

Development of Islamic Religious Education Curriculum Design Based on Learning Outcomes in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum

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Abstract

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Indonesia has introduced significant changes in educational practices, particularly in promoting competency-based and student-centered learning. Within this framework, learning outcomes serve as a fundamental component in guiding curriculum design, instructional strategies, and assessment processes. This study aims to develop a conceptual framework for Islamic Religious Education curriculum design based on learning outcomes in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. The research employs a qualitative approach using library research methods by analyzing relevant academic literature, policy documents, and previous studies related to curriculum development, learning outcomes, and Islamic Religious Education. Data were collected through a systematic literature review and analyzed using qualitative analysis techniques involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that a learning outcomes-based curriculum design for Islamic Religious Education should be developed through several systematic stages, including needs analysis, formulation of learning objectives, selection and organization of learning materials, design of learning experiences, and development of appropriate assessment strategies. This approach ensures alignment between curriculum objectives, teaching activities, and evaluation methods while promoting the development of students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies. Furthermore, the integration of innovative teaching strategies and digital learning resources can enhance the effectiveness of curriculum implementation. The study concludes that a learning outcomes-based curriculum design supports the goals of the Independent Curriculum by fostering meaningful learning experiences and strengthening students' moral character, critical thinking skills, and social responsibility.

Keywords: learning outcomes, curriculum design, Islamic religious education

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Introduction

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum (*Kurikulum Merdeka*) in Indonesia marks a paradigmatic shift from content-driven instruction to competency-based, student-centered learning. Central to this reform is the emphasis on learning outcomes as the primary reference for curriculum structuring, instructional design, and assessment. While existing literature widely acknowledges the curriculum's potential to foster 21st-century competencies and the Pancasila Student Profile (Angga et al., 2023; Wati et al., 2023), critical examinations reveal significant disparities in its practical translation across subject domains. Studies indicate that although learning outcomes theoretically align with Outcome-Based Education (OBE) principles, their operationalization remains fragmented, particularly in value-laden subjects such as Islamic Religious Education (IRE) (Rasyid et al., 2022; Saptaputra et al., 2023). Rather than functioning as integrated developmental targets, learning outcomes are often reduced to administrative checklists, highlighting a persistent disconnect between policy intent and classroom practice.

Within IRE, the curriculum serves a dual mandate: cultivating religious literacy and nurturing moral-spiritual character. Recent scholarship emphasizes the need to contextualize

Islamic education through inclusive, technology-enhanced, and ethically grounded pedagogies (Rahmawati et al., 2024; Rustam & Qomariyah, 2024). However, a critical synthesis of current research exposes a notable gap: while the Independent Curriculum promotes flexibility and learning-outcome alignment, there is limited scholarly attention on how Islamic values, ethical frameworks, and traditional pedagogical principles can be systematically integrated into an OBE-based curriculum design model. Existing studies predominantly focus on policy adaptation or teacher readiness (Aisyah et al., 2023; Faridah et al., 2024; Sartika et al., 2024), yet few provide operational frameworks that translate learning outcomes into structured IRE curriculum stages that balance cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies. Furthermore, the challenges of harmonizing national competency standards with localized Islamic educational contexts remain underexplored, leaving educators without clear, contextually responsive design guidelines.

This study addresses these underexplored dimensions by examining the conceptual and practical intersections between the Independent Curriculum, learning outcomes, and IRE curriculum design. Specifically, it investigates how a learning outcomes-based curriculum design can be systematically developed to align Islamic educational values with competency-driven pedagogical frameworks. The research gap lies in the absence of a coherent design model that operationalizes learning outcomes across curriculum development stages—needs analysis, objective formulation, content selection, learning experience design, and assessment—while explicitly embedding Islamic ethical and spiritual dimensions. By bridging this gap, the study moves beyond descriptive policy analysis toward a structured framework that enables educators to design IRE curricula that are both compliant with national educational reforms and faithful to Islamic pedagogical traditions.

Accordingly, this study develops a conceptual framework for Islamic Religious Education curriculum design based on learning outcomes within the Independent Curriculum. Employing a qualitative library research approach, the study critically synthesizes policy documents, academic literature, and established curriculum design models to construct a systematic, actionable framework. The discussion is organized to first examine the conceptual foundations of learning outcomes in the Independent Curriculum, followed by an analysis of curriculum design models applicable to IRE, implementation mechanisms, contextual challenges, and practical implications. Ultimately, this research contributes to both theoretical discourse and instructional practice by offering a structured, learning-outcome-driven curriculum design that enhances the relevance, coherence, and character-building capacity of Islamic Religious Education in contemporary Indonesian schools.

Method

This study employs a systematic narrative review to develop a conceptual framework for Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum design grounded in learning outcomes under Indonesia's Independent Curriculum. Literature was systematically retrieved from Google Scholar using targeted keyword combinations such as "*curriculum design AND learning outcomes AND Islamic Religious Education*", "*Kurikulum Merdeka AND Capaian Pembelajaran*", and "*Outcome-Based Education AND religious education*". To ensure transparency and replicability, explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied: only peer-reviewed articles, academic books, and official Indonesian policy documents (2018–2025) that directly address competency-based curriculum development, OBE alignment, or IRE pedagogical innovation were retained, while opinion pieces, non-academic publications, duplicate studies, and literature focused exclusively on higher education were excluded. Following title, abstract, and full-text screening, a final corpus of 38 sources was selected for rigorous analysis.

Data analysis followed the interactive qualitative framework of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, progressing through systematic data reduction, thematic coding, and conceptual synthesis. Extracted information was categorized into three analytical domains—(1) learning outcomes formulation and competency alignment, (2) curriculum design stages and instructional

modeling, and (3) integration of Islamic ethical and spiritual values—using a cross-matrix approach to map theoretical convergences, operational gaps, and pedagogical linkages. This structured synthesis directly aligns with the study's core focus by tracing how national competency indicators (*Capaian Pembelajaran*) are systematically translated into actionable curriculum phases, from needs analysis and objective setting to learning experience design and authentic assessment, while positioning Islamic values as cross-cutting competencies rather than isolated content. Consequently, the methodological procedure ensures that policy mandates and theoretical constructs are rigorously synthesized into a coherent, contextually responsive curriculum design model tailored to the cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions of Islamic Religious Education.

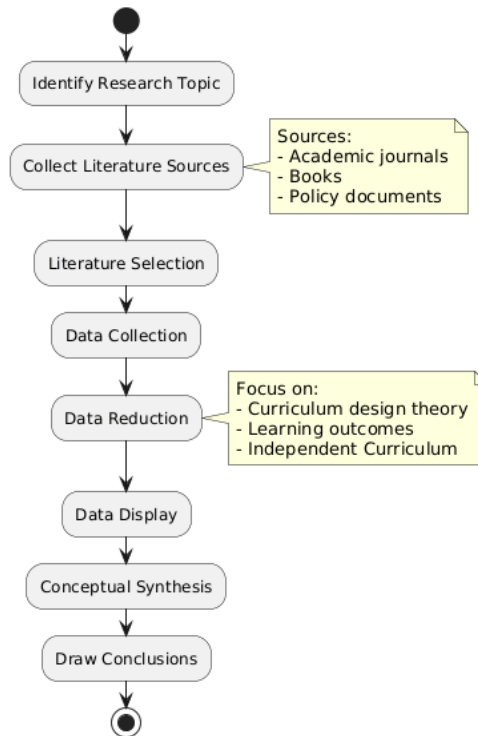


Figure 1. Library Research Method Framework

The diagram illustrates the stages of the library research methodology used in this study. The process begins with identifying the research topic and collecting relevant literature from academic journals, books, and policy documents. The selected literature is then reviewed and organized during the data collection stage. Next, the data undergo reduction to focus on key concepts related to curriculum design, learning outcomes, and the Independent Curriculum policy. The analyzed data are subsequently presented and synthesized conceptually to develop a comprehensive understanding of the curriculum design framework for Islamic Religious Education. Finally, the study concludes by formulating conceptual findings that contribute to the development of a learning-outcomes-based curriculum design within the Independent Curriculum framework.

Results and Discussion

Critical Synthesis of Learning Outcomes and Curriculum Reform in IRE

Existing scholarship on the Independent Curriculum widely acknowledges learning outcomes as central to competency-based education (Rasyid et al., 2022; Setiono et al., 2023). However, a critical synthesis reveals a persistent epistemological and pedagogical divide in how

these outcomes are conceptualized across disciplines. While studies in STEM and general education emphasize measurable cognitive indicators and standardized alignment with OBE frameworks (Saptaputra et al., 2023), literature on Islamic Religious Education (IRE) remains fragmented. Some scholars advocate for flexible, context-responsive curriculum adaptation (Wati et al., 2023; Ngura et al., 2024), yet others caution that without structured competency mapping, flexibility devolves into instructional inconsistency (Faridah et al., 2024; Sartika et al., 2024). This contradiction highlights a critical gap: prior research tends to treat learning outcomes either as administrative compliance tools or as abstract pedagogical ideals, rarely operationalizing how they can be systematically translated into IRE’s dual mandate of intellectual rigor and spiritual-moral formation. Furthermore, methodological limitations in existing studies—predominantly descriptive case reports or policy commentaries—fail to critically examine how OBE’s technical architecture can accommodate Islamic ethical frameworks without reducing them to peripheral “soft skills.” Consequently, the literature lacks a coherent design logic that bridges national competency standards with IRE’s distinctive pedagogical ontology.

Table 1. Critical Synthesis of Existing Scholarship on Learning Outcomes and Curriculum Reform in IRE

Research Orientation	Dominant Focus in Previous Studies	Main Strengths	Critical Limitations	Implication for IRE Curriculum Design	Research Orientation
STEM/General OBE Approaches	Measurable competencies, standardized outcomes, cognitive achievement	Clear indicators, assessment alignment, accountability systems	Overemphasis on technical measurement and cognitive performance	Difficult to accommodate spiritual-moral dimensions central to IRE	STEM/General OBE Approaches
Flexible Curriculum Adaptation in IRE	Contextual responsiveness, local culture, adaptive pedagogy	Encourages relevance and contextual learning	Lack of structured competency mapping causes inconsistency	Learning outcomes become interpretive rather than operational	Flexible Curriculum Adaptation in IRE
Administrative Compliance Perspective	Curriculum documentation, CP alignment, accreditation requirements	Supports institutional standardization	Learning outcomes reduced to bureaucratic instruments	Weak connection between curriculum documents and classroom praxis	Administrative Compliance Perspective
Islamic Ethical-Pedagogical Perspective	Moral formation, akhlaq, spiritual development	Preserves Islamic educational identity	Often conceptually abstract and difficult to assess systematically	Ethical outcomes remain peripheral within OBE structures	Islamic Ethical-Pedagogical Perspective
Existing Assessment Practices	Knowledge retention and summative testing	Efficient for large-scale evaluation	Neglects affective and psychomotor	Holistic competency realization is not	Existing Assessment Practices

Research Orientation	Dominant Focus in Previous Studies	Main Strengths	Critical Limitations	Implication for IRE Curriculum Design	Research Orientation
Methodological Trends in Prior Studies	Descriptive case studies and policy commentary	Provides contextual insights	competencies Limited operational or design-based models	adequately measured Lack of replicable curriculum architecture for IRE	Methodological Trends in Prior Studies

Operationalizing the Learning Outcomes-Based IRE Curriculum Design Model To address this gap, this study advances an operational curriculum design framework that structurally embeds Islamic values into each stage of competency-based curriculum development. Unlike conventional OBE models that treat affective and spiritual domains as secondary, the proposed framework positions *tauhid* (ontological unity), *akhlak* (moral character), and *rahmah* (compassionate action) as cross-cutting design principles that inform objective formulation, content curation, pedagogical sequencing, and assessment validation. The model operationalizes curriculum design through five interdependent stages, each explicitly aligned with IRE’s cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies:

1. Contextualized Needs Analysis: Moving beyond generic student profiling, this stage requires diagnostic mapping of learners’ religious literacy, moral reasoning patterns, and sociocultural realities. For instance, in urban contexts where digital secularization influences youth identity, needs analysis may prioritize digital ethics and faith resilience, whereas rural settings may emphasize communal worship practices and agrarian stewardship.
2. Competency-Aligned Objective Formulation: *Capaian Pembelajaran* indicators are deconstructed into specific, observable IRE competencies. A cognitive indicator such as “explains Islamic jurisprudence principles” is paired with affective outcomes (“demonstrates ethical reasoning in contemporary dilemmas”) and psychomotor targets (“applies ritual knowledge in community service”), ensuring multidimensional competency development.
3. Value-Integrated Content Selection: Rather than treating classical Islamic texts as static knowledge, content is curated through a problem-posing lens. Historical *fiqh* discussions are paired with modern case studies (e.g., bioethics, financial equity, environmental justice), enabling students to critically engage Islamic epistemology while meeting national competency standards.
4. Pedagogical Sequencing and Learning Experience Design: Instructional strategies are backward-designed from CP indicators. Project-based learning, reflective journaling, and ethical simulation are deployed not as decorative activities but as competency-validation mechanisms. For example, a unit on social responsibility may culminate in a community mapping project where students analyze local moral issues through Islamic ethical frameworks and propose actionable interventions, directly evidencing affective and psychomotor CP attainment.
5. Authentic, Multidimensional Assessment: Assessment shifts from summative testing to performance-based validation. Rubrics explicitly map cognitive recall, affective reflection, and practical application, while portfolios and peer-evaluation capture spiritual-moral growth over time. This addresses a key limitation identified in prior studies (Rasyid et al., 2022), where assessment remains narrowly focused on knowledge retention rather than holistic competency realization.

Table 2. Operational Framework of Learning Outcomes-Based IRE Curriculum Design

Curriculum Design Stage	Operational Focus	Integration of Islamic Values	Expected Learning Outcomes
1. Contextualized Needs Analysis	Mapping learners' religious literacy, moral reasoning, and sociocultural realities	Tauhid guides worldview orientation; rahmah shapes social sensitivity	Identification of contextual spiritual and academic learning needs
2. Competency-Aligned Objective Formulation	Translating CP into observable competencies across domains	Akhlaq embedded into cognitive, affective, and psychomotor targets	Balanced development of knowledge, ethics, and practice
3. Value-Integrated Content Selection	Linking Islamic sources with contemporary social issues	Islamic epistemology connected to real-life ethical problems	Critical and contextual understanding of Islam
4. Pedagogical Sequencing and Learning Experience Design	Designing project-based, reflective, and experiential learning	Rahmah operationalized through collaborative and community-based learning	Demonstrated ethical action and social responsibility
5. Authentic Multidimensional Assessment	Portfolio, reflective, peer, and performance-based evaluation	Spiritual-moral growth assessed alongside academic achievement	Holistic validation of intellectual, affective, and practical competencies

By structurally weaving Islamic values into each design stage, this model resolves the artificial dichotomy between secular OBE metrics and religious pedagogical integrity, offering a replicable architecture for IRE curriculum development.

Navigating Implementation Realities: Challenges and Contextual Adaptation

Despite the theoretical robustness of learning outcomes-based design, empirical literature consistently documents implementation fractures. Studies highlight that teacher readiness remains the primary bottleneck: many educators lack pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) to translate CP indicators into faith-integrated, student-centered activities (Irfan et al., 2023; Sartika et al., 2024). Institutional constraints exacerbate this issue; schools in resource-limited regions often revert to teacher-centered instruction due to infrastructure deficits and pressure from standardized evaluation systems (Zekina et al., 2023). Critically, these challenges are not inherent flaws of the Independent Curriculum but symptoms of misaligned implementation support. The proposed framework mitigates these barriers by providing scaffolded design templates that reduce teachers' cognitive load. Instead of requiring educators to independently construct OBE-aligned IRE curricula, the model offers structured mapping matrices that link CP indicators to ready-made pedagogical sequences, assessment rubrics, and value-integration checkpoints. Moreover, the framework accommodates contextual differentiation: while the competency

architecture remains nationally aligned, content examples, project themes, and community engagement formats can be localized without compromising CP fidelity. This addresses Wijayanti & Ngazizah (2023) emphasis on flexible implementation while ensuring that contextual adaptation does not dilute competency standards or Islamic pedagogical integrity.

Conceptual Contribution and Actionable Implications

Unlike prior confirmative studies that merely endorse OBE principles or describe policy shifts, this research offers a distinct conceptual contribution: the Learning Outcomes-Integrated IRE Curriculum Design Framework, which operationalizes how national competency standards can be systematically harmonized with Islamic ethical-spiritual objectives. The novelty lies not in proposing new values, but in engineering a design architecture that embeds those values into the technical mechanics of curriculum development—transforming Islamic pedagogy from a supplementary narrative into a structural competency driver. This reframes IRE curriculum design from content-delivery planning to competency-embedded moral formation.

For educators, the framework translates into actionable strategies: (1) adopt backward design starting from CP indicators, (2) utilize multidimensional rubrics that explicitly track cognitive-affective-psychomotor progression, (3) integrate reflective portfolios to document spiritual-moral growth alongside academic achievement, and (4) employ project-based ethical simulations that bridge classical Islamic teachings with contemporary societal challenges. For educational institutions, implications include establishing curriculum-mapping workshops, developing open digital repositories of CP-aligned IRE learning modules, and implementing peer-mentoring networks to support teachers in translating policy mandates into classroom practice.

It is acknowledged that this study, grounded in library research, provides a conceptual and structural framework that requires empirical validation through classroom implementation and longitudinal competency tracking. Future research should pilot the framework across diverse institutional contexts (public schools, madrasahs, rural vs. urban settings) and evaluate its impact on both CP attainment and students' moral-spiritual development. Nevertheless, by bridging the gap between OBE's technical rigor and IRE's pedagogical ontology, this study offers a theoretically coherent, operationally viable pathway for advancing competency-based Islamic religious education in Indonesia.

Conclusion

This study critically demonstrates that aligning Islamic Religious Education (IRE) with the Independent Curriculum requires moving beyond administrative compliance toward a structurally integrated, learning outcomes-based design. By synthesizing policy mandates, curriculum theory, and IRE pedagogical research, the study advances a novel conceptual framework—the *Learning Outcomes-Integrated IRE Curriculum Design Model*—which systematically embeds Islamic ethical and spiritual competencies into each stage of curriculum development. Unlike conventional Outcome-Based Education applications that treat affective domains as supplementary, this framework operationalizes *tauhid*, *akhlaq*, and contextual moral reasoning as cross-cutting design principles, transforming IRE curriculum planning from static content delivery into dynamic, competency-embedded character formation. The model explicitly bridges the gap between national *Capaian Pembelajaran* standards and IRE's distinctive pedagogical ontology by ensuring that competency indicators directly drive needs analysis, objective formulation, value-integrated content selection, pedagogical sequencing, and multidimensional assessment.

The framework yields actionable operational strategies for classroom and institutional implementation: educators should adopt backward design starting explicitly from CP indicators, utilize multidimensional rubrics that track cognitive-affective-psychomotor progression, and integrate reflective portfolios with project-based ethical simulations to document spiritual-moral growth. Institutions must support this transition through structured curriculum-mapping

workshops, open digital repositories of CP-aligned IRE modules, and peer-mentoring networks to reduce teachers' pedagogical cognitive load. As a conceptual library research study, its primary limitation lies in the absence of empirical classroom testing and longitudinal competency tracking across diverse educational contexts. Future research should therefore pilot the framework in varied settings, evaluate implementation fidelity through design-based studies, and develop validated assessment instruments that reliably measure integrated cognitive-spiritual outcomes, ultimately refining the model into a scalable, evidence-based standard for competency-based Islamic education in Indonesia.

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