

Research Article

Curriculum Management for Interdisciplinary Integration in Islamic Junior High Schools: A Case Study of Madrasah Tsanawiyah

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Abstract

The integration of religious and general knowledge is a fundamental principle of Islamic education, but the curriculum practices in madrasah tsanawiyah (junior high school) still show disciplinary separation, which results in fragmented learning and weak integration of student competencies. This study aims to analyze the implementation of interdisciplinary curriculum management at MTs Al-Mishbah in Bandung and identify obstacles to teacher adaptation from the perspective of Islamic Education Management. The research used a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with the deputy head of the madrasah in charge of the curriculum, general subject teachers, and religious subject teachers, observation of the teaching and learning process in the classroom, and analysis of curriculum documents in the form of syllabi and lesson plans. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques to find patterns and implementative meanings. The results of the study indicate that the madrasah curriculum has not been systematically integrated. The integration of disciplines is only applied to certain materials, is not supported by integrated syllabi and assessment instruments, there is minimal collaboration between teachers, and there are constraints in terms of competence, time, and managerial support. This study emphasizes that an interdisciplinary curriculum in madrasahs requires strengthening the functions of planning, organizing, and developing human resources as the core of Islamic Education Management.

Keywords: Implementation, Interdiscipliner Curriculum, Knowledge Integration, Learning.

INTRODUCTION

Madrasah Tsanawiyah has a strategic mandate in Indonesia's national education system. Madrasahs not only function as institutions for the transfer of knowledge, but also as spaces for shaping the values, morals, and ways of thinking of their students. In this context, the integration of general subjects and religious subjects is a fundamental issue. However, the reality in the field shows that learning in madrasahs still tends to be dichotomous. Religious and general knowledge are often taught separately, both in curriculum planning and classroom learning practices. This condition limits students' ability to see the interrelationships between different fields of knowledge in understanding real-life issues (Nelly, 2025).

Interdisciplinary curricula have developed in response to the limitations of monodisciplinary approaches in education. These curricula emphasize the interconnectedness of concepts, methods, and learning objectives across subjects. In the framework of Islamic education, the interdisciplinary approach is highly relevant because the Islamic scientific paradigm philosophically does not recognize the separation between religious and general knowledge. Muna & Fauzi (2024) emphasize that an interdisciplinary curriculum in Islamic education does not merely combine content, but builds meaningful connections between empirical knowledge and Islamic normative values. This approach enables students to understand knowledge as a whole and meaningful entity.

A number of studies in the last five years have shown an increase in academic attention to curriculum integration in Islamic educational institutions. Dardiri & Su'aidi (2024) found that integrative learning in Islamic schools can strengthen the internalization of religious values without sacrificing students' academic achievement. These findings show that curriculum integration has a positive impact on character building as well as cognitive competence. Other studies emphasize that the integration of disciplines contributes to the development of students' critical and reflective thinking skills, especially in the context of 21st-century learning (Basri & Abdullah, 2024).

However, these studies also indicate that the implementation of interdisciplinary curricula faces various practical challenges. Anshori et al. (2022) show that many Islamic educational institutions are still at the conceptual stage and have not yet reached systematic implementation. Integration often only appears in the form of simple thematic links, without a well-developed curriculum design. Syafi'i et al. (2025), found similar results, emphasizing that weak curriculum management is a major obstacle to the implementation of an integrative approach in madrasahs.

In the context of Madrasah Tsanawiyah, the challenges of implementing an interdisciplinary curriculum are becoming increasingly complex. MTs are at the junior high school level, where the curriculum structure begins to be segmented into more specific subjects. A study by Mustaqiim & Azani (2024) shows that curriculum integration in MTs often depends on the individual initiatives of teachers, rather than institutional policies. As a result, integration is unsustainable and difficult to evaluate systematically. This condition is also reinforced by

research by Ismail et al. (2021), which highlights the limitations of collaboration between teachers and the lack of managerial support in the development of an integrated curriculum.

In addition to planning aspects, teacher competence is a crucial factor in the success of interdisciplinary curricula. Recent research shows that many teachers do not yet have an adequate conceptual understanding of interdisciplinary curricula. Teachers tend to understand integration as the addition of religious verses or values in general lessons, rather than as an effort to link concepts, objectives, and evaluations across disciplines (Nelly, 2025). This condition causes the implementation of integration to be superficial and inconsistent, as also found in various empirical studies of Islamic education (Basri & Abdullah, 2024).

Curriculum instruments such as syllabi and lesson plans are important indicators in assessing the level of integration. Several studies have noted that the absence of integrated syllabi causes teachers to work separately and maintain the authority of their respective subjects (Dardiri & Su'aidi, 2024). As a result, interdisciplinary learning is difficult to achieve due to the absence of formal collaboration in planning. In addition, the assessment system, which is still based on single subjects, reinforces the fragmentation of learning and weakens the objectives of the interdisciplinary curriculum (Anshori et al., 2022).

Although the literature on curriculum integration in Islamic education continues to grow, there are significant research gaps. First, most studies emphasize the conceptual or normative aspects of science integration, while empirical studies based on classroom practice in MTs are still limited. Second, research linking the implementation of interdisciplinary curricula with the perspective of Islamic Education Management, particularly in terms of curriculum planning, organization, implementation, and supervision, is still rare. Third, few studies explicitly examine the obstacles to teacher adaptation and managerial support in the context of non-boarding madrasahs.

Based on these gaps, this study has clear academic and practical urgency. This study aims to analyze the implementation of interdisciplinary curriculum at MTs Al-Mishbah in Bandung by highlighting learning practices, teacher readiness, curriculum documents, and managerial support from the madrasah. This study also seeks to identify barriers to teacher adaptation in implementing an interdisciplinary approach and explain how these conditions relate to the basic functions of Islamic Education Management.

The contribution of this research is twofold. Theoretically, this research enriches the study of Islamic Education Management by providing empirical data on interdisciplinary curriculum practices at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level. The findings of this study reinforce the argument that curriculum integration cannot be separated from the managerial capacity of madrasahs. Practically, this research provides data-based recommendations for madrasah administrators in designing curriculum policies, developing teacher competencies, and building a sustainable culture of cross-subject collaboration.

Thus, this research not only contributes to the development of academic discourse on the integration of science in Islamic education but also offers a

concrete foundation for improving curriculum management practices in Madrasah Tsanawiyah.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. This approach was chosen because the study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of interdisciplinary curriculum management practices in the natural context of madrasahs. Case studies allow researchers to examine the process of planning, implementation, and constraints of the curriculum holistically in a single educational institution (Yins, 2018). The qualitative approach is also relevant for interpreting teachers' perceptions and practices that cannot be measured quantitatively (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The research was conducted directly at MTs Al-Mishbah in Bandung. Data collection was carried out through interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. Triangulation techniques were used so that the data obtained had an adequate level of credibility (Miles & Huberman, 2014).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three main informants, namely the Deputy Head of the Madrasah in charge of the curriculum, one general subject teacher, and one religious subject teacher. Informants were selected purposively based on their direct involvement in curriculum management and implementation. The interviews focused on the informants' understanding of the interdisciplinary curriculum, subject integration practices, lesson planning, assessment systems, and obstacles encountered. The semi-structured interview model was chosen because it provides a balance between research focus and flexibility in data exploration (Kallio et al., 2016).

In addition to interviews, researchers conducted classroom observations to directly observe the learning process. Observations focused on how teachers delivered material, efforts to link religious and general subjects, teacher-student interactions, and student responses during learning activities. Observations were conducted without intervention so that learning practices could be observed naturally. Classroom observation is an important technique in educational research to capture the gap between planning and actual practice (Cohen et al., 2017).

This study also involved document analysis as the main source of data. The documents analyzed included syllabi and lesson plans (RPP) for general and religious subjects. Document analysis was conducted to trace the extent to which interdisciplinary integration was designed at the learning planning stage. The focus of the analysis was on learning objectives, materials, learning strategies, and assessment instruments. Document analysis helped researchers understand formal curriculum policies and practices that are often not fully visible in interviews or observations (Bowen, 2009).

Data from interviews, observations, and documents were analyzed using thematic analysis. The researchers read the data repeatedly, coded the relevant parts, and then grouped the codes into main themes according to the research focus. The analysis process was carried out simultaneously with data collection, so that the researchers could deepen the findings that emerged in the field. Thematic

analysis was chosen because it is suitable for qualitative research that focuses on patterns of meaning and social practices (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and methods, as well as limited confirmation from key informants. With this approach, the study is expected to provide an accurate and accountable picture of interdisciplinary curriculum management in Madrasah Tsanawiyah.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results of the case study at MTs Al-Mishbah show that the school curriculum as a whole has not been integrated between general and religious subjects. Each subject is still designed and implemented separately. The integration of disciplines only appears in certain materials. This integration usually takes the form of inserting religious values into general learning or vice versa. The delivery of this integration is brief and not in-depth. There is no pattern of learning that is designed from the outset to systematically link cross-subject competencies.

Field findings also reveal teachers' limited understanding of the concept of an interdisciplinary curriculum. Most teachers do not have a clear picture of the difference between the integration of values and the integration of disciplines. Teachers generally understand integration as providing moral examples or relevant verses from the Qur'an. This understanding has not yet reached the stage of designing common learning objectives or combining concepts across subjects. This condition indicates that cross-disciplinary pedagogical competencies are still weak.

In terms of curriculum planning, no integrated syllabus has been found at the madrasah level. Syllabi are developed based on individual subjects and follow the national curriculum structure separately. There are no documents showing the interrelationship between competencies across subjects. Teachers develop lesson plans individually. The learning planning process does not involve cross-subject discussions. As a result, integration is not established from the planning stage.

Assessment instruments also do not support interdisciplinary learning. Assessment still focuses on cognitive achievement in each subject. Affective aspects and interdisciplinary skills have not been designed in an integrated manner. There are no assessment rubrics that measure students' ability to connect religious and general concepts. Assessment is carried out sectorally by each teacher according to the subject they teach.

Other findings show that policy and managerial support for the development of interdisciplinary curricula are still limited. Madrasahs have not provided special training programs for teachers on interdisciplinary learning design. Support facilities for integrated learning are also limited. Teachers rely on their own learning resources without shared guidance. Policy support is more administrative than pedagogical.

In addition, teachers tend to maintain their respective subject authority. Teacher feels fully responsible for the achievements of the subjects being learned. This condition forms the psychological boundary between subjects. Cross-subject

collaboration has not become a working culture. Teachers have not seen integration as a shared responsibility, but rather as an additional burden beyond the main task.

Workload and time limitations are the main obstacles in collaboration development. The dense teaching schedule and administration demands make it difficult for teachers to provide time for joint planning. There is no specific time allocation for the preparation of collaborative RPP. As a result, the opportunity of integration ceases at the discourse level and has not been realized in structured practice.

Overall, the findings of the study suggest that the implementation of interdisciplinary curriculum at MTs Al-Mishbah is still in its early stages. Integration takes place partially, sporadically, and has not been supported by a strong curriculum management system. These results show the gap between the idea of curriculum integration and classroom learning practices.

Discussion

The results of a case study at MTs Al-Mishbah showed that the interdisciplinary curriculum is in fact still running partially. Integration between common and religious subjects occurs only in certain materials and is not consistently implemented throughout the RPP. The findings reflect common challenges in cross-disciplinary education, where learning planning often remains based on individual subjects, not integrative units that connect the two realms of science (Nelly, 2025).

In the context of Islamic education, such approaches could potentially lead to paradoxes. Philosophically, Islamic education rejects the dichotomy of science. But in practice, the structure of the curriculum and culture of the school organization is actually reproducing the separation of the discipline. The findings are in line with criticisms of Anshori et al. (2025) which asserts that the failure of curriculum integration is often not due to the absence of concepts, but by the weak governance and management of implementation at the unit level of education.

Limitations of teacher competence become one of the main obstacles of implementation. Many teachers do not yet understand what an operational interdisciplinary curriculum is, and tend to associate material only at normative value levels without designing cross-eye learning goals. The findings are consistent with literature that suggests that teachers need professional training support to be able to design learning units that connect two or more authentically disciplined (Herningrum & Siregar, 2025).

The lack of integrated syllabus indicates that curriculum planning is still at the level of sectoral instruments. RPP is still arranged individually. This shows that curriculum integration has not yet been part of the school planning culture. Another study found that an effective integrative curriculum should start from syllabus, RPP, to assessments designed to combine interdisciplinary competencies (Basri & Abdullah, 2024).

In the Islamic Education Management perspective, planning is a basic function that determines the direction and consistency of education

implementation. When syllabus and RPP are arranged individually based on their respective subjects, cross-disciplinary integration loses its structural footing. This strengthens Dardiri dan Su'aidi (2024) findings that an integrative curriculum without clear planning documents will be difficult to realize sustainably.

Immature and unintegrated assessment instruments emphasize that the measurement of learning achievements is still based on the disciplinary syllabus. This implies an evaluation that is unable to assess the interrelationship of understanding between religious and general science values. Research on curriculum management emphasizes that assessments should be designed to assess broad competencies, not just the sheer cognitive realm (Khozin et al., 2021).

Limited managerial support such as lack of means, infrastructure and training also hinders integrative implementation. Another study found that educational institutions that successfully implement curriculum integration pay attention to the capacity of teachers through intensive training and teamwork support between subjects (Muna & Fauzi, 2024). This context suggests that school management has a central role in preparing an environment conducive to interdisciplinary practice.

Teacher culture that maintains the autonomy of each subject is also a barrier. Teachers tend to work in "silo" disciplines that complicate collaboration. International research shows that overly rigid organizational structures impact low collaboration between teachers, so that cross-disciplinary approaches are less space-free in everyday learning practices (Scheie et al., 2025).

Workload and time limitations become systemic barriers that cannot be ignored. Cross RPP requires dialogue and collaborative meeting times between teachers. Without clear time allocation, the chances of composing the combined RPP become very small. Literature on learning management states that collaborative time giving is an important factor for curriculum integration to be effective (Suriswo & Zakaria, 2025).

This phenomenon is in accordance with global studies that suggest that curriculum integration still faces resistance because formal education tends to assess achievements per subject, not cross-disciplinary achievements. Fragmented assessment system is one of the main inhibitors of integration (Kreijkes & Greatorex, 2024). Education reviewers also noted that effective integration requires the arrangement of an assessment system that supports combined competencies.

From the perspective of Islamic education management, curriculum integration is not simply inserting moral values briefly in general subjects. It must be the foundation of the philosophy of learning that refers to the epistemological interrelationship between revelation and reason. Curriculum policy that leads to multidisciplinary is important to address the dichotomy of science that has been taking place in Islamic education in Indonesia (Loviana et al., 2025). The study confirms the need for a management structure that integrates the purpose of religious and general education in harmony.

If associated with international studies on interdisciplinary learning, the findings of this study show relatively similar patterns. Various studies suggest that the main challenge of interdisciplinary learning lies not in ideological resistance,

but in the structure of the school's still-based organization (Basri & Abdullah, 2024). This suggests that the problem facing MTs Al-Mishbah is not an isolated case, but rather a part of the systemic challenge of secondary education.

Nevertheless, the findings of the study also open up critical reflection chambers. Limitations of implementation of interdisciplinary curriculum cannot be fully read as a teacher failure or madrassa management. National curriculum system, evaluation mechanisms and educational culture that are still oriented to single subjects also form the context of implementation. Therefore, interdisciplinary approaches need to be understood as a gradual transformation process, not as an instant target.

The problem of curriculum integration at MTs Al-Mishbah reflects a broader challenge to Islamic education in the modern era. Education today requires graduates who are not only normatively religious but also able to think critically, creatively, and adaptively in the context of contemporary world multidimensions. The interdisciplinary curriculum offers a learning framework that accommodates those demands by placing the relationship between religion and science as the core of education. The success of its implementation depends heavily on the managerial strategies of madrassas in strengthening teacher competence, improving assessment instruments, and creating a collaborative culture between studies.

CONCLUSION

The study found that interdisciplinary curriculum management at MTs Al-Mishbah City Bandung has not been systematically running. The integration between common and religious subjects is partial, limited to certain materials, and has not been designed in depth. Curriculum documents such as syllabus, RPP, and assessment instruments are arranged separately based on their respective subjects. This condition suggests that the interdisciplinary approach has not yet been part of the overall madrasa curriculum policy.

The research findings also reveal that the limitations of teacher competence are the main inhibitors. Most teachers do not fully understand the concept of interdisciplinary curriculum and are not familiar with the planning of collaborative learning across subjects. Workload and time limitations strengthen the tendency of teachers to maintain the authority of their respective subjects. In addition, madrassah managerial support is limited, especially in the form of professional training, provision of infrastructure facilities, and policies that encourage teacher collaboration.

From the point of view of Islamic Education Management, the results of this study confirms that the success of the interdisciplinary curriculum depends heavily on the managerial functions of madrassas. Integrated curriculum planning, the organizing of the teacher's collaborative work, the implementation of cross-disciplinary learning, and continuous supervision and evaluation are an inseparable unit. Without strengthening the management aspect, curriculum integration tends to stop at the discourse level.

The practical implications of this study suggest the need for madrassas to devise curriculum policies that explicitly encourage the integration of common and religious subjects. Madrasah needs to develop integrated syllabus and RPP, provide special time for cross-subject planning, as well as organize teacher training focused on developing interdisciplinary curriculum competencies. In addition, the assessment system needs to be redesigned to be able to measure the achievements of cross-disciplinary learning in a whole manner.

Policyically, this study recommends that madrasa managers and stakeholders of Islamic education make an interdisciplinary curriculum part of madrasa quality development strategy. This approach is expected to not only strengthen the integration of religious and general sciences, but also increase the relevance of madrassa education to the social and intellectual challenges of learners.

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