are as follows:

1. Evaluation of the Outer Model

   The outer model is evaluated by looking at the validity and reliability values of the measurement of the model.

1.1 Validity Test

Measurement validity consists of convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity is determined using the loading factor parameter and the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) value. Measurements can be categorized as having convergent validity if the loading factor value is > 0.7 and the AVE value is > 0.5 (Jogiyanto, 2009). Discriminant validity is determined by looking at the cross loading of each variable and is categorized as having discriminant validity if it has a cross loading value of 0.7 (Jogiyanto, 2009).

1.2 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is the correlation between the indicator score and the construct score. The PLS-SEM model meets convergent validity and can be valid if the outer loading value is > 0.7 and the AVE value is > 0.5 (Jogiyanto, 2009). The following results from the correlation between the indicator and the construct show an outer loading value > 0.7.

Of the existing variables and indicators, for the PAI Learning variable (X1) only indicators X4, X5, X6, X7 have outer loading values > 70, so indicators < 70 must be excluded. Only indicators Y5 and Y7 have a Loading factor value of > 70 for the Character Education variable, so indicators < 70 must be excluded. For the MBKM Curriculum variable, only indicators Y14 and Y15 have a Loading factor value > 70, so indicators < 70 must be excluded. Then after being reprocessed, the training construct can be processed further. The result is as follows.

Table 1 - Loading Value of Each Stage II Construct

VARIABLE	INDICATOR	Loading
PAI learning (X)	X3	0,817
	X4	0,844
	X5	0,825
	X6	0,720
	X7	0,700
Character building (Y1)	Y5	0.729
	Y8	0.748
MBKM Curriculum (Y2)	Y14	0,757
	Y15	0,760

All outer loading variables and indicators are > 70 of the existing variables and indicators, so they are declared valid.

Besides that, the convergent validity test is seen from the AVE value. The variables in this study already have an AVE value > 0.5. The AVE value in the model can be seen in table 3 below.

Table 2 -Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Value

Variable	AVE Value
Character building	0.765
MBKM Curriculum	0.873
PAI learning	0.676

Source: Processed data (2023)

Thus it can be concluded that based on the outer loading and AVE values, the research data already meets the requirements of convergent validity.

1.3 Discriminant Validity

In discriminant validity, the cross loading value is used. An indicator is said to meet discriminant validity if the cross loading value of the indicator on the variable is the largest compared to other variables. The cross loading value in the model can be seen in table

Table 3 -Cross Loading

	Caracter Building	Curriculum MBKM	Learning PAI
X3	0.284	0.440	0.854
X4	0.378	0.531	0.902
X5	0.437	0.367	0.829
X6	0.222	0.437	0.806
X7	0.179	0.337	0.706
Y14	0.191	0.909	0.381
Y15	0.387	0.959	0.561
Y5	0.848	0.219	0.295
Y8	0.901	0.343	0.361

Based on table 4.4, all the indicators that make up each variable in this study have met discriminant validity, namely the cross loading value exceeds the value of 0.7 (Jogiyanto, 2011).

1.4. Reliability Test

Composite reliability tests the value of the reliability of indicators on a variable. A variable is said to meet composite reliability if it has a composite reliability value of > 0.7. The composite reliability value of each variable can be seen in table 4 below.

Table 4 Composite Reliability Value

Variabel	Nilai *Composite Reliability*
Caracter Building	0.867
Curiculum MBKM	0.932
Learning PAI	0.912

Table 5 shows that the composite reliability value meets the requirements, which is more than 0.7. Reliability testing is also seen from Cronbach's alpha value which is presented in table 5.

Table 5-Cronbach's Alpha Value

Variable	Nilai *Cronbach's Alpha*
Caracter Building	0.795
Curiculum MBKM	0.859
Learning PAI	0.880

The Cronbach's Alpha value above shows a value above 0.6 which proves that the measurements in this study are reliable.
2. Evaluation of the Inner Model
Evaluate the inner model or test the structural model to see the direct and indirect effects between variables. Evaluation of the inner model with PLS-SEM begins by looking at the R-square value. Based on data processing with SmartPLS 3.0 Professional, the R-Square value is generated in table 6.

Table 6-R-square value

Variabel	*R-square value*
Caracter Building	0,143
Curiculum MBKM	0,270

　　　　Table 6 shows that the R-square value for the variable "Character Education" is 0.143. This means that the percentage of the influence of PAI learning on character education is 14.3% while other factors influence the remaining 85.7%. Furthermore, the R-square value for the "MBKM Curriculum" variable is 0.270. This means that the percentage of the influence of PAI learning on the MBKM curriculum is 27% while other factors influence the remaining 73%. The goodness of fit assessment can be identified through the Q2 value. The Q2 value has the same meaning as the coefficient of determination (R-Square) in the regression analysis, where the higher the R-Square, the more fit the model can be with the data. The calculation of the Q2 value is as follows (Hair et al., 2011)

$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - R_1^2)(1 - R_2^2) \ldots (1 - R_p^2)$

$Q^2 = 1 - (1-0,143) \times (1-0,270)$

$= 1 - (0,857 \times 0,730)$

$= 1 - 0,626$

= 0,374

The calculation results show that the Q2 value is 0.374, meaning that the diversity of the research data can be explained by the structural model developed in this study, which is 37.4%. Based on these results, this study's structural model has a good fit.

The next evaluation is on the inner model by looking at the path diagram which shows how much influence the independent variables have on the dependent variable,

3. Hypothesis Testing (Bootstrapping Method)

After the data meets the measurement requirements, it can be continued by performing the bootstrapping method on SmartPLS 3.2.4. The bootstrapping method is a procedure for taking new samples repeatedly as many as N new samples from the original data of size n, where for a new sample a sample point is taken from the original data one by one up to n times with retrieval (Moreira et al., 2021).

For the simultaneous test, the T-statistic test is used which is intended to test the significance of the influence of the exogenous variables Xi as a whole on the endogenous variable Y. This test is carried out by comparing the T-value resulting from the T-statistic calculation with the T-table value. The null hypothesis will be accepted if the T-statistic value is smaller than the T-table value (T-statistic <T-table), this means that the alternative hypothesis is rejected. Conversely, the null hypothesis will be rejected if the T-statistic value is greater or equal to the T-table value (T-statistic ≥ T-table), this means that the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The T-table value can be known based on a significance level of 0.05 with a total of 71 observations, which is 1.66. The following table is the result of the t-statistic test.

Table 7- Statistical test of the Direct Influence hypothesis

Statistical hypothesis	ξ	η	t-statistic	P Value
H01	Learning PAI	Caracter	3,451	0,001
H02	Learning PAI	Curiculum MBKM	6,133	0,000

Based on the equation model in table 8, structural equations are made in the path diagram and statistical hypothesis testing for testing each research hypothesis as follows:

H1: PAI learning has a positive effect on Character Education.

H01 : $\gamma_1 \le 0$: PAI learning (ξ_1) has no positive effect on Character Education (η_1).

Ha1 : $\gamma_1 > 0$: PAI learning (ξ_1) has a positive effect on Character Education (η_1).

T-statistic (H01) = 3.451. 🔲 3.451 > 1.66 or 0.001 < 0.05

T-statistic (H01) > T-table, then H01 is rejected (Ha1 is accepted).

This means that PAI learning has a significant positive effect on character education.

From testing the research results, there is a positive and significant influence between PAI Learning and Character Education. This is consistent with the results of the path coefficients with an original sample value of 0.378 which indicates a positive number with a t-count value of 3.451 greater than the t-table value of 1.66 and a p-value of 0.001 less than 0.05 so that it can be said that the PAI learning

variable has a significant effect on the Character Education variable. These results can be interpreted to indicate that PAI learning has a good impact on forming students' career education.

H2: PAI learning has a positive effect on the MBKM Curriculum.
H02 : $2 ≤ 0$: PAI learning (ξ_1) has no positive effect on MBKM Curriculum (η_1).
Ha2 : $2 > 0$: PAI learning (ξ_1) has a positive effect on the MBKM Curriculum (η_1).
T-statistic (H02) = 6.133. 6.133 > 1.66 or 0.000 < 0.05
T-statistic(H02) > T-table, then H01 is rejected (Ha2 is accepted).
This means that PAI learning has a significantly positive positive effect on the MBKM Curriculum.

Islamic Religious Education Learning has a positive and significant influence on the MBKM Curriculum. This is consistent with the results of the path coefficients with an original sample value of 0.520 which indicates a positive number with a t-count value of 6.133 greater than the t-table value of 1.66 and a p-value of 0.000 less than 0.05 so that it can be said that the PAI learning variable has a significant effect on the MBKM Curriculum variable. These results can be interpreted that learning PAI has a good impact on implementing the MBKM curriculum.

Discussion

Discuss the Implementation of PAI Learning on the Character of Students in Independent Learning at Madrasah Aliyah Sejahtera.

Along with this, PAI learning is an effort to encourage students to study the PAI curriculum, which permanently changes students' behavior. In optimizing PAI learning in schools, they face obstacles. Therefore,: First, a change in the paradigm of PAI learning is needed which is not only limited to cognitive orientation, but also the psychomotor, affective and aspects of attitudes and religious behavior. Second, PAI learning in schools/madrasahs must be developed and innovated, with media in learning to be an alternative, developed and placed as a source, reference, and information on teaching materials, so that PAI learning is up to date and attracts students' interest. (Priatna, 2018)

Based on some of the results of the study, it shows that the role of the PAI teacher in the formation of the character of students is very much needed with the existence of a PAI teacher who acts as a parent, of course, has a very large role in educating students to become ihsani human beings. As for his role as a PAI teacher in building the character of students including: Empowerment, exemplary through habituation. 3S (Greetings, greetings, smile).

The habit of praying dhuha and midday in congregation, The habit of reading short letters, The recitation of prayers, The habit of being disciplined, The habit of being honest. The supporting factors come from external factors, namely good teacher academic and professional competence, and creativity in implementing learning. Inhibiting factors consist of internal factors, namely from the person of each student due to the lack of education and guidance of parents given to children

since childhood while external factors are of those from outside the community environment

PAI teachers' role in developing exemplary students' character is shown through their words, attitudes, and personality, such as courtesy, discipline, responsibility, tolerance, honesty, and concern for students and other people. The teacher as a guide assists in and outside the classroom by observing students' behavior and correcting their mistakes, giving warm reprimands. (Research et al., 2022)

One alternative that can be done in carrying out character education in schools is to optimize the learning of Islamic religious education (PAI) materials. The role of religious education, especially Islamic religious education, is very strategic in realizing students' character formation. Religious education is a means of transforming knowledge in the religious aspect (cognitive aspect), as a means of transforming norms and moral values to shape attitudes (affective aspect), which plays a role in controlling behavior (psychomotor aspect) so as to create a complete human personality. . (Sakur et al., 2022)

Based on the results of interviews conducted with Islamic Religious Education teachers on June 5, 2023, (Sundari teacher of PAI) explained that the Implementation of PAI Learning on the Characteristics of Prosperous Madrasah Aliyah Students is as follows:

1. All students are required to live in dormitories, except for students who live around Selahtera MA;
2. Make a habit of reading prayers every morning and praying Duha in congregation;
3. Every time the prayer is performed, it is mandatory for students to be absent;
4. For students who do not carry out the midnight prayer, there is a summary;
5. Character education takes precedence over academics.

CONCLUSION

From testing the research results: 1) there is a positive and significant influence between PAI Learning and Character Education. This is consistent with the results of the path coefficients with an original sample value of 0.378 which indicates a positive number with a t-count value of 3.451 greater than the t-table value of 1.66 and a p-value of 0.001 less than 0.05 so that it can be said that the PAI learning variable has a significant effect on the Character Education variable. These results can be interpreted to indicate that PAI learning has a good impact on forming students' career education. 2) Islamic Religious Education Learning has a positive and significant influence on the MBKM Curriculum. This is consistent with the results of the path coefficients with an original sample value of 0.520 which indicates a positive number with a t-count value of 6.133 greater than the t-table

value of 1.66 and a p-value of 0.000 less than 0.05 so that it can be said that the PAI learning variable has a significant effect on the MBKM Curriculum variable. These results can be interpreted that learning PAI has a good impact on implementing the MBKM curriculum.

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