

Curriculum Development in Islamic Educational Institutions: A Case Study at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Pati

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes curriculum development at MTsN 1 Pati in implementing the Independent Curriculum, with particular attention to the integration of Islamic values and digital literacy. Non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation including the vice principal for curriculum, teachers, and curriculum-related documents were used to gather data using a naturalistic qualitative approach. Through reduction, display, verification, and conclusion drawing, data were studied interactively. The results demonstrate that updating the madrasah's vision and mission is part of curriculum development at MTsN 1 Pati, strengthening its religious culture, and establishing flagship programs such as the Boarding School and Digital Class. The curriculum integrates Islamic values, digital literacy, technological competence, and global skills through intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities. These efforts contribute not only to students' academic achievement but also to character formation in accordance with Islamic educational principles. However, several challenges remain, including teachers' readiness to implement differentiated learning, variations in student motivation, changes in learning paradigms, and technical limitations related to digital technology. The study emphasizes the necessity of strong institutional support, sufficient technology infrastructure, and ongoing professional development for teachers. In order to show that madrasahs can adjust to educational reform while preserving their Islamic identity and unique educational features, this research proposes a curriculum integration model that integrates religious values and digital literacy within the Independent Curriculum framework.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, curriculum development has experienced various challenges. In the curriculum, many factors influence such as the development of science, philosophy, psychology, sociocultural, religion, politics, universities, state development, and world development. Historically, the Indonesian curriculum was first formed in 1947. The first curriculum is nomenclacated as the Learning Plan curriculum. Then, with the development of the times, new, more up-to-date curricula emerged, such as the Independent Learning Curriculum. This curriculum was born as a form of evaluation results, so it is relevant to the changes of the times in the future. Curriculum changes are an inevitability that cannot be denied due to the influence of globalization and competition between countries. This influence requires every government agency in the education sector to innovate curriculum development. The innovation is a manifestation to catch up with countries whose education is more advanced than Indonesia (Chairunnisa et al., 2024).

Curriculum development efforts are intended to improve educational standards in Indonesia. Improving competence aims to equalize the standards of domestic educational institutions that are balanced with educational institutions in other countries. In an attempt to educate the nation's citizens in line with the educational objectives outlined in the 2003 Law, which are to develop skills and create a dignified character and civilization of the nation in

order to educate the nation's life, which aims to develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe in and fear God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and to be democratic and responsible citizens (Thohri, 2022).

The curriculum is etymologically derived from the Greek word "curir" which means "runner" and "curere" which means "race". In French, the curriculum comes from the word "courir" (running). The curriculum can be interpreted as everything that affects the learning of students in the madrasah community and outside the madrasah which is still the authority of the institution, then it can be interpreted as a curriculum. In the current period, curriculum refers to all scientifically organized activities and experiences that take place in madrasas, in the madrasah yard, and outside the madrasah in order to accomplish educational objectives (Masykur, 2019).

The impact of the change in curriculum that is too fast has made the response of some curriculum users, namely madrasah institutions and educators, who are not ready for changes to implement the latest curriculum (Independent Learning Curriculum) and caused resistance in some educational units. Central Java Joglo online media in its editorial: Commission D of the House of Representatives (DPR) Roihan during an audience with the Central Java Education Quality Assurance Center (BBPMP), the Pati Education and Culture Office (Disdikbud), the Ministry of Religion Pati in the meeting discussed several points.

First, the Independent Learning Curriculum is not ready to be implemented in all madrassas in Pati Regency because the infrastructure is not adequate to run the educational program. Second, regarding the change of curriculum which always changes every time the Minister changes, which causes the old curriculum to not be fully implemented, but a new curriculum has emerged. Third, changes in the curriculum will change the new paradigm of teachers in carrying out learning. Moreover, there are still many madrasas that lack competent educators and education personnel (Luthfi Majid, 2023).

As a result of this issue, educational institutions in Pati Regency should ideally employ the Independent Learning Curriculum in an effort to stay current with the times and align it with the Ministry of Education and Culture's government program, which has provided guidelines for its implementation. The reality in the field is that some educational institutions continue to employ the outdated curriculum and have not adopted the Independent Learning Curriculum. The author carried out a little study at one of the Pati Regency's educational institutions based on these issues. The MTsN 1 Pati Educational Institution served as the research object and sample for the study. The research was conducted at the institution because the institution is one of the leading institutions in Pati Regency that is very responsive to the changing times.

The research gap is important to study considering that madrasas face challenges in the form of changing learning paradigms, improving teacher competence, utilizing digital technology, and the demands of producing graduates who have a religious character while being able to compete in the global era. Studies on curriculum development in madrassas can make conceptual and practical contributions in formulating an implementation model of the Independent Curriculum that is in accordance with the characteristics of Islamic education.

MTsN 1 Pati was selected as the study site because it has implemented the Independent Curriculum through a number of cutting-edge initiatives, such as Boarding School and Digital

Classrooms, which combine the advancement of digital literacy and technology skills with the reinforcement of Islamic values. This condition makes MTsN 1 Pati relevant as a case to understand the practice of curriculum development in madrasas in the era of educational transformation.

The previous research was conducted by the ICECRD Institute for Religious and Religious Education Research and Development Agency of the Ministry of Religion in 2015, which in its research the ICECRD researched curriculum innovation, where the institution still uses Curriculum 13. However, the research that the author will research is a novelty, namely researching the innovation product of the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Independent Curriculum, which was legalized in 2022 and implemented at the MTsN 1 Pati educational institution (Madrasah et al., 2015). From the arguments that have been presented, the author conducted research at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Pati Education Institute. The purpose of this study is to ascertain how the educational institution's innovative and modified curricula have been implemented.

2. METHOD

In order to fully comprehend the curriculum development process at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri (MTsN) 1 Pati in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, this study employs a qualitative technique with the type of naturalistic research. The study was conducted between January and March of 2025 for a total of three months. MTsN 1 Pati is one of the madrasahs that has implemented the Independent Curriculum through various innovative programs, such as Boarding School and Digital Classroom, so it is relevant to be studied as a case of developing an Islamic education curriculum, according to academic considerations that led to the selection of the research location. Purposive sampling procedures were used to choose the research informants based on their participation in the development and execution of the program. The informants consist of the Deputy Head of the Madrasah for Curriculum (1 person), the subject teacher (4 people), the teacher in charge of the flagship program (2 people), and the Head of the Madrasah (1 person), so that the total number of informants is 8 people.

Table 1. Research Informant

No	Informants	Quantity
1	Head of Madrasah	1
2	Deputy Head of Curriculum	1
3	Subject Teacher	4
4	Featured Program Teachers (Boarding School and Digital Classroom)	2
Total		8 People

Techniques for gathering data include documentation, interviews, and observation. Non-participant observation was used to watch how curricular programs and learning activities were implemented in madrasahs. The interview uses a semi-structured format that allows researchers to obtain in-depth information related to curriculum development, planning, implementation, obstacles, and evaluation. Documentation is used to obtain supporting data in the form of curriculum documents, madrasah profiles, activity archives, photos, videos,

program reports, as well as data sourced from EMIS, madrasah websites, and other official documents.

Primary and secondary data make up the research data. The outcomes of informant interviews and field observations were used to gather primary data. In the meantime, secondary data was gathered from books, research journals, scientific papers, institutional documents, and other literature pertinent to the topic of developing curricula for Islamic education and implementing the Independent Curriculum.

This study used source triangulation techniques and triangulation methods to guarantee the veracity of the data. Information from teachers, the deputy head of curriculum, and the head of the madrasah were compared in order to perform source triangulation. The results of observations, interviews, and documentation were compared in order to apply the triangulation method. In addition, the researcher also applies member checking by asking informants to reconfirm the results of interviews that have been transcribed and audit trails through systematic recording of the entire research process so that it can be traced and verified.

The interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of four stages—data gathering, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification—is referred to as data analysis. During the data collecting phase, the researcher uses documentation, interviews, and observation to gather information. Additionally, the collected data is chosen, condensed, and concentrated in accordance with the goals of the study. To aid with interpretation, the condensed data is subsequently shown as narratives, matrices, and thematic classifications. The last stage is carried out by drawing conclusions and verifying findings on an ongoing basis so that valid and accountable research results are obtained.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Data on the Results of Research on Curriculum Development of Islamic Education Institutions MTsN 1 Pati

In an attempt to raise the standard of student-centered learning, MTsN 1 Pati uses the Independent Curriculum in response to the demands of 21st-century education and the dynamics of the times. This curriculum, which has been used in classrooms since 2022, is regarded as an educational innovation that gives madrasahs the freedom to tailor instruction to the needs, abilities, and traits of its pupils. In addition to focusing on academic success, the Independent Curriculum at MTsN 1 Pati aims to develop students' character, competence, and abilities so they can confront global challenges.

The direction of curriculum development at MTsN 1 Pati is reflected in the vision of the madrasah, namely "The Realization of Madrasah Uswatun Hasanah, Excellence in Science and Technology, Environmental Care, and International Standard." This vision is the main foundation in the implementation of all education programs and curriculum development in madrasahs. As a madrasah that is oriented towards the formation of Islamic character, improving academic quality, environmental awareness, and global competitiveness, MTsN 1 Pati designs various programs that support the achievement of each aspect of this vision.

In realizing madrasah as Uswatun Hasanah, MTsN 1 Pati develops various religious coaching programs that aim to shape the religious character of students. The program includes maktubah congregational prayer activities, *tathawwu'* prayers such as *isyraq*, *dhuha*, *qabliyah*,

and *ba'diyah* prayers, morning routine istighasah, Friday Wage recitation, Islamic holiday commemoration (PHBI), *berzanji* reading, *jariyah istiqamah* program, strengthening religious moderation, and the habit of reading the Qur'an, Asmaul Husna, and salawat. These various activities are part of strengthening character education based on Islamic values that are integrated into the daily lives of students.

Aspects of excellence in science and technology are realized through various academic programs and learning innovations. These programs include the study of the yellow book, the superior program of tahfiz Al-Qur'an, superior academic classes, the development of research culture, robotics coaching, the development of sports and art achievements, increasing the acceptability of graduates to the superior high school level, the development of digital madrasas, the use of the Academic Information System (SIAKAD), edutainment-based learning, and partnerships with various universities. These programs demonstrate how MTsN 1 Pati's curriculum development emphasizes developing students' digital literacy, creativity, and critical thinking abilities in addition to teaching them religious science.

The commitment to environmental conservation is realized through various programs that support the creation of a clean, healthy, safe, and comfortable madrasah culture. The program includes the implementation of the 7K culture (Safety, Comfort, Cleanliness, Order, Beauty, Family, and Longing), the development of child-friendly madrasas, the madrasah sahabat program, social compensation activities, the preservation of local wisdom, and economic partnerships with the surrounding community. Through these programs, MTsN 1 Pati seeks to instill social awareness and environmental concern in students as part of sustainable character education.

Meanwhile, the orientation of madrasas towards an international level is realized through the development of foreign language skills, especially Arabic and English, the implementation of international classes, and the development of student achievement at the international level. These programs are designed to equip students with global competencies so that they are able to compete at the national and international levels without abandoning their Islamic identity and local cultural values.

To support the achievement of this vision, MTsN 1 Pati has set a number of missions that serve as guidelines in the implementation of education. The mission includes increasing faith and practicing Islam that is *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, strengthening religious moderation in the life of the nation and state, improving the professionalism of digital-based education governance, developing research-based madrasas, providing adequate facilities and infrastructure, developing useful and sustainable madrasah culture, increasing academic and non-academic competitiveness at a global level, developing the potential and achievements of students, and the development of educators and education personnel towards international standards. The mission shows that the development of the curriculum at MTsN 1 Pati is carried out comprehensively by paying attention to spiritual, academic, social, technological, and globalization aspects of education.

In addition to the vision and mission, MTsN 1 Pati also has a motto that is the spirit in the implementation of education, namely "Serving Wholeheartedly in Developing the Potential Towards a Great, Dignified, Independent, and Outstanding Madrasah at the International Level." The motto reflects the madrasah's commitment to providing quality educational services while encouraging the development of all students' potentials to become a generation

with character, achievements, independence, and ability to compete in the global era. Thus, the vision, mission, and motto of MTsN 1 Pati are the main foundation in the development of a curriculum that integrates Islamic values, academic excellence, environmental concern, and international insight.

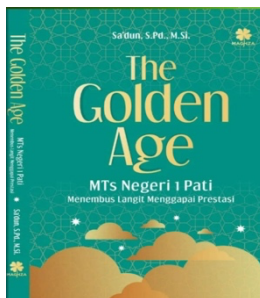


Figure 1. Digital Books *The Golden Age*

Curriculum Implementation at MTsN 1 Pati

The implementation of the curriculum at MTsN 1 Pati is carried out through the development of integrated intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular programs. Learning activities in Boarding School (BS) and Regular classes basically have the same schedule and learning load. One of the flagship programs that is characteristic of madrasas is the Classical Book *Ngaji* (Yellow Book) activity which is held once a week and is attended by all students in grades VII to IX. In addition, on Saturdays from the first hour to the fourth hour, students participate in co-curricular and extracurricular activities before carrying out intracurricular learning. The program is required for all students, both from Boarding School and Regular classes. Although the subjects taught in both programs are the same, the standard of competency targeted at Boarding School students is higher than that of Regular students. The arrangement of lesson schedules between classes is also designed differently to avoid schedule clashes and create an equitable distribution of teachers' teaching load. Each subject has a time allocation of 40 minutes per lesson hour and is supported by 74 educators and professional education staff.

From the aspect of curriculum design, MTsN 1 Pati applies a horizontal dimension curriculum model. This model can be seen from the organization of subjects that are arranged based on certain characteristics and learning objectives. Arabic, Pancasila Education, Indonesian Language, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Informatics, Javanese, Cultural Arts, Tahfidz, and Crafts are among the subjects that are organized autonomously. However, Islamic Religious Education's subjects Qur'an Hadith, Moral Faith, Fiqh, and Islamic Cultural History are closely related to one another, forming a cohesive body of religious knowledge. Meanwhile, Physical Education, Sports, and Health are designed in an integrated manner by integrating various learning materials in a single goal to be achieved.

In the intracurricular aspect, MTsN 1 Pati applies the same curriculum to Boarding School, Regular, and Digital classes. Islamic Religious Education, Arabic, Pancasila Education, Indonesian Language, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, English, Informatics, Cultural Arts, Sports and Health Physical Education, Crafts, and local content such as Nahwu Shorof, Javanese, and BTQ-Tahfidz are among the subjects taught. The main difference between Boarding School and Regular classes lies in the competency targets that

students must achieve. In addition to knowledge and skill competencies, Boarding School students are also required to achieve attitude competence and self-development through various more intensive religious and boarding school coaching programs.

In addition, MTsN 1 Pati also develops Digital classes as a form of curriculum innovation that is adaptive to technological developments. Digital Classes use the same curriculum as Boarding School and Regular classes, but supported by more modern facilities and infrastructure. The study room is equipped with air conditioning, personal lockers, interactive television, internet access, learning tablets, and other supporting facilities that support the digital-based learning process. The development of Digital Classrooms is also supported through the International Digital Class (IDC) program in collaboration with universities as an effort to improve the quality of learning and technological literacy of students. At MTsN 1 Pati, the co-curricular curriculum is implemented through a number of initiatives that seek to develop students' character while enhancing their academic proficiency. The Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project and Rahmatan lil Alamin Student Profile (P5PPRA), which takes place twice during a school year, are two of the primary initiatives that are carried out. The theme of the project that has been implemented includes sustainable living which focuses on the formation of environmental awareness and entrepreneurship through the Ndeso Snack Festival which aims to foster the entrepreneurial spirit of students. In addition, the madrasah also organizes various supporting activities such as journalism classes, journalistic workshops, Regular Ngaji Friday Wage, Madrasah Student Ta'aruf Period (MATSAMA), collaborative ceremonies with the police, commemorations of national and international holidays, as well as various partnership programs with educational institutions and community organizations. These various activities show that there is synergy between madrasahs and various external parties in supporting the improvement of the quality of education.

Meanwhile, the implementation of the extracurricular curriculum is directed at the development of students' talents, interests, and potential. The madrasah provides a wide selection of extracurricular activities such as volleyball, dance, pencak silat, journalism, robotics, futsal, scouting, Intra-School Student Organization (OSIS), Youth Red Cross (PMR), karawitan, Mathematics classes, Natural Science classes, Social Science classes, and Mini English Villages. All of these extracurricular activities can be participated by students in Regular, Boarding School, or Digital classes without any difference in treatment. After the completion of intracurricular learning activities, activities are implemented Monday through Thursday. Through these diverse programs, MTsN 1 Pati aims to develop students holistically not just academically, but also in the character, skills, creativity, and social skills necessary to meet today's issues.

Discussion

Implementation of Vision and Mission as the Basis for Curriculum Development

Vision is a strategic direction that becomes a guideline in all educational activities. The vision is the ideal state of affairs that the educational establishment hopes to attain in the future. (Afifah et al., 2022; Fitriah et al., 2025; Hafizin & Herman, 2022; Marsona et al., 2026; Zulfa & Nugraha, 2024). The vision of MTsN 1 Pati is translated into various programs that reflect

four main pillars, namely spiritual, academic, socio-ecological excellence, and the internationalization of education.

The madrasah creates a number of religious habituation programs in the area of Uswatun Hasanah, including regular istigasah, congregational prayers, sunnah prayers, Friday Wage recitation, Berzanji reading, religious moderation, Qur'an reading, Asmaul Husna, and salawat. These programs demonstrate that curriculum development is focused on developing students' religious character in addition to their cognitive abilities. This result is consistent with the idea of Islamic education, which views moral development as the primary objective of education. The findings of the study on Islamic education curriculum innovation also demonstrate that, in order to meet the difficulties of modernity, the curriculum in Islamic educational institutions must be focused on bolstering spiritual, moral, and character traits. Islamic-based curricula can produce students with strong moral integrity and personalities in addition to outstanding academic performance (Hasmiza, 2025; Herawati et al., 2025; Imamuddin, 2025; Isti'anah et al., 2025). Therefore, MTsN 1 Pati's religious activities are an actual implementation of curriculum development that is focused on striking a balance between intellectual and spiritual dimensions.

In terms of excellence in science and technology, madrasahs develop superior tahfiz programs, yellow book studies, research, robotics, digital madrasahs, Academic Information Systems (SIKAD), and partnerships with universities. These results demonstrate how Islamic scientific traditions and contemporary science are integrated. As a result, MTsN 1 Pati's curriculum seamlessly blends religious science and general science rather than being binary. This conclusion is consistent with studies on Islamic education innovation in the digital age, which indicates that in order for Islamic educational institutions to stay current, they must be able to combine technological proficiency with bolstering Islamic principles. Graduates with strong religious character, intellectual aptitude, and digital literacy can be produced by Islamic education that adapts to technology advancements (Al Jaber et al., 2025; Hamzah & Mudlofir, 2025; Juliantri, 2025; Safirah et al., 2025). Thus, MTsN 1 Pati's robotics programs, digital madrasahs, and academic collaborations demonstrate efforts to change the curriculum to meet the needs of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0.

Furthermore, MTsN 1 Pati's creation of digital madrasahs is consistent with research findings about the Independent Curriculum's implementation, which highlights the significance of learning flexibility, enhancing 21st century competencies, and integrating technology into the educational process. The Merdeka Curriculum gives educational institutions leeway to create innovations that meet the needs of students and the institution's unique features. In this regard, the research development and digital madrasah program are a tangible way to apply the Independent Curriculum, which is focused on enhancing the caliber of technology-based learning and bolstering student competencies all around (Muslimin, 2023; Swandari et al., 2023; Tasya, 2025).

In the aspect of environmental awareness, the 7K program, child-friendly madrasahs, social compensation, preservation of local wisdom, and community economic partnerships are the means of forming students' social awareness. These initiatives demonstrate the use of character-based education that fosters compassion, social responsibility, and environmental sustainability. The creation of this curriculum demonstrates that MTsN 1 Pati is focused on developing citizens who are socially conscious and environmentally conscious in addition to

academic success. This result is consistent with the Independent Curriculum paradigm, which places a strong emphasis on the development of the Pancasila Student Profile, particularly in the areas of independence, cooperation, and care for the environment. Through these programs, students gain a contextual learning experience and are close to people's lives.

Meanwhile, international orientation is realized through strengthening Arabic and English, organizing international classes, and fostering international achievements. This effort shows that MTsN 1 Pati is trying to build a curriculum that is able to bridge local, national, and global needs simultaneously. The results are consistent with research on Islamic education innovations in the era of industry 5.0, which highlights the need for Islamic educational institutions to equip students with digital literacy, global competency, cross-cultural communication skills, creativity, and collaborative abilities in a global setting. Mastery of foreign languages is seen as one of the strategic competencies to increase the competitiveness of graduates at the global level. Therefore, the development of international classes and foreign language strengthening programs at MTsN 1 Pati is a strategic step in realizing the vision of a superior and international standard madrasah without abandoning its Islamic identity.

The results of the study show that the vision and mission of MTsN 1 Pati do not stop as normative documents, but are implemented in real terms through various integrated curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular programs. The success of curriculum development is largely dependent on educational institutions' capacity to translate their vision and mission into programs that are responsive to the advancement of science, technology, community needs, and global challenges. These findings support the findings of earlier research. Therefore, MTsN 1 Pati's curriculum development can be classified as an innovative Islamic education curriculum that balances religious principles, academic proficiency, social responsibility, and global perspective.

Religious Philosophical Foundations and Curriculum Structure in the Development of the MTsN 1 Pati Curriculum

The study's findings demonstrate that MTsN 1 Pati's curriculum creation is not only focused on academic success but also on the philosophical underpinnings of religion, which serve as the madrasah organization's identity and culture. Shahada, prayer, friendship, dignity, and benefit are the five primary qualities that make up the basis. The establishment of madrasah culture, learning programs, and educational objectives are all based on these five values. The value of the Shahadat emphasizes the internalization of the Islamic faith as the foundation of all educational activities so that students are committed to carrying out Islamic teachings consistently. The value of praying reflects the efforts of the madrasah in instilling love for the Prophet Muhammad PBUH as the main role model in life. Meanwhile, the value of Friendship is realized through the development of cooperation with various educational institutions, universities, and external organizations to expand students' insights and learning experiences. The Dignity value is oriented towards the formation of the character of students who are moral, honest, and responsible, while the Dignity value shows an educational orientation that is not only beneficial to oneself, but also to the community and the surrounding environment.

This conclusion is consistent with research on the creation of Islamic education curricula, which indicates that the curriculum must be prepared using the philosophical underpinnings of Islam in order to produce students who are not only intellectually gifted but

also morally, socially, and spiritually mature. The research emphasizes that the Islamic education curriculum ideally integrates the divine dimension (*hablum minallah*) and the human dimension (*hablum minannas*) in a balanced manner so that it is able to form people with character and competitiveness (Idris, 2024; Irsad, 2016; Ishak, 2024; Marlina & Nugraha, 2025; Syafei, 2025). Furthermore, studies on Islamic educational innovations in the digital age demonstrate that, in order to prevent students from losing their Islamic identity in the face of technical advancements and globalization, religious values must be strengthened (Afif & Ningrum, 2024; Hoeruman et al., 2025; Karadona Scott, 2025; Puja et al., 2025a, 2025b; Rahma et al., 2024; Rahmayanti et al., 2025; Susono et al., 2025).

From the aspect of curriculum organization, MTsN 1 Pati implements an integrated vertical and horizontal curriculum design. In the vertical dimension, the curriculum is prepared based on a tiered class system consisting of grades VII, VIII, and IX which are in Phase D of the Independent Curriculum. Each level is designed with a level of breadth and depth of material that is tailored to the psychological development and learning needs of students. The class structure is also divided into Regular, Boarding School, and Digital classes. This grouping allows madrasas to provide more adaptive educational services according to the characteristics of students. Even though they use the same subjects, Boarding School students get additional religious coaching programs, strengthening foreign languages, tahfiz Al-Qur'an, and more intensive self-development through the dormitory system, while Digital classes get reinforcement on aspects of technology utilization and digital literacy.

In the horizontal dimension, MTsN 1 Pati combines several models of curriculum organization. The Separate Subject Curriculum model is applied to stand-alone subjects, such as Arabic, Bahasa Indonesia, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Informatics. The Correlated Curriculum model is applied to the Islamic Religious Education cluster which includes the Qur'an, Hadith, Moral Beliefs, Fiqh, and Islamic Cultural History which are interrelated in forming the religious competence of students. Meanwhile, the Integrated Curriculum model is seen in the subjects of Physical Education, Sports, and Health which integrate various competencies into a single learning unit. These findings show that MTsN 1 Pati is not fixated on one specific curriculum model, but combines various forms of curriculum organization according to learning needs and teaching material characteristics.

The study's findings support the idea that implementing the Independent Curriculum gives educational units the freedom to create a curriculum framework that fits the needs of the students and the institution's unique features. The flexibility of curricular organization enables schools and madrasas to create more contextual, differentiated, and student-centered learning, according to research on the independent curricular's implementation (Alfaeni & Asbari, 2023; Buds & Squirrel, 2024). Thus, the development of the curriculum at MTsN 1 Pati shows the integration between the philosophical foundation of religion and the design of a modern curriculum that is adaptive to the needs of students, scientific development, and the demands of the global community without abandoning its identity as an Islamic educational institution.

Innovation of Intracurricular, Co-curricular, and Extracurricular Programs

The study's findings demonstrate that MTsN 1 Pati's curriculum development is enhanced by extracurricular and co-curricular activities that foster students' character and competency development in addition to intracurricular learning activities. In the intracurricular

aspect, madrasas apply subjects according to the Independent Curriculum and add local content such as Nahwu Shorof, Javanese, and BTQ-Tahfidz. Especially for Boarding School students, madrasas add competencies related to the formation of attitudes, knowledge, skills, and self-development. This policy demonstrates the efforts made by madrasas to combine Islamic principles with the requirements of contemporary education so that students develop their religious character in addition to their academic skills.

In terms of extracurricular activities, MTsN 1 Pati creates a number of initiatives that aid in the execution of the Independent Curriculum, particularly the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5). Activities that focus on sustainable lifestyles and entrepreneurship provide a more contextual learning experience and are close to the lives of learners. In addition, programs such as journalism, Ngaji Jumat Wage, Masa Ta'aruf Siswa Madrasah (Matsama), partnerships with universities, Dejavato Foundation, and Kampung Ankle are a means to expand horizons, improve social skills, and build students' confidence. These findings are in line with research that shows that co-curricular activities are able to strengthen learning in the classroom while developing students' character, creativity, and critical thinking skills (Amalia & Rosmaya, 2025; Faizah, 2025; Rachmadina et al., 2025).

MTsN 1 Pati places a high priority on the growth of students' skills and interests through a variety of extracurricular activities in addition to co-curricular programs. The programs available include robotics, journalism, futsal, *pencak silat*, PMR, *karawitan*, scouting, Mini English Village, as well as Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies olympiad classes. The range of activities available demonstrates that madrasas work hard to give students a large area to reach their full potential in accordance with their interests and skills. Extracurricular activities serve as a vehicle for character development, leadership, teamwork, and social responsibility in addition to developing talent. These findings are consistent with research showing that extracurricular activities have a major role in helping students build the non-academic competences and 21st century abilities necessary to meet difficulties in the future. (Ndruru et al., 2025; Pamulaan, 2025).

Overall, the innovations of intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular programs developed by MTsN 1 Pati show that curriculum development is not only directed at academic achievement alone, but also at character building, social skills, creativity, critical thinking skills, and students' readiness to face global changes. This finding is in line with research on the implementation of the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes that the success of curriculum development is highly determined by the ability of educational institutions to integrate academic learning with character strengthening and developing students' potential holistically (Hidayah & Nabila, 2025; Karadona, Rahmawati, & Mudatsir, 2026; Karadona, Rahmawati, Arsyad, et al., 2026; Tohet et al., 2024).

Obstacles to Curriculum Development in Islamic Education Institutions at MTsN 1 Pati

The study's findings indicate that since the Independent Curriculum was introduced in 2022, MTsN 1 Pati's curriculum development has encountered a number of challenges. This curriculum gives teachers the freedom to create lessons that meet the needs of their pupils, but it also necessitates a difficult shift in perspective and workplace culture. Teachers who were previously accustomed to structured, achievement-oriented learning must adapt to a more flexible, student-centered approach, and emphasize competency and character development.

These changes pose challenges in the implementation process, especially at the planning and implementation stages of learning.

The shift in the paradigm of learning is one of the primary challenges. Teachers are no longer the sole source of information in the Independent Curriculum; instead, they serve as facilitators who assist students in discovering and realizing their own potential. This condition requires teachers to implement more active, collaborative, and project-based learning. However, not all teachers are ready to make these changes because they are still used to conventional learning methods. This result is consistent with Sucipto et al.'s research, which claims that there are still a number of obstacles to the Independent Curriculum's implementation, particularly with regard to the preparedness of teachers' human resources, the use of technology, and the execution of learning assessments (Sucipto et al., 2024).

The application of differentiated learning presents the next challenge. In order to adapt instruction to each student's requirements, the Independent Curriculum mandates that teachers comprehend each student's traits, interests, and skills. In practice, teachers have difficulties because they have to prepare different materials, methods, and forms of assessment for each group of students. In addition to requiring more time, this approach also requires good classroom management skills. The findings of this study are consistent with those of Rahmawati's research, which discovered that teachers frequently struggle with creating lesson plans, creating a variety of learning activities, and managing their time in differentiated instruction (Rahmawati, 2023).

In addition, teachers' readiness in understanding the concept and tools of the Independent Curriculum is also an obstacle in itself. To create lesson plans, administer diagnostic tests, and carry out instruction in line with the Independent Curriculum's tenets, some educators still require support and training. These conclusions are corroborated by Yantoro et al.'s research, which demonstrates that many educators still lack a thorough understanding of the Independent Curriculum's structure and must improve their skills in creating learning resources and evaluations (Yantoro et al., 2023).

Another factor that also affects the development of the curriculum at MTsN 1 Pati is the learning motivation of students. The abolition of the National Exam as a national evaluation standard has a positive impact in the form of reduced academic pressure, but for some students it also causes a decrease in learning motivation. Some students become less motivated to achieve learning targets because they no longer have the same measure of success nationally. As a result, teachers must work harder to build students' intrinsic motivation through engaging and meaningful learning strategies.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research's findings, it can be said that MTsN 1 Pati's curriculum development is an example of how Islamic educational institutions are adapting to the Independent Curriculum's implementation, which is done methodically and creatively. Curriculum development is not only oriented towards changing the learning structure, but also includes updating the vision, mission, culture of madrasas, as well as strengthening educational programs that are integrated with Islamic values. The vision of madrasas that are oriented

towards excellence in science and technology, environmental concern, and international competitiveness are the main cornerstones in designing various educational programs that are relevant to the needs of the 21st century.

The implementation of the curriculum at MTsN 1 Pati is realized through the integration of intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular programs. The Boarding School and Digital Classroom programs are superior innovations that combine strengthening religious character, digital literacy, foreign language mastery, and global competence. In addition, the philosophical foundation consisting of the values of Shahada, Prayer, Friendship, Dignity, and Benefit serves as a framework for creating a madrasah culture that promotes students' overall character development. As a result, the curriculum established emphasizes not just academic success but also the development of values, social skills, creativity, and preparedness for global issues. However, curriculum development at MTsN 1 Pati still faces several obstacles, including changes in learning paradigms, the implementation of differentiated learning, teacher competency readiness, student learning motivation, and technical obstacles in the use of technology. In order to ensure that the Independent Curriculum is implemented as effectively as possible, it is necessary to provide instructors with ongoing training and mentoring, enhance learning facilities and infrastructure, and periodically evaluate the curriculum. All things considered, MTsN 1 Pati has demonstrated how to create an Islamic education curriculum that is creative, flexible, and pertinent to contemporary needs without sacrificing the identity and Islamic principles that define madrasahs.

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