Development of an Islamic Religious Education Curriculum Based on Spiritual and Social Competencies at Darussalam Senior High School Medan

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Abstract

Islamic Religious Education plays a strategic role in shaping students' character by fostering a balance between intellectual, spiritual, and social intelligence. However, in practice, religious education in many schools still tends to emphasize cognitive and memorization aspects, without fully addressing the formation of values and behavior. This study aims to analyze and develop a Islamic religious education curriculum model based on spiritual and social competencies at senior high school Darussalam Medan as an effort to establish a contextual, holistic, and transformative Islamic education.The research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation involving the principal, Islamic religious education teachers, and students. The findings reveal that the curriculum development process is carried out collaboratively through several stages, including needs analysis, formulation of learning objectives, development of materials and learning strategies, and value-based evaluation. The implementation of the Islamic religious education curriculum at senior high school Darussalam Medan emphasizes contextual, reflective, and experience-based learning that integrates spiritual and social dimensions—such as *tadarus* activities, community service, and *Rohis* mentoring—focused on nurturing empathy and moral responsibility. These practices have significantly enhanced students' awareness of worship, discipline, social empathy, and their ability to reflect Islamic values in daily life.

The study concludes that a Islamic religious education curriculum grounded in spiritual and social competencies effectively bridges the gap between religious knowledge and real-life practice, serving as an innovative model for Islamic educational institutions to foster students who are faithful, noble in character, and socially responsible.

Keywords: *Islamic Religious Education, Spiritual Competence, Social Competence, Character Education, Senior high school Darussalam Medan.*

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Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (Islamic religious education) is one of the core subjects that plays a vital role in shaping students' character so that they become individuals who are faithful, pious, and virtuous. Within the framework of national education, Islamic religious education is not merely aimed at transmitting religious knowledge to students but also at cultivating and internalizing spiritual and social values in their daily lives (Mulyasa, E., 2018). Through a well-designed curriculum, the values of Islamic teachings can be instilled comprehensively, enabling students to apply moral, ethical, and social principles both within the school environment and in society.

However, the reality in the field shows that the implementation of the Islamic religious education curriculum often still focuses predominantly on cognitive aspects. Many teachers emphasize mastery of materials and memorization of concepts without providing sufficient attention to the development of students' spiritual and social attitudes (Arifin, Z., 2019). As a result, students may understand Islamic teachings theoretically but fail to apply them contextually in their daily behavior and actions. This creates a gap between the intended goals of religious education and the outcomes achieved in practice.

The rapid development of the modern era—particularly in the age of digitalization and globalization—presents new challenges for religious education in schools. The growing phenomena of moral degradation, low social empathy, increased individualism, and consumerist tendencies among adolescents indicate that the Islamic religious education curriculum needs significant renewal (Rahman, A., & Fauzi, M., 2021). Today's students require not only textual religious knowledge but also social skills and spiritual competencies that are relevant to the dynamics of modern life. Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop a Islamic religious education curriculum oriented toward spiritual and social competencies so that students can maintain a balance between intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence.

At senior high school Darussalam Medan—an Islamic educational institution with a vision to nurture a generation that is faithful, knowledgeable, and morally upright—the effort to develop a spiritually and socially competent Islamic religious education curriculum is highly relevant. Such a curriculum is expected to address contemporary educational needs by embedding Islamic values in an applicable and experiential manner. It not only equips students with religious knowledge but also molds reflective, caring, and socially responsible personalities (Hasanah, S., 2020). Thus, senior high school Darussalam Medan strives to create a more holistic and integrative model of Islamic religious education learning.

The concept of *spiritual competence* in this context includes students' ability to recognize, understand, and internalize divine values in their daily lives. It encompasses sincerity (*ikhlas*), trust in God (*tawakal*), patience (*sabr*), and constant awareness of God's presence in all human activities. Meanwhile, *social competence* refers to the ability to interact harmoniously with others, appreciate diversity, cooperate, and foster empathy and compassion (Nata, A., 2020). These two competencies are inseparable elements in forming the Islamic character of students.

The integration of spiritual and social values also aligns with national policy directions through the *Merdeka Belajar* (Freedom to Learn) Curriculum initiated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. This curriculum emphasizes the importance of learner-centered, flexible, and socially contextual learning (Kemdikbudristek, 2020). Within this framework, Islamic religious education must adapt to the new educational paradigm, where learning is no longer confined to theoretical aspects but expands toward meaningful and transformative learning experiences.

Philosophically, the development of a Islamic religious education curriculum based on spiritual and social competencies has a strong foundation in Islamic teachings. The Qur'an affirms that the purpose of human creation is to worship Allah (QS. Adz-Dzariyat: 56), which signifies a deep spiritual consciousness (Ministry of Religious Affairs of Indonesia, 2010). At

the same time, Islam underscores the importance of human social relations, as stated in the Prophet Muhammad's hadith: *"The best of people are those who are most beneficial to others"* (HR. Ahmad). These spiritual and social values serve as theological foundations that must be manifested in the educational system, including the Islamic religious education curriculum in schools.

Previous studies also indicate that implementing a Islamic religious education curriculum that integrates spiritual and social values can significantly enhance students' religious behavior and social awareness (Fauziah, R., & Maulana, A., 2021). Research by Rahman and Fauzi (2021) further demonstrates that students who undergo integrative Islamic religious education learning show substantial improvement in social empathy and religious consciousness. This evidence supports the notion that such curriculum approaches have a tangible impact on character formation.

Nonetheless, developing a curriculum based on spiritual and social competencies cannot be achieved instantaneously. It requires in-depth needs analysis, precise formulation of learning objectives, and alignment between content, methods, and assessment strategies. Teachers, as the primary implementers of the curriculum, play a crucial role in ensuring that spiritual and social values are truly internalized in students (Mulyani, R., 2022). Therefore, teachers' capacity in designing, implementing, and evaluating Islamic religious education learning should be continuously enhanced through professional training and mentoring.

senior high school Darussalam Medan holds great potential to become a model for developing a curriculum grounded in spiritual and social competencies. Supported by competent teachers, a strong Islamic vision, and a religious school culture, the institution can pioneer Islamic religious education curriculum innovation that meets contemporary challenges. The empirical experiences from this school can serve as a foundation for formulating a curriculum model that can be replicated in other schools—both public and private—with similar characteristics (Syahrin, A., 2022).

From the perspective of modern Islamic education, such curriculum development also aligns with the concept of an *integrated curriculum*—a curriculum that interconnects knowledge, values, and learning experiences into a unified whole (Zubaedi, 2020). Through this approach, students are not only encouraged to understand religious texts but also to reflect on and apply them within the context of modern life (Republic of Indonesia, 2022). This represents a concrete step toward addressing the challenges of secularization and the fragmentation of values that often separate faith from knowledge.

Literature Review
2.1   The Essence of the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum

A curriculum is a structured plan and arrangement concerning educational objectives, content, teaching materials, and methods used as a guide for organizing learning activities to achieve specific educational goals (Mulyasa, E., 2018). In the context of Islamic Religious Education (Islamic religious education), the curriculum holds a strategic function in realizing the ideals of Islamic education—namely, the formation of *insan kamil*, or complete human beings who are faithful, knowledgeable, virtuous, and beneficial to society. The Islamic religious education curriculum is not limited to religious content but also encompasses learning strategies, assessment systems, and character formation aimed at helping students internalize Islamic values in their daily lives (Arifin, Z., 2019).

Historically, the Islamic religious education curriculum in Indonesia has undergone various transformations, shifting from a normative-doctrinal approach toward a more contextual and integrative model. The 2013 Curriculum, for instance, positioned Islamic religious education as a subject oriented toward character building and the development of spiritual and social attitudes—rather than merely emphasizing mastery of religious knowledge. However, in practice, many schools still implement the Islamic religious education curriculum

in a traditional manner, focusing primarily on memorization of verses, fiqh laws, and historical facts, with little connection to real-life problems faced by students (Hasanah, S., 2020). Therefore, it is essential to develop an adaptive curriculum that responds to students' needs and the dynamics of the modern era.

According to Zubaedi (2020), an effective curriculum must maintain balance among the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. In Islamic education, this balance can be achieved through an approach that connects knowledge, spiritual values, and social realities of students. This is known as the *integrated curriculum* approach, which harmonizes rational knowledge and Islamic values in a holistic and meaningful way (Zubaedi, 2020).

2.2 Spiritual Competence in Islamic Religious Education

Spiritual competence refers to students' ability to recognize, internalize, and practice divine values in their daily lives. From the Islamic perspective, such competence originates from strong *aqidah* (faith), correct worship, and noble morality (Nata, A., 2020). Spiritual competence is not confined to reading the Qur'an or performing formal acts of worship; it also involves the reflective ability to understand the meaning of life, foster self-awareness of God's presence, and cultivate sincerity in every action.

According to Anwar (2021), spiritual competence can be developed through *experiential learning*, an educational process based on direct experiences. Students are not merely taught religious concepts theoretically but are also guided to experience them in practice—through empathy, patience, honesty, gratitude, and humility (Anwar, A., 2021). Islamic religious education teachers play a crucial role in modeling these values and creating a learning environment that fosters spiritual growth.

Within the framework of the *Merdeka Belajar* (Freedom to Learn) Curriculum, the spiritual dimension is also reflected in the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (Pancasila Student Profile), which identifies *"faith in God Almighty, piety, and noble character"* as one of the core attributes of Indonesian learners (Kemdikbudristek, 2020). Thus, the Islamic religious education curriculum must intentionally aim to strengthen spiritual values so that students not only develop intellectual capacity but also moral and spiritual intelligence as the foundation of ethical behavior.

2.3 Social Competence in Islamic Religious Education

Social competence is an individual's ability to interact effectively within their social environment—at school, in the family, and in the wider community. In the Islamic religious education context, this competence encompasses tolerance, empathy, social responsibility, cooperation, and concern for others (Abidin, M., 2022). These values align with Islamic teachings that emphasize *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), social justice, and mutual assistance in goodness, as stated in *Surah Al-Maidah (5:2)*: *"And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression."*

Abidin (2022) asserts that social education within Islamic religious education should be implemented through participatory and collaborative learning. Teachers can integrate social engagement projects such as humanitarian missions, community service, or social outreach activities into classroom instruction. Through direct social experiences, students can comprehend that Islamic values are not confined to verbal expressions but must be embodied in real social behavior (Rahman, A., & Fauzi, M., 2021).

Therefore, social competence should not only serve as an indicator of success in Islamic religious education learning but also as a benchmark for the overall achievement of national education goals—namely, the formation of morally upright and civically responsible citizens.

2.4 Developing a Islamic religious education Curriculum Based on Spiritual and Social Competencies

Curriculum development is a systematic process of planning and designing meaningful learning experiences relevant to students' needs. In the context of Islamic religious education, developing a curriculum based on spiritual and social competencies involves integrating religious and social values into all components of learning—from objectives, content, and teaching methods to assessment (Print, M., 1993).

One applicable framework is Tyler's Model, which emphasizes four fundamental steps:
1. Defining learning objectives;
2. Selecting appropriate learning experiences;
3. Organizing those experiences effectively; and
4. Evaluating learning outcomes.

Within this framework, the objectives of Islamic religious education learning are directed toward nurturing students' spiritual awareness and social responsibility. Teaching methods may include project-based learning, value clarification techniques, and social-oriented religious habituation (Tyler, R., 2013).

The successful implementation of this curriculum requires a conducive learning environment, a religious school culture, and strong collaboration among teachers, students, and parents. Consequently, Islamic education evolves beyond theoretical instruction into a transformative process that shapes students' attitudes, behavior, and character in real life (Syahrin, A., 2022).

2.5 Relevance to the Challenges of Modern Education

The challenges of modern education demand innovation in curriculum design and pedagogical approaches. Globalization and advances in information technology have significantly influenced students' thinking patterns and behaviors. Many young people today face spiritual and social disorientation due to exposure to instant and materialistic cultures (Samsul, H., 2022). In this context, the Islamic religious education curriculum must adapt to modern realities without losing the essence of Islamic values.

A curriculum based on spiritual and social competencies serves as a strategic solution to address the ongoing value crisis. Through an integrative approach, students are trained to relate religious principles to contemporary social issues—such as digital ethics, environmental stewardship, and online responsibility. Consequently, Islamic religious education becomes more relevant, engaging, and meaningful for today's generation (Naufal, I., 2023).

Research Method
3.1 Type and Approach of the Research

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, as it aims to provide an in-depth description of the process of developing an Islamic Religious Education (Islamic religious education) curriculum based on spiritual and social competencies at senior high school Darussalam Medan (Moleong, L. J., 2021). This approach was chosen to enable the researcher to understand the phenomenon in a naturalistic manner, explore the lived experiences of teachers and students directly, and interpret the meanings embedded within educational practices at the school.

3.2 Research Location and Subjects

The research was conducted at senior high school Darussalam Medan, an Islamic educational institution that consistently integrates religious values into its learning process. The research subjects included the school principal, Islamic religious education teachers, and students from grades X and XI. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, which involves deliberately choosing individuals considered most knowledgeable and directly

involved in the implementation of the Islamic religious education curriculum at the school (Sugiyono, 2022).

3.3 Data Collection Techniques
The data were collected through three primary techniques:
1. Observation – used to gather data on the learning environment and religious activities within the school setting.
2. In-depth Interviews – conducted with teachers, the school principal, and students to obtain detailed information about the planning and implementation processes of the curriculum.
3. Documentation – including syllabi, lesson plans (*RPP*), and records of religious activities, which served as supporting evidence (Creswell, J. W., 2018).

3.4 Data Analysis Technique
The data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, consisting of four stages:
1. Data Collection – gathering information from observations, interviews, and documents.
2. Data Reduction – organizing, simplifying, and selecting relevant data to focus on key findings.
3. Data Display – presenting the data systematically in narrative or tabular form for better interpretation.
4. Conclusion Drawing and Verification – deriving and validating conclusions through continuous reflection and comparison.

This iterative analysis process was carried out to ensure the validity, reliability, and consistency of the research findings (Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M., 2014).

Results And Discussion
4.1 Overview of senior high school Darussalam Medan
senior high school Darussalam Medan is an Islamic educational institution committed to integrating religious values into all aspects of its learning activities. The school operates under the vision *"To nurture a generation that is faithful, knowledgeable, and noble in character."* In practice, senior high school Darussalam Medan emphasizes a balance between mastery of general knowledge and the cultivation of Islamic spiritual and social values. The school's curriculum structure has been adapted to the *Merdeka Curriculum*, further enriched through local Islamic content and distinctive religious programs (senior high school Darussalam Medan Profile Document, 2024).

Learning activities at senior high school Darussalam Medan extend beyond the classroom through programs such as *tadarus al-Qur'an* (daily Qur'an recitation), congregational prayers, weekly religious lectures, social service projects, and *tahfidz* programs for students interested in Qur'anic memorization. These activities serve as instruments for internalizing spiritual and social values closely linked to Islamic Religious Education (Islamic religious education). Based on interviews with the principal and Islamic religious education teachers, the curriculum at senior high school Darussalam Medan is designed around two core competencies: spiritual competence (faith, worship, and morality) and social competence (responsibility, empathy, and social concern) (Interview with Principal of senior high school Darussalam Medan, 2025).

The Process of Developing a Islamic religious education Curriculum Based on Spiritual and Social Competencies

The findings reveal that the Islamic religious education curriculum at senior high school Darussalam Medan is developed collaboratively among teachers, the school principal, and the school committee. The process involves four main stages:
1. Needs analysis,

2. Formulation of curriculum objectives,
3. Development of learning materials and strategies, and
4. Evaluation of learning outcomes.

In the needs analysis stage, teachers reflect on students' conditions and the moral challenges of the digital era. It was found that some students exhibited a decline in worship discipline and empathy for others. Consequently, the Islamic religious education curriculum was redesigned to emphasize not only religious knowledge but also real-life habituation and social-religious experiences (Rahman & Fauzi, 2021).

During the objective formulation stage, the goals were directed toward fostering religious awareness and social responsibility through active, reflective, and contextual learning. Teachers established learning outcomes such as:

1. Understanding the meaning of worship and spirituality in life,
2. Developing empathy and compassion for others, and
3. Demonstrating Islamic behavior within the school and the community (Hasanah, S., 2020).

The development stage focused on integrating spiritual and social values into learning topics. For instance, when studying *zakat*, students not only learned about its laws and types but also conducted simulations of collecting and distributing *zakat* to nearby residents. Similarly, in lessons on *akhlaq* (morality), students were assigned social projects such as helping those in need or cleaning the school environment as a practical expression of care and compassion.

In the evaluation stage, teachers assessed not only students' cognitive abilities but also their affective and social behaviors. Evaluation methods included attitude observation, reflective journals, and daily behavior logs. This approach—known as *assessment for learning* aims to motivate and guide behavioral improvement rather than merely assign grades.

4.2 Implementation of Islamic religious education Learning Based on Spiritual and Social Competencies

The implementation of the Islamic religious education curriculum at senior high school Darussalam Medan combines classroom instruction, extracurricular activities, and habituation programs. Teachers act as facilitators who guide students in understanding Islamic values through contextual and reflective approaches.

In the classroom, teachers employ methods such as *Value Clarification Technique (VCT)*, group discussions, case studies, and project-based learning. The VCT method helps students clarify and internalize values they believe in, such as honesty, responsibility, and cooperation. Project-based learning encourages active participation in social-religious activities, including food charity programs, Ramadan initiatives, and fundraising for disaster relief.

Beyond the classroom, extracurricular activities such as *Rohis* (Islamic spirituality club) and social service initiatives serve as key platforms for strengthening students' spiritual and social competencies. Islamic religious education teachers act as mentors to ensure these activities are not merely ceremonial but genuine processes of internalizing values. For instance, *Rohis* focuses on spiritual coaching, sermon practice, and applied moral education that nurtures students' religious character (Interview with Islamic religious education Teacher, senior high school Darussalam Medan, 2025).

Observation results show that these activities have had a positive impact on students' behavior. Students have become more disciplined in worship, more respectful in social interactions, and more compassionate toward peers and their surroundings. This demonstrates that the integration of Islamic religious education learning with social activities has a synergistic effect on holistic character development (Field Observation, 2025).

4.3 Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Curriculum Development

The study identified several supporting factors contributing to the success of the Islamic religious education curriculum at senior high school Darussalam Medan, including:

1. Strong commitment from school leadership and Islamic religious education teachers to uphold Islamic values.
2. A deeply rooted religious school culture—evident in congregational prayers, morning *tadarus*, greetings, and pre-study prayers.
3. Active involvement of parents and the community in supporting religious and social programs.
4. A conducive and communicative learning environment that fosters a spiritual and harmonious atmosphere (Nasution, A., 2021).

Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include:

1. Limited instructional time for Islamic religious education, making it difficult for teachers to integrate all spiritual and social elements in every session.
2. Differences in students' socio-economic and religious backgrounds, leading to varying levels of value internalization.
3. Insufficient teacher training in designing systematic curricula based on spiritual and social competencies (Mulyani, R., 2022).

To overcome these challenges, the school introduced innovations such as extending value-based habituation activities beyond class hours and organizing professional development workshops for Islamic religious education teachers to strengthen adaptive and contextual learning strategies.

4.4 Impact of Curriculum Development on Students

The research findings indicate that the development of a Islamic religious education curriculum based on spiritual and social competencies at senior high school Darussalam Medan has had a significant positive impact on students' character formation. Based on observation and interview data, notable improvements were observed in several key areas:

1. Increased religious awareness – Students became more consistent in performing obligatory prayers, participating in *tadarus*, and showing accountability in fulfilling religious obligations (Student Reflection Journal, senior high school Darussalam Medan, 2025).
2. Enhanced empathy and social concern – Students actively participated in social initiatives such as visiting orphanages, assisting sick peers, and engaging in community service.
3. Improved discipline and manners – Students demonstrated greater respect for teachers and peers, maintained school cleanliness, and showed responsibility in academic tasks.
4. Developed reflective ability – Through reflective journals and self-assessment exercises, students evaluated their own spiritual and social growth and strived for continuous improvement.

These findings align with the study by Rahman and Fauzi (2021), which concluded that Islamic religious education learning grounded in spiritual and social values significantly enhances students' moral sensitivity and social behavior. Therefore, the curriculum model implemented at senior high school Darussalam Medan can serve as a benchmark for other schools seeking to balance cognitive and affective dimensions in religious education.

Discussion

The results of this study suggest that the success of developing a Islamic religious education curriculum based on spiritual and social competencies depends not merely on curriculum documentation but on its effective implementation in the field. This model succeeds

because it positions students as active participants who experience and internalize values, rather than passive recipients of religious information.

This approach is consistent with the constructivist theory in Islamic education, which posits that knowledge and values are built through social interaction and reflective experiences. Teachers are no longer the sole source of knowledge but act as spiritual guides who help students discover the meaning of life through Islamic teachings. This approach also supports the national educational goals outlined in Government Regulation No. 4 of 2022 on National Education Standards, which emphasizes developing individuals who are faithful, pious, virtuous, and socially responsible.

The development of the Islamic religious education curriculum at senior high school Darussalam Medan demonstrates that integrating spirituality and social engagement is the key to cultivating well-rounded student character. The curriculum not only instills Islamic values but also provides opportunities for students to apply them in real-life contexts. Consequently, Islamic Religious Education transcends its traditional, dogmatic perception and evolves into a dynamic and transformative system of value education that is deeply embedded in the everyday lives of learners.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion presented earlier, it can be concluded that the development of an Islamic Religious Education (Islamic religious education) curriculum based on spiritual and social competencies at senior high school Darussalam Medan represents a strategic effort to realize a holistic, relevant, and adaptive model of Islamic education that responds effectively to contemporary challenges. The curriculum developed is not solely focused on the mastery of religious knowledge (cognitive domain), but also emphasizes the cultivation of spiritual and social attitudes (affective and psychomotor domains) as reflected in students' daily behavior.

The research results show that curriculum development at senior high school Darussalam Medan was carried out through a systematic process, encompassing needs analysis, goal formulation, learning material and strategy development, and learning evaluation. The needs analysis was grounded in observations of students' conditions and social phenomena in the digital era, which tend to erode moral sensitivity and weaken spiritual awareness. Therefore, the curriculum objectives were directed toward fostering religious consciousness, social empathy, and moral responsibility among students.

In its implementation, Islamic religious education learning based on spiritual and social competencies is applied through contextual, reflective, and participatory approaches. Teachers act as facilitators and spiritual mentors rather than mere transmitters of religious knowledge. Learning strategies such as *Value Clarification Technique (VCT)*, *Project-Based Learning*, and collaborative learning are employed to help students connect Islamic values with their social realities. For instance, *zakat* activities, community service, and *Rohis* (Islamic spirituality club) programs serve as practical avenues for internalizing religious values grounded in empathy and compassion.

The success of developing the Islamic religious education curriculum based on spiritual and social competencies at senior high school Darussalam Medan cannot be separated from the collective commitment of all stakeholders—particularly the school principal's leadership, the professionalism of Islamic religious education teachers, and the active involvement of parents and the surrounding community. The school's strong religious culture, manifested in daily *tadarus* sessions, congregational prayers, and the habit of offering greetings and prayers before lessons, forms an integral part of the learning system that fosters a deeply rooted religious habitus among students. The school's conducive environment also plays a crucial role in maintaining a harmonious spiritual and social atmosphere.

Thus, the development of the Islamic religious education curriculum at senior high school Darussalam Medan stands as a model for Islamic education that is applicative, contextual, and humanistic—one that not only instills religious values at a theoretical level but also translates them into concrete actions that benefit society.

Conceptually, the results of this study reinforce the idea that effective Islamic education must be oriented toward the transformation of values—from knowledge to experience, from theory to praxis, and from cognition to spiritual-social consciousness. In other words, the ideal Islamic religious education curriculum is not merely a *curriculum of instruction*, but a *curriculum of transformation*.

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