



## Integration Of Religion Into Curriculum Design And Educational Institution Identity

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**Abstract:** This study aims to explore the influence of religion on curriculum design and the identity of educational institutions. In the context of religious-based education, curriculum design does not only focus on the development of academic knowledge but also on shaping the character of students in accordance with the values of the religion followed. This research uses a qualitative approach with a library research method, examining literature related to the application of religious teachings in curricula and educational cultures at various religious-based educational institutions. The results show that the integration of religion in the curriculum produces a holistic educational approach that connects spiritual and intellectual aspects in the learning process. Furthermore, the identity of educational institutions is greatly influenced by the religious values applied in the curriculum, distinguishing these institutions from general education institutions. The influence of religion is not limited to the teaching of religious subjects but also affects the approach in other subjects, creating an educational environment that reflects religious values. This study also found challenges in integrating religion into curricula in pluralistic environments, which requires an inclusive approach that respects diversity. Therefore, it is essential for religious-based educational institutions to design a balanced curriculum that considers religious values while remaining open to cultural and religious diversity in the classroom.

**Keywords:** Religion, Curriculum Design, Educational Institution Religious-Based Education.

### INTRODUCTION

Education plays a crucial role in shaping the character of individuals and society. As an instrument influencing intellectual, moral, and social development, education does not merely involve the transfer of knowledge but also the values embedded within the existing socio-cultural systems. One of the factors influencing curriculum design and the identity of educational institutions is religion. As a belief system with a strong influence on individual and societal life, religion has long been an essential component in shaping educational policies worldwide. The presence of religion in education not only covers the learning of religious teachings but also impacts how educational institutions build their identity and direct overall educational goals. This research aims to examine the influence of religion on curriculum design and the identity of



educational institutions, focusing on how religion shapes educational policies and institutional identities both locally and globally.

Religion plays an essential role in shaping values that are applied in the educational system. Each religion has views on life's purpose, morality, and relationships between individuals that can influence how one views the education system. Religion serves as an inspiration for many educational institutions in formulating their educational objectives, often linked to moral and ethical values. For example, Islamic education emphasizes the development of character, ethics, and the acquisition of beneficial knowledge, along with integrating educational practices with religious values derived from the Qur'an and Hadith (Hadi, 2016). For instance, the curriculum in many Islamic schools and universities not only focuses on general subjects but also allocates significant time for religious education as a foundation for character building and cultivating noble values in students.

At the global level, many countries integrate religious values into their curriculum design in various ways. Some countries incorporate religious education as an integral part of the national curriculum, while others may choose to separate religious education from general education to maintain secularism in the educational system. In some Western countries, where secularism is a core societal value, religious teaching in schools is often limited to religious studies as a separate subject, without directly influencing the general curriculum design (McGrath, 2012). Meanwhile, in countries with a majority population adhering to a particular religion, such as Saudi Arabia or Indonesia, religious education is an integral component that shapes the identity of these educational institutions. The influence of religion on curriculum design can be seen in the subjects taught, teaching approaches, and the educational goals pursued.

Curriculum design influenced by religion also creates a distinct identity for educational institutions. This identity is formed not only through the name or symbols used but also through the values imparted via teaching and the approaches adopted in learning activities. For example, schools based on certain religious education often have policies that emphasize religious values in every aspect of school life, from teaching activities, regulations, to interactions between members of the school community. This clearly distinguishes one educational institution from another, both in terms of learning and the personal development process of students. Some studies show that



religious-based curricula not only affect academic learning but also play a role in shaping students' religious and ethical personalities (Sulaiman, 2015).

Religion also significantly influences the choice of teaching methods applied in educational institutions. Religious-based teaching methods often involve a more personal approach and are based on spiritual values that educators aim to instill in students. In the context of Islamic education, for instance, the talaqqi method (direct learning) is used to deliver religious knowledge directly and systematically, while also embedding moral values into daily life (Al-Jabari, 2019). Such methods are not only applied in religious education but are also integrated into the teaching of other subjects to create a connection between knowledge and morality. Therefore, the influence of religion in education extends beyond religious teachings and also encompasses the methods used to transfer knowledge and values.

In the context of educational institution identity, religion serves as the foundation for developing a distinctive educational culture that sets one institution apart from another. This identity is not only shaped through the curriculum but also through religious rituals and activities carried out at the school or university. For instance, in many Islamic schools, in addition to religious subjects, there are regular activities such as congregational prayers, religious study groups, and celebrations of religious holidays, all of which become an integral part of the students' educational experience. These activities help shape students' character, strengthen community bonds among them, and foster a sense of responsibility towards the religious values upheld by the institution (Mohammad, 2017).

However, the influence of religion on curriculum design and the identity of educational institutions is not without challenges. In some countries, particularly those with secular education systems, there is debate about how much religion should be incorporated into general education curricula. Some argue that religious teaching could lead to exclusivity and discrimination against those who do not adhere to the same religion, while others believe that religion can serve as a tool for character and moral development, as well as promoting interfaith tolerance (Mokhtar, 2018). Therefore, it is important to assess how the integration of religion into the curriculum can be done inclusively and openly, without diminishing the pluralism present in multicultural societies.

Additionally the development of technology and globalization also influences religious-based education curriculum design. In the digital era, educational institutions face the challenge of



maintaining the relevance of religious education amidst the rapid flow of information. Religious education must adapt to technological advancements and integrate digital media into the learning process to make it more engaging and effective for students. This is also linked to the identity of educational institutions, which need to continually innovate to remain relevant to the needs of the times, while still maintaining the religious values that form the foundation of their identity (Omar, 2020).

The significance of this research lies in gaining a deeper understanding of how religion influences curriculum design and the identity of educational institutions. This study will provide insights for policymakers, educators, and the public in designing education that not only emphasizes intellectual aspects but also shapes character and identity in line with religious values. Given the complexity of religion's role in education, this research is expected to offer useful recommendations for developing religion-based curricula in various educational institutions.

## **METHOD**

In this study, a library research method is used to explore the influence of religion on curriculum design and the identity of educational institutions. This research relies on written sources such as books, academic articles, journals, research reports, and dissertations relevant to analyzing this topic. As explained by Fink (2010), library research allows researchers to delve into existing literature to build a deeper understanding of a topic. In the context of this study, these sources include theories on religious education, religion-based curricula, and the application of religion in education across various institutions. This method also helps the researcher identify key concepts related to the design of religion-based educational curricula and how these influence the identity of educational institutions.

The data collection process in this research involves identifying relevant literature that discusses the relationship between religion, curriculum, and the identity of educational institutions. Hart (2018) states that it is important to select recent and relevant literature so that the findings reflect the dynamics and developments in religion-based education. Therefore, the researcher selects literature published between 2010 and 2024 to ensure that the information gathered aligns with contemporary contexts. Subsequently, analysis is carried out by describing the findings in the



literature and relating them to the phenomena of religious education and institutional identity discussed in this study.

In the literature analysis, the researcher uses a descriptive-analytical approach, as suggested by Machi and McEvoy (2016), which enables a deep description of the findings from the various literatures reviewed. This approach aims not only to describe but also to connect these findings with relevant theoretical contexts, as well as to identify patterns that emerge regarding how religion influences the curriculum and identity of educational institutions. In addition, this study refers to theories of religious and social education, which explain how religious values shape educational curricula and influence institutional identities, both in countries with a dominant religious population and in more pluralistic countries (Creswell, 2014).

The sources used in this study also include scholarly works from various countries and cultures that have religion-based education systems, such as those in the Middle East and Indonesia. The researcher will examine how these countries integrate religion into their curricula and how it shapes their institutional identity. As explained by Boote and Beile (2005), library research allows researchers to gain a broad view of how different countries address the influence of religion in education and their curricula, as well as the challenges they face in this context.

The results of this library research are expected to provide deeper insights into how religion influences curriculum design and institutional identity in education and contribute to the development of more inclusive curricula based on religious values that align with contemporary advancements (Jesson, Lacey, & Matheson, 2011). By using the library research method, the researcher can explore this topic in depth, identify existing trends, and relate them to relevant educational theories and practices.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Influence of Religion on Curriculum Design**

Religion plays a significant role in shaping the design of educational curricula, especially in religion-based educational institutions. A religion-based curriculum seeks to integrate religious values into various aspects of learning, both in religious subjects and general subjects. In this context, religion is not just a separate subject but also serves as a foundation for shaping the character and morals of students. Therefore, religious education not only encompasses an



understanding of religious texts but also involves the application of religious values in everyday life, including in the learning of other disciplines (Nasution, 2001).

In religion-based educational institutions, such as Islamic schools, the curriculum is designed not only to develop students' intellectual knowledge but also to shape their character and morals according to religious teachings. In this regard, the curriculum design focuses on developing students' potential cognitively, affectively, and psychomotorically. This approach aims to ensure that students are not only academically intelligent but also possess good moral and ethical values, which will help shape them into individuals who contribute positively to religion, society, and the nation (Mulyasa, 2003).

One approach used in religion-based curriculum design is the integration of religious teachings into every discipline. For example, in the teaching of science, history, and mathematics in Islamic schools, these subjects are taught in connection with religious understanding. In this curriculum, science is not merely seen as knowledge about the universe but as a means to understand God's creation. History is taught with reference to moral and spiritual teachings, while mathematics is integrated with an understanding of order and beauty that reflects the greatness of God (Nasution, 2001).

Religion-based education in Islamic schools aims to shape students into individuals who are not only knowledgeable in the sciences but also understand and practice religious teachings in their daily lives. A curriculum that prioritizes religious teachings leads students to a more comprehensive understanding of life, which is not only limited to worldly knowledge but also encompasses spirituality. Such a curriculum teaches students to view the world as part of God's creation that must be respected and preserved, while instilling the understanding that knowledge and religion are not in conflict, but complement each other (Al-Qardawi, 2011).

The importance of integrating religion into the curriculum is also evident in character education. Religious education in many Islamic schools is not seen merely as an additional subject or a compulsory lesson but as the foundation for building students' character. Religious education is taught holistically, where religious values are not only studied in religious subjects but also applied in the teaching of general subjects. As a result, students can see the connection between religious teachings and their daily lives, which helps them build a worldview that aligns with religious teachings (Mulyasa, 2003).



This approach also facilitates the development of character based on religious values, such as honesty, discipline, tolerance, and social responsibility. This aligns with the goal of Islamic education to produce generations who are not only academically competent but also have noble morals. In a religion-based curriculum, character development becomes an integral part of the entire learning process, playing an essential role in shaping students into good, responsible individuals who care about others (Al-Qardawi, 2011).

a curriculum influenced by religion not only aims to meet students' academic needs but also to shape them into individuals with strong moral values who can contribute positively to society. A religion-based curriculum strives to create a balance between worldly and spiritual knowledge, emphasizing the importance of character and moral development, which will ultimately result in a generation that is not only intelligent but also virtuous (Nasution, 2001).

### **Religion and Educational Institution Identity**

The identity of religious-based educational institutions is deeply influenced by the religious teachings implemented within them. This identity encompasses not only visible religious symbols such as the institution's name and logo but also the values and culture practiced in the daily life of the school or educational institution. In this context, religion serves as the foundation for shaping the character and ethics of students, while also creating a distinct atmosphere compared to general educational institutions. This identity becomes unique, emphasizing religious teachings as the center of personality development and moral guidance for students.

A clear example can be seen in Islamic-based schools, where the institutional identity is shaped by the implementation of worship routines such as congregational prayers, Qur'anic studies, and ongoing character building. These routines are not only intended to deepen religious knowledge but also to instill discipline and character in students. Every activity at the school is always directed to align with religious principles. As a result, religion becomes integrated into all aspects of school life, both academically and socially. Thus, the identity of the religious-based educational institution is evident in every activity carried out.

The identity of religious-based educational institutions often reflects a focus on teaching not only intellectual aspects but also the character and morality of students. In Islamic schools, for instance, religious education and morality are considered crucial in students' daily lives. In addition to teaching academic subjects like mathematics, science, or languages, religious-based schools



also emphasize moral education closely tied to the religious teachings followed. This approach aims to shape students who are not only academically intelligent but also possess good character aligned with religious principles. Therefore, religious education is often integrated into all subjects, allowing students to understand the connection between the knowledge they acquire and the religious values in their lives (Gundara, 2000).

Furthermore, the identity of religious-based educational institutions also reflects an effort to link the learning process with the principles of the religious teachings adhered to by the institution. This includes not only the curriculum but also the teaching methods applied. For example, in Islamic education, there is an approach that combines religious teachings with teaching methodologies that prioritize understanding moral values such as honesty, compassion, and peace. In this sense, the goal of education is not limited to the transfer of knowledge but also to shaping students who have good attitudes and behavior in accordance with religious teachings (Hasan, 2005).

Religion is not only the subject matter but also the guiding principle underlying the identity and educational objectives of the institution. In many religious-based schools, religious education serves as the foundation for developing all aspects of education. For example, learning the Qur'an, Hadith, Fiqh, and ethics is not only taught theoretically but is also directly applied in the daily lives of students, both at school and at home. This helps students understand and apply religious teachings within the broader context of their lives. Religion becomes a guide that directs them in their interactions with others, facing life's challenges, and viewing the world from a broader religious perspective (Sullivan, 2009).

religious-based education has a significant impact on students' social behavior. By applying religious values in the school environment, students are expected to exhibit better behaviors, such as tolerance, respect for others, and concern for their peers. Religious-based education creates a foundation for students to develop the ethical and moral principles necessary for responsible social interaction and contributes to building a society where shared values promote peaceful coexistence and mutual respect.

### **Implications of Religion Integration in Curriculum Design and Educational Institution Identity**



The integration of religion into curriculum design and the identity of educational institutions brings several significant implications, both positive and challenging. One of the main advantages of this approach is the ability to shape students' character through the instillation of moral, ethical, and spiritual values. A religion-based curriculum, which integrates religious teachings into the learning process, not only focuses on intellectual development but also on the moral and spiritual growth of students. Religion-based education plays a crucial role in equipping students with a strong academic foundation while also providing a solid moral basis that guides them in their everyday lives.

In many religious-based educational institutions, the religious values taught aim at forming a character that prioritizes not only intellectual intelligence but also ethics and behaviors aligned with religious teachings. For example, in Islamic-based schools, religious education is integrated with other subjects, and students are taught to practice religious teachings in their daily lives. This encourages students to understand the relationship between spiritual and worldly life, as well as apply religious principles in their interactions with others. This integration not only impacts holistic learning but also contributes to the formation of a strong moral identity among students (Nash, 2004).

However, the integration of religion in the curriculum also poses challenges, particularly in pluralistic and multicultural societies. Religious and cultural diversity in the classroom can lead to differing views on how religious teachings should be applied in the curriculum. In schools that emphasize religious integration, there is a risk that the teachings of a particular religion could dominate, while students from other religious backgrounds may feel marginalized or undervalued. Therefore, it is essential for religious-based educational institutions to design a curriculum that not only teaches their own religious doctrines but also provides space for interfaith understanding and respects religious diversity.

An inclusive approach in the design of a religion-based curriculum is crucial to ensure that religious values are respected without disregarding the cultural and religious diversity in the classroom. Religion-based education must consider the principles of tolerance, respect for differences, and the promotion of constructive interfaith dialogue. This will create a harmonious educational environment where students from different religious backgrounds can appreciate each other. Additionally, religion-based education must accommodate differences in views and



introduce students to various religious and cultural perspectives to strengthen their understanding of pluralism and diversity.

The importance of an inclusive curriculum design that is sensitive to cultural and religious diversity is reflected in the development of students' character, which not only focuses on religiosity but also on respect for human rights and the appreciation of differences. In highly pluralistic countries such as Indonesia, a religion-based curriculum is expected to introduce religious values that can be accepted by various religious groups while fostering tolerance and mutual respect among students. This is essential for building social cohesion and peace in a diverse society (Zaman, 2017).

Although the integration of religion into curriculum design offers many benefits in terms of character building and morality, it also brings challenges that require caution in its implementation. It is important to maintain a balance between religious education and respect for cultural and religious diversity to create an education system that is not only academically sound but also socially and ethically formative. With the right approach, religion-based education can produce individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also exhibit good behavior and possess a deep sense of mutual respect for others, regardless of religious or cultural differences.

## **CONCLUSION**

The influence of religion on curriculum design and the identity of educational institutions is highly significant, particularly in religious-based institutions. Religion provides a strong foundation in character building, ethics, and students' morality. In many religious-based educational institutions, such as Islamic schools, religious education is not only taught as a separate subject but is also integrated into various disciplines. This aims to create students who are not only academically intelligent but also possess good character, enabling them to apply religious values in their daily lives. Religious education acts as a foundation that directs students to better understand the relationship between the worldly and spiritual realms, enriching their learning holistically. In the context of religious and cultural diversity in society, it is crucial for religion-based curricula to introduce religious values with an inclusive approach. Religious diversity within a classroom can present a challenge to the integration of religion in education. Therefore, it is important to design curricula that not only delve into the teachings of a particular religion but also



provide space for appreciation of other religions and promote attitudes of tolerance and mutual respect. Inclusive education will create a fair and harmonious environment where each student feels valued, not only within the context of their religion but also in their unique cultural and belief backgrounds. the integration of religion in education must be done wisely to maintain a balance between character development based on religion and respect for existing diversity, creating a harmonious, fair, and inclusive educational environment.

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