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Comparative Analysis of Pesantren and Formal School Curricula Based on Prevailing Government Regulations

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Abstract

The curriculum serves as the cornerstone of the educational process, functioning as a guideline for learning implementation across all educational institutions. In the Indonesian context, pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) and formal schools possess distinct characteristics, yet both are officially recognized within the national education system. This study addresses the growing need to understand the similarities and differences between pesantren and formal school curricula as regulated by government policies, and explores how integration and synchronization can be achieved within the national education framework. This study analyzes the comparison between pesantren and formal school curricula based on existing government regulations, including Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, Government Regulation No. 55 of 2007 on Religious and Religious Education, and other curriculum implementation policies. A descriptive qualitative method with a document study approach was employed. The findings reveal that while similarities exist in basic curriculum structures such as competency achievement and learning assessment, significant differences emerge in educational goals, content, and pedagogical approaches. Pesantren emphasize religious dimensions and character development rooted in Islamic values, whereas formal schools orient more toward national competency standards. The study concludes that dialogue and curriculum integration are essential to building an equitable, adaptive, and socially responsive education system in Indonesia.

Keywords:

Curriculum,
Pesantren,
Formal school,
Government regulation,
Comparative analysis

INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia encompasses a diversity of institutions that reflect the nation's rich traditions and dynamic socio-cultural landscape. Two educational institutions with distinct characteristics yet both constitutionally recognized are pesantren and formal schools. Pesantren, as Indonesia's oldest Islamic educational institutions, have played a strategic role in transmitting Islamic knowledge and developing character from the pre-independence era to the present. Meanwhile, formal

schools have evolved as products of educational system modernization, adhering to standardized and structured national curricula aligned with government policy directions.

Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System explicitly acknowledges the existence of pesantren as an integral part of the national education system, subsequently reinforced through Government Regulation No. 55 of 2007 on Religious and Religious Education and Law No. 18 of 2019 on Pesantren. These regulations provide a strong legal foundation for the implementation of education in pesantren while opening dialogical space regarding integration and equivalence between pesantren and formal schools within the national education framework. Nevertheless, curriculum implementation in these two types of institutions continues to exhibit significant differences in structure, content, goal orientation, learning methods, and evaluation systems.

According to 2022 data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, there are more than 28,000 pesantren in Indonesia with approximately 4.2 million students. Of this number, approximately 42% are pesantren salafiyah (traditional Islamic boarding schools) that employ curricula based on kitab kuning (classical Islamic texts, lit. "yellow books") without full integration with the national curriculum, while 58% are modern or combined pesantren that have integrated the national curriculum into their educational systems. In contrast, the number of formal schools (elementary, junior high, senior high/vocational schools) reaches approximately 220,000 units serving more than 45 million students. This quantitative disparity indicates that although pesantren make significant contributions, their coverage and accreditation systems still require special attention to achieve equivalence recognition with formal schools.

These curricular differences create challenges for national education system integration. Pesantren, with their inherent autonomy, possess freedom in determining curricula tailored to scholarly traditions, madhhab (schools of Islamic jurisprudence), and local community needs. Hasibuan (2013) affirms that pesantren salafiyah emphasize character formation, worship discipline, and mastery of kitab kuning, whereas formal schools orient more toward cognitive and academic competency mastery aligned with national standards. This condition raises an important question: how can these two educational systems with different orientations coexist synergistically within the national regulatory framework without losing their respective identities?

Furthermore, the lack of standardization in curriculum implementation at pesantren has implications for formal recognition of pesantren graduates in the workforce and for further education. Although Law No. 18 of 2019 has provided space for the equivalence of pesantren diplomas with formal school diplomas, field implementation still faces various administrative and regulatory obstacles. This results in many pesantren

graduates encountering difficulties in advancing to higher education or obtaining recognition in formal sectors without undertaking equivalency programs.

This study aims to analyze curriculum comparisons between pesantren and formal schools based on prevailing government regulations, identify similarities and differences in educational goals, curriculum structure, learning methods, and evaluation systems, and formulate policy recommendations to promote curriculum integration and harmonization within the national education system. Thus, this research is expected to provide academic and practical contributions toward building an inclusive, adaptive, and responsive education system that meets the needs of Indonesia's pluralistic society.

The curriculum, as the heart of the education system, has become a dynamic object of study in Islamic education and national education discourse. Etymologically, curriculum derives from the Latin *currere*, meaning a path or course to be traversed. In the educational context, curriculum is understood as a set of plans and arrangements concerning objectives, content, subject matter, and methods used as guidelines for organizing learning activities to achieve specific educational goals. Conceptually, curriculum is not merely a formal document but rather a philosophical representation of the educational vision an institution or nation seeks to realize.

Modern curriculum theory encompasses several key perspectives relevant to understanding pesantren and formal school curriculum dynamics. First, Tyler's (1949) perspective emphasizes four fundamental questions in curriculum development: what educational purposes should be pursued, what learning experiences should be provided, how should these experiences be organized, and how can effectiveness be evaluated. This rational Tyler model is deeply embedded in formal school curriculum design, which is structured and oriented toward measurable competency achievement. Second, Freire's (1970) constructivist perspective emphasizes education as a process of liberation and critical dialogue, wherein learners are not passive objects but active subjects in knowledge construction. This perspective is highly relevant to pesantren tradition, which emphasizes dialogical relations between kiai (Islamic scholars/teachers) and santri (students) through methods such as halaqah (study circles) and sorogan (individualized instruction).

Recent research on pesantren and formal school curricula reveals complexities requiring deep understanding. Kusuma (2024) identifies that the primary differences among madrasah (Islamic schools), pesantren, and schools lie in the emphasis on religious content and learning orientation. Madrasah and pesantren allocate greater portions to religious subjects such as Arabic, Quranic exegesis (*tafsir*), Prophetic traditions (*hadith*), and Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), while general schools emphasize life skills development and general academic literacy. However, Kusuma's research

remains largely descriptive and has not critically explored how these differences affect learning outcomes and graduate relevance in the workforce.

Musfah et al. (2019) in their study on integrated curriculum models for pesantren-based schools in Indonesia found that pesantren possess high flexibility in establishing curricula aligned with scholarly traditions and local needs, whereas formal schools must follow centrally determined national curricula. This flexibility, on one hand, provides creative and adaptive space for pesantren, yet on the other hand poses challenges regarding standardization and accountability. This study highlights the importance of curriculum integration models that are not top-down and dominating, but rather dialogical and participatory, wherein local wisdom and classical Islamic scholarly traditions are valued as epistemological wealth equivalent to modern knowledge.

Wafi Ali Hajjaj (2020) in his work on curriculum integration offers an important conceptual framework for understanding pesantren and formal school integration dynamics. He argues that curriculum integration is not merely merging religious and general subjects, but rather a deeper epistemological process to eliminate the dichotomy between religious and general knowledge. This dichotomy, according to Hajjaj, constitutes a colonial legacy that artificially separates sacred and profane realms, whereas classical Islamic tradition recognizes no such separation. Curriculum integration, therefore, must be understood as an epistemological reconstruction effort that restores the unity of knowledge in Islamic perspective.

In the context of Islamic education development during the reformation era, Sari et al. (2024) note that Islamic mass organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah have played important roles in developing modern pesantren models that integrate religious curricula with vocational education. These modern pesantren models respond to contemporary demands without abandoning the roots of Islamic scholarly tradition. They adopt national curricula as part of their educational systems while maintaining kitab kuning study as their distinctive characteristic and identity. This phenomenon demonstrates that pesantren are not static but rather dynamic and adaptive to social change.

From a curriculum theory perspective, this research employs Tyler's curriculum analysis framework, which emphasizes four components: objectives, content, methods, and evaluation. This framework is relevant for systematically comparing pesantren and formal school curricula. Additionally, this research adopts Bernstein's (1971) sociological curriculum perspective, which distinguishes between curricula with strong or weak classification (subject separation) and strong or weak framing (teacher control over learning processes). Pesantren tend to have weak classification due to integration across various Islamic disciplines, yet strong framing due to kiai authority in determining

content and methods. Conversely, formal schools have strong classification with clear subject separation, yet increasingly weak framing with student-centered learning approaches.

Nevertheless, gaps persist in existing literature. Most previous research focuses on describing curricular differences without critically analyzing government regulation implications for field curriculum practices. This research attempts to fill this gap by comprehensively analyzing how regulations such as Law No. 20 of 2003, Government Regulation No. 55 of 2007, and Law No. 18 of 2019 shape and constrain the curricular space of pesantren and formal schools, and how these two systems respond to and negotiate these regulations in daily educational practice.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach through library research (library research). The qualitative approach was selected because this research aimed to understand and interpret the deep meanings of pesantren and formal school curriculum phenomena as regulated in government regulations. Creswell (2014) explains that qualitative research is naturalistic and interpretive, wherein researchers attempt to understand phenomena within their complex and meaning-rich contexts. The descriptive nature of this research refers to efforts to systematically and factually describe the curricular characteristics of both types of educational institutions based on official documents and relevant academic literature.

Data in this research derived from two main categories: primary and secondary sources. Primary data sources included official government regulatory documents, namely: (1) Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System; (2) Government Regulation No. 55 of 2007 on Religious and Religious Education; (3) Law No. 18 of 2019 on Pesantren; (4) Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 24 of 2016 on Core Competencies and Basic Competencies; and (5) Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education No. 6843 of 2015 on Pesantren Curriculum.

Secondary data sources included reference books, scholarly journal articles, previous research findings, and other academic publications relevant to the theme of pesantren and formal school curricula. Selection of secondary sources was conducted purposively with criteria: (1) topical relevance to research focus; (2) author and publisher credibility; (3) publication currency, particularly those published within the last ten years; and (4) depth of analysis presented. Literature used encompassed works by Islamic education researchers such as Musfah, Hajjaj, Kusuma, Sari, Heryadi, and other researchers who have contributed to pesantren curriculum studies.

To ensure data credibility and research finding validity, this study employed source triangulation techniques. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explain that triangulation

constitutes a data validity checking technique that utilizes something else outside the data for checking or comparison purposes. Source triangulation in this research was conducted by comparing and checking the reliability degree of information obtained from various data sources, both primary and secondary.

Operationally, triangulation was performed by comparing government regulation content with its implementation as reported in empirical research, as well as with academic discourse in theoretical literature. Additionally, researchers conducted member checking by discussing initial research findings with researcher peers possessing expertise in Islamic education and curriculum fields. This process helped ensure that researcher interpretation of data was unbiased and aligned with actual context.

Collected data were analyzed using content analysis techniques with a thematic approach. Miles and Huberman (1994) propose that qualitative data analysis is conducted interactively through three concurrent activity streams: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. In the data reduction stage, researchers conducted selection, focusing, simplification, and abstraction of raw data obtained from regulatory documents and academic literature.

The data display stage was performed by organizing reduced information into structured thematic narrative forms aligned with research focus: educational goals, curriculum structure, learning methods, and evaluation systems. This organization facilitated researchers in observing patterns, relationships, and differences among data from various sources. Finally, conclusion drawing was conducted inductively by identifying main themes, recurring patterns, and emerging meanings from data. Initial conclusions were verified by returning to raw data and literature to ensure interpretation consistency and validity. This analysis process was iterative, wherein researchers moved back and forth among data, analysis, and interpretation until reaching theoretical saturation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This research presents factual findings regarding curriculum comparisons between pesantren and formal schools based on analysis of government regulations and curriculum documents. Findings are presented across four main aspects: educational goals, curriculum structure, learning methods, and evaluation systems.

Educational Goals

Based on Law No. 20 of 2003 Article 3, national education goals are to develop student potential to become persons who believe and are devoted to God Almighty, possess noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens. These goals are comprehensive and encompass spiritual, moral, intellectual, and social dimensions.

Meanwhile, pesantren educational goals as outlined in Law No. 18 of 2019 Article 4 are: (1) forming individuals excelling in spiritual, intellectual, and social aspects; (2) instilling Islamic values and traditions; (3) producing prospective ulama (Islamic scholars) and mubaligh (preachers); and (4) providing religious education through muallimin education systems. More specifically, Government Regulation No. 55 of 2007 Article 8 states that religious education aims to form students who understand and practice their religious teaching values.

From the above regulatory data, it appears that formal education and pesantren goals intersect in aspects of faith and character formation, yet possess different emphases. Formal schools emphasize balance among spiritual, intellectual, and democratic citizenship dimensions, whereas pesantren emphasize religious knowledge deepening (*tafaqquh fiddin*) and noble character formation (*akhlak karimah*) based on Islamic values.

Curriculum Structure

Formal school curriculum structure is regulated through Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 24 of 2016, which establishes Core Competencies (KI) and Basic Competencies (KD) for each subject. Curriculum structure encompasses: (1) Group A: mandatory general subjects such as Mathematics, Indonesian Language, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences; (2) Group B: mandatory local content subjects and self-development; and (3) Group C: specialization subjects (for senior high/vocational school levels). Total learning load for senior high schools is 42-44 lesson hours weekly, with Islamic Religious Education allocation of only 3 hours weekly (approximately 7% of total lesson hours).

Meanwhile, pesantren curriculum structure as stipulated in Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education No. 6843 of 2015 is more flexible. Pesantren salafiyah curricula are based on kitab kuning study with groupings: (1) Instrumental Sciences (Ilmu Alat: Arabic Grammar/Nahwu, Morphology/Sharaf, Rhetoric/Balaghah); (2) Islamic Law Sciences (Ilmu Syariah: Jurisprudence/Fiqh, Legal Theory/Ushul Fiqh); (3) Creed Sciences (Ilmu Akidah: Theology/Tauhid, Logic/Mantiq); (4) Ethics Sciences (Ilmu Akhlak: Sufism/Tasawuf, Etiquette/Adab); and (5) Quranic Exegesis and Prophetic Tradition Sciences (Ilmu Tafsir and Hadith). No rigid lesson hour limitations exist, and

learning emphasizes deep text mastery rather than measurable competency achievement.

Modern or reformed (khalaf) pesantren have adopted national curricula by integrating them into pesantren systems. For instance, pesantren operating Madrasah Aliyah (Islamic senior high schools) follow madrasah curriculum structures comprising 70% general subjects and 30% religious subjects. Nevertheless, they maintain kitab kuning study as extracurricular activities or supplementary religious studies (diniyah takmiliah) outside formal hours.

Learning Methods

Learning methods in formal schools follow scientific approaches as regulated in Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 22 of 2016 on Process Standards. The scientific approach comprises five stages: observing, questioning, gathering information, associating, and communicating. Additionally, formal schools implement active learning models such as discovery learning, problem-based learning, and project-based learning emphasizing student-centered learning.

In pesantren, learning methods employed include: (1) Sorogan: individualized method wherein santri read and translate texts before kiai; (2) Bandongan/Wetonan: collective method wherein kiai read and explain texts while santri listen and take notes; (3) Halaqah: circle-format group discussions examining specific themes; (4) Muhafadzah: memorizing important texts from books or the Quran; and (5) Mudzakaroh: scholarly discussions among santri or among kiai to resolve religious issues.

These traditional pesantren methods possess characteristics of intensive relations between kiai and santri, wherein knowledge transmission is not merely cognitive but also spiritual through the concept of barakah (knowledge blessing). Kiai authority is highly dominant in determining content, methods, and learning evaluation.

Evaluation Systems

Evaluation systems in formal schools are regulated through Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 23 of 2016 on Education Assessment Standards. Assessment encompasses three aspects: (1) attitudes through observation, self-assessment, and peer assessment; (2) knowledge through written tests, oral tests, and assignments; and (3) skills through practical tests, projects, and portfolios. Assessment is conducted continuously through daily assessment, mid-semester assessment, end-of-semester assessment, and school examinations. Results are reported in report cards with 0-100 numerical scales or A-D predicates.

Additionally, formal schools follow National Assessment comprising Minimum Competency Assessment (Asesmen Kompetensi Minimum/AKM), Character Survey, and Learning Environment Survey. AKM measures reading literacy and numeracy as basic competencies all students must master. Assessment results are used for educational quality mapping and learning improvement foundations.

In pesantren, evaluation systems are more qualitative and not nationally standardized. Evaluation is conducted through: (1) Imtihan (examinations) both oral and written conducted periodically; (2) Direct observation by kiai toward santri understanding, etiquette, and character; (3) Khataman (text completion) of specific books; and (4) Scholarly chain (sanad keilmuan), namely kiai recognition that santri have mastered specific texts and are authorized to teach them.

Nevertheless, Law No. 18 of 2019 Article 15 paragraph (2) regulates that pesantren education diplomas or certificates can be equated with formal education diplomas after passing equivalency examinations organized by government-appointed institutions. This opens opportunities for pesantren graduates to obtain formal recognition, although implementation still faces various technical and administrative obstacles.

Discussion

Based on the above research findings, the following discussion critically analyzes these findings from theoretical perspectives and compares them with relevant literature to generate deeper understanding of pesantren and formal school curriculum dynamics.

Dualism of Goals: Spiritual-Intellectual versus National Competencies

The fundamental difference in educational goals between pesantren and formal schools reflects a broader epistemological tension between value-based education and competency-based education. Formal schools, with their orientation toward measurable national competency achievement, tend to adopt educational paradigms that are instrumental and oriented toward economic competitiveness. This aligns with human capital theory viewing education as investment to increase labor productivity (Becker, 1964).

Conversely, pesantren with emphasis on tafaquh fiddin (deep understanding of religion) and akhlak karimah formation are closer to transformative educational paradigms emphasizing character formation and critical consciousness. Freire (1970) in liberation pedagogy theory emphasizes that genuine education is not merely knowledge transfer, but rather a humanization process that liberates humans from ignorance and oppression bondage. In this context, pesantren can be understood as educational spaces that not only transfer religious knowledge but also form santri critical consciousness to understand social reality based on Islamic values.

Heryadi (2023) in research on Pesantren Modern Daarul 'Uluum Lido demonstrates that integration of formal education and pesantren goals is possible through dual curriculum models combining academic competency achievement with religious knowledge deepening and character formation. This model affirms that dichotomy between spiritual and intellectual goals is actually artificial and can be overcome through holistic curriculum design. Nevertheless, implementing this model requires strong institutional commitment and adequate resources.

Flexibility versus Standardization in Curriculum Structure

Curriculum structure differences between pesantren and formal schools reflect tension between needs for standardization to ensure equitable education quality and needs for flexibility to accommodate local diversity and scholarly traditions. Nationally standardized formal school curriculum structures, as regulated in Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 24 of 2016, guarantee that all students in Indonesia receive the same basic competencies. This is important for ensuring equal access and education quality across Indonesia's vast and diverse regions.

Nevertheless, rigid standardization also has weaknesses. Apple (2004) in his critique of national curricula argues that standardization often ignores local contexts, cultural diversity, and specific student needs. Overly uniform curricula can become cultural hegemony tools imposing dominant values and ignoring local knowledge and non-mainstream scholarly traditions. In Indonesia's highly plural context, this critique possesses high relevance.

Pesantren curriculum flexibility, as contained in Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education No. 6843 of 2015, provides space for pesantren to develop curricula aligned with madhhab traditions and local needs. This aligns with contextual curriculum theory emphasizing that learning becomes more meaningful when relevant to student life contexts (Johnson, 2002). Nahdlatul Ulama pesantren, for instance, emphasize study of kitab kuning by Shafi'i school scholars, while Muhammadiyah pesantren emphasize direct Quran and Hadith study. This diversity constitutes wealth that must be valued, not homogenized.

On the other hand, flexibility without minimum standards can result in significant quality gaps among pesantren. Musfah et al. (2019) note that not all pesantren possess equal capacities in developing quality curricula. Some large pesantren with adequate resources can effectively integrate pesantren curricula with national curricula, while small pesantren in remote areas still experience difficulties even meeting basic learning needs. Therefore, balanced approaches are needed: providing flexibility space for

pesantren to develop distinctiveness while establishing minimum quality standards that must be met.

Learning Methods: Dialogue Between Tradition and Modernity

Learning method differences between formal schools implementing scientific approaches and pesantren maintaining traditional methods such as sorogan, bandongan, and halaqah demonstrate two different yet equally valuable pedagogical logics. Scientific approaches in formal schools, as regulated in Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 22 of 2016, emphasize active learning developing critical thinking skills, creativity, and collaboration. This approach aligns with constructivism theory emphasizing that knowledge is constructed by learners through active experiences, not merely passively received (Piaget, 1970; Vygotsky, 1978).

Sayangan et al. (2024) demonstrate that 21st-century learning models such as discovery learning, problem-based learning, and project-based learning prove effective in enhancing students' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. These approaches are highly relevant to 21st-century demands requiring human resources who are adaptive, innovative, and capable of lifelong learning. Nevertheless, scientific approaches also have weaknesses, particularly when implemented mechanistically without considering cultural contexts and local values.

On the other hand, traditional pesantren methods such as sorogan and bandongan possess their own strengths that cannot be ignored. Kamal (2020) notes that sorogan methods enable highly intensive individualized learning, wherein kiai can identify each santri's strengths and weaknesses in detail and provide personal guidance. Personal relations between kiai and santri are not merely intellectual but also emotional and spiritual. The concept of barakah ilmu (knowledge blessing) strongly emphasized in pesantren tradition affirms that knowledge transmission is not merely cognitive transfer but also spiritual transmission requiring closeness and trust between teacher and student.

Additionally, halaqah methods based on group discussions actually possess similarities with collaborative learning methods currently popular in modern approaches. The difference lies in kiai authority remaining highly dominant in halaqah, while modern collaborative learning emphasizes equality among participants. Nevertheless, in contexts of religious knowledge learning requiring scholarly chain (sanad keilmuan) authority, kiai dominance can be understood as quality and knowledge authenticity safeguarding mechanisms.

Interestingly, some modern pesantren have begun integrating traditional methods with modern approaches. They maintain sorogan and bandongan for kitab kuning study

while adding critical discussion methods, paper writing, and presentations to sharpen santri analytical thinking skills. This integration demonstrates that tradition and modernity are not binary opposites but rather can dialogue and mutually enrich.

Evaluation Systems: Quantitative versus Qualitative

Evaluation system differences between standardized and quantitatively measured formal schools and more qualitative and holistic pesantren evaluation systems reflect two different assessment paradigms. Formal school evaluation systems, as regulated in Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 23 of 2016, employ standardized and objective instruments to measure student competency achievement. This approach possesses advantages in objectivity, accountability, and ease in comparing school or regional performance.

Ahmadi (2013) proposes that comprehensive K13 curriculum evaluation not only measures student learning achievement but also encompasses four perspectives: educational customer satisfaction, internal process perfection, curriculum financing, and learning growth. This balanced scorecard approach demonstrates that formal education evaluation increasingly becomes holistic and not only focused on student learning outcomes alone. Nevertheless, evaluation systems overly emphasizing quantitative measurement also possess risks. This can encourage teaching to the test, wherein learning is reduced to mere test preparation, and ignores other important aspects such as creativity, character, and social skills difficult to measure quantitatively.

Pesantren evaluation systems that are more qualitative and based on kiai direct observation toward santri understanding, etiquette, and character possess advantages in assessing aspects that cannot be quantitatively measured. Khaerudin (2022) notes that pesantren evaluation not only measures cognitive aspects but also emphasizes affective and spiritual dimensions of santri constituting main foundations in Islamic character formation. This holistic evaluation aligns with authentic assessment theory emphasizing performance-based and real-context assessment, not merely artificial written tests (Wiggins, 1990).

Nevertheless, unstandardized pesantren evaluation systems also possess weaknesses, particularly regarding formal recognition. Zaini (2019) in research on integrated curriculum management demonstrates that although pesantren possess credible internal evaluation systems based on kiai authority, these evaluations are not always recognized by national education systems requiring formal evidence in the form of standardized diplomas or transcript grades. This becomes obstacles for pesantren graduates wishing to advance to higher education or enter formal work sectors.

Law No. 18 of 2019 Article 15 paragraph (2) regulating pesantren diploma or certificate equivalence with formal education diplomas through equivalency examinations constitutes progressive steps in providing pesantren education recognition. However, in implementation, equivalency examination mechanisms still face various technical and administrative obstacles. Abd. Rakhim Nanda (2021) emphasizes the importance of curriculum evaluation conducted systematically with needs analysis, implementation, and evaluation stages based on academic quality standard instruments. Pesantren need to develop credible and well-documented internal evaluation systems to meet national accreditation standards without abandoning their traditional evaluation system distinctiveness.

Policy Implications: Toward Dialogical Curriculum Integration

This research findings demonstrate that pesantren and formal school curricula exist in two different yet complementary educational system poles. Integration through dual curriculum models or formal pesantren constitutes efforts to bridge these disparities. This is important so pesantren graduates possess academic competitiveness without losing Islamic scholarly identity, and formal school graduates possess robust spiritual character strength.

Sobali (2023) emphasizes that curriculum evaluation models must be adjusted to evaluation goals, educational contexts, and curriculum characteristics being evaluated. Comprehensive and continuous evaluation will provide highly valuable feedback for developing more effective and responsive curricula to student and societal needs. In pesantren and formal school curriculum integration contexts, evaluation models are needed that are not dominating from one party but rather dialogical and participatory.

Governments need to promote adaptive and inclusive curriculum integration while respecting each institution's distinctiveness. This can be accomplished through: (1) Regulatory strengthening providing flexibility space for pesantren without sacrificing minimum quality standards; (2) More accessible and non-discriminatory equivalency programs; (3) Integrated curriculum model development valuing each institution's characteristics; (4) Human resource capacity enhancement at pesantren through training and mentoring; and (5) Recognition of credible pesantren internal evaluation systems as parts of national accreditation mechanisms.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that pesantren and formal school curricula possess common ground in basic educational structures, particularly in aspects of student character and moral value formation. Nevertheless, fundamental differences exist in goal orientation, curriculum flexibility, learning methods, and evaluation systems. Pesantren

emphasize religious knowledge deepening (tafaqquh fiddin) and noble character formation (akhlak karimah) based on Islamic values through traditional methods such as sorogan, bandongan, and halaqah, with qualitative and holistic evaluation systems. Conversely, formal schools emphasize academic competency achievement aligned with national standards through scientific and student-centered learning approaches, with standardized and quantitatively measured evaluation systems.

These differences are not dichotomous and contradictory but rather can dialogue and mutually enrich through dialogical and participatory curriculum integration models. Law No. 20 of 2003, Government Regulation No. 55 of 2007, and Law No. 18 of 2019 have provided strong legal foundations for such integration, yet field implementation still faces various technical, administrative, and cultural challenges. Therefore, governments need to promote adaptive and inclusive policies while respecting each institution's distinctiveness, strengthening equivalency programs, enhancing human resource capacities at pesantren, and recognizing credible pesantren internal evaluation systems as parts of national accreditation mechanisms.

Thus, it is hoped that equitable, adaptive, inclusive, and responsive national education systems can be created meeting needs of Indonesia's pluralistic society, wherein pesantren graduates possess academic competitiveness without losing Islamic scholarly identity, and formal school graduates possess robust spiritual character strength

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