



ACCOMMODATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL ISSUES IN LEARNING ISLAMIC CULTURAL HISTORY: RECONSTRUCTION OF THE ISLAMIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM THROUGH A RESPONSIVE EVALUATION APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the instructional issues in the learning of Islamic Cultural History (SKI) within the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum and to reconstruct the PAI curriculum through a Responsive Evaluation approach. The urgency of this research lies in the persistent gap between the formal curriculum and actual classroom practice, particularly in the representation of SKI as a subject area that is often perceived as memorization-based and historically disconnected from students' contemporary contexts. Employing a qualitative research design with document analysis and field observation, this study involved PAI teachers and curriculum coordinators at Islamic educational institutions in East Lombok. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and curriculum document reviews, then analyzed using responsive evaluation indicators developed by Stake (1975) and refined by contemporary scholars. The findings reveal three critical instructional issues: (1) the dominance of transmissive pedagogical approaches, (2) misalignment between curriculum objectives and student learning outcomes, and (3) limited integration of higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) in SKI learning materials. The reconstructed curriculum model proposed in this study incorporates contextual learning principles, multicultural perspectives, and inquiry-based instructional strategies. This study contributes to PAI curriculum development discourse by providing an empirically grounded evaluation framework that bridges policy intent and classroom reality.

Keywords: Responsive Evaluation; SKI Learning; PAI Curriculum; Instructional Issues; Curriculum Reconstruction.

1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is an integral component of Indonesia's national education system, with a dual responsibility: developing religious competence while

simultaneously shaping the character of students who are faithful and pious. In this context, Islamic Cultural History (ISH) occupies a strategic position as a sub-field of study that connects students to the historical and cultural roots of Islamic civilization (Muhaimin, 2021; Majid & Andayani, 2020).

However, various empirical studies indicate that the implementation of ISH learning in Indonesia faces complex instructional challenges. Research by Fauzi (2022) shows that 73.4% of ISH teachers at the junior high school level still use the lecture method as the primary strategy in delivering ISH material. This condition implies low student cognitive engagement in the process of constructing historical-Islamic knowledge (Wahyudi & Sari, 2023; Aziz et al., 2021).

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Instructional problems in ISH learning are not isolated but rooted in structural gaps between curriculum design and implementation. The current Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum—both within the 2013 Curriculum and the Independent Curriculum—normatively establishes Islamic Religious Education (IS) learning outcomes that integrate historical aspects, values, and contemporary contextualization (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022). However, in practice, classroom implementation still falls short of this goal (Hasyim, 2023; Nugroho & Rahmawati, 2021).

A literature review of recent research (2019-2024) revealed that most studies on the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum focus on the development of teaching materials (Hidayat & Muttaqin, 2022), the integration of learning technology (Supriadi et al., 2023), and competency-based assessment (Ningsih & Fitri, 2021). Meanwhile, research specifically exploring Islamic Religious Education (IS) instructional issues through a comprehensive curriculum evaluation lens remains very limited, particularly those adopting the Responsive Evaluation approach as a reconstruction framework.

Responsive Evaluation, developed by Stake (1975) and later reinterpreted by Guba and Lincoln (1989) within a constructivist evaluation framework, offers an alternative paradigm grounded in stakeholder realities and the actual program context. This approach has not been widely applied in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum evaluation in Indonesia, leaving a significant research gap to be filled through this study. Therefore, this study was designed to: (1) identify instructional issues that empirically emerge in Islamic Religious Education (SKI) learning; and (2) reconstruct an Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum model that is responsive to actual needs based on these evaluative findings.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a qualitative approach with an evaluative case study design. This design was chosen based on the research's objective of in-depth understanding of instructional phenomena in their natural context and evaluating curriculum implementation based on rich, descriptive empirical data (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018).

The research was conducted at three public and two private Islamic junior high schools (madrasah tsanawiyah) in East Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province. Locations were selected purposively, taking into account variations in institutional context (public/private), institutional accreditation (A and B), and urban-rural representation.

The study participants included: (1) 12 Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers specializing in Islamic Education (SKI) with at least three years of teaching experience; (2) five curriculum coordinators/deputy principals of madrasahs for curriculum; (3) three Islamic Religious Education supervisors from the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) of East Lombok Regency; and (4) 48 eighth-grade students selected using maximum variation sampling to represent a variety of sociodemographic backgrounds.

Data were collected through three main methods: (1) in-depth semi-structured interviews with teachers and curriculum coordinators, using an interview guide developed based on the Responsive Evaluation dimensions (antecedents, transactions, outcomes); (2) non-participant classroom observations of 30 SKI learning sessions using a structured observation sheet; and (3) document review including lesson plans, syllabi, textbooks, and assessment instruments used by teachers.

Data analysis used an inductive-deductive thematic analysis model (Braun & Clarke, 2019) integrated with Stake's (1975) evaluation framework. The analysis process involved six stages: (1) data familiarization, (2) initial code generation, (3) theme development, (4) theme review, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing an analysis report. Data credibility was ensured through source triangulation, method triangulation, member checking, and thick description.

Table 1. Responsive Evaluation Framework in the Context of the PAI-SKI Curriculum.

Evaluation Dimensions	Aspects Evaluated	Operational Description
Antecedents	Islamic Religious Education and Skills Curriculum Foundation	Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum documents (K-13/Independent Curriculum), Ministry of Religious Affairs policies, Islamic educational philosophy, responsive evaluation theory (Stake, 1975; Guba & Lincoln, 1989).
Transactions	Classroom Instructional Process	Teacher-student interactions, learning methods used, media and teaching materials, formative assessment in Islamic Religious Education (IS) learning.
Outcomes	Learning Outcomes & Impact	Student competency achievement, teacher perceptions of curriculum effectiveness, gaps between the intended curriculum and the learned curriculum.
Judgments	Evaluation & Reconstruction	Standards-based and needs-based assessments for curriculum model reconstruction.

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Findings: Instructional Issues in SKI Learning

Analysis of observational, interview, and document data yielded three main themes of instructional issues that consistently emerged across all research sites. These three issues manifest the gap between the intended curriculum and the implemented curriculum in SKI learning.

Table 2. Map of Instructional Issues in SKI Learning

Issue	Category	Frequently	Description of Findings
Issue 1	Transmissive Approach	Dominant (87% of observation class)	Teachers serve as the sole source of information; students passively receive SKI material without critical elaboration.
Issue 2	Goal-Outcome Misalignment	Significant (42% gap)	Curriculum objectives emphasize contextual historical understanding, but assessments only measure chronological memorization.
Issue 3	Low HOTS Integration	Minimal (14% of activities)	Questions and assignments are predominantly at levels C1-C2 of Bloom's Taxonomy; there are almost no analytical, evaluative, or creative activities.

Dominance of Transmissive Pedagogical Approaches

The first and most dominant finding was the use of transmissive approaches in almost all observed Islamic Religious Education (IS) learning sessions. Of the 30 observed sessions, 26 (86.7%) displayed a pattern in which the teacher dominated the learning time through monologue lectures, while students acted as passive recipients of information. This pattern is consistent with the findings of Fauzi and Priyatna (2022), who identified that Islamic Religious Education (IS) learning at the secondary level remains trapped in an oral tradition (orality tradition), which positions historical texts and narratives as objects for memorization, rather than as sources for reflection and the construction of meaning.

Analysis of lesson plan documents also confirmed this finding. Of the 60 lesson plans reviewed, only 8 (13.3%) included active-constructive learning activities such as historical evidence-based discussions, primary source analysis, or simple historical research projects. This situation contradicts the principles of Islamic Education (SKI) learning mandated by the Independent Curriculum, which explicitly emphasizes historical thinking competencies, rather than merely mastery of factual content (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022).

Misalignment between Curriculum Objectives and Learning Outcomes

The second issue identified was a significant misalignment between the learning outcomes set by the curriculum and the actual outcomes achieved by students.

Triangulation of teacher interview data, classroom observations, and assessment instrument reviews revealed that although the curriculum stipulates outcomes at the analysis and evaluation levels (C4-C5 of Bloom's Taxonomy), classroom assessment practices are still dominated by memorization and literal comprehension questions (C1-C2).

This finding aligns with a study by Wahyudi and Sari (2023) that criticized Islamic Education assessment practices in West Java, and research by Rahmat et al. (2021) that found a similar gap in the context of Islamic elementary schools (madrasah ibtidaiyah). Furthermore, this condition confirms the "curriculum alignment gap" construct proposed by Biggs (2014) in the context of constructive alignment, where all three—objectives, methods, and assessment—should cohesively support each other.

Lack of Integration of Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)

The third issue relates to the low integration of Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in the design and implementation of SKI learning. An analysis of 60 lesson plans showed that, on average, only 14.2% of learning activities were designed to develop analytical, evaluation, and creative skills. Students were rarely asked to analyze the causes and effects of historical events, evaluate different historical perspectives, or create new representations of their historical knowledge.

This limited integration of HOTS in SKI learning has direct implications for the relevance of the material to students' lives. As argued by Marin and Halpern (2011) and confirmed in the context of Islamic education by Busthomi and Muliawan (2022), critical thinking skills are a prerequisite for students to be able to learn lessons (ibrah) from historical events in a meaningful way, not just knowing historical facts in isolation.

Reconstruction of the Islamic Education Curriculum Model Based on Responsive Evaluation

Based on the evaluative findings above, this study proposes a reconstruction model for the PAI-SKI curriculum called the KRIS Model (SKI Responsive Instructional Curriculum). [wk3.1] This model is built on four pillars that directly respond to the identified instructional issues: (1) the Contextualization Pillar (connecting historical narratives with contemporary realities), (2) the Inquiry Pillar (encouraging independent investigation and analysis), (3) the Reflection Pillar (facilitating meaningful learning), and (4) the Integration Pillar (integrating multidisciplinary perspectives into understanding SKI).

The KRIS Model differentiates itself from conventional PAI curriculum approaches in several fundamental aspects. First, in terms of epistemological orientation, the KRIS Model shifts from a positivistic epistemology (history as facts to be memorized) to a constructivist-hermeneutic epistemology (history as text to be interpreted and contextualized). This shift aligns with Wineburg's (2018) view of 'historical thinking' as a core competency in contemporary history education, whose relevance for SKI has been argued by Abdurrahman (2023).

Second, in terms of instructional design, the KRIS Model adopts Wiggins and McTighe's (2005) backward design principle, which begins curriculum design by identifying desired learning outcomes, then determining evidence of achievement, and finally designing

learning experiences. This approach ensures coherence between objectives, assessments, and learning activities—while also directly addressing identified misalignments.

Third, from an evaluation perspective, the KRIS Model integrates Stake's (1975) principle of responsive evaluation not only as an external evaluation tool but as an evaluative orientation inherent in the curriculum implementation cycle itself. Thus, Islamic Religious Education teachers not only act as curriculum implementers but also as evaluators who continuously respond to the needs and realities of their students—in line with the concept of teacher as researcher proposed by Stenhouse (1975) and its relevance to the Indonesian madrasah context as argued by Suyanto and Hisyam (2020).

Steps for Implementing the KRIS Model

To ensure the operational implementation of the KRIS Model by teachers and curriculum coordinators in the field, this study formulated four systematic and sustainable implementation stages:

Stage 1: Responsive Mapping

In this stage, Islamic Religious Education teachers and curriculum coordinators systematically identify the actual learning conditions, which include: (a) analyzing the gap between the learning outcomes set by the curriculum (intended curriculum) and the actual student outcomes (learned curriculum) through a diagnostic pre-assessment; (b) mapping the needs and local context of students—including socio-cultural backgrounds, historical literacy levels, and learning interests—using a brief survey instrument and initial observations; and (c) identification of available resources (teaching materials, media, face-to-face time, and teacher capacity) as parameters for curriculum design. This stage takes place for 2-3 weeks at the beginning of the semester and produces an instructional needs profile that forms the basis for the next stage.

The results of this responsive mapping not only serve as baseline data, but also as a communication document between teachers, curriculum coordinators, and madrasah principals. The instructional needs profile produced at this stage contains at least five main components: (1) a description of the initial state of students' historical competencies based on diagnostic pre-assessment data; (2) a map of differentiated learning needs based on variations in students' sociodemographic backgrounds and historical literacy; (3) an inventory of instructional resources available at the madrasah and those that need to be developed independently by teachers; (4) identification of contextual barriers that may affect the implementation of the KRIS Model, such as limited face-to-face time, media availability, or teachers' professional capacity; and (5) recommendations for development priorities that are contextual, realistic, and actionable within one semester. This document serves as a roadmap that guides the entire curriculum design and implementation process in subsequent stages, while also serving as an evaluation benchmark at the end of the implementation cycle to measure the extent to which instructional gaps have been successfully narrowed. Careful and comprehensive mapping at this initial stage is crucial to the effectiveness of the entire KRIS Model cycle, as without an accurate understanding of the context and actual needs, the resulting curriculum design in subsequent stages risks remaining generic and unresponsive to the realities of the classroom.

Stage 2: Backward Design-Based Curriculum Design

Equipped with the instructional needs profile from Stage 1, teachers design SKI learning units using backward design principles (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) modified for the SKI context. This step includes: (a) establishing desired outcomes in the form of specific, measurable, and contextual historical thinking competencies—going beyond mere mastery of chronological facts; (b) designing evidence of achievement through authentic assessments that integrate HOTS levels C4-C6, such as primary source analysis, mini-historical research projects, or presentations of comparative historical perspectives; and (c) developing learning experiences based on the four pillars of KRIS (Contextualization, Inquiry, Reflection, and Integration), which organize learning experiences from the most concrete-contextual to the most abstract-integrative. At this stage, teachers are encouraged to develop or adapt local teaching materials that connect Islamic historical narratives with the cultural realities of East Lombok as an authentic learning context.

In practice, backward design in the context of SKI requires a deep understanding of the historical competency structure to be developed. Teachers need to formulate desired outcomes that encompass three interrelated competency dimensions: (a) the historical knowledge dimension, which encompasses an understanding of facts, concepts, and narratives of Islamic history relevant to students' lives; (b) the historical skills dimension, which encompasses the ability to analyze primary and secondary sources, interpret historical evidence, and construct data-supported arguments; and (c) the historical dispositions dimension, which encompasses a critical attitude, historical empathy, and an awareness of perspective in historical narratives. Designing authentic assessments at this stage also needs to consciously consider the rich local context of East Lombok as a source of authentic and meaningful learning materials and media. For example, teachers can design project assignments in which students are asked to investigate the historical footprint of Islam in their local community, compare historical narratives from different perspectives, or create presentations that connect historical events to contemporary issues relevant to their lives. This design process will be more optimal if carried out collaboratively within a teacher learning community, allowing for the exchange of ideas, peer review among teachers, and continuous refinement of the design before implementation in the classroom.

Stage 3: Implementation of Inquiry-Based Instruction

The implementation stage emphasizes the transformation of the teacher's role from a transmitter of knowledge to a facilitator of historical inquiry. Specifically, each SKI learning session is designed following the KRIS cycle: (a) Contextualization—the teacher opens the lesson by connecting Islamic historical events with contemporary issues or phenomena relevant to students in East Lombok (for example, connecting the history of the spread of Islam in the archipelago with local religious dynamics); (b) Inquiry—students are invited to conduct inquiry-based investigations using historical sources provided by the teacher, encouraging independent analysis and interpretation; (c) Reflection—a class deliberation session where students extract lessons from their inquiry findings, guided by reflective questions from the teacher; and (d) Integration—students connect SKI learning with interdisciplinary perspectives (social, cultural, ethical) to build

a holistic understanding. The principle that each session implements at least two of the four KRIS pillars must be ensured in session planning.

Implementing the KRIS cycle in daily classroom practice requires thorough preparation and a high level of pedagogical creativity from teachers. To support the success of this implementation phase, teachers need to gradually build a historical sources bank containing primary documents, cultural artifacts, alternative narratives, and multimodal sources that can be used in inquiry activities. This source bank should be contextualized to the realities of East Lombok, for example by including documents on the spread of Islam in Lombok, oral history accounts of local Islamic scholars, or Sasak Islamic cultural artifacts that reflect the unique blend of Islamic tradition and local wisdom of the local community. Furthermore, teachers also need to develop a diverse and adaptive repertoire of inquiry facilitation strategies, such as Socratic seminars based on historical texts, gallery walks with multimodal historical sources, jigsaw document analysis, historical perspective debates, or decision-making simulations of historical figures. It is crucial to emphasize that the transformation from a transmissive approach to an inquiry approach does not occur instantly and requires systematic and gradual scaffolding. Teachers should begin with structured inquiry, where questions and investigation procedures are prepared by the teacher. Then, gradually move to guided inquiry, where students formulate their own questions with teacher guidance. Finally, to open inquiry, where students are able to independently design and conduct their own historical investigations, as their historical thinking capacity increases throughout the semester.

Stage 4: Ongoing Responsive Evaluation

Unlike conventional summative and terminal evaluations, the KRIS Model integrates responsive evaluation as an ongoing process embedded in each implementation cycle. At this stage, teachers conduct: (a) formative evaluation at each meeting through independent classroom observations and teacher journal reflections, focusing on the quality of students' cognitive engagement and the relevance of activities to actual needs; (b) mid-cycle evaluation every 4-6 meetings through HOTS mini-assessments and student feedback sessions; and (c) end-cycle evaluation at the end of the learning unit through a comprehensive authentic assessment, the results of which are used to revise the design of the next learning unit. This evaluation-revision cycle ensures that the KRIS Model is adaptive to the evolving needs of students and the ever-changing madrasah context. The curriculum coordinator acts as a monitor and facilitator of this evaluation cycle, ensuring consistent implementation of the KRIS Model across grades and levels.

The implementation of continuous responsive evaluation requires a strong institutional commitment not only from individual teachers but also from the madrasah principal and curriculum coordinator as system enablers. Therefore, madrasahs need to actively provide structured time and space for this cycle of reflection and revision. One recommended mechanism is establishing a regular schedule for biweekly teacher professional learning community meetings, where Islamic Education (IS) teachers can share formative evaluation findings, discuss implementation challenges, and collaboratively revise learning designs for subsequent meetings. Curriculum coordinators need to develop a simple yet systematic documentation system to record the progress of the KRIS Model implementation in each class—including teacher portfolios containing revised lesson plans, assessment instruments, reflection notes, and recaps of student

achievement data. This documentation is not only useful for internal madrasah improvements but can also be a valuable empirical contribution to the development of knowledge about Islamic Education (IS) curriculum practices more broadly. By undergoing a consistent and systematic responsive evaluation cycle, every SKI teacher who implements the KRIS Model essentially also plays a role as a practitioner-researcher who produces knowledge based on authentic and contextual field experiences—in line with Stenhouse's (1975) vision of teachers as curriculum researchers and its relevance for strengthening the professionalism of madrasa teachers in Indonesia.

4. CONCLUSION

This study successfully identified three critical instructional issues in the learning of Islamic Cultural History (ISCR) in the Islamic Religious Education curriculum in East Lombok: (1) the dominance of the transmissive approach, which is reflected in 86.7% of observation sessions (26 of 30 sessions) featuring a monologic lecture pattern with only 13.3% of lesson plans (8 of 60) including active-constructive learning activities; (2) misalignment between curriculum objectives and learning outcomes, with a gap of 42% between the curriculum's targeted achievements (levels C4-C5) and the actual achievements of students who are still locked at the memorization level (C1-C2); and (3) minimal integration of Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), with an average of only 14.2% of learning activities designed to develop analytical, evaluation, and creative skills. These three issues are manifestations of the structural gap between the designed curriculum and the implemented curriculum that has not been successfully addressed through conventional curriculum development approaches. Empirical data from East Lombok—including the condition of 47 Islamic Junior High Schools (MTs) with 21,384 students, low teacher training capacity, and SKI scores below the national average (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024)—emphasizes that this instructional issue is not merely a pedagogical issue, but also a matter of institutional capacity that requires a systemic response.

Using a Responsive Evaluation approach based on Stake's (1975) framework, this study proposes the KRIS Model (SKI Responsive Instructional Curriculum) as a reconstructive alternative. This model offers a paradigmatic shift from transmissive pedagogy to transformative pedagogy oriented toward the development of historical competence, critical thinking, and meaningful learning. Epistemologically, the KRIS Model marks a shift from a positivistic approach that positions history as facts to be memorized to a constructivist-hermeneutic epistemology that treats history as a text to be interpreted and contextualized (Wineburg, 2018; Abdurrahman, 2023). The novelty of the KRIS Model lies in its unique integration of the four pillars of KRIS (Contextualization, Inquiry, Reflection, Integration), the principle of backward design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), and the continuous responsive evaluation cycle—which together form a cohesive and adaptive curriculum ecosystem. The KRIS Model also encourages the transformation of the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers from mere curriculum implementers to practitioner-researchers who actively evaluate and respond to the needs of their students, in line with the concept of teacher as researcher proposed by Stenhouse (1975) and its relevance for strengthening the professionalism of Indonesian madrasah teachers as

argued by Suyanto and Hisyam (2020). The practical implications of this research include: (1) reorientation of Islamic Religious Education teacher training towards active-constructive learning facilitation competencies; (2) revision of assessment instruments that progressively integrate HOTS levels; (3) development of contextual and inquiry-based Islamic Religious Education teaching materials; and (4) the structured implementation of the four stages of the KRIS Model (Responsive Mapping, Backward Design, Inquiry-Based Instructional Implementation, and Continuous Responsive Evaluation) in madrasahs.

This study's limitations lie in its limited geographic scope in East Lombok, so the generalizability of the findings needs to be further tested through replication studies in more diverse contexts. Further research is recommended to develop and test the KRIS Model quasi-experimentally to measurably measure its effectiveness on student learning outcomes and historical competencies.

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