

Implementation Of Islamic Religious Education Curriculum In Developing Students' Religious Character At Al Firdaus Senior High School Sukoharjo

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ABSTRACT

The formation of students' religious character has become a crucial aspect of the national education system, particularly in the context of global challenges and adolescent moral crises. Al Firdaus Senior High School Sukoharjo, as a school based on national and international curricula (International Baccalaureate), develops Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum integratively to strengthen students' religious values. This research aims to describe the planning, implementation, and impact of IRE curriculum on students' religious character formation. The study employs a qualitative descriptive approach with data collection techniques through interviews, observations, and documentation. Informants consist of the school principal, IRE teachers, and grade XI students. Research results show that curriculum planning is conducted through the development of learning modules based on learning achievements and contextual learning objectives. Learning implementation is carried out dialogically, reflectively, and based on student experiences. The impact of curriculum implementation is evident in the improvement of students' religiosity indicators, such as worship discipline, participation in religious activities, and strengthening of moral and social values. These findings affirm the importance of synergy between flexible planning, religious environment, and meaningful learning methods. The implications of this research indicate that schools need to continuously develop value-based curriculum and contextual learning to form individuals with good character and integrity in the global era.

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Introduction

Curriculum serves as an essential element in the educational process, functioning as a guide for planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (IRE), curriculum is not merely understood as a set of materials, objectives, and methods, but also as an instrument for comprehensive religious character formation among students. A contextually and adaptively designed curriculum will encourage educational institutions to produce students who are not only intellectually intelligent but also spiritually and morally excellent. Religious education in schools is required to be more than just knowledge

transfer, but also as a process of internalizing values and morals manifested through real attitudes and actions in students' daily lives (Septiani et al., 2024).

An effective IRE curriculum must serve as a bridge between the vision of Islamic education and contemporary demands. In practice, curriculum development should ideally consider principles of relevance, flexibility, and continuity, while integrating intracurricular and extracurricular activities as a unified entity supporting students' religious character formation (Satriono, 2018). Therefore, in-depth empirical studies are needed on how IRE curriculum implementation is concretely executed in specific educational units, including challenges and solutions in systematically and continuously forming students' religious character.

Several previous studies have discussed IRE curriculum development from both planning and implementation perspectives. However, few specifically highlight the comprehensive integration between planning, implementation, and results of IRE curriculum implementation in empirically forming students' religious character. Most previous research focused on conceptual aspects or limited case studies, without addressing learning practice dynamics that combine intracurricular and extracurricular approaches within a planned curriculum framework. Therefore, this study has urgency to fill this gap by presenting comprehensive and contextual field data at Al Firdaus Senior High School Sukoharjo.

Several relevant studies provide general insights into IRE curriculum development models. Research by (Pramita, Halimah, & Ridha, 2025) shows that curriculum development principles must be based on relevance, flexibility, and continuity in content formulation and learning strategies. Meanwhile, a study by (Rosadi, Setiawan, & Mahmud, 2024) emphasizes the importance of philosophical and humanistic approaches in developing students' religious values. Research by (Rahmadani & Masbirorotni, 2025) underlines the need for curriculum that is adaptive to students' needs and based on expected graduate competencies. However, these studies have not explicitly examined the direct relationship between IRE curriculum and results of students' religious character formation in one institution systematically.

Curriculum development is a systematic process to update or formulate new curriculum according to educational institution needs and contemporary demands (Koesoema, 2019). In the IRE context, curriculum must integrate values of faith, worship, and morals as the main foundation for religious character formation. Religious character refers to individual behavioral qualities that reflect understanding and practice of religious values such as faith, Islam, ihsan, knowledge, and good deeds (Gunawan, 2022). Strategies for instilling religious values in curriculum involve methods of exemplarity, habituation, and continuous guidance in school life (Sauri, Sanusi, Saleh, & Khalid, 2022).

Curriculum implementation does not only stop at document formulation but includes planning, learning implementation, and evaluation as indicators of successful student character formation. Contextual curriculum will produce more effective transfer of values rather than mere transfer of knowledge (D. M. Sari, 2019).

This research offers novelty by presenting a holistic approach to IRE curriculum development in students' religious character formation. Different from previous research that was theoretical or segmental, this study combines planning, implementation, and evaluation aspects in one comprehensive analysis in the context of Al Firdaus Senior High School Sukoharjo. This research also evaluates actual results of curriculum implementation on student character

changes, considering the role of teachers, infrastructure, and synergy among school components. Thus, this study is expected to strengthen contextual and applicable value-based IRE curriculum models.

Based on the background and problem identification presented, the research problems are: (1) How is the planning of Islamic Religious Education curriculum development in forming students' religious character at Al Firdaus Senior High School Sukoharjo? (2) How is the implementation of Islamic Religious Education curriculum development in forming students' religious character at Al Firdaus Senior High School Sukoharjo? (3) What are the results and impacts of IRE curriculum implementation on students' religious character?

Method

This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach aimed at comprehensively describing the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum development in students' religious character formation at Al Firdaus Senior High School Sukoharjo. This approach is considered relevant as it allows researchers to explore complex educational phenomena through interpretive processes oriented toward meaning and socio-cultural context where the research is conducted (Moleong, 2007).

The research was conducted at Al Firdaus Senior High School Sukoharjo with implementation beginning in May 2025. Location selection was done purposively considering institutional readiness and its relevance to the study focus. Data sources in this research consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through direct interviews with the principal, vice principal for curriculum, IRE teachers, and students. Secondary data were obtained from documentation including syllabi, lesson plans, curriculum development meeting notes, and school religious activity archives (Sarosa, 2021).

Data collection techniques were conducted through three main methods: (1) in-depth interviews to explore planning and implementation of IRE curriculum development; (2) observation, covering intracurricular and extracurricular student learning activities, as well as teacher interactions in transferring religious values; and (3) documentation, as physical evidence and field data complement relevant to activities such as photos, meeting minutes, and learning materials (Wijaya, 2020).

To ensure data validity, source and method triangulation techniques were used, comparing interview results, observations, and documents. Data trustworthiness was also maintained through extended researcher participation and in-depth observation of school activities (Anam et al., 2023). Data analysis was conducted using Miles and Huberman's interactive model consisting of four stages: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Sugiyono, 2013).

Each research stage was conducted systematically: (1) planning and informant selection stage; (2) field data collection stage; (3) data analysis and interpretation stage; and (4) research report compilation stage. With this approach, research results are expected to provide comprehensive and applicable insights regarding the effectiveness of IRE curriculum development in forming students' religious character.

Result and Discussion

1. Planning of IRE Curriculum Development

Field findings show that IRE curriculum development planning at Al Firdaus Senior High School Sukoharjo is conducted by integrating Independent Curriculum principles and International Baccalaureate (IB) approaches. This is reflected in learning modules systematically developed by teachers based on Islamic values reflection. Modules include learning achievements, learning objectives, activity steps, and assessments covering knowledge, attitude, and skill dimensions. Teachers have freedom to formulate learning objectives (TP) based on context and student needs, while still referring to fixed national learning achievements (CP).

These findings align with Oliva's theory stating that curriculum development includes flexible, adaptive planning processes based on student needs (Oliva, 1988). At Al Firdaus Senior High School, teachers do not merely copy teaching materials but develop modules through ATM (Observe, Imitate, Modify) approaches to be more contextual with the school's religious culture. This supports Hamalik's view that curriculum planning must be rooted in real needs and learning environment conditions (Hamalik, 2003).

Learning planning at this school also involves religious character habituation from the beginning of learning activities. Observation results show that each learning session begins with prayer reading, greetings, and religious apperception activities. This practice aligns with habituation-based religious character learning approaches as stated by (Gunawan, 2022), that character formation must begin with spiritually valuable routines.

Regarding material substance, teachers develop themes such as "The Essence of Loving Allah" taught through reflective methods, discussions, and presentations. This strategy supports Ki Hajar Dewantara's view that education must guide students' spiritual potential through contextual approaches and direct experience (Sugiarta, Mardana, & Adiarta, 2019). This is strengthened by research results from (Pratama, 2018) showing that IRE learning emphasizing reflection and personal meaning is more effective in instilling religious values compared to one-way lecture approaches.

From the evaluation aspect, teachers use formative and summative assessments not only to measure students' cognition but also attitude and affective aspects, for example through reflective journals or religious values portfolios. This aligns with ideas from (Kasanah & Pratama, 2024) that character education assessment must include all domains of Bloom's taxonomy—knowledge, attitudes, and skills.

The principal and vice principal for curriculum are also involved in supervising learning planning quality. They conduct supervision on completeness and content alignment of modules with school vision. This managerial involvement strengthens findings from (Amelia, Adriansyah, Setiawati, & Hayati, 2025) that curriculum development success is greatly determined by synergy between teachers and school management.

Interview findings with teachers also show that the biggest challenge in curriculum planning is aligning national curriculum and IB demands. However, through internal training and mentoring, teachers can balance these two approaches, making them integrative strengths in IRE education. This supports Bruner's theory emphasizing the importance of scaffolding and learning

communities in teacher professional development (Widayanthi, Subhaktiyasa, Hariyono, Wulandari, & Andrini, 2024).

From the documentation side, IRE teachers have compiled learning modules completely and consistently. Modules reflect integrative principles between Islamic values and Pancasila student profiles, as mandated by the Independent Curriculum. This integration aligns with research results from (Khasanah et al., 2024) concluding that IRE curriculum must be flexibly developed to align with institutional needs and contemporary developments.

These findings support the theory that effective curriculum planning must be adaptive, value-based, and contextual. IRE curriculum at Al Firdaus Senior High School Sukoharjo is not only designed to meet administrative standards but also as a means of transforming religious values within students. This planning has provided a strong foundation for forming applicable religious character in daily life, consistent with Islamic education ideals.

2. Implementation of IRE Curriculum in Forming Religious Character

Implementation of IRE curriculum development at Al Firdaus Senior High School Sukoharjo is conducted in an integrated manner between intracurricular learning, co-curricular, and religious activities outside the classroom. Based on observation and interview results, this implementation not only emphasizes academic achievement but also students' religious character formation through habituation and exemplarity approaches. Learning takes place actively and dialogically, with teachers serving as facilitators and moral models for students (Rochmat, Maulaya, & Avilya, 2022).

The IRE learning process is implemented using inquiry and reflection-based learning modules. In practice, students are encouraged to connect learning materials with their life experiences, such as reflecting on the meaning of trust in God (*tawakal*), patience (*sabar*), and gratitude (*syukur*) in daily contexts. This strategy aligns with Vygotsky's constructivism theory emphasizing the importance of social experience and dialogue in building meaning (Pass, 2004). This is also supported by research results from (Arman, 2023) showing that contextual learning strategies are more effective in forming religious values.

One prominent form of curriculum implementation is the integration of religious values in all school activities, for example through "*One Day One Hadith*" programs, congregational Dhuha prayer activities, and daily Qur'an memorization. Teachers not only serve as instructors but also as student moral guides in every interaction. These findings strengthen Abuddin Nata's view that religious education must be implemented in an atmosphere enabling value internalization, not merely cognition (Nata, 2012).

At the classroom level, IRE teachers develop spiritual dialogue in the learning process. For example, when discussing the theme "Being Devout to Allah," teachers direct students to write personal reflections about forms of devotion they have practiced. This technique builds high affective awareness, as emphasized by Thomas Lickona's value education theory, that appreciation and action become the core of character formation (Lickona, 1996).

Co-curricular activities such as Islamic studies, weekly mentoring, and leadership training are organized as part of religious character formation strategies. These activities are inseparable from IRE curriculum as they serve as applicative means of values taught in class. Documentation

results show continuity between learning content and student self-development activities, indicating vertical and horizontal integration in curriculum (Famella et al., 2025).

The school environment is also designed to support religious curriculum implementation, including providing a mosque as the center of worship activities, Islamic propagation posters in every classroom, and internal regulations based on Islamic values. This is consistent with John Dewey's learning environment theory, emphasizing that physical and social environments must be part of the educational process itself (Dewey, 2022).

Teachers' roles are very significant in actualizing curriculum. From interviews, it is known that teachers are given methodological freedom to develop learning according to student characteristics. Teachers also serve as informal counselors in guiding students experiencing religious and moral problems. This multifunctional role supports research results from Agustin, Abbas, Khasanah, & Sari (2024) affirming the importance of teachers' personal capacity in successful IRE curriculum implementation.

On the evaluation side, curriculum implementation includes cognitive and affective assessments that complement each other. Besides written exams, teachers ask students to write religious journals, reflect on their daily worship, and discuss applications of Islamic values. This approach aligns with (Sukiyat, 2020) view stating that character evaluation must be experience-based and attitude change-oriented, not merely test results.

Implementation barriers found in the field are variations in students' religious awareness levels and limited classroom learning time. However, the school overcomes this by strengthening extracurricular approaches and establishing intensive communication between teachers, students, and parents. This step shows that religious character education cannot be formed instantly but through collaborative and continuous social processes.

Thus, IRE curriculum development implementation at Al Firdaus Senior High School Sukoharjo reflects comprehensive and integrative Islamic education practices. Dialogical learning, consistent habituation, and supportive school environment make students not only understand Islamic teachings conceptually but also manifest them in daily behavior. These findings strengthen the urgency of value-based curriculum approaches in addressing character education challenges in the modern era.

3. Impact of IRE Curriculum Implementation on Students' Religious Character

Results of Islamic Religious Education curriculum implementation at Al Firdaus Senior High School Sukoharjo show significant impact on students' religious character formation. Based on interviews, observations, and documentation, it was found that most students show improvement in worship practices, social attitudes based on Islamic values, and spiritual awareness. IRE teachers state that students become more disciplined in obligatory worship, active in school religious activities, and able to demonstrate courteous attitudes in daily interactions (Subando & Firdaus, 2024).

These results are strengthened by students' reflection notes in their religious journals, revealing awareness of the importance of timely prayer, regular Qur'an reading, and maintaining etiquette in social interactions. This reflection is not merely formal reporting but a form of internal awareness growing from meaningful learning. This aligns with Lickona's approach stating

that character education success is marked by integration between knowing, feeling, and acting (Lickona, 1996).

Quantitatively, from affective assessment documentation results and student portfolios, it was found that more than 80% of students are in "good" to "very good" categories in religiosity indicators such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility in worship. Teachers also note positive behavioral changes, especially in students who were previously less active in spiritual activities. These findings support Banks' character change theory, stating that character can be formed through consistent and contextual habituation (Banks & Banks, 2010).

Curriculum impact is also visible in increasingly religious school culture. The school environment becomes a means of value habituation, such as greeting culture, Qur'anic literacy culture before class hours, and use of courteous language. This shows that religious character is not only formed through classroom learning but also through supportive school climate. Dewey's learning environment theory affirms that effective learning occurs when environment functions as a value medium (Hasbullah, 2020).

Based on student interviews, they feel that IRE learning encourages them to become more self-aware, tolerant, and spiritually responsible individuals. For example, students mention that through daily memorization activities and weekly Islamic studies, they not only memorize verses but also contemplate their meaning and strive to apply them in life. This shows success in affective and moral-spiritual aspects of learning.

On the other hand, some teachers note that impact does not occur instantly but gradually. Students with weaker religious backgrounds need more intensive mentoring. However, through mentoring processes and character development programs, these students gradually show changes in attitudes and worship habits. This aligns with findings from (Idris, 2017) stating that the value internalization process in IRE requires continuity and exemplarity.

Programs such as "*One Day One Hadith*," student religious talks, and Ramadan programs at school become part of curriculum instruments that significantly impact student character. Besides serving as cognitive means, these activities foster leadership values, honesty, and religious awareness in social contexts. This program strengthens (Suherman, Fauzan, & Rosviana, 2024) view that value-based curriculum will be effective when supported by applicative activities forming real experiences.

The following table presents a summary of implementation results and their impact on students' religious character dimensions based on teacher documentation and student reflections:

Religious Character Indicator	Before Implementation	After Implementation	Change
Prayer Discipline	Inconsistent	Regular and timely	Significantly increased
Qur'an Reading	Only during IRE classes	Daily routine	Increased
Courteous and Islamic Language	Inconsistent	Habituation occurs	Moderately increased
Reflection and Self-	Rarely done	Weekly habit	Significantly

Evaluation			increased
Participation in Religious Activities	Passive	Active and voluntary	Highly increased

The table above shows real changes that can be measured both qualitatively and quantitatively. This success is inseparable from teacher commitment, integrated curriculum programs, and supportive school culture. These results also align with research by (I. N. B. Sari, Pahrudin, Jatmiko, & Koderi, 2024) stating that consistently implemented IRE curriculum can form students' complete Islamic personality.

Thus, it can be concluded that the impact of IRE curriculum implementation at Al Firdaus Senior High School Sukoharjo is not only apparent in students' religious knowledge but also reflected in their attitudes, habits, and daily behaviors. This proves that religious education, when supported by good curriculum and conducive environment, can serve as the main pillar in forming young generation's religious character.

Conclusion

Based on research results, it can be concluded that Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum development planning at Al Firdaus Senior High School Sukoharjo is conducted systematically and contextually. Integration between the Independent Curriculum and International Baccalaureate (IB) approaches becomes the main strategy in compiling learning modules oriented toward religious character formation. Teachers have freedom in formulating learning objectives and teaching strategies while still referring to national achievements. This planning process demonstrates alignment with modern curriculum development theory that is adaptive and value-based.

IRE curriculum implementation at this school reflects a holistic approach encompassing intracurricular, co-curricular learning, and school culture. The learning process not only transmits religious knowledge but also instills religious values through habituation, exemplarity, and reflective activities. As a result, students show significant improvement in religiosity dimensions such as worship discipline, courteous attitudes, and spiritual awareness. This proves that contextually designed and consistently implemented curriculum can form students' religious character continuously.

Implications of these findings show that effective IRE curriculum development and implementation requires synergy between flexible planning, meaningful learning approaches, and supportive school environment. For other schools, the IRE curriculum model at Al Firdaus can serve as a reference for designing religious character-based learning relevant to contemporary needs. Meanwhile, for policymakers, it is important to provide space for schools to adapt national curriculum into contextual local practices, without neglecting the main goal of Islamic education as forming individuals who are faithful, moral, and contribute to society.

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