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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Implementation of the Integrated Curriculum at the Darul Arqam Muhammadiyah Islamic Boarding School, Gombara

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Abstract: This study aims to describe and analyze the implementation of an integrated curriculum at Pesantren Darul Arqam Muhammadiyah Gombara Makassar, which combines the national curriculum, the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum, and the ISMUBA curriculum. The research focuses on curriculum planning, implementation, evaluation, and the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting its implementation. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving pesantren leaders, teachers, and students. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while validity was ensured through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking. The findings reveal that the integrated curriculum was systematically planned and implemented through learning activities and boarding school programs that emphasize not only academic achievement but also Islamic values, character building, and students' skills. Evaluation was conducted comprehensively by assessing academic, attitudinal, and practical competencies. Supporting factors included teacher competence, the boarding school system, and institutional policy support, whereas challenges involved students' learning burden, limited instructional time, and differences in teachers' ability to integrate the curricula. Overall, the study concludes that the success of the integrated curriculum implementation depends on the synergy between planning, implementation, and evaluation in developing students with strong character, academic competence, and the ability to apply Islamic values in daily life.

Keywords: Implementation; The Integrated Curriculum; The Darul Arqam Muhammadiyah Islamic Boarding School, Gombara.

1. Introduction

Education is the primary foundation for the development of a sustainable human civilization. In the modern era, education is no longer merely a process of transferring knowledge, but also involves the transformation of values, character formation, and the comprehensive development of human potential. The rapid advancement of science and technology in the era of globalization has brought significant changes to the educational landscape, creating both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, globalization facilitates access to



information; on the other hand, it contributes to serious issues such as moral degradation, identity crises, and the weakening of spiritual values in society (Usman et al., 2024). These conditions require educational systems not only to focus on intellectual intelligence (IQ) but also to develop emotional intelligence (EQ) and spiritual intelligence (SQ). However, the reality shows that formal education often remains partial and fragmented. The dichotomy between religious and secular sciences frequently hinders the formation of students' holistic personalities, resulting in graduates who excel academically but lack moral integrity and social responsibility (Adilan & Mu'min, 2025).

In the context of Islamic education, particularly in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), there is a need for an educational model capable of integrating various dimensions of knowledge holistically. *Pesantren* possess strengths in moral cultivation and Islamic scholarly traditions, yet they are also required to adapt to contemporary developments. One relevant approach is the implementation of an integrated curriculum that combines religious and general sciences into a unified and interconnected educational framework (Achmadin et al., 2024). An integrated curriculum emphasizes not only mastery of subject matter but also the internalization of values, character building, and life skills development. Through this approach, education is expected to produce students who achieve balance in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (AlAfnan, 2025). This principle aligns with Islamic teachings that emphasize comprehensive balance in life, as reflected in QS. Al-Baqarah verse 208 regarding the obligation to practice Islam comprehensively (*kaffah*), and QS. Al-Qashash verse 77 concerning balance between worldly and spiritual life.

One institution implementing an integrated curriculum is *Pesantren Darul Arqam Muhammadiyah Gombara Makassar*. This *pesantren* integrates three major curricula: the national curriculum, the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum, and the ISMUBA curriculum (Al-Islam, Muhammadiyah Studies, and Arabic Language). This integration aims to eliminate the dichotomy of knowledge and provide students with a more comprehensive learning experience. Furthermore, the boarding school system enables the educational process to continue for twenty-four hours, allowing character formation and value internalization to occur more intensively and sustainably (Hariyanto et al., 2026). The *pesantren* also serves as a strategic center for Muhammadiyah cadre formation; therefore, its educational orientation extends beyond academics to include ideological character building, leadership development, and *da'wah* spirit. Consequently, the curriculum implemented is holistic, encompassing intellectual, spiritual, and social dimensions of student development (Lee, 2020).

Nevertheless, the implementation of the integrated curriculum in this *pesantren* faces several challenges. One major challenge is the dense learning schedule resulting from the integration of multiple curricula, which may lead to physical and mental fatigue among students. In addition, uneven teacher competence remains an obstacle because integrated curricula demand multidisciplinary and integrative teaching abilities. Another challenge is the suboptimal internalization of Muhammadiyah values in the learning process, influenced by less varied teaching methods and limited instructional time (Fahmi & Shohib, 2025). Based on these conditions, the implementation of the integrated curriculum at *Pesantren Darul Arqam Muhammadiyah Gombara Makassar* represents a strategic effort to develop integrative and adaptive Islamic education. However, the success of its implementation is strongly influenced by learning management, teacher competence, and innovation in learning strategies. Therefore, research on the implementation of integrated curricula is important to provide a comprehensive understanding and contribute to the development of both theory and practice in Islamic education, particularly within *pesantren* institutions.

2. Research Method and Materials

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to obtain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the integrated curriculum at Pesantren Darul Arqam Muhammadiyah Gombara Makassar. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the research focused on exploring meanings, processes, and social contexts related to curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation in a holistic manner (Cresswell et al., 2020). The case study method was used to provide a comprehensive and contextual description of the educational practices carried out within the pesantren environment (Ali, 2020). The research location was selected because the pesantren implements an integrated curriculum system that combines the national curriculum, the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum, and the ISMUBA curriculum, making it relevant to the objectives of the study.

The sources of data in this study consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from informants through in-depth interviews involving pesantren leaders, teachers, and educational staff, while secondary data were collected from curriculum documents, learning instruments, and institutional archives relevant to the research (Muazzomi et al., 2017). Data collection techniques included interviews, observations, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore information regarding the implementation of the integrated curriculum, whereas observations were used to directly examine the learning process and students' daily activities within the boarding school environment. Documentation techniques complemented the data collection process through written records, photographs, and other institutional documents (Tamara et al., 2024).

The data analysis process employed an interactive analysis model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data reduction was carried out by selecting and simplifying relevant information, while the data were presented in descriptive narrative form to facilitate interpretation. Conclusions were drawn gradually and continuously throughout the research process. To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the findings, this study applied triangulation techniques, including source, technique, and time triangulation. Furthermore, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability tests were conducted to ensure that the research findings were scientifically valid and reliable (Enworo, 2023). Through these approaches and methods, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the integrated curriculum at Pesantren Darul Arqam Muhammadiyah Gombara Makassar.

3. Results and Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of the integrated curriculum at Pesantren Darul Arqam Muhammadiyah Gombara Makassar has been systematically carried out through the integration of three major curricula: the national curriculum, the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum, and the ISMUBA curriculum (Al-Islam, Muhammadiyah Studies, and Arabic Language). This integration is reflected not only in the formal curriculum structure but also in classroom learning practices and students' daily activities within the pesantren environment. The learning process is designed to connect general academic subjects with Islamic values so that students gain a more comprehensive and meaningful understanding of knowledge. Such integration reflects the growing trend in Islamic education institutions to eliminate the dichotomy between religious and secular sciences, which has long been considered one of the weaknesses of the education system in many Muslim societies (Sahin, 2018). Integrated curriculum models are increasingly viewed as an effective educational approach because they encourage students to develop intellectual competence alongside spiritual awareness and moral responsibility (Asman et al., 2025). In this context, the pesantren does not merely function as a place for academic instruction but also as a center for character formation and value internalization. This finding is consistent with previous studies stating that Islamic boarding schools play an important role in shaping students' religious identity, discipline, and social ethics through a balanced integration of cognitive and

spiritual learning (Mustain & Bakar, 2025). Furthermore, integrated curricula in Islamic institutions have been shown to contribute positively to students' critical thinking skills, moral behavior, and emotional maturity because learning is not limited to theoretical knowledge but is also connected to daily life practices (Batsal & Hadi, 2025).

The implementation of the integrated curriculum at Pesantren Darul Arqam Muhammadiyah Gombara Makassar is also strongly supported by the boarding school system, which enables educational activities to take place continuously for twenty-four hours. The boarding school environment creates an educational ecosystem in which students are consistently exposed to religious values, discipline, and communal responsibility through formal learning, worship activities, and daily routines. This condition supports the process of value internalization more intensively compared to conventional school systems where students spend limited time within the educational environment (Bartell, 2003). The holistic nature of pesantren education aligns with the theory of holistic education, which emphasizes the balanced development of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of learners (Setio & Oviyanti, 2026). Through the boarding school system, students not only acquire academic knowledge but also practice Islamic ethics, leadership, cooperation, and self-discipline in their daily interactions. Previous studies have shown that the boarding school model significantly contributes to character education because students live in an environment that consistently reinforces moral and spiritual values (Fitri et al., 2024). Moreover, Muhammadiyah-based pesantren have a unique educational orientation because they combine Islamic teachings with modern educational principles and organizational values, thereby preparing students to become intellectually competent and socially responsible individuals (Pertivi et al., 2026). The integration of ISMUBA subjects into daily activities also strengthens students' understanding of Muhammadiyah ideology and Islamic values, which are expected to guide their behavior both inside and outside the pesantren environment. Such an educational model is increasingly relevant in the contemporary era, where educational institutions are required to respond to moral crises, social changes, and the challenges of globalization (BEN-IZUAGIE, 2025).

Despite these strengths, the findings also reveal several challenges in implementing the integrated curriculum. One of the major challenges is the dense learning schedule resulting from the integration of multiple curricula. Students are required to study both general and religious subjects within limited time allocations, which increases their academic workload and may lead to physical and psychological fatigue. This challenge is common in many Islamic boarding schools implementing integrated curricula because curriculum integration often increases the quantity of learning materials without proportionally adjusting instructional time (Auni et al., 2022). Excessive academic demands may reduce students' learning motivation and negatively affect their well-being if not supported by effective time management and adequate recreational activities (Dong et al., 2023). In addition, the complexity of integrated curricula requires students to adapt to different learning approaches and expectations simultaneously, which may become burdensome for some learners. Previous research has emphasized the importance of balancing academic rigor with students' mental health and emotional needs in boarding school setting (Thoyibah et al., 2025). Therefore, pesantren administrators need to design more flexible learning schedules and provide psychological support systems to maintain students' physical and emotional well-being.

Another important challenge identified in this study relates to teacher competence in implementing integrated learning. Although teachers generally possess adequate subject knowledge, not all educators have the ability to integrate religious and general sciences effectively within the learning process. Integrated curricula require multidisciplinary competence, pedagogical creativity, and the ability to connect theoretical concepts with Islamic values contextually (Asykur et al., 2025). However, differences in teachers' educational backgrounds and professional experiences often influence the quality of curriculum implementation. Some teachers still tend to use conventional teaching methods

centered on lectures and memorization, limiting students' opportunities for active participation and critical thinking. This finding supports earlier studies indicating that teacher competence is one of the most decisive factors in the success of curriculum integration in Islamic educational institutions (Fahrezi et al., 2024). Teachers are expected not only to transfer knowledge but also to become role models capable of demonstrating Islamic values in their behavior and teaching practices. Consequently, continuous professional development programs are essential to improve teachers' integrative pedagogical skills, technological literacy, and innovative teaching strategies. Training programs focusing on interdisciplinary learning, project-based learning, and contextual Islamic pedagogy may significantly enhance the effectiveness of integrated curriculum implementation (Herlina et al., 2025).

From the perspective of value internalization, the study found that although the ISMUBA curriculum was specifically designed to instill Islamic and Muhammadiyah values, its implementation has not yet been fully optimal. One contributing factor is the limited use of innovative and contextual learning methods. In some cases, Islamic values are delivered normatively without adequately connecting them to students' real-life experiences and contemporary social issues. As a result, students may understand religious concepts theoretically but face difficulties applying them practically in everyday life. Effective value internalization requires learning strategies that are participatory, reflective, and contextual so that students can internalize values meaningfully rather than merely memorizing religious doctrines (Mashoedi et al., 2025). Contemporary Islamic education emphasizes the importance of integrating moral education into all aspects of learning rather than confining it to specific religious subjects (Rosyada, 2021). Therefore, all teachers, regardless of their subject areas, should actively contribute to character education by integrating ethical and spiritual dimensions into their teaching. The use of collaborative learning, experiential learning, and digital learning media may also increase students' engagement and facilitate deeper understanding of Islamic values in modern contexts (Izzuddin & Istanto, 2025).

Overall, this discussion demonstrates that the implementation of the integrated curriculum at Pesantren Darul Arqam Muhammadiyah Gombara Makassar has significant potential to create holistic and integrative education capable of balancing intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and social development. The integrated curriculum model represents an important innovation in Islamic education because it seeks to overcome the long-standing dichotomy between religious and secular sciences while responding to the demands of globalization and modern society (Ubaidila et al., 2025). However, the success of its implementation depends greatly on effective educational management, teacher competence, and continuous innovation in learning strategies. Strengthening teachers' professional capacities, improving curriculum management, and developing more contextual and student-centered learning approaches are essential for enhancing the effectiveness of integrated curriculum implementation in pesantren environments. In addition, collaboration between educational institutions, families, and the wider community is necessary to ensure that the values taught within the pesantren can be consistently reinforced in students' broader social lives (Siswati et al., 2023). Therefore, integrated curricula should not merely be viewed as administrative curriculum integration but as a comprehensive educational philosophy aimed at developing individuals who are intellectually capable, morally grounded, spiritually mature, and socially responsible in facing the challenges of contemporary society.

4. Conclusion

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of the integrated curriculum at the Darul Arqam Muhammadiyah Gombara Islamic Boarding School in Makassar is a strategic effort to realize a holistic and integrative Islamic education. The integration of the national curriculum, the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum, and the ISMUBA curriculum has provided a comprehensive learning experience for students, enabling them to connect knowledge and Islamic values in their daily lives. The

implementation of the integrated curriculum is supported by a boarding school system that allows for an intensive 24-hour educational process. This positively contributes to the development of character, discipline, and the internalization of Islamic and Muhammadiyah values in the students. However, the implementation of the integrated curriculum still faces several challenges, including a busy learning schedule, uneven teacher competency in integrating various disciplines, and suboptimal internalization of values in learning. These challenges demonstrate that the success of the integrated curriculum is determined not only by curriculum design, but also by the quality of implementation, educational management, and the readiness of human resources. Thus, it can be affirmed that an integrated curriculum has great potential in developing students who excel not only academically but also possess strong character, spirituality, and social skills. Therefore, ongoing efforts to improve teacher competency, learning innovation, and curriculum management are needed to ensure optimal and sustainable implementation of the integrated curriculum.

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