

THE ROLE OF TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS IN EVALUATING AND STRENGTHENING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN MADRASAHs

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Abstract :

This study analyzes the roles of teachers and principals in strengthening the implementation of the Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum in madrasahs. The main problem lies in the tendency of learning practices that still focus on cognitive aspects, while the internalization of values and character formation are not consistently measured. This study employs a qualitative approach with a library research design through the analysis of relevant literature on curriculum evaluation, teacher roles, and madrasah leadership. The findings show that teachers need to shift from technical implementers to active evaluators who are able to design assessment instruments, analyze learning outcomes, and improve instruction based on data. Assessment does not merely function to measure outcomes, but serves as a strategic tool to strengthen implementation through authentic assessment and value reflection. On the other hand, principals act as instructional leaders who transform teachers' evaluation results into strategic policies through academic supervision, data-based decision making, and continuous professional development. The synergy between teachers and principals is realized through a collaborative mechanism that includes communication of evaluation results, policy follow-up, and joint reflection forums. This study confirms that the effectiveness of the curriculum is determined by systematic, collaborative, and sustainable evaluation practices that enhance learning quality and strengthen students' religious character formation.

Keywords : *teacher role, principal leadership, learning evaluation, Islamic Religious Education curriculum*

Abstrak :

Penelitian ini menganalisis peran guru dan kepala madrasah dalam penguatan implementasi kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) di madrasah. Permasalahan utama terletak pada kecenderungan pembelajaran yang masih berfokus pada aspek kognitif, sementara internalisasi nilai dan pembentukan sikap belum terukur secara konsisten. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis kepustakaan melalui analisis literatur terkait evaluasi kurikulum, peran guru, dan kepemimpinan madrasah. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa guru perlu beralih dari pelaksana teknis menjadi evaluator aktif yang mampu merancang instrumen penilaian, menganalisis capaian belajar, serta melakukan perbaikan pembelajaran berbasis data. Penilaian tidak hanya berfungsi mengukur hasil, tetapi menjadi instrumen penguatan implementasi melalui asesmen autentik dan refleksi nilai. Kepala madrasah berperan sebagai pemimpin instruksional yang mengolah hasil evaluasi guru menjadi kebijakan strategis melalui supervisi akademik, pengambilan keputusan berbasis data, serta pembinaan profesional. Sinergi keduanya terwujud dalam mekanisme kolaboratif berupa komunikasi hasil penilaian, tindak lanjut kebijakan, dan forum refleksi bersama. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa efektivitas kurikulum ditentukan oleh integrasi evaluasi yang sistematis, kolaboratif, dan berkelanjutan untuk meningkatkan mutu pembelajaran serta pembentukan karakter religius siswa.

Kata Kunci: *peran guru, kepemimpinan kepala madrasah, evaluasi pembelajaran, kurikulum PAI*

INTRODUCTION

The Islamic Religious Education curriculum plays a strategic role in the Indonesian national education system. It is not merely a complementary subject but serves as a core instrument for shaping students' educational direction. Through this curriculum, madrasahs aim to instill strong religious foundations from an early stage. Islamic religious education is not limited to delivering content on aqidah, worship, or Islamic history. It is designed to develop students' character and personality holistically. The learning process is directed not only to enhance cognitive understanding but also to encourage students to internalize and practice Islamic teachings in daily life, both in school, family, and society. Thus, Islamic religious education functions as a medium for shaping attitudes, values, and behaviors aligned with Islamic teachings (Fadhilah & Suparjo, 2025).

Despite its systematic design to build students' religious character, the implementation of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum in madrasahs continues to face several challenges. Studies conducted in various Indonesian madrasahs indicate that Islamic Religious Education learning is still frequently oriented toward the achievement of cognitive learning outcomes, while the assessment of value internalization and character formation remains limited and less systematically implemented (Rivaldi et al., 2024; Fadhilah & Suparjo, 2025). This condition suggests that curriculum success cannot be assessed solely through document completeness or the achievement of content targets. Rather, it should be evaluated based on the effectiveness of its implementation in classroom learning and its contribution to students' religious attitudes and behaviors. Consequently, madrasahs need to strengthen reflective and evaluative practices to ensure that the curriculum remains responsive to students' actual needs. Therefore, the primary challenge lies not in curriculum design itself, but in how the Islamic Religious Education curriculum is implemented, evaluated, and continuously improved within educational settings.

Evaluation holds a central role in the curriculum development cycle as it assesses goal attainment and learning effectiveness. It is an integral part of educational management, which includes planning, organizing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating. Without evaluation, the actual condition of the curriculum in terms of design, implementation, and outcomes cannot be identified. In the context of Islamic religious education, evaluation extends beyond measuring student achievement. It also examines the relevance of content, instructional strategies, and the effectiveness of religious programs implemented in madrasahs. Systematic and continuous evaluation provides an objective basis for targeted curriculum improvement (Laksono & Izzulka, 2022).

The effectiveness of the curriculum depends largely on competent and

professional teachers, as they are the primary actors responsible for translating curriculum objectives into classroom practice. Beyond serving as knowledge transmitters, teachers function as agents of change who facilitate meaningful learning experiences, encourage active participation, and foster students' independent learning while accommodating classroom diversity. In curriculum evaluation, teachers occupy a strategic position because they directly observe students' learning processes, assess learning outcomes, and identify challenges encountered during implementation. Consequently, teachers provide valuable empirical and contextual information for evaluating curriculum effectiveness and determining areas that require improvement (Amalina, 2023; Azzahra et al., 2025).

However, several studies have reported that teachers often face challenges in conducting curriculum evaluation, including limited competence in developing assessment instruments, difficulties in measuring affective learning outcomes, and a tendency to focus primarily on cognitive achievement indicators (Nawanti et al., 2024; Agung, 2022). These challenges highlight the importance of strengthening teachers' evaluative role so that curriculum implementation can be continuously refined based on evidence derived from classroom practice.

In addition to teachers, madrasah principals play a crucial role in strengthening the implementation and evaluation of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum. Research has shown that effective instructional leadership contributes significantly to improving teaching quality, strengthening academic supervision, and ensuring the successful implementation of educational programs (Saman & Hasanah, 2024; Husnayati et al., 2023). In the context of Islamic Religious Education, principals are responsible for transforming teachers' evaluation findings into institutional policies and improvement programs that support curriculum effectiveness.

The importance of the principal's role becomes evident when curriculum implementation lacks adequate supervision and follow-up. Previous studies have reported that weak instructional leadership may result in inconsistent curriculum implementation, limited professional development opportunities for teachers, and the underutilization of evaluation data for educational improvement (Khatimah et al., 2023; Anggiyanto, 2023). As educational leaders, principals conduct academic supervision, monitor instructional processes, analyze teachers' evaluation results, and determine appropriate follow-up actions. Their role extends beyond ensuring administrative compliance to fostering teacher competence and continuous improvement in learning quality. Through consistent instructional leadership, principals can ensure that the Islamic Religious Education curriculum is implemented effectively and contributes to the development of students' religious character and values.

Previous studies have examined Islamic religious education curriculum

development from various perspectives. Amalina (2023) emphasized the role of teachers in curriculum development and implementation, arguing that teachers are key actors in translating curriculum objectives into classroom practice. Similarly, Azzahra et al. (2025) highlighted the importance of teachers in evaluating curriculum implementation through assessment and reflection activities aimed at improving learning quality. On the other hand, studies by Husnayati et al. (2023) and Saman and Hasanah (2024) focused on the role of madrasah principals in academic supervision and teacher competency development, demonstrating that instructional leadership contributes significantly to improving learning effectiveness. Khatimah et al. (2023) further found that principals play a strategic role in curriculum management by facilitating planning, implementation, and evaluation processes within the madrasah.

Although these studies provide valuable insights, they tend to examine the roles of teachers and principals separately. Limited attention has been given to how both actors interact and collaborate in using evaluation results to strengthen curriculum implementation at the institutional level. As a result, the mechanism through which teachers' classroom-based evaluations are transformed into policy decisions and continuous curriculum improvement remains underexplored. This gap is particularly important in the context of Islamic religious education, where curriculum effectiveness is measured not only by students' cognitive achievement but also by the internalization of religious values and character formation. Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing the synergy between teachers as evaluators and curriculum implementers, and madrasah principals as instructional leaders who utilize evaluation findings to strengthen curriculum implementation through supervision, decision-making, and policy improvement. The objective is to formulate an analytical framework explaining how such collaboration can enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of Islamic religious education curriculum implementation in madrasahs.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a library research design. This approach was selected because the study focuses on conceptual analysis of the roles of teachers and madrasah principals in evaluating and strengthening the implementation of the Islamic religious education curriculum. The data were obtained from relevant academic sources, including books, accredited journal articles, and previous research related to curriculum development, educational evaluation, academic supervision, and madrasah leadership. The data sources were selected based on their relevance, credibility, and contribution to the research topic. Data collection was conducted through systematic literature review by identifying, selecting, and examining scholarly works accessed through academic databases

such as Google Scholar and reputable national journals.

Data analysis was carried out using content analysis techniques. The researcher identified key concepts, findings, and arguments from the collected sources, then categorized them into main themes, namely curriculum evaluation, the role of teachers, and the role of madrasah principals. The analysis process involved data reduction, classification, and interpretation to generate a structured understanding. Finally, the researcher synthesized the findings to construct an analytical framework that explains the synergy between teachers and principals in strengthening the implementation of the Islamic religious education curriculum in madrasahs (Moeloeng, 2021).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Teachers in Evaluating the Implementation of the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum

Within the structure of the education system, teachers are often positioned as implementers of a curriculum designed by developers at both central and regional levels. In this role, teachers function as implementers who carry out all components of the curriculum in accordance with official documents. Learning objectives, materials, strategies, media, learning resources, time allocation, and evaluation systems have been predetermined, limiting teachers' autonomy in directing the curriculum. In this framework, teachers tend to act as technical personnel who ensure that the learning process follows established guidelines.

This position as implementers has implications for teachers' creativity and innovation. When all instructional components are predetermined, teachers tend to follow routines without strong motivation to innovate or adapt contextually. As a result, Islamic religious education learning may become procedural and less responsive to students' actual needs. This condition can weaken the function of evaluation as a tool for reflection and improvement, as teachers often prioritize completing material targets over analyzing instructional effectiveness (Amalina, 2023).

Nevertheless, curriculum implementation, including in Islamic religious education, requires professional judgment from teachers. They must consider the clarity of objectives and content, alignment with learning theories, relevance to social and cultural contexts as well as technological developments, and the availability of facilities and time allocation. Evaluation and feedback are integral parts of curriculum implementation. Although structurally positioned as implementers, teachers substantively retain professional responsibility to ensure that the implementation of the Islamic religious education curriculum is effective and responsive to students' needs.

The role of teachers as passive implementers is no longer relevant in the context of madrasah autonomy and educational quality demands. Decentralization

provides opportunities for madrasahs to develop curricula based on student characteristics and environmental contexts. In this situation, teachers must move beyond technical implementation and act as professionals who understand classroom dynamics, identify student needs, and adapt learning strategies contextually. This demand is particularly significant in Islamic religious education, where learning objectives include the development of attitudes and behaviors, not merely cognitive mastery.

Effective implementation requires objective and continuous evaluative competence. Evaluation should not be limited to grading but must include analysis of goal attainment, method suitability, and the impact of learning on student development. Teachers who rely solely on instructional modules without reflection will struggle to improve learning quality. In contrast, reflective teachers who employ formative assessment can identify weaknesses and implement systematic improvements. This shift from technical implementers to reflective curriculum agents is essential for strengthening the implementation of the Islamic religious education curriculum in madrasahs (Sutikno, 2023).

The role of teachers as active evaluators is evident through measurable indicators in classroom practice. Teachers design evaluation instruments aligned with learning objectives, including written tests, attitude observation sheets, reflective journals, and rubrics for assessing worship practices. They also analyze learning outcomes systematically to identify achievement patterns, competency gaps, and obstacles in value internalization. These analyses inform follow-up actions such as method improvement, enrichment for high-achieving students, and targeted support for those who have not met learning goals. Additionally, teachers document both the process and outcomes of instructional improvements as part of professional reflection and collaborative evaluation with the madrasah principal. These indicators demonstrate that evaluation is not merely administrative but a structured, data-driven academic process aimed at improving curriculum implementation quality (Nawanti et al., 2023).

Teachers must also evaluate the suitability of instructional methods to student characteristics. Each class differs in social background, cognitive ability, and learning styles. Lecture-based methods may not be effective for students who require participatory approaches. In Islamic religious education, methods such as discussion, case studies, and habituation of worship practices must align with students' developmental levels. Evaluation helps teachers determine whether the chosen methods facilitate understanding and engagement or instead lead to boredom and passivity.

Furthermore, teachers need to assess the extent to which learning objectives are achieved. These objectives encompass not only knowledge but also attitudes and religious skills. Teachers should compare planned objectives with actual

student outcomes using formative assessments, reflective tasks, and behavioral observations. Without systematic evaluation, curriculum objectives remain normative statements without empirical verification.

Teachers are also responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of value habituation in students' behavior. Practices such as discipline in congregational prayer, honesty, and responsibility must be observed consistently in students' daily lives, not only during classroom activities. If taught values are not reflected in behavior, value internalization has not been achieved. This form of evaluation requires continuous observation and collaboration with homeroom teachers and madrasah principals (Agung, 2022).

Conceptually, this evaluation aligns with Ralph Tyler's framework, which emphasizes the relationship between objectives and evaluation as the core of curriculum design. Tyler argues that evaluation determines the extent to which educational objectives are achieved. Therefore, evaluation is not a separate final stage but an integral part of the entire curriculum design. In the implementation of the Islamic religious education curriculum, evaluation functions as a quality control mechanism that ensures learning processes remain aligned with established goals (Matin et al., 2026).

Evaluation also serves as a mechanism for strengthening curriculum implementation. It must lead to concrete improvement decisions rather than merely measuring outcomes. For teachers, evaluation provides a basis for assessing whether learning processes effectively achieve objectives. If lecture methods prove ineffective, teachers should adjust strategies through interactive discussions, case studies, or practical worship activities suited to student characteristics. Evaluation enables teachers to identify strengths and weaknesses, then use data to systematically improve instruction. Thus, evaluation acts as a quality control tool rather than a procedural formality.

At the institutional level, evaluation provides a basis for decision-making by policymakers and madrasah principals. Evaluation data inform whether programs should be maintained, revised, or discontinued. It also filters valid information to support rational decisions. The benefits extend beyond teachers and school management to parents and the community, who can assess whether the curriculum produces meaningful behavioral changes and learning outcomes. In Islamic religious education, this is reflected in consistent worship practices, honesty, and responsibility in students' daily lives.

Evaluation results should also encourage the use of authentic assessment and value-based reflective learning. Authentic assessment measures students' abilities through social projects, worship practices, attitude observation, and portfolios. This approach provides a more objective picture of value internalization compared to written tests alone. Teachers should facilitate reflection so that students can connect

learning materials with life experiences and evaluate their own behavior. This perspective aligns with Sukiman's view that curriculum evaluation aims to improve substance, implementation, and impact. In this framework, evaluation becomes a strategic instrument to ensure that the Islamic religious education curriculum effectively develops students' character and religious competence (Arofah, 2021).

Finally, evaluation results must be communicated systematically through academic supervision forums or madrasah evaluation meetings. In these forums, teachers present learning outcomes, implementation challenges, and planned follow-up actions. The madrasah principal reviews these findings, provides professional feedback, and ensures the availability of policy and resource support. This process transforms evaluation into a collective mechanism integrated within madrasah management. Therefore, the role of teachers as active evaluators is not isolated but part of a data-driven, collaborative, and sustainable system for strengthening the implementation of the Islamic religious education curriculum (Anugerah & Santosa, 2025).

The Role of Madrasah Principals in Strengthening the Implementation of the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum

The role of madrasah principals in strengthening the implementation of the Islamic religious education curriculum lies in their capacity as academic leaders and institutional managers. Principals are not only responsible for administrative supervision but also for guiding teachers to implement the curriculum effectively. Academic supervision serves as the primary mechanism for mentoring teachers by providing direction, motivation, and professional support. Through this process, principals assist teachers in understanding student needs and learning challenges, while also enhancing pedagogical competence through continuous guidance and training.

In addition to teacher development, principals are responsible for monitoring and controlling the quality of education to ensure that teaching and learning activities align with curriculum objectives. This supervision is both preventive and corrective, involving feedback, recommendations, evaluation, and decision-making to improve instructional practices. Thus, principal supervision functions as a control mechanism that maintains consistency and quality in the implementation of the Islamic religious education curriculum (Husnayati et al., 2023).

Madrasah principals also play a strategic role in curriculum development. They facilitate the formation of curriculum development teams, empower teachers to design syllabi and curriculum documents, select learning resources, and plan and direct instructional processes. Principals ensure that the curriculum aligns with developments in science, technology, and student needs, while also evaluating its implementation to assess program effectiveness (Khatimah et al., 2023).

In the context of Islamic religious education, principal leadership is crucial because learning objectives include the development of religious attitudes, value internalization, and affective competencies. Evaluation results generated by teachers must be communicated and transformed into institutional policies. Principals translate evaluation data into follow-up actions such as improving instructional strategies, strengthening religious programs, and organizing teacher training. Through consistent instructional leadership, principals ensure that curriculum implementation is not limited to classroom practice but is also reinforced structurally, systematically, and continuously.

Beyond academic supervision, principals play an important role in monitoring religious programs within the madrasah. Activities such as congregational prayer, short religious lectures, character habituation, and social-religious programs must be systematically monitored to ensure alignment with curriculum objectives. This monitoring goes beyond attendance or routine compliance, focusing instead on the quality of implementation, consistency of value internalization, and its impact on students' attitudes and behavior. Through this approach, principals ensure that religious programs function as meaningful instruments of character development rather than mere administrative formalities.

Teacher evaluation results serve as the primary basis for decision-making at the institutional level. Principals analyze learning outcomes, method effectiveness, and instructional challenges to determine appropriate follow-up actions. Evaluation data can be used to adjust teaching strategies, strengthen religious activities, or design training and workshops for teachers. Thus, teacher evaluation is not treated as a personal record but is transformed into strategic decisions that strengthen overall curriculum implementation. In this role, principals act as a bridge between classroom practices and institutional policies, ensuring that field findings are translated into program improvements and quality enhancement in Islamic religious education (Sayekti, 2024).

Principals also facilitate the professional development of Islamic religious education teachers through continuous training and coaching. When evaluation results indicate weaknesses in value internalization strategies, authentic assessment, or classroom management, principals provide training programs, workshops, or forums for sharing best practices. This support enables teachers to improve their pedagogical and professional competencies, making curriculum implementation more effective and responsive to student needs (Anggiyanto, 2023).

Furthermore, principals exercise instructional leadership as a key factor in improving learning quality. This leadership emphasizes the importance of a clear vision for the Islamic religious education curriculum, prioritization of learning objectives, and alignment of all policies and resources to support curriculum success. Principals foster a culture of reflection, collaboration, and accountability

among teachers, ensuring that evaluation and instructional improvement become integral to daily professional practice (Hanifah et al., 2025).

Through the integration of professional development support and instructional leadership, principals ensure that teacher evaluation findings do not remain as administrative reports. Instead, evaluation data and teacher reflections are transformed into concrete policies, improvement strategies, and sustainable quality enhancement programs. This approach positions the madrasah principal as a driver of systemic change in curriculum implementation, ensuring that learning objectives are not only achieved normatively but also produce meaningful impacts on students' character formation and religious competence. Consequently, the principal's role serves as a bridge between classroom-level evaluation and institutional-level policy, determining whether evaluation remains administrative or evolves into a strategic tool for improving the overall quality of Islamic religious education curriculum implementation.

Collaborative Mechanism for Evaluation and Improvement of Islamic Religious Education Curriculum Implementation

The communication flow of teachers' evaluation results serves as the initial stage in a collaborative mechanism to strengthen the implementation of the Islamic religious education curriculum. Evaluation results should not remain as personal records but must be systematically communicated to madrasah management for joint analysis. Common mechanisms include supervision reports, learning portfolios, and documentation of students' formative and reflective assessments. In addition, teacher meetings and periodic coordination forums function as important platforms to present findings, discuss challenges, and highlight best practices. This communication process becomes the foundation for subsequent improvement efforts (Adelin et al., 2025).

The use of madrasah information systems further strengthens this mechanism by facilitating real-time and well-documented communication of evaluation results. With a structured system, madrasah principals and curriculum development teams can obtain a comprehensive overview of learning outcomes, method effectiveness, and the internalization of Islamic religious education values among students. A clear communication flow ensures that teacher evaluation does not stand alone but becomes the basis for collective analysis, enabling data-driven and professionally accountable decision-making (Candrika et al., 2025).

Based on this communication process, the next stage involves follow-up actions by the madrasah principal. Evaluation should not stop at reporting; it must be used as a basis for strategic decision-making to improve curriculum implementation. Data-based decision-making encourages objective analysis to adjust instructional strategies, develop curricula aligned with student needs, and design teacher development programs. A clear transition from communication to

action ensures that evaluation data leads to targeted interventions, enhances learning effectiveness, and optimizes the use of madrasah resources (Susanto et al., 2025).

Decisions taken extend beyond instructional content to include scheduling professional training for teachers, improving facilities and infrastructure, and adjusting time allocation for religious activities that support value internalization. A data-driven approach enables principals to monitor learning outcomes, identify areas for improvement, and plan systematic follow-up actions. Thus, the principal's role in follow-up becomes an integral part of strengthening curriculum implementation.

Data-based leadership produces well-informed and responsive policies, as decisions are grounded in accurate evidence from teacher reports, madrasah information systems, and student assessments. This cycle emphasizes that the principal is not merely an administrative decision-maker but an instructional leader who guides the madrasah toward more meaningful and higher-quality learning outcomes (Sabthazi et al., 2025).

Collaborative reflection forums then become essential professional spaces for teachers and principals to review evaluation results and formulate collective improvement strategies. Through madrasah evaluation meetings, teacher learning communities, and lesson study activities, teachers and principals engage in discussions about instructional practices, share experiences, and evaluate implemented strategies. These discussions encourage teachers to reflect on their practices, while principals develop recommendations to systematically improve learning quality. With open and participatory communication, evaluation becomes not only an individual responsibility but also a shared learning process (Maulani et al., 2025).

In the context of Islamic religious education, these reflection forums also emphasize value internalization and the strengthening of students' affective dimensions. Discussions extend beyond cognitive aspects to evaluate how moral and religious values are integrated into learning practices and student behavior. Lesson study and teacher learning communities support the development of strategies that enhance pedagogical skills while fostering discipline, responsibility, and religious character. Such forums enable teachers to provide feedback on value-based learning, compare effective approaches, and establish agreed improvements, ensuring that character internalization becomes more consistent within the Islamic religious education curriculum (Rohaeti et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

The effective implementation of the Islamic religious education curriculum requires the active roles of teachers and madrasah principals through continuous,

data-driven evaluation oriented toward concrete improvement. Teachers must move beyond technical activity but as a central instrument for improving learning quality and strengthening the formation of students' religious character in real contexts. Future studies are recommended to explore empirical models of collaborative evaluation practices in madrasahs to further validate and operationalize this conceptual framework.

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