

Curriculum Transformation at Islamic Boarding High School: Moving Ahead Modernism

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ABSTRACT

Education in Indonesia is evolving, including in Islamic boarding schools, which increasingly adopt modern approaches while preserving Islamic traditions. This study explores the curriculum movement at Modern Assalaam Islamic Boarding School, where national and boarding school curricula are integrated to balance modern education with traditional religious teachings. This study employs a qualitative case study approach, collecting data from eleventh-grade teachers through interviews, observations, and documentation. Data were analyzed using NVivo 14 software to encode, categorize, and identify emerging themes. Findings reveal that Assalaam Islamic Boarding School has successfully integrated technology, traditional boarding school practices, interactive learning, and collaboration with other educational institutions. Examples include using digital tools such as Canva, Excel, and PowerPoint in instruction, implementing practical sessions aligned with course content, utilizing the JOS program for material application, teaching practical skills like coding, and fostering cooperative learning through teacher-led group discussions. The institution demonstrates that curriculum transformation in Islamic boarding schools is essential to remain relevant and competitive. By incorporating technology and modern pedagogical strategies while preserving Islamic values, the school enhances student engagement and prepares them for contemporary challenges. Assalaam Islamic Boarding School serves as a model for integrating modernism and tradition in Islamic education. Its curriculum demonstrates adaptability to globalization and technological advancements while maintaining strong Islamic principles. Future research should explore curriculum adaptations in other Islamic boarding schools to enhance competitiveness in the modern era.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The transformation of the curriculum at Islamic boarding high schools represents a crucial step in ensuring that religious education remains relevant in the modern era. As the world undergoes rapid technological advancements and globalization, Islamic boarding schools must adapt their educational frameworks while maintaining their strong foundation in Islamic values. Traditionally, these institutions have focused on religious studies and moral education, fostering students' spiritual and ethical development. However, as contemporary society demands 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, digital literacy, and global awareness, Islamic boarding schools are evolving to integrate modern educational methodologies with traditional Islamic teachings. This shift not only enhances students' academic competencies but also prepares them to navigate modern challenges while upholding their religious and cultural identity. The curriculum transformation at Islamic boarding high schools reflects an effort to balance tradition and modernism, ensuring that graduates emerge as intellectually competent, morally grounded, and globally competitive individuals. By incorporating technology, interactive learning strategies, and competency-based education, Islamic boarding schools can redefine their role in shaping well-rounded students, capable of making meaningful contributions to society. This study explores the curriculum transformation process in modern Islamic boarding schools, examining how they integrate Islamic values with contemporary education to remain progressive, adaptive, and globally relevant.

Assalaam Modern Islamic Boarding School is a distinguished educational institution that integrates Islamic values with formal education, aiming to produce individuals who are not only academically proficient but also possess strong moral character (Assalaam, 2024). The institution implements a dual curriculum system, which consists of the boarding school culture curriculum, rooted in Islamic scholarly traditions, and the national curriculum, which is adapted to contemporary educational standards. As a boarding school, Assalaam offers a holistic education model, where learning extends beyond the classroom into daily interactions among students, teachers, and boarding school administrators. This immersive environment fosters academic excellence, spiritual growth, and character development through structured activities such as Qur'anic recitation, congregational prayers, and scientific discussions. Moreover, the boarding school system instills discipline, responsibility, and adaptability, reinforcing values of cooperation and mutual support (Dumiyati et al., 2023).

At the core of Assalaam's educational model is the integration of tradition and modernity, creating a transformative learning experience that prepares students for global challenges. The curriculum not only ensures a deep understanding of Islamic teachings but also incorporates contemporary knowledge, equipping students with the necessary skills to navigate modern society. Character education remains a central focus, where religious activities reinforce moral values and strengthen students' ethical foundations. The role of *ustadz* and *ustadzah* (Islamic teachers) is pivotal, as they provide intensive personal guidance that shapes students' behavior and instills lifelong values (Jusubaidi et al., 2024). In addition to academic and religious instruction, dormitory life plays a vital role in cultivating essential social skills. Practices such as communal greetings, effective time management, and teamwork enhance students' interpersonal development while fostering discipline and leadership qualities. However, despite its effectiveness, this holistic education model faces challenges, particularly in balancing religious education with skill development in leadership, creativity, and innovation. Therefore, continuous curriculum optimization and active community engagement are crucial to ensuring the institution's sustained relevance in a rapidly evolving global landscape (Mardiah Astuti et al., 2023).

The dual curriculum approach at Assalaam Modern Islamic Boarding School plays a vital role in preparing students to meet the demands of globalization and technological advancements. The boarding school curriculum focuses on Islamic teachings, moral education, and religious practices, providing a strong spiritual and ethical foundation for students. Meanwhile, the national curriculum, specifically the Merdeka Curriculum, aligns with national education standards, ensuring that students meet academic expectations while fostering a well-rounded personality that balances intellectual knowledge with spiritual depth (Ab Halim et al., 2021). As outlined by the Ministry of Education,

Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek, 2022), the Merdeka Curriculum grants educational institutions the flexibility to develop learning models that cater to students' needs, promoting 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. Additionally, it reinforces character education based on Pancasila values, supporting moral development alongside academic achievements.

By implementing this dual curriculum model, Assalaam Modern Islamic Boarding School provides students with opportunities for comprehensive personal and intellectual development. Graduates of Assalaam Senior High School are expected to be academically outstanding, morally upright, and socially responsible individuals who contribute positively to both local and global communities. This integrated approach positions Assalaam as a leading example of Islamic boarding school education in Indonesia, demonstrating that tradition and modernity can coexist to produce future leaders who uphold Islamic values while embracing innovation and global challenges.

One of the primary challenges faced by Assalaam Modern Islamic Boarding School is the limited facilities and resources available for integrating advanced technology into the learning process. While efforts have been made to incorporate technology, several obstacles remain, including insufficient infrastructure, reliance on outdated learning media, and inconsistencies in quality standards. These limitations hinder the full potential of digital learning and adaptive education. Therefore, curriculum transformation is necessary, focusing on expanding technology integration, enhancing digital literacy among educators and students, and diversifying high-quality learning resources. Addressing these challenges will enable Assalaam to create a more interactive, accessible, and engaging learning environment, equipping students with essential skills for the future.

Despite these challenges, significant opportunities exist to enhance education quality through technology-driven and competency-based approaches. The rapid advancement of information and communication technology offers broader access to digital learning platforms, fostering more dynamic and interactive educational experiences. By leveraging these developments, Islamic boarding schools can bridge the gap between traditional education and modern innovations, ensuring students are well-prepared for the demands of an increasingly globalized world.

This study seeks to explore how Assalaam Modern Islamic Boarding School can uphold its Islamic values while adapting to globalization and technological advancements. By identifying strategies for balancing traditional and modern curricula, this research aims to contribute to the development of innovative and sustainable educational models. Additionally, the study will examine methods for curriculum enhancement in response to global educational demands and propose practical solutions for other institutions seeking to integrate traditional Islamic values with modern educational approaches (Zubairu et al., 2016). Through these insights, Assalaam can serve as a model for progressive Islamic education, demonstrating that tradition and innovation can coexist to shape well-rounded, globally competent students.

2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative case study approach, focusing on grade 11 teachers at Assalaam Modern Islamic Boarding School. The research aims to explore how educators integrate the national curriculum with traditional boarding school values, examining their teaching strategies, challenges, and adaptation methods.

2.1 Participants and Sampling

Five teachers were purposively selected based on specific criteria: (1) 10–18 years of teaching experience, (2) expertise in core subjects such as Physics, Chemistry, Economics, Mathematics, and Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile (P5), and (3) a deep understanding of curriculum integration in the Islamic boarding school system.

2.2 Data Collection

Data were collected over two months (May–June 2024) using three primary methods:

- a. Semi-structured interviews: Open-ended questions explored teachers' perspectives on curriculum implementation, pedagogical challenges, and the incorporation of Islamic values in learning. Each interview lasted 45–60 minutes, was recorded, transcribed, and analyzed.
- b. Classroom observations: Conducted during 12 different teaching sessions (90 minutes each), with a checklist assessing teaching methods, teacher-student interactions, use of instructional materials, and integration of religious values in classroom activities.
- c. Document analysis: Examination of lesson plans, teaching materials, and student assessment records to assess their alignment with curriculum objectives and Islamic educational principles.

2.3 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was conducted using NVivo 14 software, following three coding stages (Creswell & Poth, 2016):

- a. Open coding: Data were broken into smaller units, such as technology integration and moral value reinforcement.
- b. Axial coding: These units were grouped into broader categories, such as technology-based teaching strategies and integration of traditional values.
- c. Selective coding: Key patterns were synthesized into core themes, including Challenges in Curriculum Transformation and Teacher Development Strategies.

2.4 Validity and Ethical Considerations

To enhance validity and reliability, the study employed data triangulation by cross-referencing findings from interviews, observations, and document analysis (Saldaña, 2021). Member checks were conducted by involving teachers in verifying the accuracy of findings. Ethical considerations included obtaining informed consent, ensuring data confidentiality through digital encryption, and anonymizing participant information in reports.

The research follows the thematic analysis framework of Lincoln & Guba (1985), providing a rigorous foundation for interpreting findings and drawing meaningful conclusions. Through this methodology, the study aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of curriculum transformation at Assalaam Modern Islamic Boarding School, highlighting the integration of modern educational approaches with traditional Islamic values.

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Profile of Assalaam Senior High School

Assalam Senior High School, which is part of the Assalam Modern Islamic Boarding School (PPMI), is an example of the harmonious integration of Islamic values and modern education. Founded on August 7, 1982, by H. Abdullah Marzuki and Hj. Siti Amina Abdullah, this institution initially operated on Jalan Yosodipuro, Surakarta, under the auspices of the Yayasan Penelitian Islam Surakarta. (YMPI). Since then, it has developed into a 10-hectare campus in Pabelan, Kartasura, Sukoharjo, Central Java. The school's mission to produce ethical, knowledgeable, and globally competitive students has resulted in a curriculum that combines traditional boarding school education with a modern approach. The school's motto, "Behave Well, Achieve Extraordinary," reflects a dual emphasis on character development and academic success. This ethos is reflected in our curriculum, which combines intensive Islamic studies, including Quran memorization, Hadith, Fiqh, and Arabic, with an independent study

curriculum. By prioritizing project-based and student-centred learning, students can explore their interests and talents while also developing essential 21st-century skills.

The curriculum is also enriched with extracurricular programs such as Family Gathering, Homestay, Outbound Activities, and Japan Overseas Studies, in addition to special clubs for scouting, journalism, and debate. To ensure global competitiveness, the school offers advanced English programs, including TOEFL preparation, in addition to Arabic. Even before the introduction of the Merdeka Curriculum, SMA Assalam had implemented the Pancasila Student Profile Enhancement Project (P5) and demonstrated a positive attitude towards curriculum innovation. Examples of these initiatives include activities called CIBIDAY and the election of the student council president. In addition, the school is committed to teacher development through programs such as in-school training (IHT) and continuous professional development in the fields of technology and pedagogy, empowering educators to implement effective and innovative teaching methods. The effectiveness of this integrated curriculum is reflected in the measurable success of the school. (smaassalaam, 2024) .

In 2016, Assalaam Senior High School received an "A" accreditation with 97 points from the National Accreditation Commission as evidence of its high standards. Its students consistently excel in national competitions, winning medals in subjects such as mathematics, biology, history, and English. In addition, many graduates continue their higher education at prestigious institutions around the world, including universities in Germany, the United States, England, Turkey, and Japan (Assalaam, 2024.). Assalaam Senior High School successfully combines Islamic traditions with a modern educational framework to equip students with excellent academic and ethical tools and prepare them for their roles as regional and global leaders. The school's consistent history, mission, and track record underscore its role as a model of integrated and mission-driven education.

3.2 *The Concept of Curriculum*

The educational curriculum is a structured plan that explains academic programs' objectives, materials, teaching strategies, and evaluation techniques. The curriculum is a guideline for organizing and managing subject activities following national institutional and public policy needs. The curriculum of Assalaam Senior High School, like any other high school, must be continuously modified and adapted to the constantly changing development of national curricula. This includes absorbing new knowledge, adapting to societal developments, and responding to national priorities. Administrators and teachers at Assalaam Senior High School are vital to implementing innovative strategies and materials that enhance student learning outcomes and their professional growth (DJ Dayao & M. Aquino, 2022). Besides, incorporating diverse perspectives, such as cultural narratives, into English, Arabic, and theatrical arts classrooms is essential because it challenges traditional standards and encourages a better understanding of human diversity (Lawes & Leask, 2022). In line with the efforts to integrate cultural perspectives, Assalaam Senior High School has taken various steps to improve teacher performance. Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation in the field, the school has implemented various agendas. The school holds a family gathering at the beginning of the school year, which also serves as a teacher evaluation. In addition, the principal has invited support staff several times to attend webinars related to the independent curriculum. Assalaam Senior High School also regularly conducts comparative research visits to other schools to improve the quality of learning. These guidelines are in line with the transformation of the Senior High School in Assalaam curriculum which combines elements of the national curriculum with relevant local approaches.

3.2.1 **Boarding School Curriculum**

The curriculum is designed for Islamic educational institutions such as homeschools that emphasize character development, religious knowledge, practical life skills, and cultural awareness. (Anwar & Maman, 2023; Salam, 2023). This curriculum aims to provide students with noble morals, a

strong understanding of Islam, and readiness to contribute positively to society. In this secondary school, the material is taken from classical religious literature focusing on tafsir, hadith, fiqh, moral theology, and the history of Islamic culture. The curriculum is delivered in Arabic, and every element, including educational objectives and teaching strategies, must be periodically evaluated to ensure its effectiveness. The Quran memorization program and hadith studies become part of the daily routine, which not only enhances the students' religious knowledge but also instils Islamic moral and ethical values. The project-based learning approach centred on students allows them to apply Islamic principles in various activities and projects, building strong and integrity-filled character. With the hope of applying the religious teachings learned in this Islamic boarding school in daily life. In addition, the language program is designed to help students become active and engaged in the community, sharpen critical thinking skills, and foster self-confidence in improving speaking and reading abilities in two languages through journalistic activities in English and Arabic, as well as bilingual speeches and debates. This program has reached an international level by visiting domestic and foreign campuses to provide more insights and experiences to students.



Figure 1. This photo of the Japan Overseas Study activity was taken from the @sma_assalaam_sukoharjo Instagram account.

Based on the picture above, Assalaam Senior High School has participated in various initiatives to enhance international education and instil cultural love. One is Central Asia's 5th Japanese Survey Study (JOS). The activities aim to improve students' ability to speak Japanese and understand Japanese culture and country. In addition, the JOS also seeks to encourage students to take advantage of educational opportunities abroad and build international relations. The students of the selected levels X and XI will attend this activity. They'll go to Japan to take Japanese language classes, visit historical sites, and experience Japanese culture. In addition, the Modern Islamic Assalaam Boarding School (PPMI) Foundation helps Assalaam Senior High School realize its goals. The foundation is committed to helping its students become individuals with good language skills and able to compete at a global level by providing a complete language laboratory and language teachers for students interested in developing Japanese, English, and Arabic language skills. Thus, its students can be more confident in facing the various challenges and opportunities and capable of realizing future ambitions.

3.2.2 Merdeka curriculum

The Merdeka Curriculum represents a significant change in the educational paradigm that emphasizes flexibility, student-centred learning, and skill development, aligned with some traditional Islamic educational values that prioritize adaptability and individual-focused learning. However, there

are challenges in ensuring that this flexibility does not compromise the depth of religious and moral knowledge that is central to traditional Islamic education. This approach allows students to tailor their learning experiences to their interests and needs, enhancing motivation and improving learning outcomes. Thus, teachers can choose materials tailored to student's needs and interests to improve English language skills and character formation. (Fauzan et al., 2023; Meisya Rawenda & Nirwanto, 2023). This curriculum aims to enhance learning outcomes by allowing students to choose how they learn. In line with the philosophy of Ki Hajar Dewantara, which is the foundation of the constructivist curriculum, it emphasizes the importance of active participation of students, social interaction, and situational learning that is important for the development of character and the formation of the identity of the nation. (Walad et al., 2024).

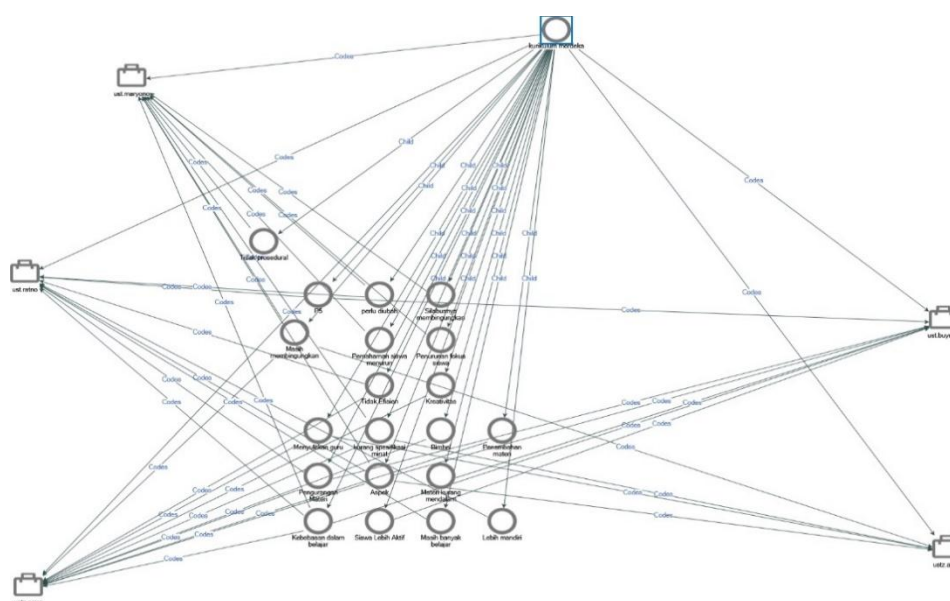


Figure 2. Coding Results Use of independent curriculum using Software Nvivo 14

Based on the results of Field Observations at Assalaam Senior High School showed that the implementation of an independent learning curriculum still needs adjustment. Teachers struggle to cope with the stress of eleventh-grade students who are not focused on the significant or public college (PTN) they want. This is because Merdeka's curriculum is focused on developing students' soft skills. This new approach makes it difficult for students to identify relevant subjects to their chosen field of study. The curriculum gives the student freedom, creating uncertainty in determining his direction after graduation. On the other hand, applying the curriculum itself has other benefits, such as improving students' creativity, independence, and critical thinking skills. Based on an interview with one of the teachers at Assalaam's high school stated:

"This independent curriculum is even confusing. I think you're an example, Boy. I'm going into engineering. It's not tested mathematics and physics specifically like this. Choose whether this kid will be able to or not. A child who wants to go to a pharmacy can't have his chemical or biological abilities. It's hard, too; kids who want to go into medicine are not tested in mathematics and biology. The kid gets into the one. Run into the literature that is not checked or tested in terms of ability. Children's language skills narrow sociology geography. Where is it in school? Well, that's just an intelligence test based on basic intelligence. Well, this is what this might be, and that's the current lecturer, the current technical lecturer. He's a tech boy, but he's counting a lot of shit like that, too. Didn't go to the doctor? His logic is so low his biological analysis is deadly. It's going to be a mess."

The above statement affirms that the curriculum of independent learning needs serious consideration. The curriculum is challenging to understand. For example, a student who wants to study engineering will not be explicitly tested in mathematics and physics. This makes it difficult to determine whether a student can complete the major. Similarly, students who want to enter pharmacy majors are not explicitly tested for their knowledge of chemistry or biology. Similar problems happen to students who wish to study medicine. There will be no mathematical and biological tests underlying the core subjects. Students who want to take an economics major will also not be tested for their accounting knowledge. Besides, students who wish to take a literature major do not take a language proficiency test, and students who want to study sociology or geography don't take a test in the field at school. The source also affirms that, at the moment, only essential intelligence is being tested, not paying attention to the unique skills required for a particular major. It raises complaints from the lecturers, especially the engineering professors that many engineering students have poor mathematical skills. Medicine also notes that students' logical and biological analytical abilities are feeble. Therefore, there is a need for a review and refinement of the curriculum at Merdeka Learning to ensure that students are tested for specialized skills that correspond to their chosen major. This allows students to build a solid foundation and pursue higher education in their field of interest without encountering unnecessary difficulties.

With the addition of P5 subjects for soft skills, students can develop communication and 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, problem-solving, and digital literacy. (Budiyanto et al., 2024; Judit & Zsolt, 2023). The following is one of the leading implementations, namely the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project Work Title (P5) which was held on Friday, May 31, 2024. This activity is the culmination of a series of project-based learning processes which include the stages of introduction, contextualization, action, reflection, and follow-up.



Figure 3. Activities such as P5 Work Exhibition

In this activity, students are asked to identify, cook, and present traditional culinary from their respective regions. In addition to demonstrating cooking skills, students also practice their communication skills by presenting their work in English in front of the Project Coordinator of each class. Assessment is based on three main criteria:

1. Cooking Techniques
2. Plating
3. Taste

Collaboration is an important element in this activity. Students learn to work together with their friends to achieve common goals. Teachers act as facilitators and mentors, while parents contribute by providing support and input during the project process. The results of this activity are included in the project report as part of the project-based learning assessment. This shows that SMA Assalaam does not only focus on student work, but also on the learning process that involves various aspects, such as creativity, collaboration, and responsibility. However, the success of activities like this cannot be

separated from the readiness of teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. Teachers at Assalaam Senior High School have undergone training in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum through school-held programs such as (IHT) and continuous professional development in the fields of technology and pedagogy. The school also regularly holds family gatherings at the beginning of the academic year, which also serve as teacher evaluations. In addition, the principal invited support staff several times to attend webinars related to the Merdeka Curriculum. Several times, the school also conducted comparative research visits to other schools to improve the quality of learning and ensure that teachers can adopt effective and innovative teaching methods. In addressing the limitations of technology access and the complexity of the curriculum, Assalaam Senior High School needs to develop technological infrastructure and provide training to teachers in the use of educational technology. This step is expected to maximize the use of this curriculum in the classroom. In addition, curriculum adjustments also need to be made to address academic needs and 21st-century skills, so that they can support students' preparation at the higher education level.

Discussion

Integration of Traditional Values

The integration of traditional values into the curriculum at Assalaam Senior High School is very prominent in shaping students' character and guiding their behaviour. Values such as honesty, modesty, cooperation, respect for parents, and obedience are consistently applied in every aspect of education. Observations show that teachers actively teach these values through real examples and integration into learning. One teacher stated, "We teach students to practice Islamic values, not only in religious lessons but also through daily activities such as group discussions and extracurricular activities." This practice is in line with previous studies (Musa et al., 2022; Rouf & Nurhalim, 2023), Which emphasizes the importance of cultural values in shaping students' character. However, Assalaam places special emphasis on developing a strong sense of identity, as reflected in the views of students who feel that these values help them "respect tradition while remaining relevant to the modern world." Through the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, this school provides teachers with the flexibility to adjust teaching materials to the needs and interests of students, so that learning becomes more meaningful and contextual. In addition, Assalaam Senior High School is active in various activities that enrich students' experiences, such as the Japan Overseas Study (JOS) program, which provides international insight and broadens global perspectives. The combination of diverse extracurricular learning and extracurricular activities helps students respect tradition while remaining relevant to the development of the modern world. Thus, Assalaam Senior High School graduates are expected to be individuals with strong character, broad knowledge, and ready to contribute positively to the global community.

Challenges in Curriculum Transformation

Curriculum transformation at Assalaam Senior High School presents several challenges for teachers, especially in implementing the Merdeka curriculum. The complexity of this curriculum often confuses teachers in designing materials that are appropriate to students' needs. One teacher stated, "We face difficulties in developing teaching materials that balance traditional values and modern standards, especially when digital facilities are still limited." This challenge reflects the findings (Hutahaean et al., 2024; Khairiah et al., 2024). This shows that the lack of support for the implementation of an independent curriculum affects digital literacy and learning effectiveness. Despite facing various obstacles, teachers at Assalaam remain committed to overcoming these obstacles. They actively seek solutions through various means, such as:

- a. Utilization of Independent Learning Resources: Assalaam Senior High School teachers use books and modules provided by the school as the main source of learning and utilize YouTube and other books as additional resources to enrich teaching materials.
- b. Webinars and Online Training: Teachers attend seminars or webinars held by the principal once every semester. The school also provides one free hour per day for teachers to seek training or additional learning resources independently. This effort is not mandatory but encourages individual initiative.
- c. Latest Educational Literature: Reading and adopting the latest literature on learning strategies, curriculum design, and teaching innovations to suit student needs. Assalaam Senior High School is active as a school that plays a role in the development and adaptation of the latest curriculum, including the Merdeka Curriculum. This school often brings in parties who are driving the latest curriculum, such as from other schools that have implemented the Merdeka Curriculum, for example, SMA Batik. Through this activity, Assalaam Senior High School explores information and learns about the best practices that have been implemented, so that it can adapt the curriculum according to the policies in force at the Boarding School. This approach ensures that Assalaam Senior High School continues to follow the development of the national curriculum while maintaining the values of the boarding school.
- d. Collaboration: Assalaam Senior High School also has a tradition of close collaboration between students and teachers, considering that this school is a boarding school. This collaboration is not only limited to classroom learning activities but also involves various other activities, such as nature-based learning. Before the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers and students often worked together in outdoor learning activities. This learning is carried out in a beautiful environment to create a fun and not boring learning atmosphere. With an open learning atmosphere, students feel more comfortable and motivated to learn better, because they are not always confined in the classroom. This approach is in line with the philosophy of active learning that adapts to the needs of students, both physically and psychologically.

In addition, the school continues to strive to improve infrastructure and provide better facilities to support the implementation of the curriculum. This includes improving internet access, procuring digital devices, and special training for teachers in using technology in learning. With this approach, the curriculum transformation is expected to not only produce learning that is relevant to the demands of the 21st century but also maintain the traditional values that are the distinctive identity of Assalaam. This success will depend on the synergy between teachers, students, and support from the school to create an optimal learning environment.

Teacher Development Strategy

To address the challenges in curriculum transformation, Assalaam Senior High School teachers have initiated various innovative teacher development programs. One of the initiatives is a collaboration with SMA Batik as a partner school to implement an independent curriculum. Assalaam teachers gain first-hand insight from SMA Batik's experience, so they can adapt the curriculum to local needs. One teacher said, *"We learned a lot from SMA Batik, especially how to design a learning program that focuses on 21st-century skills."* In addition, the school regularly holds webinars on artificial intelligence (AI), Photoshop, and other educational technologies to improve teacher skills. This strategy not only improves teachers' professional skills but also has a positive impact on student learning. One student stated, *"I feel more involved in learning because teachers often use technology and creative media."* This initiative is in line with previous research (Hutahaeon et al., 2024) This suggests that improving digital literacy and professional training are essential to support curriculum transformation. However, Assalaam Senior High School provides a unique approach by involving partner schools and utilizing

foundation support to implement contextually relevant training. This practice can be adapted by other schools by expanding the collaboration network and offering local needs-based training.

4 CONCLUSION

The curriculum transformation at Assalaam High School has successfully integrated traditional values with a modern educational approach through a combination of a boarding school curriculum that focuses on religious and moral education and an independent curriculum that supports the development of academic and 21st-century skills. This success is reflected in student achievements in national competitions, acceptance into top universities, and the development of technology-based innovations. Key success factors include teacher training in digital literacy, a student-centred learning approach, and support for professional development. However, challenges such as limited technological resources and adaptation to technological developments remain obstacles. Strategic steps forward, such as improving digital literacy, expanding learning facilities, and strengthening international collaboration, are priorities to ensure the sustainability of the transformation. This educational model offers a relevant approach that can be adopted by other institutions, while also proving that traditional values can synergize with the demands of modern education to produce graduates who are competent, moral, and ready to compete globally.

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