



THE PRINCIPLE OF PARTICIPATION IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT: AN EDUCATIONAL GOVERNANCE PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The transformation of Islamic education in the digital era demands the development of an Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum that is not only oriented toward normative aspects but also able to address the challenges of globalization, technology, and the needs of modern students. This article aims to analyze the principle of participation in the development of the PAI curriculum from the perspective of good governance in Islamic education. The novelty of this research lies in the integration of participation theory into PAI curriculum development based on collaboration between educational stakeholders. This article employed library research with a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected from books and national and international journal articles published between 2020 and 2025, indexed in academic databases such as Scopus, the Directory of Open Access Journals, Google Scholar, and the Science and Technology Index. Data were then analyzed using content analysis techniques. The analysis shows that participatory PAI curriculum development can create more inclusive, adaptive, and contextual Islamic education governance through the involvement of teachers, students, parents, and the community. Other findings indicate that the success of PAI (Islamic Religious Education) curriculum implementation is not determined primarily by the completeness of curriculum administration or the sophistication of learning technology, but rather by the quality of stakeholder participation, the school's organizational culture, and collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community in the educational process. The principles of participation, transparency, and accountability are crucial factors in developing an Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum that is relevant to the needs of modern students.

Keywords *Islamic Religious Education Curriculum Development, Stakeholder Participation Principles, Good Governance*

INTRODUCTION

The development of students' religious character has become a crucial curriculum element in education amidst the increasingly complex currents of globalization, technological development, and social change. The importance of moral awareness, discipline, and the appreciation of religious values demonstrates the need to develop students' religious character and behavior holistically. Therefore, faith-based character education should not be limited to strengthening personal values. It should also pave the way for understanding and addressing global challenges through an inclusive religious perspective (Yusuf Siswantara & Tedi Supriyadi, 2024). Character building in Islamic Religious Education has a strategic role as a means of forming students' spiritual, moral, and social values through the curriculum, school culture, and the involvement of a good social educational environment. The Islamic Religious Education curriculum also has different characteristics from the general learning curriculum because it is not value-neutral, but rather has a scientific bias towards the formation of Islamic faith, morals, and

the practice of Islamic teachings in the daily lives of students (Hamdan, 2014). Thus, the participatory management of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum is important to study as an effort to create Islamic education that is more responsive, inclusive, and oriented towards the sustainable formation of students' religious character.

Global issues such as the development of an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based Islamic Education curriculum are urgently needed today. AI has been found to improve learning efficiency and help analyze and detect student learning difficulties more accurately, but this success depends heavily on systematic and collaborative support. Synergy between policymakers, educators, and technology developers is needed to ensure that the developed curriculum remains humanistic, value-oriented, and sustainable (Ali et al., 2025). This is further strengthened by the integration of the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC), which enriches the affective dimension of the Islamic Education curriculum and Deep Learning Through project-based learning and in-depth reflection, it is possible to improve understanding and application of Islamic values in daily life (Nisa Amaliyah Rohmah Al Faroqi et al., 2025).

Previous studies have shown that developing an Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum through a religious literacy program can improve the quality of education while strengthening students' understanding of Islamic values (Mayasari, 2023). Other research also confirms that curriculum integration, strengthening religious culture, and synergy between teachers, schools, and the educational environment contribute positively to the development of students' religious character and behavior (Sopidi et al., 2024). For example, findings on the collaboration between Islamic Guidance and Counseling and Islamic Religious Education (PAI) have a positive impact on the development of religious behavior, awareness of worship, and self-control in students (Pirdaus & Juariah, 2025). The implementation of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in various educational institutions still faces several challenges. As stated in the study, the low competence of some teachers and suboptimal learning implementation are obstacles to the implementation of the integrated Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum (Sobandi et al., 2022).

Previous studies have focused on learning aspects, technology integration, and curriculum model development, while discussions on participatory Islamic Religious Education curriculum management from an educational governance perspective offer opportunities for further study. This is because the participation of teachers, students, parents, and the community is a crucial factor in supporting the success of sustainable religious character building (Muhammad Nasa'i Dwi Saputra et al., 2025).

The similarities between these studies lie in the development of Islamic Religious Education to improve the quality of education and strengthen the religious character of students based on daily religious practice. Both studies position the Islamic Religious Education curriculum as an important instrument in shaping the religious values, morals, and behavior of students through various approaches, such as religious literacy, curriculum integration, religious culture, collaboration with Islamic Guidance and Counseling, and values-based learning. The differences between these studies lie in the management aspect of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum based on participatory education

governance perspective. These studies not only discuss curriculum implementation but also highlight the involvement of various stakeholders such as teachers, students, parents, and the community in the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum. The novelty lies in the use of a perspective of Good Governance and Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation to analyze participation in PAI curriculum governance. Sherry Arnstein introduced the concept Ladder of Citizen Participation which explains that community participation is a multi-level spectrum, starting from involvement that is merely formality or symbolic to the level of active participation in the form of partnership and full community control (citizen control) in the decision-making process (Sherry R. Arnstein, 1969)

This article aims to analyze participatory Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum management as an effort to build collaborative Islamic education governance that is oriented toward character building. The question is: What are the Principles of Participation in Islamic Religious Education Curriculum Development from an Educational Governance Perspective?

METHODS

This article was a library research using a descriptive qualitative approach. Research data was obtained from various relevant literature sources, such as books, national and international journal articles published in 2020–2025 that are indexed in database like Scopus, Directory of Open Access Journals, Google Scholar, and Science and Technology Index (SINTA), related to the development of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum, educational participation, and the principles of good governance. Data collection techniques were carried out through documentation studies, literature reviews, and searches of scientific journal article databases. Data were analyzed using content analysis techniques through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data validation uses triangulation of secondary data sources. As shown in the following table,

Table 1. Literature Study Data Analysis

Technique	Process
I. Data Collection	1. Documentation study
	2. Scientific database search (Scopus, DOAJ, Google Scholar, SINTA)
II. Data Analysis	
A. Data Reduction	1. Select relevant literature
	2. Grouping research themes
	3. Simplifying and focusing data
B. Data Display	1. Describe the results of the literature review
	2. Describe the concepts and findings
	3. Establish the relationship between theories
C. Conclusion	1. Interpreting analytical results

Technique	Process
	2. Identifying conceptual patterns
	3. Formulating main research insights

RESULTS

Based on document analysis, using databases such as Scopus, DOAJ, Google Scholar, and SINTA, articles, books, and policy documents related to Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum development, religious character, stakeholder participation, education management, and technology integration in the learning process as sources of information. Literature was selected based on thematic relevance, source reliability, and publication timeliness.

Table 2. Results of Analysis of Research Document Studies on the Development of Islamic Religious Education Curriculum

No	Document Study	Focus Study	Key Findings	Contribution to Study
1	Mayasari <i>Nusantara: Journal of Education Indonesia</i> , Vol. 3, No. 2, May 2023	Curriculum and material development of PAI through religious literacy.	Literacy program religious covers development purpose, content, methods, and evaluation of the ability to increase interest in reading, critical thinking, and quality education.	Confirm that the development of the PAI curriculum must support strengthening religious character and religious literacy as part of improving madrasah education.
2	Ali, Jamin, & Iqbal <i>Teunuleb Scientific Journal: The International Journal of Social Sciences</i> , Vol. 6, Issue 4, December 2025	Development of PAI curriculum based on Artificial Intelligence (AI).	AI improves effectiveness learning, personalization material, efficiency teacher, and the identification of learners' learning difficulties, supporting adaptive curriculum to development, technology, and 21st-century education needs.	Strengthening the argument that development PAI curriculum needs the participation of various stakeholders in creating a curriculum through collaborative support as a success factor of implementation.
3	Sopidi, Nugroho, & Syibromilisi	Curricular integration in	Curricular integration	Strengthening argumentation

No	Document Study	Focus Study	Key Findings	Contribution to Study
	<i>Permata: Journal of Education Islam</i> , Vol. 5, No. 2, 2024	improving the quality of Islamic Education at MAN 1 Kuningan.	increases learning quality, forms religious character and ethics of learners, and encourages implementation of Islamic values in daily life.	that development PAI curriculum needs synergy and involvement of various education elements as part of participatory governance oriented toward character formation.
4	Ahmad Pirdaus and Siti Juariah <i>EDUCATION: Journal of Education Research and Review</i> , 2025	Implementation of Islamic Guidance and Counseling in improving quality of Islamic Education learning through BK-PAI collaboration.	BK and PAI collaboration increases awareness of worship, self-control, and religious behavior of learners, even though its integration is not yet managed systematically.	Strengthening the importance of collaboration and participation of various educational elements in supporting religious character strengthening and effective PAI curriculum development.
5	Sobandi, Sukandar, & Setiawan <i>Education: The Journal of Educational Research</i> , Vol. 2, No. 1, 2022	Implementation of the integrated Islamic Education curriculum with Islamic boarding school curriculum.	Integration of school and Islamic boarding school curriculum increases learning achievement through learning programs and religious habituation, although obstacles remain in teacher competence and learning implementation.	Strengthening argumentation that development PAI curriculum needs the participation and synergy of various education stakeholders to achieve academic goals and the formation of learners' religious character.
6	Coenraad et al. <i>International Journal of Child-Computer Interaction</i> , Vol. 31, 2022	Curriculum development based on participatory design involving various education stakeholders.	Involvement of students, teachers, parents, and administrators produces a curriculum that is more relevant, contextual, and in	Strengthening the concept of stakeholder participation in curriculum development as a form of collaborative,

No	Document Study	Focus Study	Key Findings	Contribution to Study
			accordance with learners' needs.	responsive, and learner-oriented educational governance.
7	Brown, Wilson, & Slade <i>International Journal for Academic Development</i> , Vol. 25, 2020	Curriculum development based on consensus involving internal and external stakeholders.	Involvement of various stakeholders produces a curriculum that is more democratic, collaborative, and in line with social and professional needs.	Strengthening the concept of participation in managing curriculum development through collaboration and consensus-based decision-making processes.

DISCUSSION

Principles of Stakeholder Participation in the Development of Islamic Religious Education Curriculum

Based on the results of the literature analysis, it is understood that the participation spectrum according to Sherry Arnstein has 8 levels (eight rungs of the ladder): Manipulation, Therapy, Informing, Consultation, Placation, Partnership, Delegated Power, Citizen Control, which are divided into 3 large categories, namely Nonparticipation, Degrees of Tokenism, Degrees of Citizen Power (Sherry R. Arnstein, 1969). With this perspective, the development of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum is no longer understood as a centralized administrative process, but has developed into a dynamic process that involves various stakeholders. The curriculum includes all stakeholders, including teachers, students, principals, parents, the community, and even social and technological developments. This approach demonstrates that the success of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum is heavily influenced by the quality of participation in the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes. This aligns with the Merdeka curriculum management in Islamic education, which demands flexibility, collaboration, and the adaptability of educational institutions to student needs (Manora et al., 2023).

Participation stakeholder As a key principle in developing Islamic religious education curricula, stakeholder involvement in curriculum development, for example in Islamic boarding schools, positively impacts the curriculum's relevance to community needs and current developments. This involvement fosters a sense of ownership in educational programs, making curriculum implementation more effective and sustainable (Muh Ibnu Sholeh et al., 2023). From the UNDP perspective, it advocates that capacity development design take into consideration the key characteristics of good governance - participatory, transparent, equitable, accountable, and strategic (United Nations Development

Programme., 1997). Thus, stakeholder participation reflects the principle of Good Governance, which emphasizes collaboration, accountability, and transparency in the management of Islamic educational institutions.

For example, in the current Islamic Religious Education curriculum, the principles of Islamic Religious Education curriculum development must be relevant to technological developments and the characteristics of the digital generation. The four principles include: (1) integrative and adaptive, which combine Islamic values with technological skills; (2) contextual and dynamic, which adapt the curriculum content to technological developments and the needs of students; (3) transformative and ethical, which makes technology a medium for forming digital morals; and (4) participatory and collaborative, which emphasizes cooperation between teachers, students, and policy maker (Nur & Zainuri, 2025). These conditions are reinforced, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum is transforming from a traditional paradigm that is textual and normative and is shifting towards a modern paradigm that is integrative, contextual, and participatory (Musthofa, 2025). Thus, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum in the digital era needs to be developed more flexibly and collaboratively by combining Islamic values, technological developments, and character building so that learning remains relevant to the needs of today's generation.

Development of an Islamic Religious Education Curriculum that is Adaptive to Digital Transformation and Strengthening Religious Character

The principles of planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating form an important foundation for developing a systematic and focused curriculum. Basic principles such as monotheism, justice, openness, and multi-stakeholder involvement play a significant role in every stage of curriculum management, from planning to evaluation. The application of these principles encourages the development of a more integrated, relevant curriculum that is oriented toward character development and student competency in the modern era (Ayu Melinda et al., 2025). It is understood that the successful implementation of curriculum development is greatly influenced by educational leadership, school organizational culture, and teachers' ability to translate the curriculum into daily learning practices. Another important consideration is the integration of local wisdom in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum development can strengthen students' cultural identity and social values. This principle emphasizes Islamic values and cultural diversity as learning resources while preserving cultural heritage (Nurbaya & Tang, 2024). In addition to integrating local culture, strengthening religious moderation is also an important part of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum development. The value of moderation can be integrated through a contextual, reflective, and character-based learning approach that emphasizes students' affective, cognitive, and psychomotor skills. The independent curriculum provides flexibility for educational units to instill moderate Islamic values in a systematic and participatory manner (Abas et al., 2025). Thus, the development of an Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum based on the principle of good governance through planning, openness, participation, accountability, and the integration of the values of moderation and local wisdom makes it possible to realize

Islamic education governance that is more systematic, inclusive, and relevant to the needs of students in the modern era.

Adaptive managerial strategies are crucial in the governance of Islamic education. Developing an Islamic education curriculum in the Society 5.0 era requires a managerial strategy capable of bridging Islamic values with the challenges of modernity. This requires synergy between schools, teachers, and parents in developing a curriculum that balances religious values and technology (Ach Zahri N.A et al., 2025). For example, from the perspective of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning by teachers, findings at SMAN 3 Sidoarjo found that differentiated learning within the scope of Islamic Religious Education (SKI) material in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects can increase student active engagement in class. The success of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is supported by good collaboration and communication between teachers and students (Marsanda Shinta Maharani et al., 2024). Thus, the success of religious instruction is greatly influenced by the teacher's ability to understand students' needs, characteristics, and learning styles. A flexible and participatory curriculum provides space for students to learn according to their individual potential and abilities.

Curriculum evaluation is also an important part of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum development. Evaluating the PAI curriculum with a multicultural perspective is necessary to ensure that religious learning is able to build attitude, *tolerance, and respect for differences* (Mainah & Wahyuni, 2025). Therefore, evaluation is not only conducted on academic results, but also on the development of character, social attitudes, and religious behavior of students. Findings regarding the evaluation of the implementation of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum in public schools, for example, still face various obstacles, such as limited facilities, low learning innovation, and minimal parental involvement in students' religious education (Verawati, 2023). This condition shows that the success of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum cannot be solely the responsibility of teachers, but requires collaboration from all levels of educational stakeholders and institutions. Thus, the development of an inclusive Islamic Religious Education curriculum can increase access and participation of all students in religious learning. An inclusive Islamic education curriculum is based on the principles of accessibility, equality, learning flexibility, and recognition of student diversity. The developed curriculum model emphasizes the integration of Islamic values with a student-centered learning approach and learning differentiation (Rahman, 2026).

Islamic Religious Education curriculum development in the digital era can no longer be positioned as an administrative activity solely oriented towards the preparation of learning documents. The curriculum has evolved into a strategic instrument that determines the direction of the development of competencies, character, and Islamic values in students. The application of good governance principles is essential for the curriculum development process to be able to respond to social change, technological developments, and increasingly complex societal needs. Democratic and collaborative curriculum development encompasses the perspectives of various stakeholders and aligns with values that promote professional, social, and public well-being (Brown Wilson, C. & Slade, C., 2020). Thus, the participation of various stakeholders is not only understood as

a complement to the decision-making process, but as a primary factor influencing the quality and relevance of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum (PAI).

Perspective Ladder of Citizen Participation about the spectrum of participation principles; then, stakeholder involvement in developing the PAI curriculum ideally does not stop at the level of informing or consultation, but moves toward partnership even delegated power. At this level, schools, teachers, students, parents, community leaders, and policymakers have more equal opportunities to contribute to determining the direction of curriculum development. This allows for the development of a curriculum that is more responsive to students' needs and relevant to the challenges of the times. Thus, a collaboratively constructed curriculum (co-created curriculum) is able to increase the relevance of the curriculum, strengthen the sense of ownership of the educational program, and create a more democratic decision-making process because it involves educators, students, and other parties as partners in the educational process (Bovill & Woolmer, 2019). This participatory ecology was also popularized by Taylor and Bovill. First, the concept of participatory ecology advances current thinking on educational curriculum and partnership ethics; Second, the use of process philosophy provides a new perspective to consider collaboration in curriculum and collaboration in curriculum development (Taylor & Bovill, 2018).

From an Islamic education perspective, stakeholder involvement is strongly grounded because education is essentially a shared responsibility between families, schools, and communities. This concept aligns with the principle of deliberation (*syura*), which plays a key role in creating a transparent, accountable, collaborative, and quality-oriented work culture (Marlina et al., 2026). Through participatory mechanisms with various educational stakeholders, including students, teachers, administrators, and parents (Coenraad et al., 2022), various aspirations and needs can be accommodated, ensuring that the curriculum developed not only meets academic demands but also addresses the social, cultural, and spiritual needs of students. Thus, Islamic Religious Education curriculum development becomes more inclusive and gains stronger legitimacy from various parties involved in the educational process.

The application of participatory principles in Islamic Religious Education curriculum development is closely related to the aspects of transparency and accountability. Case studies in three Dutch schools on educators' experiences with school governance in the curriculum change process illustrate that in school 1, participants described an unclear governance structure, resulting in chaotic implementation where abstract educational concepts could not be fully realized. In school 2, participants described a governance structure that was top-down and strict procedures that contributed to the relatively successful implementation of educational concepts. However, this also led to demotivation among educators, who began to rebel against regaining the freedom they felt they had lost. In school 3, participants described a relatively fragmented process that provided a lot of freedom, which contributed to satisfaction and motivation but did not fully produce the desired changes (Velthuis et al., 2021). Therefore, openness in the development of learning objectives, the selection of materials, learning strategies, and curriculum evaluation allows stakeholders to understand the direction of educational development undertaken by the

institution. As in the case study of a postgraduate program at one of the leading universities in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, regarding the involvement stakeholder in curriculum design, the four study programs gathered stakeholder input through tracer studies, informal discussions in academic meetings, and student evaluations. Accommodations made by the study programs can be tracked in the form of adding additional courses, merging several courses, or adding or removing certain courses within the new curriculum design (Hidayah et al., 2021). This transparency can ultimately increase public trust while strengthening the accountability of Islamic educational institutions in carrying out their educational service functions. Within this framework, good governance and effective educational accountability are realized through a structured democratic voice, namely providing an organized space for stakeholders to express their views and participate in the planning and evaluation process of education policies (Smith & Benavot, 2019). Thus, stakeholder participation is structured and sustainable, contributing to increasing accountability, trust, and effectiveness of curriculum implementation within the framework of good governance.

CONCLUSION

The development of a participatory Islamic Religious Education curriculum has a significant contribution to building a more collaborative, adaptive, and relevant Islamic education governance system to meet the challenges of the digital era. The success of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum implementation is not determined more by the completeness of curriculum administration or the sophistication of learning technology, but rather by the quality of stakeholder participation, the school's organizational culture, and collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community in the educational process. In fact, several literature findings indicate that educational institutions with limited facilities but strong social engagement tend to be more successful in creating contextual and inclusive Islamic Religious Education learning than institutions that are technologically superior but lack collective participation. This finding confirms the principle of good governance, such as participation, openness, collaboration, and accountability, are strategic factors in the development of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in the modern era. This research is still limited to the type of literature, so it does not yet show a more applicable study of the principles of participation and good governance in developing the PAI curriculum directly in educational institutions. Subsequent research needs to be directed at field studies through a field approach or mixed methods in order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement in the implementation of the PAI curriculum in the digital era.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to all co-authors for their valuable contributions, collaboration, and support throughout the research and publication process. The authors also extend their appreciation to the organizing committee of the 6th Graduate International Conference (GIC) at UIN Mataram, Indonesia, for their support and assistance in facilitating the research and publication process.

Conflict of Interest. The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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