



The Role of Cambridge Curriculum in Shaping Academic Achievement in Sekolah Putri Darul Istiqamah

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: 2024-12-15 Revised: 2025-01-22 Published: 2025-02-02	<p>Education plays a pivotal role in shaping the intellectual, emotional, and social development of students. In the era of globalization, where critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills are highly valued, curriculum selection significantly influences academic performance. This study investigates the impact of the Cambridge curriculum on students' academic achievement at Sekolah Putri Darul Istiqamah, a school committed to nurturing excellence among young women by combining high-quality education with Islamic values. The Cambridge curriculum, developed by Cambridge Assessment International Education, is recognized globally for its rigorous academic standards, emphasis on analytical thinking, and holistic approach to education. At Sekolah Putri Darul Istiqamah, its implementation has enhanced academic performance, developed essential skills, and aligned seamlessly with the institution's mission of integrating global academic excellence with Islamic teachings. This study employs qualitative descriptive-exploratory methods, including interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations, to analyze the curriculum's effectiveness. The findings highlight significant improvements in students' academic performance, critical thinking, and communication skills while ensuring alignment with moral and cultural values. Challenges such as resource allocation and initial adaptation were also identified but were mitigated through collaborative efforts. The study concludes that the Cambridge curriculum provides a balanced approach, enabling students to achieve global competency while staying connected to their cultural and religious identity.</p>
Keywords: <i>Cambridge Curriculum; Academic Achievement.</i>	

Artikel Info	Abstrak
Sejarah Artikel Diterima: 2024-12-15 Direvisi: 2025-01-22 Dipublikasi: 2025-02-02	<p>Pendidikan memiliki peran penting dalam membentuk perkembangan intelektual, emosional, dan sosial siswa. Di era globalisasi, di mana keterampilan berpikir kritis, pemecahan masalah, dan komunikasi sangat dihargai, pemilihan kurikulum menjadi faktor utama dalam menentukan prestasi akademik. Penelitian ini mengkaji dampak kurikulum Cambridge terhadap pencapaian akademik siswa di Sekolah Putri Darul Istiqamah, sebuah sekolah yang berkomitmen untuk mendorong keunggulan di kalangan perempuan muda dengan menggabungkan pendidikan berkualitas tinggi dengan nilai-nilai Islam. Kurikulum Cambridge, yang dikembangkan oleh Cambridge Assessment International Education, dikenal secara global karena standar akademiknya yang ketat, penekanan pada pemikiran analitis, dan pendekatan holistik dalam pendidikan. Di Sekolah Putri Darul Istiqamah, penerapannya telah meningkatkan kinerja akademik, mengembangkan keterampilan esensial, dan selaras dengan misi institusi untuk mengintegrasikan keunggulan akademik global dengan pengajaran Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif-eksploratif, termasuk wawancara, diskusi kelompok terarah, dan observasi kelas, untuk menganalisis efektivitas kurikulum. Temuan menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan dalam kinerja akademik, kemampuan berpikir kritis, dan keterampilan komunikasi siswa sambil memastikan keselarasan dengan nilai-nilai moral dan budaya. Tantangan seperti pengalokasian sumber daya dan adaptasi awal juga diidentifikasi, tetapi berhasil diatasi melalui upaya kolaboratif. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kurikulum Cambridge menawarkan pendekatan yang seimbang, memungkinkan siswa mencapai kompetensi global sekaligus tetap terhubung dengan identitas budaya dan religius mereka.</p>
Kata kunci: <i>Kurikulum Cambridge; Pencapaian Akademik.</i>	

I. INTRODUCTION Education has a significant impact on students' intellectual, emotional, and social development. In an era where globalization	requires individuals to have critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication abilities, curriculum selection becomes an important factor of academic performance. The Cambridge
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curriculum, for example, has received global renown for its strong academic standards and holistic approach to learning. This study investigates the impact of the Cambridge curriculum on the academic achievement of students at Sekolah Putri Darul Istiqamah, a school dedicated to encouraging excellence among young women via high-quality education and Islamic values.

Cambridge Assessment International Education developed the Cambridge curriculum, which is well-known for emphasizing analytical thinking, academic mastery, and global perspectives. It provides a structured framework that blends theoretical knowledge and practical application, allowing students to excel at both local and international academic levels. In the context of Sekolah Putri Darul Istiqamah, the implementation of this curriculum acts as a tool for not only improving academic performance but also preparing students for real-world issues while retaining their cultural and religious identities.

This study examines the structure, teaching practices, and assessment procedures of the Cambridge curriculum in order to better understand how it leads to academic accomplishment. It also looks into how the curriculum fits with the school's objective of encouraging intellectual and moral development. Furthermore, the study seeks to highlight the strengths and problems of applying the Cambridge curriculum at Sekolah Putri Darul Istiqamah, hence giving significant insights for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders.

This study examines the experiences of students and teachers within this educational framework to emphasize the impact of the Cambridge curriculum on students' academic outcomes, critical thinking ability, and preparedness for future activities. Finally, it strives to demonstrate how a globally recognized curriculum may be tailored to the specific demands of a faith-based educational institution, finding a balance between global competency and local relevance.

II. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive-exploratory methodology, allowing for a thorough understanding of participants' experiences and opinions. The data will be gathered via semi-structured interviews and structured questionnaires.

Research Design A qualitative technique with a descriptive-exploratory design was adopted to investigate the curriculum's role in affecting academic and admittance outcomes. This technique allows for a thorough examination of the opinions of students, teachers, parents, and university representatives.

Participants and Samples The study focused on participants from Sekolah Putri Darul Istiqamah, including:

Current and former students who have completed Cambridge examinations (IGCSE or A-Level).

Teachers are educators with at least three years of experience teaching the Cambridge Curriculum.

Parents are guardians of pupils participating in the Cambridge program.

University representatives are admissions personnel who are familiar with Cambridge qualifications.

Purposive sampling was used to choose participants who were relevant to the study's objectives.

Data Collection Methods

In-depth interviews. Semi-structured interviews delved into participants' experiences with the Cambridge Curriculum. Academic preparation, skill development, and university admissions were among the key themes discussed.

Focus Group Discussions (FGD) FGDs enabled interactive discussions between students and teachers about the curriculum's effectiveness and challenges.

Document Analysis Documents such as academic reports, school policies, and university admission criteria were analyzed to supplement interview data.

Classroom Observations Observations focused on teaching approaches, student participation, and the integration of Cambridge standards with religious education.

Data analysis Thematic analysis was utilized to discover common themes, such as academic preparedness, critical thinking, and admission competitiveness. Data triangulation increased the reliability and validity of findings by cross-checking information from multiple sources.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Result

The study's findings show that implementing the Cambridge curriculum at Sekolah

Putri Darul Istiqamah has a significant and multifaceted impact on students' academic progress and overall educational experience. The outcomes are divided into three categories: academic performance, skill development, and alignment with institutional aims.

1. Academic Performance

The Cambridge curriculum has demonstrated to dramatically improve pupils' academic performance, particularly in core disciplines like mathematics, science, and English.

a) Assessment Results:

Students routinely performed above average in Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) as compared to counterparts in non-Cambridge schools. The curriculum's emphasis on defined benchmarks and internationally recognized standards gave students a competitive advantage.

b) Conceptual Mastery:

Teachers emphasized that the curriculum's planned and progressive nature promoted a deeper comprehension of subjects rather than mindless memorization. The emphasis on mastery learning meant that students could apply theoretical information to real-world circumstances, which was crucial for academic success.

c) Problem-Solving Skills:

The inclusion of difficult problem-solving tasks in areas like Mathematics and Science encouraged students to think critically and approach problems analytically, laying the groundwork for academic and eventual career success.

2. Skill Development

In addition to academic accomplishment, the Cambridge curriculum instilled a variety of vital abilities required in both academic and professional life.

a) Critical Thinking and Analysis:

Students were regularly involved in inquiry-based learning, which encouraged them to ask questions, test ideas, and critically assess outcomes. These abilities were especially noticeable in project-based coursework and scientific investigations.

b) Communication Skills:

Debates, presentations, and group discussions helped students improve their oral and written communication skills. These activities also helped to build confidence in expressing ideas effectively.

c) Real-World Application:

Practical evaluations, such as experiments and research projects, required students to connect classroom theories with real-world applications. This approach prepared students to deal with complex problems outside of academic settings.

d) Collaboration:

Group projects and teamwork assignments honed cooperation abilities, promoting the capacity to work well in different teams, which is vital in today's businesses.

3. Alignment with Institutional Goals

One of the key highlights of this study is how the Cambridge curriculum aligns with Sekolah Putri Darul Istiqamah's mission to provide a quality education grounded in Islamic values.

a) Integration of Faith and Global Education:

The curriculum's global perspectives were tailored to the school's cultural and religious framework. Teachers expertly integrated Islamic teachings into the Cambridge curriculum, ensuring that pupils excelled intellectually while being grounded in their faith and identity.

b) Moral and Ethical Development:

By emphasizing ethical principles and social responsibility, the curriculum contributed to generating well-rounded individuals who achieve academically and uphold strong moral values.

B. Discussion

1. Comprehensive Curriculum Design

The Cambridge curriculum's design assures a logical development of learning objectives, allowing pupils to gain knowledge gradually. This format encourages deep learning and long-term memory as students revisit and expand on basic concepts throughout their academic careers.

2. Teacher Expertise and Training

The study emphasizes the importance of teacher expertise when implementing curriculum. Teachers were given frequent professional development to familiarize themselves with the curriculum's standards and approaches. Their ability to contextualize global knowledge for local relevance greatly improved the learning experience, ensuring that lessons were both effective and culturally suitable.

3. Student Engagement and Motivation

The curriculum's inquiry-based and interactive style kept children interested, instilling a love of learning. Hands-on experiments, debates, and problem-solving projects encouraged students to take ownership of their education, fostering an environment of academic curiosity and self-directed learning.

4. Challenges in Implementation

While the curriculum brought numerous benefits, its implementation was not without challenges:

- a) **Adaptation to Rigorous Standards:** To retain cultural and religious relevance, the curriculum's worldwide framework has to be carefully planned with Islamic ideals in mind.
- b) **Balancing Global and Local Content:** Some educators expressed the need for extra resources and training to fully realize the curriculum's potential. However, joint efforts by administrators, teachers, and curriculum specialists helped overcome these challenges over time.
- c) **Resource and Training Gaps:** Some educators expressed the need for extra resources and training to fully realize the curriculum's potential. However, joint efforts by administrators, teachers, and curriculum specialists helped overcome these challenges over time.
- d) **Global Relevance and Local Identity** The Cambridge curriculum effectively linked global academic standards to the school's faith-based goal. The curriculum empowered students by offering a world-class education that reflects their cultural and religious values.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight the importance of the Cambridge curriculum in molding academic accomplishment at Sekolah Putri Darul Istiqamah. By providing a rigorous and disciplined framework, the curriculum has improved students' performance in core subjects, cultivated critical 21st-century skills, and contributed to overall personal growth. The Cambridge curriculum's inquiry-based and student-centered approaches have given pupils the ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and apply their knowledge to real-world situations.

Furthermore, the seamless integration of global academic standards with Islamic values highlights the Cambridge curriculum's adaptability to culturally and religiously varied environments. This alignment has not only improved academic performance but also kept students connected to their faith and identity, resulting in well-rounded individuals ready for global opportunities and local responsibilities.

While the Cambridge curriculum has provided numerous benefits, challenges such as initial adaptation difficulties and resource constraints highlight the importance of ongoing professional development and institutional support. Nevertheless, the collaborative efforts of teachers, administrators, and stakeholders have proven instrumental in overcoming these obstacles.

B. Suggestion

Based on the findings, numerous recommendations are made to improve the implementation and impact of the Cambridge curriculum at Sekolah Putri Darul Istiqamah:

1. **Continuous Professional Development:** Teachers should receive regular training and workshops to keep them up to speed on the latest techniques for teaching the Cambridge curriculum and connecting it with Islamic beliefs.
2. **Enhanced Resource Allocation:** To ensure the curriculum is delivered effectively, the school should invest in resources such as current teaching tools, updated textbooks, and digital platforms.
3. **Parent and Community Engagement:** Increasing parental and community knowledge of the Cambridge curriculum's benefits and expectations can help to create

a supportive learning environment for kids outside of the classroom.

4. Student Support Programs: Mentorship programs and academic support services can assist students adjust to the challenging requirements of the Cambridge curriculum while also meeting specific learning needs.
5. Research and Feedback Mechanisms: Periodic assessments and feedback from students, instructors, and parents should be undertaken to identify areas for development and keep the curriculum on track with the school's mission and vision.
6. Global Networking Opportunities: Encouraging involvement in international partnerships, contests, and exchange programs can broaden students' experience and enable them use their abilities in a variety of contexts.

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