

Curriculum Management in Islamic Boarding Schools: Integrating the Study of Kitab Kuning and Quranic Memorization (Tahfidz)

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Abstract

Curriculum management in Islamic boarding schools is seen as a necessity for survival amidst competition and globalization, as well as a foundation for future development. Curriculum management plays a crucial role in supporting the success of memorization programs in Islamic educational institutions. This paper aims to explore the concept of implementing curriculum management in the learning of the yellow books and Quran memorization in Islamic boarding schools. Through proper and correct management of the learning of the yellow books and Quran memorization, it is hoped that optimal learning outcomes can be achieved. The study employed a library research method, utilizing sources in the form of journals and books retrieved from Google Scholar. The results indicate that the management of the yellow books curriculum in Islamic boarding schools is implemented in an integrated manner, as the integrated curriculum utilizes a learning approach that enables students, both individually and in groups, to actively explore, explore, and discover concepts. Furthermore, this integrated curriculum is a new curriculum without abandoning the previous curriculum model. Therefore, the integration of the old and new curriculum models can strengthen Islamic boarding schools as unique, creative, and distinctive institutions.

Keywords

Curriculum Management ;Learning ;Tahfidz Al-Qur'an and Yellow Book



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INTRODUCTION

The need for curriculum management in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) has become increasingly important to ensure their sustainability amid the challenges of globalization and educational competition while simultaneously serving as a foundation for future institutional development. Curriculum management plays a strategic role in enabling pesantren to operate effectively and efficiently in accordance with their educational vision and objectives. Similar to formal educational institutions, pesantren are expected to produce highly qualified graduates

through a systematic educational process involving teachers, ustadz, kyai, students, and the surrounding community. These stakeholders collectively contribute to improving graduate quality, while the curriculum functions as the primary framework guiding the educational process. Consequently, curriculum management enhances the competitiveness of graduates for higher levels of education. In addition to maintaining their traditional educational identity, many pesantren have also adopted the national curriculum to accommodate contemporary educational demands (Karim, 2025).

In practice, pesantren no longer focus exclusively on Islamic religious education but have expanded their curricula to include general subjects that broaden students' knowledge and competencies. This integration enables graduates to combine Islamic scholarship with scientific and technological knowledge that continues to develop rapidly. One of the distinctive strengths of pesantren lies in their ability to cultivate a comprehensive way of life that promotes independence among students without dependence on external institutions. The growth and sustainability of pesantren are closely associated with the effectiveness of their management systems. As one of Indonesia's oldest Islamic educational institutions, pesantren have historically implemented a boarding-based educational model characterized by independent leadership under one or more kyai, whose authority and moral integrity shape the institution. Long before Indonesia's independence, pesantren had already become productive centers of Islamic learning. Although often categorized as non-formal Islamic educational institutions, pesantren design their own educational programs and generally operate independently from formal governmental regulations (Agustin, 2025).

In the contemporary educational context, the development of Tahfidz Al-Qur'an (Qur'anic memorization) studies has become increasingly significant. Numerous Islamic educational institutions throughout Indonesia actively promote and develop Tahfidz programs, reflecting the strong enthusiasm of Indonesian Muslims for Qur'anic education and their commitment to encouraging their children to memorize the Qur'an. This phenomenon also represents an important indicator of the advancement of Islamic education. Although memorizing the Qur'an has long been an established tradition within pesantren, it remains a central religious obligation because the Qur'an is the revealed word of Allah that serves as guidance for all Muslims. Preserving its authenticity through memorization is therefore considered a noble responsibility, particularly for students enrolled in Tahfidz-oriented pesantren where memorization is emphasized or even mandatory. Nevertheless, despite Allah's promise of ease in memorizing the Qur'an, the memorization process itself requires considerable dedication, perseverance, and appropriate educational management (Fikri, 2025).

At the same time, the teaching of classical Islamic texts (kitab kuning) has gradually declined in many modern pesantren following the incorporation of general education into their curricula. As a consequence, students' mastery of classical Islamic scholarship has weakened. Since the study of kitab kuning provides the essential foundation for understanding the Qur'an, Hadith, Fiqh, and Ijma', strengthening this component remains indispensable for developing students with noble character. Effective instruction in classical Islamic texts requires an

integrated curriculum capable of promoting efficient and meaningful learning aligned with Islamic teachings. Such an integrated curriculum facilitates learning while enhancing students' motivation and achievement in mastering classical texts. In accordance with the School-Based Curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan—KTSP), integrated learning is recommended across all educational levels because it encourages students, individually and collaboratively, to actively explore, investigate, and construct knowledge in a holistic and authentic manner (Ihsan, 2020).

Considering these circumstances, the successful implementation of pesantren education depends substantially on effective curriculum management. Without a well-designed curriculum management system, the educational process cannot operate optimally. Therefore, this study offers a novel contribution to the field of Islamic education by proposing a curriculum management approach that systematically integrates modern scientific knowledge with Islamic values. Through this integration, the study is expected to provide valuable insights for strengthening curriculum implementation in Islamic boarding schools while preserving their distinctive educational identity..

METHODS

This study employed a library research design using a descriptive analytical approach. The research was conducted through the systematic collection of relevant literature, followed by the organization, classification, and interpretation of the collected data. The descriptive analytical method was selected because the primary objective of this study was to provide a comprehensive and detailed description of the phenomenon under investigation based on existing scholarly sources. The research process began with identifying and formulating the research problem, determining the research focus, developing the scope of the literature review, formulating guiding research questions, and subsequently collecting relevant data from academic references. The data sources consisted primarily of scientific journals and scholarly books related to curriculum management in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), the integration of kitab kuning learning and Tahfidz Al-Qur'an, and Islamic educational management. The collected data were then analyzed descriptively to identify key concepts, synthesize previous findings, and develop a comprehensive understanding of curriculum management practices that support the integration of classical Islamic learning and Qur'anic memorization in Islamic boarding schools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Curriculum management in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) is a systematic process involving the planning, implementation, evaluation, and continuous development of educational programs within the pesantren environment. The management process consists of three fundamental elements: planning, implementation (actuating), and supervision (controlling). Within the context of pesantren, the curriculum is not merely regarded as a

formal instructional framework but also as a comprehensive system for cultivating students' character, spirituality, and the distinctive scholarly traditions of Islamic education. Consequently, curriculum management serves as the backbone for preserving the identity and sustainability of pesantren values while enabling these institutions to adapt to contemporary educational challenges. Historically, pesantren represent the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, possessing a unique curriculum that differs significantly from that of conventional schools. Traditionally, the pesantren curriculum is based on the study of classical Islamic texts (kitab kuning), delivered through learning methods such as sorogan, bandongan, halaqah, and wetonan. However, in response to educational developments, many pesantren have gradually adopted the formal curricula issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education, resulting in the emergence of an integrated educational system that combines traditional Islamic learning with national educational standards (Widodo, 2025).

Classical Islamic texts (kitab kuning) refer to religious works written in Arabic or Arabic script by early Muslim scholars (ulama salaf), traditionally printed on yellow-colored paper. More accurately, these works are known as kutub al-turats, representing the intellectual heritage and scholarly contributions that shaped the development of Islamic civilization. This rich scholarly tradition contains both fundamental principles that remain indispensable and contextual discussions that may be critically examined or adapted to contemporary circumstances. Nevertheless, core disciplines such as Usul al-Fiqh, Musthalah al-Hadith, Nahwu, Sharaf, Tafsir, and Tajwid continue to serve as essential foundations of Islamic scholarship. Consequently, the study of kitab kuning remains indispensable for Islamic education, as these classical works continue to function as authoritative references for Muslim scholars, Islamic education teachers, and students across generations (Hanani, 2022).

The implementation of curriculum management to strengthen students' Tahfidz Al-Qur'an program at Pondok Pesantren Amanatul Qur'an demonstrates the effectiveness of integrating Qur'anic memorization with a structured educational system. Graduates who successfully complete the memorization of the Qur'an originate from various regions across Indonesia, both within and outside Java. Upon completing their memorization, students are awarded a sanad (chain of transmission) in Qira'ah Sab'ah, signifying the authenticity of their recitation lineage. The Tahfidz program is conducted through several systematic stages designed not only to improve students' memorization but also to enhance the accuracy, fluency, and correctness of Qur'anic recitation. Furthermore, students who demonstrate mastery of Qur'anic memorization receive certification of Qira'ah Sab'ah, reflecting their academic and spiritual competence in preserving the Qur'an (Agustin, 2025).

The strengthening of the Tahfidz Al-Qur'an program is further supported by integrating Qur'anic memorization with the study of kitab kuning and general academic subjects. This integrated curriculum enables students to develop not only exceptional memorization skills but also comprehensive competencies in Islamic sciences and contemporary knowledge. As a result, graduates possess balanced intellectual, spiritual, and practical capabilities that enable

them to respond effectively to the challenges of the modern era while remaining firmly grounded in authentic Islamic teachings based on the principles of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah. In addition, Pondok Pesantren Amanatul Qur'an collaborates closely with Pondok Pesantren Amanatul Ummah in strengthening Qur'anic memorization programs. Both institutions share the same vision of producing outstanding, well-rounded, and morally upright individuals dedicated to advancing Islam and contributing to national development. Alongside the Tahfidz program, students study various classical Islamic texts, including Nahwu, Ta'lim al-Muta'allim, Nashoihul 'Ibad, and other works emphasizing Islamic ethics and character education. This comprehensive curriculum reflects the pesantren's commitment to integrating religious knowledge, moral development, and academic excellence within a unified educational framework.

Discussion

The implementation of curriculum management in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) requires educators to continuously adopt and adapt both traditional and contemporary learning theories in response to educational developments. This approach is aligned with the ****Regulation of the Minister of National Education No. 22 of 2006 concerning Content Standards****, which emphasizes that curriculum implementation should be competency-based and responsive to students' developmental characteristics and educational needs. Students should receive quality educational services while being provided with opportunities to express themselves freely within a dynamic, creative, and enjoyable learning environment. Furthermore, curriculum implementation should strengthen the five pillars of learning: learning to believe and be devoted to God Almighty, learning to understand and internalize knowledge, learning to apply knowledge effectively, learning to live harmoniously and contribute to society, and learning to develop personal identity through active and meaningful learning experiences. In addition, the curriculum should accommodate remedial, enrichment, and accelerated learning according to students' abilities while fostering balanced spiritual, personal, social, and moral development. The relationship between educators and students should also reflect mutual respect, openness, warmth, and cooperation in accordance with the educational philosophy of **Tut Wuri Handayani, Ing Madya Mangun Karso,** and **Ing Ngarso Sung Tulodo**, whereby educators provide guidance, motivation, and exemplary leadership throughout the learning process (Karim, 2025).

To achieve these educational objectives, pesantren require a distinctive curriculum management system that integrates the study of classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*) with contemporary educational demands. Effective curriculum management begins with ****planning****, which involves establishing educational objectives that align with the pesantren's vision and mission, conducting SWOT analysis, identifying institutional needs, analyzing stakeholder expectations, addressing strategic issues, and formulating appropriate educational strategies and programs. This planning stage serves as the foundation for ensuring that curriculum implementation remains systematic and responsive to institutional goals. The second managerial function is ****organizing****, which focuses on establishing an effective

organizational structure, clarifying responsibilities, and fostering collaboration among educational personnel. Proper organization enables all institutional components to work synergistically in implementing the planned curriculum while maintaining accountability and efficiency throughout the educational process (Fikri, 2025).

Another essential component of curriculum management is **motivating**, which aims to strengthen students' enthusiasm and commitment toward achieving educational objectives. Strong motivation significantly influences students' academic performance, persistence, and success in completing various learning programs. This motivational process is complemented by **actuating**, which encourages educators and students to implement educational activities enthusiastically and responsibly according to institutional plans. Furthermore, **facilitating** ensures the availability of educational resources, learning facilities, and opportunities for personal and professional development, thereby enabling students to cultivate creativity and innovation. Equally important is **empowering**, which emphasizes maximizing the potential of human resources within the pesantren by developing the competencies of both educators and students, ultimately contributing to institutional sustainability and educational excellence (Fikri, 2025).

Curriculum management is further strengthened through the functions of **controlling** and **evaluating**. Controlling involves continuous supervision to ensure that educational activities are implemented according to established plans and institutional objectives. Through systematic monitoring, deviations can be identified promptly and corrected effectively. Evaluation, meanwhile, serves as a comprehensive process for measuring educational outcomes and determining whether institutional standards have been achieved. When expected outcomes are attained, follow-up actions are implemented to maintain educational quality; conversely, when outcomes fall below expected standards, continuous improvements are undertaken to enhance curriculum implementation. These managerial functions collectively establish a quality assurance system that supports the continuous development of pesantren education while maintaining its effectiveness and accountability (Fikri, 2025).

In the context of modern Islamic education, the position of *kitab kuning* remains indispensable because these classical texts preserve the authenticity of Islamic intellectual traditions and the scholarly legacy of earlier Muslim scholars. Many pesantren continue to uphold the teachings of the **Shafi'i school of jurisprudence**, recognizing its historical significance within Indonesian Islamic education. Nevertheless, educational reforms introduced by the Indonesian government have encouraged pesantren to integrate general academic subjects into their curricula alongside traditional Islamic sciences. Consequently, contemporary students are expected not only to master *kitab kuning* in disciplines such as **Akhlak**, **Tauhid**, and **Fiqh**, but also to acquire competencies in modern scientific knowledge. This integrated curriculum enables students to develop comprehensive intellectual, spiritual, and practical competencies necessary for addressing the challenges of contemporary society while remaining firmly grounded in Islamic values. Therefore, effective

curriculum management encompassing planning, organizing, motivating, actuating, facilitating, empowering, controlling, and evaluating is essential for ensuring that pesantren continue to preserve their distinctive educational identity while simultaneously responding to the demands of educational modernization (Widodo, 2025)..

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings presented in this study, it can be concluded that curriculum management plays a pivotal role in strengthening the integration of Tahfidz Al-Qur'an and kitab kuning learning within Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). At Pondok Pesantren Amanatul Qur'an, curriculum implementation is carried out through three flagship programs—Binandhor, Tahfidz Al-Qur'an, and Qira'ah Sab'ah—which collectively support the development of students' Qur'anic memorization competencies. The successful implementation of these programs is achieved through the active involvement of all institutional components, ensuring that curriculum management is conducted systematically through planning, implementation, supervision, and evaluation. This integrated management approach not only enhances students' memorization abilities but also improves the accuracy and quality of their Qur'anic recitation while preserving the authenticity of Islamic scholarly traditions.

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