Optimization of the Use of Islamic Education Knowledge to Improve the Quality of Graduates from Madrasah Aliyah in Bengkulu

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Abstract: Optimization of the Use of Islamic Education Knowledge to Improve the Quality of Graduates from Madrasah Aliyah in Bengkulu
*Objective: This study aims to map the optimization of the use of Islamic education in improving the quality of student graduates and analyze the reasons for the quality of graduates of madrasah Aliyah students who are not optimal. This research was conducted in 2024. **Method:** The research design uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Data collection: research data consists of primary and secondary data sources. **Data analysis:** Miles and Huberman analysis is used to analyze data, which includes data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusions. **Results:** Islamic education science has not been optimally carried out in improving the quality of student graduates, so the quality of student graduates has not improved optimally. **Conclusion:** The concept of the use of the science of Islamic education, which is not well organized and professional, is the basis for difficulties in improving the quality of graduates. The difficulty in improving the quality of student graduates is due to the lack of understanding of the usefulness of the science of Islamic education, which has not been optimized. **Contribution:** This research can contribute to developing and evaluating the Islamic education curriculum in Madrasah Aliyah by understanding the aspects that need to be optimized.*

Keyword: Optimization; Islamic Education Knowledge; Graduate Quality

Abstrak: Optimalisasi Kegunaan Ilmu Pendidikan Islam Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Lulusan Siswa Madrasah Aliyah Di Bengkulu
Tujuan: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memetakan bentuk optimalisasi kegunaan pendidikan Islam dalam meningkatkan mutu lulusan siswa, juga menganalisis alasan terjadinya mutu lulusan siswa madrasah Aliyah yang belum optimal. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan pada tahun 2024. **Metode:** Desain penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif. Pengumpulan data: data penelitian terdiri dari sumber data primer dan skunder. **Analisis data:** analisis Miles dan Humberman digunakan untuk menganalisisi data yang mencakup pengumpulan data, reduksi data, reduksi data, tampilan data, dan kesimpulan. **Hasil:** kegunaan ilmu pendidikan Islam belum optimal dilakukan dalam meningkatkan mutu lulusan siswa, sehingga mutu lulusan siswa belum meningkat secara optimal. **Kesimpulan:** Konsep kegunaan ilmu penddikan Islam yang yang tidak terorganisir dengan baik dan profesional menjadi dasar kesulitan meningkatkan mutu lulusan. Kesulitan meningkatkan mutu lulusan siswa disebabkan pemahaman kegunaan ilmu pendidikan Islam yang belum optimal dilakukan. **Kontribusi:** Penelitian ini dapat memberikan kontribusi dalam pengembangan dan evaluasi kurikulum pendidikan Islam di Madrasah Aliyah dengan memahami aspek-aspek yang perlu dioptimalkan.

Kata Kunci: Optmalisasi, Ilmu Pendidikan Islam, Mutu Lulusan Siswa

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A. INTRODUCTION

Quality is a highly strategic component of the education system, determining an institution's or individuals overall performance. Quality is considered exclusive, selective, and competitive. Khairiah (2015) explained that quality can be understood in terms of reputation, resources and inputs, processes, content, outputs, and added value. Quality as reputation refers to the general consensus regarding whether an educational institution is high or low quality; Quality as resources is evident in the level of provision of infrastructure and facilities; Quality as inputs pertains to the characteristics of students, educators, and administrators, including their numbers and training levels; Quality as processes reflects the level of interaction between students and educators or the overall quality of the program or system; Quality as content refers to the level of knowledge, attitudes, and skills transmitted through the curriculum; Quality as outputs concerns the short-term consequences of education, such as cognitive achievements, completion rates, certifications, individual skills, attitudes, and behaviors; Quality as outcomes involves long-term impacts, such as employment, income, health, social engagement, social attitudes, behaviors, and skills; Quality as added value relates to the impact, influence, and effects of the education system on students, aiming to expand human capacity to achieve their potential (Khairiah, 2015).

The quality of education can be identified through the graduates it produces. Educational institutions can optimize quality management by assessing physical attributes, such as buildings and facilities, and measuring output quality, including the competencies of graduates (Chui & bin Ahmad, 2016). In madrasah institutions, students are the primary focus for achieving high-quality graduates aligned with the institution's vision and mission (Yuliarsi et al., 2023).

Improving the quality of graduates requires attention to various aspects and significant efforts from administrators, teachers, and students themselves. Graduate quality is crucial as it plays a vital role in shaping professional human resources (Wijaya, 2018). Teachers, in particular, significantly influence graduate quality through curriculum development, syllabus preparation, basic competency mapping, setting graduate competency standards, supervisory programs, and evaluations (Sari et al., 2022).

Thus, the quality of graduates is essential in determining the overall quality of madrasah education. However, the quality of graduates from both public and private madrasahs remains suboptimal. Research by Adha et al. (2019) highlights the low quality of education in Indonesia, as shown by the country's performance in the 2015 PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) conducted by the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development), where Indonesia ranked 62nd out of 70 countries.

Similarly, the performance of madrasahs has been subpar, with challenges including inadequate academic leadership, low motivation, lack of enthusiasm, poor work discipline, and limited perspectives among madrasah heads (Latifah, 2021). These issues hinder professional growth and development.

The role of Islamic education knowledge in optimizing the quality of madrasah graduates is as follows: (1) Students, as the largest asset of the Muslim community, are concentrated in madrasahs; (2) The allocation of Islamic Religious Education subjects in madrasahs is still limited, making it challenging to cover the curriculum comprehensively; (2) Islamic Religious Education receives insufficient attention, resulting in a dichotomy between science and religion; (3) Islamic education still receives less attention; there is a dichotomy between science and religion.

Haryanti (2014) explains that the roles of Islamic education knowledge include (1) Shaping human character through the educational process, (2) Serving as a source rooted in Islamic values, instilling a life guided by religious principles while also fostering knowledge aligned with Islamic teachings; (3) Providing guidance as Islam, a divine revelation from Allah

SWT, aims to ensure the welfare and happiness of humanity in this world and the hereafter; (4) Covering all aspects of human life in this world; (50 Presenting educational theories, hypotheses, and assumptions derived from Islamic teachings, which remain scientifically unstructured despite the availability of relevant literature.

This research aims to map the optimization of Islamic education knowledge in improving graduate quality and analyze the quality of graduates from Madrasah Aliyah in Bengkulu through this optimization. To simplify the mapping, analysis, and discussion on optimizing Islamic education knowledge to improve the quality of graduates from Madrasah Aliyah in Bengkulu, the study is framed around three research questions: (1) What is the role of Islamic education knowledge? (2) What is the quality of graduates from Madrasah Aliyah in Bengkulu?; (3) How can optimizing Islamic education knowledge improve the quality of graduates from Madrasah Aliyah in Bengkulu?.

The hypothesis proposed is that optimizing the role of Islamic education knowledge will enhance the quality of graduates. Furthermore, this optimization should be continuously developed to maintain the reputation of Islamic educational institutions. According to Khairiah and Sirajuddin (2018), quality encompasses four domains: input, process, output, and outcome (1) Input includes all resources needed for processing to achieve the desired graduate output; (2) Process refers to high-quality learning, characterized by active, creative, enjoyable, and meaningful learning environments, which contribute to quality graduates; (3) Output is considered high-quality when students achieve high academic and non-academic results; (4) Outcome is deemed high-quality when graduates are quickly absorbed into the workforce, possess high adaptability, and demonstrate perseverance (Khairiah et al., 2021). Therefore, optimizing the role of Islamic education knowledge can significantly improve the quality of graduates in Indonesian schools.

B. Method

This study employs qualitative methods and a descriptive approach to analyze the optimization of Islamic education knowledge to improve students' graduation quality. The purpose of this research is to provide an overview of the quality of graduates and to understand it through an analysis of the optimization of Islamic education knowledge.

The research was conducted in 2024, focusing on the processes and teaching methods implemented in Madrasah Aliyah in Bengkulu. It includes the application of Islamic education knowledge in various subjects, both religious and general.

Data were collected by utilizing all relevant information and ideas related to the theme, including reviews of relevant books, journal articles, and literature, both offline and online. Various texts on the quality of student graduates were consulted to support the study. The article's arguments and data were analyzed using techniques similar to those of Miles and Huberman, following four stages: Data collection, Data reduction, Data display, and Conclusion drawing.

C. Results and Discussion

1. The Role of Islamic Education Knowledge

The role of education is to serve as an investment for the nation's future. Education becomes a reality in policy and practice when society, families, and the government collectively show a high level of concern in addressing the challenges and issues of current and future education. The independence of education in human life requires mutual trust among individuals (Rabbani & Khairiah, 2022). Therefore, national education must instill values across all societal levels to promote tolerance, mutual trust, and living in various forms of life's pluralism (Imelda, 2017). However, collective awareness still requires time, while

societal and contemporary demands are rapidly evolving, making modernization — including Islamic education a necessity.

As the sociological awareness of the Muslim community shifted toward the importance of education that instills religious values, new experiments in Islamic education emerged during the 1990s (Zguir et al., 2021). These experiments aimed to meet the demands of the times by integrating general and religious knowledge, primarily initiated by private educational institutions.

Islamic education has become a vital part of the national education system, albeit with political dynamics that have historically hindered its development (Akala, 2021). During the New Order era, Islamic education institutions were marginalized due to the strong dichotomy between scientific paradigms and the historical legacy of Indonesia's educational system (Onar et al., 2014). Islamic education originated from religious teachings in pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), which focused solely on Islamic religious sciences as practiced in Middle Eastern education. Under colonial rule, Islamic education isolated itself as a form of resistance to colonial education, limiting its scope to religious studies.

In Indonesia, Islamic education operates on two simultaneous fronts: (1) Preserving classical Islamic education to maintain Islamic scholarly traditions and (2) Adapting to the national education system by incorporating general sciences. This duality arose from the necessity to align religious education graduates with the National Education System Law (UUSPN). If religious education does not conform to UUSPN standards, its graduates lack legal recognition and equivalence with general education graduates (Rabbani & Khairiah, 2022). The differing scientific paradigms have perpetuated institutional stereotypes that persist even in the reform era, characterized by political openness and the surge of globalization.

To maintain national identity globally, Indonesia must adapt to global trends and developments, particularly in information technology (Salehan et al., 2018). A nation's progress in the global context is largely determined by its mastery of science and technology, supported by moral and religious values (Stavrov et al., 2016).

However, the national education paradigm in Indonesia still grapples with dualism. First, religious education is confined to a specialized domain focusing solely on religious studies. Second, Islamic secondary education is equated with general secondary education, highlighting a lack of unified recognition within the national education system for Islamic religious education as having equal status and rights. In practice, budget allocations for religious education are significantly smaller than those for general education. Thus, the role of education within Indonesia's national education system remains suboptimal.

2. The Quality of Graduates from Madrasah Aliyah in Bengkulu

The quality of education in Indonesia remains relatively weak due to several factors, including the readiness of educational institutions to understand the importance of education and the mismatch between the taught materials and the needs of the job market or industry. Research by Latifah et al. (2021) indicates that Indonesia's education quality ranked 72nd out of 77 countries in a UNICEF report, reflecting the poor condition of the nation's education system. This low quality is attributed to various factors, such as inadequate education quality within individual schools (Latifah et al., 2021).

Riyuzen (2018) found that the quality of graduates in Indonesia is still low. As of August 2018, unemployment among vocational school graduates was 24.74% of the total 7.069 million unemployed individuals. This indicates that the curriculum at the school level does not align with the labor market requirements (Perdana, 2018).

At the planning stage, graduate quality lacks a structured, directed, integrated, and sustainable approach. It does not optimally involve parents, school committees, or stakeholders. At the organizational level, the allocation of teacher responsibilities is inconsistent with regulations. Implementation remains suboptimal, which is evident in

inadequate infrastructure and learning facilities. Furthermore, monitoring and evaluation are not conducted continuously (Darmaji et al., 2019).

Efforts to improve graduate quality have been supported by the eight national standards outlined in Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005, later amended by Regulation No. 32 of 2013. These standards include content, process, graduate competency, educators and educational staff, infrastructure, management, funding, and educational assessment. These standards must be carefully and efficiently adopted to ensure all students receive a high-quality education.

Graduate competency standards serve as criteria to determine a student's eligibility for graduation (Chan et al., 2017). These standards encompass minimum competencies in subject areas, topics, and educational institutions. Indicators of graduate quality include exceeding graduation standards, employability, and the ability to continue to higher education. Efforts to improve graduate quality include optimizing teacher competency through professional education, training, workshops, and seminars, encouraging a culture of reading among teachers, and enhancing social interaction within communities. Optimizing student admissions (PPDB) involves forming committees and conducting basic religious knowledge tests to assess students' religious capabilities. Infrastructure improvements, such as classrooms, prayer, and sports facilities, are also crucial. By fulfilling educational standards, the quality of graduates can be enhanced.

The focus of graduate quality is the students, who are the primary subjects in achieving quality outcomes aligned with the vision and mission of education and the madrasah. Many aspects require attention and significant effort from school principals, teachers, and students. Producing professional graduates requires an education system that achieves high academic performance. Education is crucial in producing skilled professionals and high-quality graduates (Nurhayati et al., 2021).

Teachers are vital in enhancing graduate quality by developing syllabi, mapping competency standards, determining graduation standards, supervising programs, and conducting evaluations (Gullickson et al., 2019). Supervision of students also plays a key role in achieving graduate quality. Student supervision is part of managerial supervision conducted by school principals and teachers, aiming to improve and enhance the results of educational activities (Sari, 2022).

Student supervision covers various areas of school administration, including curriculum management, student affairs, infrastructure, staffing, finance, school-community relations, and special services. The Plan, Do, Check, Act (PDCA) model can also improve graduate quality by utilizing management activities within the madrasah, such as public relations, student affairs, curriculum, administration, and full-day school programs (Darmaji et al., 2019). Thus, the involvement of educators, school principals, teachers, supervision, and strategic approaches can significantly improve the quality of graduates.

3. Optimizing the Use of Islamic Education Science to Improve Student Graduation Quality

Research analyzing the optimization of the use of Islamic education science to improve student graduation quality found that education serves as an investment for the nation's future. Education also manifests as a reality within policies and practices. Islamic education science is essential and serves as an integral part of Indonesia's national education system. However, Islamic education faces various political dynamics that are less favorable compared to general education, particularly during the New Order era, where Islamic educational institutions were marginalized. This marginalization created challenges in achieving quality education standards.

The quality of education in Indonesia remains weak, particularly in madrasahs. This weakness stems from the inadequate readiness of educational institutions to comprehend the significance of education and the misalignment of curricula with market or industry needs (Tasdemir & Gazo, 2020). The planning of graduate quality is often unstructured, unfocused,

unintegrated, and unsustainable, with insufficient involvement from parents, school committees, and stakeholders.

The organization of graduate quality efforts is suboptimal, as evidenced by the misalignment of teacher task allocations with regulations (Harris, 2020). Implementation is also inadequate, with insufficient infrastructure and learning facilities. Monitoring and evaluation are not conducted consistently (Brownson & Fowler, 2020). Consequently, the application of Islamic education science has not been fully optimized to enhance the quality of madrasah Aliyah graduates in Bengkulu.

The research findings indicate (1) Challenges in Optimizing Islamic Education Science: On one hand, difficulties arise in optimizing Islamic education science within the national education system. Islamic education has faced less favorable treatment compared to general education. During the New Order era, Islamic educational institutions were marginalized, necessitating a redefinition of the concept of Islamic education's role within the national education system. (2) Impact on Future Graduate Quality: On the other hand, the research highlights a foundational issue that significantly impacts the poor quality of student graduates in the future. This weakness is attributed to several factors, including the lack of readiness among educational institutions to understand the purpose of education, the misalignment of curricula with market or industry demands, and unstructured, unfocused, and unsustainable planning. Additionally, there is inadequate involvement from parents, school committees, and stakeholders, suboptimal task allocation for teachers, insufficient educational infrastructure, and inconsistent monitoring and evaluation (Daly-Smith et al., 2020).

Thus, Islamic education science has not been fully optimized, leading to suboptimal graduate quality (Yusri et al., 2024). The study also explains that the underutilization of Islamic education science results in the inability to achieve optimal graduate quality (Rogers et al., 2021). This is attributed to a "mode of production" structured by a limited understanding of the benefits of Islamic education science in enhancing graduate quality. This is evident in the weak readiness of educational institutions, limited comprehension of Islamic education science, the misalignment of educational materials with workforce needs, unstructured planning, insufficient stakeholder involvement, and inconsistent implementation and monitoring processes. Such conditions reveal that achieving high-quality graduates is a complex challenge, reflecting the historical development and demands of the times.

D. Research Implications and Contributions

Research Implications. The findings of this study provide insights into optimal strategies for integrating Islamic education principles into the existing curriculum of Madrasah Aliyah. This integration can strengthen the application of more effective and relevant teaching methods, ultimately improving the quality of Madrasah Aliyah graduates. The study also highlights the implications of aligning Islamic education taught in madrasahs with the demands of the job market and the social and cultural developments within the community. This alignment is crucial to ensure that Madrasah Aliyah graduates possess religious competencies and the skills necessary for social and professional life.

Research Contributions. This research contributes to developing and evaluating the Islamic education curriculum in Madrasah Aliyah. The study offers practical recommendations for designing a more effective curriculum to achieve the desired educational goals by identifying aspects that need optimization. Additionally, it identifies challenges Madrasah Aliyah faces in Bengkulu, such as limited facilities, a lack of innovative teaching approaches, and other issues. As a result, the study provides actionable and relevant solutions to address these challenges.

E. Recommendations for Future Research Directions

Future researchers are encouraged to delve deeper into utilizing information and communication technology (ICT) in the learning processes at Madrasah Aliyah. Technology can be optimized for delivering materials, accessing learning resources, and developing students' skills, especially in the continuously evolving digital era. Future studies could explore how technology can support the implementation of Islamic education principles and improve the quality of graduates

F. Conclusion

The application of Islamic education principles has not been optimally implemented to enhance the quality of student graduates. This issue is not solely due to a limited understanding of the utility of Islamic education but also stems from unfavorable government treatment towards Islamic education compared to general education. This disparity has resulted in suboptimal graduation quality among Madrasah Aliyah students. The weak graduation outcomes can be attributed to several factors: the lack of institutional readiness to understand the utility of Islamic education, teaching materials that do not align with workforce demands, unplanned and unsystematic program planning, insufficient involvement of parents, school committees, and stakeholders, as well as inadequate organizational management, improper allocation of teaching responsibilities, and poor execution of educational processes. Moreover, there is a lack of continuous monitoring and evaluation. Consequently, the suboptimal application of Islamic education principles has created significant challenges in improving the graduation quality of Madrasah Aliyah students in Bengkulu.

This study highlights that the issue of graduation quality should not be viewed as static but rather as a dynamic process influenced by how graduation outcomes are developed and sustained. Various forms of social discourse and practices lacking awareness have contributed to the difficulty of achieving high-quality graduates. The unclear concept of Islamic education's utility, insufficient infrastructure and structural support, weak planning, suboptimal organization, difficult implementation processes, and poor oversight are foundational issues that hinder the improvement of graduation quality.

Therefore, this study underscores the challenges in improving graduation quality stemming from the suboptimal understanding and implementation of Islamic education principles. However, the study is limited in scope as it relies on data from a single province (Bengkulu), making it insufficient as a comprehensive basis for policy formulation. Developing policies as lessons learned requires extensive surveys and in-depth interviews with informants to form a solid foundation for effective policy frameworks. Such surveys and interviews should cover educational facilities, infrastructure, ongoing services, and informants' experiences regarding their capabilities, preparedness, and responses, which can serve as strong bases for improving educational services.

Future studies should accommodate broader and more diverse data sources across Indonesia. This would enable the findings to provide a more comprehensive understanding of ways to enhance student graduates' quality effectively. In this context, An-Nizom | Vol. 8, No. 1, April 2023: Optimization of Islamic Education Utility could be a critical source of knowledge and deeper insights for improving graduation outcomes.

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