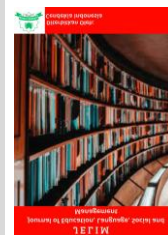




JELIM

Journal of Education, Language, Social and Management

<https://jurnal.rahiscendekiaindonesia.co.id/index.php/jelim/>



Optimizing Curriculum Management to Improve Learning Outcomes in MTS Al-Amin Kampung Pajak

Rini Setyaningsih

UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, Indonesia

KEY WORD	A B S T R A C T
<p>Curriculum Management, Learning Outcomes, Islamic School, Teacher Empowerment,</p>	<p>This study explores the process of optimizing curriculum management as a strategy to improve student learning outcomes at MTS Al-Amin Kampung Pajak. Using a qualitative descriptive method with a case study approach, data were collected through interviews, observations, focus group discussions, and document analysis involving school leaders, teachers, students, and curriculum-related documents. The findings indicate that while the school has implemented curriculum planning and execution in alignment with national standards, the process often remains administrative and lacks innovative teaching strategies. Teachers face challenges in implementing student-centered learning due to limited training, insufficient resources, and a lack of continuous professional development. Additionally, assessment practices tend to focus on summative evaluation, with minimal use of formative feedback to support student progress. Nevertheless, the study reveals strong leadership commitment and student motivation, particularly in religious subjects, which provides a foundation for curriculum enhancement. The study concludes that optimizing curriculum management requires a holistic approach, including teacher empowerment, participatory planning, data-driven evaluation, and the integration of Islamic values across subjects to create a more engaging and effective learning environment.</p>

INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental pillar in shaping the quality of human resources in any nation. In the current era of rapid globalization and technological advancement, the need for a robust and dynamic education system is more pressing than ever. Schools are expected not only to transfer knowledge but also to cultivate students' character, critical thinking, creativity, and readiness to face real-world challenges. To fulfill these expectations, educational institutions must ensure that all components within the learning process are well managed—among them, curriculum management holds a central and strategic position.

Curriculum is not merely a compilation of subjects or learning materials; it represents the vision, mission, and educational goals of an institution translated into a structured plan of action. Therefore, the effectiveness of a school's curriculum directly influences the quality of its learning outcomes. Optimizing curriculum management entails designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating curriculum components to ensure that they align with educational standards, meet students' needs, and are responsive to societal developments.

MTS Al-Amin Kampung Pajak, as one of the Islamic junior high schools under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, plays a vital role in providing holistic education that integrates religious and general knowledge. This institution strives to create graduates who are not only academically competent but also morally grounded. However, like many other schools in rural or semi-urban areas, MTS Al-Amin faces various challenges in delivering optimal learning outcomes. These include limited resources, inadequate teacher training, low student motivation, and lack of innovation in instructional strategies. In such circumstances, the role of effective curriculum management becomes even more crucial.

Curriculum management involves several interrelated processes such as planning instructional content, organizing learning experiences, selecting appropriate teaching methodologies, and assessing student achievement. At MTS Al-Amin, ensuring that these processes are synchronized and continuously improved is key to enhancing student performance and engagement. Moreover, curriculum management should reflect the local context, student background, and institutional capacity. For example, integrating local culture and Islamic values into the curriculum can foster a sense of identity and relevance among students.

The success of curriculum management does not solely depend on written policies or administrative directives; it requires the active participation of all stakeholders—school leaders, teachers, students, parents, and the community. School leadership plays a pivotal role in creating a conducive environment for curriculum implementation by facilitating professional development, promoting collaborative planning, and utilizing data for decision-making. Teachers, as the main implementers of the curriculum, must be empowered with pedagogical skills and curriculum literacy. In this regard, capacity-building programs and regular curriculum reviews can support teachers in adapting to new demands.

Several studies have shown that schools with strong curriculum management practices tend to achieve better learning outcomes. These schools often exhibit characteristics such as clearly defined learning objectives, alignment between teaching strategies and assessment methods, continuous monitoring of student progress, and a culture of reflection and innovation. By learning from such best practices and tailoring them to the unique context of MTS Al-Amin Kampung Pajak, it is possible to improve the overall quality of education and student achievement at the school.

This study aims to explore how curriculum management at MTS Al-Amin Kampung Pajak can be optimized to improve learning outcomes. It examines the current state of curriculum planning and implementation, identifies the challenges faced by educators, and proposes strategic solutions grounded in theory and practice. Through a

qualitative approach involving interviews, document analysis, and classroom observations, this research provides insights into how curriculum management can be transformed from a bureaucratic function into a dynamic driver of educational excellence.

Ultimately, the findings from this research are expected to contribute not only to the academic discourse on curriculum management but also to practical efforts in school improvement, particularly in religious-based educational institutions. By fostering a more responsive, contextualized, and participatory approach to curriculum management, MTS Al-Amin Kampung Pajak can enhance its capacity to deliver meaningful learning experiences and prepare students to become knowledgeable, ethical, and competent members of society.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method with a case study approach, focusing specifically on MTS Al-Amin Kampung Pajak. The qualitative approach was chosen to allow the researcher to explore deeply the processes, challenges, and dynamics involved in curriculum management and how it affects learning outcomes. The case study design enabled a comprehensive and contextual analysis of a single institution, making it possible to generate rich and detailed insights that may be relevant to similar educational settings, particularly in Islamic junior high schools.

The research was conducted at MTS Al-Amin, located in Kampung Pajak, North Sumatra. This school was selected due to its significant role in integrating religious and general education while striving to improve the quality of learning outcomes. The participants of the study were chosen through purposive sampling, targeting individuals who were directly involved in or affected by curriculum management in the school. These included the principal, who plays a central role in decision-making and leadership; the curriculum coordinator, responsible for overseeing curriculum activities; several teachers from different subjects; a representative of the school committee; and students from various grade levels who provided firsthand experiences of the learning process.

Data were collected using multiple techniques to ensure validity through triangulation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with school leaders and teachers to gain insights into the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum. Focus group discussions were held with students to gather their perspectives on how the curriculum influences their learning experiences. In addition, direct observations were carried out in classrooms to examine how the curriculum was translated into teaching practices, learning strategies, and student engagement. Relevant school documents such as the school-based curriculum (KTSP), lesson plans (RPP), syllabi, student achievement reports, and internal evaluations were also analyzed to understand the structural and procedural aspects of curriculum management.

The data collected through these various methods were analyzed using thematic analysis. The process began with organizing the data, followed by coding significant statements and actions. These codes were then grouped into broader themes such as curriculum planning, instructional methods, teacher readiness, assessment practices,

and institutional challenges. The final stage involved interpreting the findings to derive meaningful conclusions about how curriculum management could be optimized to improve learning outcomes. To ensure the credibility of the findings, member checking was conducted by sharing the preliminary results with some of the participants, allowing them to confirm or clarify the interpretations.

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were strictly maintained. Participants were informed about the objectives of the study and were asked to provide informed consent. Their identities were kept confidential, and all data were used solely for academic purposes. Participants also had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

In conclusion, this method allowed for a comprehensive and in-depth exploration of curriculum management practices at MTS Al-Amin Kampung Pajak, providing valuable insights into how educational institutions can enhance learning outcomes through effective planning, implementation, and evaluation of their curriculum.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study reveal that curriculum management at MTS Al-Amin Kampung Pajak is carried out within the framework of the national curriculum, with efforts to incorporate local wisdom and Islamic values. Curriculum planning is conducted annually, involving the school principal, curriculum coordinator, and subject teachers. However, the implementation tends to be procedural rather than innovative, with an emphasis on meeting administrative requirements. Teachers reported that much of their time is consumed by paperwork, leaving little opportunity for reflective practice or creative lesson design. This has resulted in a learning process that remains largely teacher-centered, relying heavily on lectures and textbooks.

Observations in the classroom further confirmed that teaching strategies were still dominated by conventional methods. Student participation was relatively low, and the use of media or interactive techniques was minimal. This traditional approach limits the development of students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are essential competencies in the current educational landscape. Teachers expressed challenges in implementing student-centered approaches, citing limited resources, inadequate training, and large class sizes as significant barriers. These findings align with previous research indicating that curriculum success is closely tied to teacher readiness and the support systems available to them.

In terms of teacher capacity, the study found that although the educators at MTS Al-Amin demonstrated dedication and moral responsibility, many lacked updated pedagogical knowledge, especially in applying active learning strategies and integrating information and communication technology (ICT) into their teaching. Professional development opportunities were found to be scarce and, when available, often theoretical with little practical application. There was a general consensus among teachers that they needed more relevant and hands-on training, particularly in areas such as curriculum differentiation, formative assessment, and contextual learning methods.

Curriculum evaluation at the school is primarily administrative in nature. Supervision is carried out by the vice principal, who ensures that lesson plans and academic reports are submitted on time. However, there is little emphasis on evaluating the effectiveness of instruction or the extent to which learning objectives are achieved. Teachers also admitted that assessments focused mainly on cognitive outcomes through summative tests, with limited use of formative assessments or diagnostic tools. Consequently, feedback mechanisms are weak, and interventions for struggling students are rarely data-driven. The absence of comprehensive monitoring systems hampers the school's ability to adjust and refine the curriculum in response to student needs.

Interviews and focus group discussions with students revealed that many found the learning process unengaging. Students expressed a desire for more interactive activities, practical examples, and the use of technology in the classroom. They noted that lessons often felt repetitive and overly focused on memorization. Despite these challenges, students showed strong interest in Islamic subjects, suggesting that the integration of religious content could serve as an effective entry point to enhance engagement across the curriculum. For instance, using Islamic history or Quranic themes to support lessons in social studies and sciences could make learning more meaningful and contextually relevant.

Leadership at MTS Al-Amin plays a central role in curriculum management, particularly in terms of organizing planning meetings and ensuring administrative compliance. The school principal is perceived as supportive and involved, but the approach remains largely top-down. Opportunities for collaborative decision-making are limited, and innovation is often hindered by structural constraints such as limited funding and lack of external support. While the principal attempts to maintain educational quality within existing limitations, the findings suggest a need for a more transformative leadership model that empowers teachers, encourages experimentation, and builds strategic partnerships with stakeholders.

Several strategic efforts are needed to optimize curriculum management in the school. These include strengthening teacher capacity through ongoing, practical professional development programs; promoting participatory curriculum planning that involves teachers, students, and parents; enhancing the use of formative assessments to support student learning; and leveraging students' interest in Islamic content to support interdisciplinary learning. Furthermore, the school would benefit from building a simple data system to track academic progress and guide instructional decisions. Encouraging collaborative teacher practices, such as peer observation and learning communities, could also contribute to a culture of continuous improvement.

In conclusion, the findings of this study highlight the need for a holistic approach to curriculum optimization at MTS Al-Amin Kampung Pajak. While the school demonstrates strong commitment and foundational practices, gaps in implementation, teacher development, and assessment practices continue to affect learning outcomes. Addressing these challenges through targeted strategies and inclusive leadership could significantly enhance the effectiveness of curriculum delivery and ultimately improve student achievement.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that curriculum management at MTS Al-Amin Kampung Pajak is conducted with sincere intention and adherence to national education standards. However, there remain several key areas that require strategic improvement to enhance the quality of learning outcomes. The planning, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum, while structurally in place, tend to be more administrative than pedagogically transformative. Teachers often carry out curriculum-related tasks as formal obligations, with limited time or support to engage in innovative and student-centered practices.

The study also highlights the pressing need for continuous and context-relevant professional development for teachers. Most educators expressed a desire to improve their instructional techniques and integrate more engaging, modern methods into their teaching, but faced barriers such as limited training, lack of resources, and minimal mentoring. In addition, assessment practices were found to be predominantly summative, with insufficient use of formative evaluation to provide timely feedback and guide remedial strategies. This lack of responsive assessment reduces the ability of the school to identify and address learning gaps effectively.

Despite these challenges, the school shows strong potential to develop a more dynamic and responsive curriculum model. Students demonstrated a positive attitude toward learning, particularly in religious subjects, and showed openness to more interactive and meaningful learning experiences. The leadership at MTS Al-Amin also exhibits commitment and integrity, although greater emphasis on instructional leadership, teacher empowerment, and participatory decision-making is needed to support curriculum innovation.

In conclusion, optimizing curriculum management at MTS Al-Amin Kampung Pajak requires a comprehensive approach that includes strengthening teacher competence, promoting participatory planning, integrating Islamic values contextually, enhancing assessment practices, and building a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement. With sustained effort, adequate support, and strategic leadership, the school has the capacity to transform its curriculum into a powerful instrument for improving student engagement, achievement, and overall educational quality.

REFERENCES

- Amru, A., Sakinah, N., & Pasaribu, G. R. (2024). The impact of accent second language on listening comprehension. *JELT: Journal of English Education, Teaching and Literature*, 2(1), 1–14.
- Baharuddin, & Esa, A. (2012). *Teori belajar dan pembelajaran*. Ar-Ruzz Media.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). *Effective teacher professional development*. Learning Policy Institute.

- Fullan, M. (2007). *The new meaning of educational change* (4th ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Guskey, T. R. (2002). Professional development and teacher change. *Teachers and Teaching*, 8(3), 381–391. <https://doi.org/10.1080/135406002100000512>
- Junaidi, J., Januarini, E., & Pasaribu, G. R. (2024). Impoliteness in information account on Instagram. *JALC: Journal of Applied Linguistics and Studies of Cultural*, 2(1), 41–50.
- Joyce, B., Weil, M., & Calhoun, E. (2015). *Models of teaching* (9th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Kemendikbud. (2017). *Panduan pengembangan kurikulum 2013 di madrasah*. Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan RI.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Mubshirah, D., Pasaribu, G. R., Lubis, M. H., Saragih, E., & Sofyan, R. (2023). Sentence complexity analysis in selected students' scientific papers: A closer look on abstract section. *E-Structural (English Studies on Translation, Culture, Literature, and Linguistics)*, 6(1), 70–83.
- Mulyasa, E. (2018). *Manajemen dan kepemimpinan kepala sekolah*. Bumi Aksara.
- Ornstein, A. C., & Hunkins, F. P. (2018). *Curriculum: Foundations, principles, and issues* (7th ed.). Pearson.
- Pasaribu, G. (2021). Implementing Google Classroom in English learning at STIT Al-Ittihadiyah Labuhanbatu Utara. *E-Link Journal*, 8(2), 99–107.
- Pasaribu, G. (2023). Malay interrogative sentences: X-Bar analysis. *RETORIKA: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa*, 9(1), 43–53.
- Pasaribu, G. (2023). *Receptive oral language skills*. [Unpublished manuscript].
- Pasaribu, G., & Arfianty, R. (2025). *Filsafat Linguistik*. [Manuscript in preparation].
- Pasaribu, G., Arfianty, R., & Januarini, E. (2024). *Mulia di Linguistik*. [In press].
- Pasaribu, G. R., Daulay, S. H., & Nasution, P. T. (2022). Pragmatics principles of English teachers in Islamic elementary school. *Journal of Pragmatics Research*, 4(1), 29–40.
- Pasaribu, G. R., Daulay, S. H., & Saragih, Z. (2023). The implementation of ICT in teaching English by the teacher of MTS Swasta Al-Amin. *English Language and Education Spectrum*, 3(2), 47–60.
- Pasaribu, G. R., & Salmiah, M. (2024). Linguistic landscape in Kualanamu International Airport. *LingPoet: Journal of Linguistics and Literary Research*, 5(1), 1–6.

- Pasaribu, G. R., Widayati, D., Mbete, A. M., & Dardanila, D. (2023). The fauna lexicon in Aceh proverb: Ecolinguistic study. *Jurnal Arbitrer*, 10(2), 149–159.
- Robbins, S. P., & Coulter, M. (2016). *Management* (13th ed.). Pearson.
- Rusman. (2019). *Model-model pembelajaran: Mengembangkan profesionalisme guru*. Rajawali Pers.
- Sallis, E. (2014). *Total quality management in education* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Sanjaya, W. (2021). *Perencanaan dan desain sistem pembelajaran*. Kencana.
- Sani, R. A. (2019). *Pembelajaran abad 21*. Bumi Aksara.
- Sudjana, N. (2010). *Penilaian hasil proses belajar mengajar*. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Sugiyono. (2021). *Metode penelitian kualitatif, kuantitatif, dan R&D*. Alfabeta.
- Supriatna, A. (2020). Integrasi nilai-nilai Islam dalam pembelajaran: Studi pada madrasah. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 17(1), 45–58.
- Tilaar, H. A. R. (2012). *Manajemen pendidikan nasional: Kajian pendidikan masa depan*. Rineka Cipta.
- Wahyudi. (2018). Strategi manajemen kurikulum dalam meningkatkan mutu pembelajaran. *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan*, 12(2), 101–109.
- Yamin, M. (2020). *Strategi pembelajaran berbasis kompetensi*. Gaung Persada Press.