



Implementation of the hidden curriculum in the formation of the religious character of students

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Abstract

The educational curriculum applied in Islamic boarding schools to educate students' character is limited to using a written curriculum system and a hidden curriculum applied in teaching activities at Islamic boarding schools. This study aims to explain the hidden curriculum policy (hidden curriculum in the Darussalam Blokagung Banyuwangi Islamic boarding school). This study uses a qualitative descriptive method, which emphasizes field observation. This method aims to obtain complete and in-depth information by collecting data through observations, interviews, and documentation. As a result of this study, the researcher found that the hidden curriculum applied at the Darussalam Blokagung Islamic boarding school has been implemented since the founders of the Islamic boarding school, namely KH. Mukhtar Syafa'at Abdul Ghofur. The hidden curriculum implemented includes congregational prayers, madrasah diniyah, istighosah, study sessions of the *Ihya' Ulumiddin* book, Quran learning using the Yanbu'a method, monthly Ahad Legi gatherings, and weekly ro'an activities every Friday. This research contributes to uncovering the role of the hidden curriculum as an effective strategy for character development in Islamic boarding schools. It provides a reference for other educational institutions to integrate similar practices into their teaching systems.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: 4 Aug 2024

Revised: 30 Nov 2024

Accepted: 5 Dec 2024

Available online: 27 Dec 2024

Publish: 27 Dec 2024

Keyword:

hidden curriculum; religious character; santri

Open access

Curricula: Journal of Curriculum Development is a peer-reviewed open-access journal.

Abstrak

Kurikulum pendidikan yang diterapkan di pondok pesantren dalam mendidik karakter santri tidak hanya sebatas menggunakan sistem kurikulum yang tertulis saja, ada pula kurikulum tersembunyi yang diterapkan dalam proses kegiatan pengajaran di pondok pesantren. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menjelaskan mengenai kebijakan hidden curriculum (kurikulum tersembunyi yang ada di Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Blokagung Banyuwangi). Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, yang menekankan observasi lapangan. Tujuan dari metode ini adalah untuk mendapatkan informasi yang lengkap dan mendalam dengan pengumpulan data berupa observasi, wawancara dan dokumentasi. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa hidden curriculum yang diterapkan di pondok Pesantren Darussalam Blokagung sudah dilaksanakan sejak zaman pendiri pondok pesantren sendiri, yaitu KH. Mukhtar Syafa'at Abdul Ghofur. Hidden curriculum yang diterapkan meliputi sholat berjamaah, madrasah diniyah, istighosah, pengajian kitab *Ihya' Ulumiddin*, pembelajaran Al-Qur'an dengan metode Yanbu'a, pengajian rutin bulanan Ahad Legi, serta kegiatan ro'an santri setiap Jumat. Penelitian ini berkontribusi dalam mengungkap peran hidden curriculum sebagai strategi efektif dalam pembentukan karakter santri di pondok pesantren, serta memberikan referensi bagi institusi pendidikan lain untuk mengintegrasikan praktik serupa dalam sistem pengajarannya.

Kata Kunci: hidden curriculum; karakter religius; santri

How to cite (APA 7)

Fitria, U., & Khalimah, N. (2024). Implementation of the hidden curriculum in the formation of the religious character of students. *Curricula: Journal of Curriculum Development*, 3(2), 363-374.

Peer review

This article has been peer-reviewed through the journal's standard double-blind peer review, where both the reviewers and authors are anonymised during review.



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INTRODUCTION

School leaders, teachers, and students are committed to enhancing school effectiveness by fulfilling their respective roles, while the parent-child relationship has become more complex, with communication playing a crucial role (Alagbela & Bayuo, 2024). All elements of education, including curriculum, financing, infrastructure, and human resources (HR), must work together to achieve educational success (Rohmad & Kolis, 2021). Initially, the curriculum originated from Latin, which means "to live". It is similar to a compass needle as a directional indicator. Both serve as a guide, indicating the correct direction and the wrong or misleading direction (Nurhayati & Hindun, 2023). So far, the learning process has been carried out through a written (formal) curriculum. However, the formal curriculum does not meet all students' needs regarding applying values or character (Hayati et al., 2021). A hidden curriculum is the result of ideas that arise in the educational process without planning, which means that the actions arise from outside the intended purpose of the teacher (Amin & Yakin, 2021). In this context, the hidden curriculum plays an important role as an educational element that emerges unintentionally but significantly shapes students' character. Against this background, this study explores how the hidden curriculum can be optimized to complement the formal curriculum in supporting more effective character education, particularly within the complex dynamics involving teachers, students, school leaders, and parents.

A hidden curriculum is understood as a distinctive curriculum. This peculiarity lies in its nature, which is a characteristic or differentiator for certain educational institutions, distinguishing them from others. This uniqueness has become a distinction and an attraction for the public to vote for a place of education for their children (Murodah et al., 2024). Darussalam Blokagung Islamic boarding school is an Islamic boarding school founded by KH. Mukhtar Syafa'at Abdul Ghofur in 1951. Since its establishment, the Darussalam Blokagung Islamic boarding school pond has more than 6000 students from Sabang to Merauke. The Darussalam Blokagung Banyuwangi Islamic boarding school is the largest in the Banyuwangi Regency. Because students come from various parts of the region, the character inherent in the students is also different. The purpose of this research is to analyze the implementation of the hidden curriculum in shaping the religious character of students at Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Blokagung Banyuwangi, identify the methods, strategies, and hidden activities employed by mentors or educators, and explore the impact of the hidden curriculum on students' behavior, attitudes, and religious values.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The curriculum, as knowledge, is the same as the stakeholders who transmit the developed content to the learners; as a process, involving stakeholders in actual teaching and learning practices; And as a product, is what the students have been equipped with knowledge, skills, and values (Porlares, 2021). Nowadays, various curriculum developments are also part of the changes in the learning process itself. This is because the curriculum is a guideline For Educators in implementing Learning (Piliano et al., 2023). A curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements that include objectives, content, topics, and the means used to direct learning

activities to achieve certain academic goals (Haryadi & Widodo, 2020). This hidden curriculum is influenced by several aspects, namely relatively fixed aspects, and aspects that can change. This hidden curriculum is influenced by several aspects, namely relatively precise aspects and aspects that can change. The relatively fixed aspect refers to the community's ideology, beliefs, and cultural values that influence schools, including determining what culture is good to pass on to the next generation. The aspects that can change include organizational variables, social systems, and culture. The hidden curriculum in this educational process includes values, norms, and behaviors that are not taught explicitly (Ardilla et al., 2023). It is explained by Allah SWT regarding the curriculum in the Quran surah Al-Qasas verse 77 as follows:

يُحِبُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ إِنَّ فِي الْأَرْضِ لَفِي لُغْوَافٍ مِمَّا يَتَذَكَّرُ لَكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ
وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ كَمَا وَأَحْسِنِ الدُّنْيَا مِمَّنْ تَصْنَعُونَ تَنْسُ وَلَا الْأَجْرَةَ الدَّارِ اللَّهُ أَلْتَنُكَ فِيمَا وَابْتِغِ
الْمُفْسِدِينَ (www)

It means: "And look for what Allah has bestowed on you (the reward) of the Hereafter, but do not forget your part in the world. Do good (to others) as Allah has done good to you, and do not harm the earth. Indeed, Allah does not like those who do evil" (Al-Qasas:77).

Quraish Shihab said several important notes about this verse must be underlined to avoid confusion. First. The Islamic view considers worldly life and ukhrawi to be one. The world is a place to plant, and the hereafter is a place to reap. Everything you plant here will bear fruit elsewhere. In Islam, there is no difference between the charity of the world and the charity of the hereafter. The above verse emphasizes how important it is to direct the perspective to the hereafter as a goal and the world as a way to achieve it. This is evident in His words, which command us to seek the happiness of the hereafter with zeal: to what Allah has given or, in the verse above, *fiy mâ atâka Allah*. Third, the verse above uses an active editor when talking about the happiness of the hereafter, even emphasizing the importance of trying with all your might to achieve it.

Curriculum development is considered a Crucial Instrument in Improving the Quality of Education (Salsabila et al., 2024). Using an appropriate and effective hidden curriculum that follows the demands of the times can help students and teachers improve themselves so that they do not fall behind in science. In this case, instructions will be given by the teacher or lecturer following the institution's purpose. According to Omar Muhammad, the curriculum is a clear outline that educators or teachers should follow when practicing with their students and help them develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Using an appropriate and effective hidden curriculum that follows the demands of the times can help students and teachers improve themselves so that they do not fall behind in science. In this case, instructions will be given by the teacher or lecturer following the institution's purpose. According to Omar Muhammad, the curriculum is a clear outline that educators or teachers should follow when practicing with their students and help them develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Researchers found motivational sentences in the hidden curriculum that are pasted on the wall, such as "Man Jadda Wa Jada", which shows students that it is good and can be used in daily life. However, as the author often observes, most students can only write these writings and have not been able to imprint them on themselves (Amin & Yakin, 2021). Previous studies found that Islamic boarding schools can maintain their educational patterns, especially in education, to form students' character during the pandemic (Yusuf et al., 2024). Using a dormitory system and face-to-face learning is very effective in shaping students'

character in Islamic boarding schools, and protocol discipline is also very important (Harahap, 2022).

Religious character education is essential for students' moral growth, fostering values like worship, patience, tolerance, and harmony. It strengthens teacher-student communication and promotes positive thinking, civilized behavior, and religious conduct, with teachers and school leadership playing key roles (Ali et al., 2023; Negara et al., 2024; Sauri et al., 2022). Religious character education in schools addresses moral degradation and social challenges through worship, prayer, and moral habits. Despite challenges like limited resources, it fosters discipline, moral values, and readiness for the digital era (Ayu et al., 2022; Azizah et al., 2023; Jalwis, 2023; Marlina, 2023).

Based on the review above, there is a research gap regarding the practical implementation and effectiveness of the hidden curriculum in shaping students' religious character, especially in the context of Islamic boarding schools. While existing studies emphasize the role of the curriculum in fostering knowledge, skills, and values, as well as the integration of worldly and ukhrawi perspectives, they often lack detailed insights into how the hidden curriculum directly influences students' internalization of religious values. Moreover, the disconnect between motivational elements (such as inspiring quotes) and students' ability to embody these values in daily life indicates a need for deeper exploration of the methods and strategies that could bridge this gap. Additionally, while religious character education is highlighted as a solution to moral degradation, studies often focus on general school settings rather than the unique dynamics of Islamic boarding schools, where religious character development is central to the educational ethos.

METHODS

The type and research approach used is descriptive qualitative. This method aims to obtain complete and in-depth information. In other words, qualitative studies are the same as naturalistic studies. Natural data collection is a term used to describe data collection or selection of phenomena carried out from appropriate conditions.

The collection methods used in this research were in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation.

Table 1. Participants Involved in The Research

No.	Informant	Gender	Quantity
1.	Head of the Islamic boarding school	Male & Female	2
2.	Teaching staff	Male & Female	2
3.	Students	Male & Female	2
4.	Alumni	Male & Female	2
5.	Students' guardians	Male & Female	2
6.	Non-teaching staff	Male & Female	2
7.	Community members	Male & Female	2
Total			14

Source: Author's Research 2024

Table 1 of informants involves 14 individuals, including the head of the Islamic boarding school, teachers, students, alumni, parents, non-teaching staff, and community members, with two representatives from each group, both male and female. This distribution captures diverse perspectives, ranging from management and educational processes to student experiences and community interactions, providing comprehensive and varied data on the dynamics of the Islamic boarding school.

In this research, researchers used two types of data sources: primary data sources obtained from in-depth interviews and participant observation, namely the researcher's direct involvement at the research location in the Darussalam Blokagung Islamic boarding school. In addition, it also uses secondary data sources obtained from documentation or archives and reports. Checking the validity of the data uses triangulation. Data reduction simplifies and selects relevant data related to the implementation of the hidden curriculum by eliminating less important information. This helps focus on key elements, such as schools' informal methods to shape students' religious character. The reduced data is then presented as descriptive narratives, tables, or diagrams for easy interpretation. This presentation helps explain how the hidden curriculum is implemented through teacher examples, school culture, or social interactions. Conclusions are made based on patterns and findings from the processed data. Researchers analyze how elements of the hidden curriculum affect students' religious character formation and provide recommendations for developing more effective educational strategies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Islamic boarding schools still survive today, even during the shock of the modern education system. The Darussalam Blokagung Islamic boarding school was founded by Kyai Mukhtar Syafa'at Abdul Ghafur, also known as Kyai Syafa'at, on January 15, 1951. It started from a small mosque called Darussalam in the south, measuring 7x7 meters. Banyuwangi, especially the hamlet of Blokagung in Karangdoro village in Banyuwangi Tegalsari district, is in Banyuwangi district.

After the death of Kyai Syafa'at at 01.00 In February 1991, the Darussalam Blokagung Islamic boarding school was responsible for the first son of Kyai Ahmad Hisyam Syafa'at Syafa'at with Nyai Maryam and his siblings. Kyai Mukhtar Syafa'at has 14 children from his marriage to Nyai Maryam and seven children from his marriage to Nyai Musyarofah (Mahmudah & Khauldi, 2021). This Islamic boarding school focuses on forming a cadre of fully committed Muslims based on "faith, knowledge, and charity" or "aqidah, shari'ah, and moral karimah." Therefore, education is the most important part for him. From this hut, it is hoped that Muslims known as "Mundzirul Qoum" (a warning giver for the ummah) who are "anfa'uhum linnas" will be born (Amin & Yakin, 2021).

Implementation of Hidden Curriculum in the Formation of Religious Character of Students at the Darussalam Islamic Boarding School Blokagung Banyuwangi

Several unwritten hidden curriculum activities at the Darussalam Blokagung Islamic boarding school in Banyuwangi significantly influenced students' religious character. The hidden curriculum at the Darussalam Blokagung Islamic boarding school includes Congregational

obligatory prayer (**Figure 1**). In congregational prayers, there are two shields whose leader in front is called the imam, while the second shield is those who follow them called makmum. Of course, what is done is a worship activity carried out in two parts, faith, and trust, and both do what is called congregational prayer (Imran & Amir, 2021).



Figure 1. Activities Of Congregational Obligatory
Source: Web of Darussalam Blokagung 2024

As a Muslim, one should uphold the values of religion listed in the pillars of Islam. The other is Prayer. Prayer has the second central role after shahad. This indicates that prayer has a very large role in the journey of a human being to uphold his religion. Words The Prophet, which means "prayer is a pillar of religion, whoever establishing prayer, he established his religion, and whoever Left him and he tearing down his religion.' Prayer should also be taught to children from the time they were little. This aims to be a habit of the implementation of prayer, as well as with fasting. Parents should be very attentive. This problem is in their children's education (Ilyas, 2021). Religion-based curriculum is important as a basis for the implementation of religious education (Susilana et al., 2020).

The next hidden curriculum at Darussalam Islamic Boarding School is the existence of the niyyah al-amiriyah madrasah. The desire of the Islamic community to learn in a balanced manner between religious science and general science is the reason for the existence of Madrasah Diniyah. Madrasahs in Indonesia have a long history, and they emerged in the 20th century due to the spirit of educational reform influenced by Islam in the Middle East. They also emerged in response to the education policy of the Dutch East Netherlands government, which had developed the school system first (Nizah, 2016). Meanwhile, the word al-amiriyah is pinned by KH. mukhtar intercession as a sign if the madrasah diniyyah of the Darussalam Islamic boarding school is a madrasah diniyyah al-amiriyah.

Following the results of the researcher's observation that at the Darussalam Islamic boarding school, the activities of the diniyah al-amiriyah madrasah must be carried out by all students of the Darussalam Blokagung Islamic boarding school, both male and female, civil servant students and boarding school students, both formal and non-formal schools. Madrasah diniyah is often considered an unprofitable educational institution, so the government and the community do not pay much attention to it. However, many alumni of Madrasah Diniyah have helped the country's progress, especially in terms of mental development. On the other

hand, madrasah diniyah often does not receive public attention, so many disband just because no teachers or students want to leave (Saiful et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the hidden curriculum at the Darussalam Blokagung Islamic boarding school is the istighosah qoshirah activity before carrying out learning activities. Istighosah qoshirah is a reading of asma'ul husna, which reads a special prayer for someone's wish at the end. The reading of istighosah qoshirah is often carried out by students at the beginning of their studies in formal schools and ba'da maghrib dormitory activities. If at school, istighosah reading activities are carried out by all Darussalam Islamic boarding school foundations in the morning. As for the ba'da maghrib recitation activities, they are held in dormitories led by the head of the dormitory. Prayer is a servant's plea to God for grace, protection, and help, both for the applicant and others. This request must come from the bottom of his heart and be accompanied by submission and obedience to Him (Amin & Yakin, 2021).



Figure 2. Book of Ihya 'Ulumiddin Recitation Activities
Source: Web of Darussalam Blokagung 2024

Other activities that are hidden curriculum at the Darussalam Blokagung Islamic boarding school are the recitation of the book of that 'ulumiddin during dhuha and bad ashar and the recitation of the book of tafsir jalalain during bad maghrib (**Figure 2**). The Book of Ihya and Tafsir recitation is required for male and female students who have taken madrasah diniyah level 4 Ula to mutakhorijin or mutakhorijat. Children are superior resources who need the right guidance and direction so that the knowledge they learn and its application does not become wrong. Therefore, the process of guiding them must be done correctly. Therefore, the debate is not good for teaching children. Children will understand all educational processes later without arguing, which results in disputes. As they mature and understand more science, they will become more independent and can make critical conclusions about the situation. They will learn that arguing and disputing is not the right way to solve problems. According to Al-Ghazali, the Prophet SAW said, "Destroy those who like to argue and find fault with others." (Syah et al., 2023).



Figure 3. Yanbu'a Graduation Activities
Source: Web of Darussalam 2024

Furthermore, the hidden curriculum applied at the Darussalam Blokagung Islamic boarding school is that all students, both boys and girls, must complete Qur'an education with the yanbu'a method by using practical, effective, and effective techniques for learning to read the Quran (**Figure 3**). Teachers or parents can use various methods to teach their children to read the Quran. The Yanbu'a method is one way to read the Qur'an (Indra, 2020). This is done so that Darussalam Islamic boarding school graduates are not only proficient in the science of Sufism graduates of the Darussalam Islamic boarding school are expected to become Qur'ani personalities.



Figure 4. Legi Sunday Recitation Routine Activities Every 1 Month
Source: Web of Darussalam 2024

Another hidden curriculum is implemented once a month at the Darussalam Islamic boarding school, namely the routine activity of Sunday legi recitation, which is carried out at the Ar-Roudlah Mosque of the Darussalam Islamic boarding school (**Figure 4**). One of the

advantages of recitation is that it bonds relationships between people because it has emotional value for the listener. This is because recitation is a type of communication that comes from the heart and is arranged through the right choice of words so that it causes feelings for the listener. A Muslim who is committed to Islamic da'wah must provide a living example of what he calls for through his oral. In contrast, a Muslim who is committed to Islamic da'wah must give a living example of what he calls for through his oral, giving a true picture of Islam through his behavior and his direct attachment to Islam itself (Nisak, 2017).

Furthermore, the hidden curriculum at the Darussalam Blokagung Islamic boarding school is a cleanliness activity for all students every Friday. Ro'an, Islamic boarding school students often interpret it as a tradition, namely the tradition of mutual service work (**Figure 5**). So the tradition of ro'anini is usually found in an Islamic boarding school to teach its students as an action or practice of prayer and recitation. There are many things that we can learn and benefit from ro'an. Such as togetherness and the values of cleanliness that we always attach to our daily habits (Saini, 2020).



Figure 5. Ro'an Santri Activities Every Friday
Source: Web Darussalam Blokagung 2024

Ro'an, or community service at the Darussalam Blokagung Islamic boarding school every Friday, is an example of a hidden curriculum that shapes students' character through daily activities. Through ro'an, students are taught the values of discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and independence, which are taught in theory and practiced directly. This activity integrates Islamic teachings about cleanliness as part of faith with the culture of the Islamic boarding school that emphasizes care and togetherness. As part of the hidden curriculum, ro'an creates a deep experience in shaping the personality of students, making them useful individuals for the wider community.

Research results regarding the hidden curriculum's implementation in forming students' religious character have several important implications. Practically, these findings guide educators and administrators of educational institutions in designing learning environments that support the internalization of religious values through daily interactions, non-formal activities, and examples. This approach can strengthen character education strategies that focus on the formal curriculum and utilize hidden aspects of the school environment.

Theoretically, this research complements previous literature on character education by providing empirical evidence of how the hidden curriculum can effectively form religious character. These findings support theories emphasizing the importance of holistic learning

experiences and the school environment as a learning medium. On the other hand, this research also has the potential to challenge the view that character formation can only be achieved through formal instructional methods by showing that informal processes have a significant impact.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that the Darussalam Blokagung Banyuwangi Islamic boarding school continues to play an important role in forming students' religious character through various activities included in the hidden curriculum. These findings confirm that education in Islamic boarding schools focuses on formal teaching and developing deep moral and spiritual values. Activities such as congregational prayers, learning at Madrasah Diniyah al-Amiriyah, istighosah qoshirah, and recitation of the book *Ihya' 'Ulumiddin* all contribute to the formation of students' character based on religious principles.

In contrast to previous research, which may emphasize the academic or formal aspects of Islamic boarding school education, this research highlights the importance of the hidden curriculum in shaping students' religious character. This shows that education in Islamic boarding schools has a broader dimension, where religious and moral values are taught directly through daily practice.

This conclusion reflects the research objectives mentioned in the introduction, namely to explore how Islamic boarding schools' hidden curriculum contributes to forming students' religious character. Thus, the results of this research provide a broader perspective on the importance of character education in the context of Islamic education.

In terms of practical implications, the results of this research can be applied by educational practitioners, especially in Islamic boarding school environments, to better understand and integrate the hidden curriculum in the learning process. Educators can create an environment that supports students' spiritual and moral development by prioritizing activities that build character, such as *ro'an* and regular recitation. Apart from that, this research can also be a reference for curriculum development in other Islamic boarding schools by emphasizing the importance of balance between religious knowledge and general knowledge and strengthening character values relevant to everyday life.

This study is limited to one Islamic boarding school, making the findings less generalizable, and its descriptive approach does not deeply explore causal relationships. Future researchers are encouraged to expand study locations, combine quantitative and qualitative methods, and include perspectives from students and alums. Comparative studies across institutions and long-term evaluations are also essential to enrich insights into the hidden curriculum in character education.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The author would like to thank and input from anyone who reads the results of this study. In particular, the author expressed his gratitude to the leaders, staff, and editors of the *Journal Curriculum Innovation*, who have received my writing and have given criticism, suggestions for improvement, and all help. The author states that there is no conflict of

interest regarding the publication of this article. The writer also emphasized that the data and content of the articles in this study are free from plagiarism.

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