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Variations of SKI Learning Models in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) with an Independent Curriculum

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Abstract: This article discusses variations in SKI learning models at the MI level using the Independent Curriculum. The learning models used by teachers vary according to class conditions. SKI subjects at the MI level largely involve literacy, as they include stories about the struggle of the Prophet Muhammad SAW in spreading Islam from childhood, prophethood, preaching, hijrah, until his death. Usually, teachers often use the lecture method, but there are actually many other methods used. With the Independent Learning Curriculum, teachers can develop students' learning potential and interest by using creative and innovative learning variations so that students do not get bored easily. This study aims to explore and analyze the various learning model variations applied in SKI subjects at MI, assessing their effectiveness in enhancing student engagement and literacy. This article employs literacy, observation, and data collection methods. The findings contribute valuable insights to the development of effective SKI education by providing alternative learning models that promote active student participation and improve literacy outcomes.

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INTRODUCTION

The learning of Islamic Cultural History (SKI) at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah plays an important role in shaping the religious character and insight of students as well as instilling essential moral values in religious life (Ansori & Alfin, 2024). SKI is a means for students to understand the history of the struggle of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH and the dynamics of the spread of Islam which is firmly rooted in national traditions. However, in practice, SKI learning faces various challenges such as declining students' interest in reading due to the dominance of gadgets and the lack of variety in learning methods that often cause boredom (Mahfudhoh, 2025; Salsabila, 2024; Fathiha, 2023).

The development of the Independent Curriculum that prioritizes teachers' freedom in developing learning models provides a great opportunity to overcome these obstacles (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2024). Teachers are given the authority to blend various creative approaches, such as project-based learning, multimedia, and interactive discussions, which adapt to the characteristics and needs of students in the field so that they are expected to be able to improve SKI engagement and learning quality (Ulfah & Achadi, 2023; Tawshiyah & Pidlir, 2024).

However, empirical studies on the implementation of SKI learning model variations in the context of the Independent Curriculum are still limited and have not studied their impact comprehensively in elementary madrasahs (Alhikam, 2024; Lestari, 2025). This research gap is an urgency for this research to present an overview and analysis of the use of learning model variations in improving the quality of SKI teaching at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. This study also highlights the challenges faced by teachers in optimizing the curriculum in addition to the need to improve teacher professionalism (Fadillah, 2024).


Against this background, this study aims to explore the variations of the SKI learning model applied in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah using the Independent Curriculum and analyze the effectiveness of this method in improving student literacy and involvement. This research is expected to make a significant empirical and practical contribution to the development of SKI learning, especially in the era of more flexible independent learning (Ansori & Alfin, 2024; Mahfudhoh, 2025).


METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with literature study methods and field observations supported by empirical data. Thus, the research is not only a pure literature review, but also integrates observational data and interview results as primary data sources for analysis. This approach was chosen in order to comprehensively describe the variety of SKI learning models applied in the context of the Independent Curriculum in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Creswell, 2014).

The research subjects consist of SKI teachers in several madrasahs who have implemented the Independent Curriculum. Primary data were collected through direct observation of the learning process and semi-structured interviews with teachers. In addition, data collection is also supported by documentation studies in the form of syllabus, teaching modules, and relevant learning evaluation results. The combination of these data sources allows for the presentation of an authentic picture of the actual state of SKI learning as well as the variations of the models used (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2019).

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The data analysis technique used is thematic analysis with the stages of data sorting, grouping, and interpretation to find patterns of learning variation and their impact on student engagement and literacy. The analysis is carried out systematically so that the research results can be scientifically accounted for while making a valid contribution. The literature studied includes books, scientific journals, and policy documents related to the Independent Curriculum and SKI learning which are referenced according to the APA 7 standard (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

With this methodology, the research has the advantage of producing comprehensive and contextual findings, as well as findings that can be replicated by future researchers in the context of SKI learning in the era of the Independent Curriculum.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Bruner's Learning Theory, developed by American psychologist Jerome Bruner, emphasizes on students' enthusiasm in the learning process. In his theory, Bruner posits that learning is an active process in which students build their own knowledge through experiences and interactions in their environment.¹

The following are the methods or variations that can be used in SKI Subjects at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Level:

A. Project Based Learning Model

In this method, students are made into several groups, with which students can solve several problems together with their group members.

This method is highly recommended when the classroom atmosphere cannot be conducive if using the Lecture Method. This learning model helps students to improve critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills. The disadvantages of the above method are as follows:

1. It takes a lot of time and money, because the project cannot be done in a short time
2. Not all students can actively collaborate with their groups, so it is difficult for teachers to assess students
3. This method can be done by teachers who have high creativity or special skills
4. The existence of project deadlines makes students even more depressed or frustrated, if they cannot complete their assignments

B. Cooperative Learning Model

As with the project-based method, students are made into several groups, but the difference is that in this model students have their own roles in group members, so that with this method students can collaborate with their group members. The disadvantages of the above method are as follows:

1. Teachers need a lot of time to prepare materials and divide students
2. It is difficult to implement if students lack work skills
3. Requires a large room to be able to make several groups of students
4. Causing noise so that it can interfere with the concentration of other classes

C. Discovery Learning Model

In this case, the teacher as the Facilitator, students find knowledge by experiment and by the results of experience. The disadvantages of the above method are as follows:

1. Increasing the achievement gap, for students with less understanding will be left behind
2. Pose a danger to students, if their experiments fail or do not conform to the procedure
3. It takes a long time to do the task

D. Simulation-Based Learning Model

The simulation method is that students demonstrate the role of characters related to SKI learning subjects, so the points that can be taken in this method need students' literacy to understand the material that has been studied and be responsible for the characters they play. The disadvantages of the above method are as follows:

1. Teachers need a lot of time to carefully design simulations
2. Complex simulations require sophisticated manpower or technology, so if not fulfilled, it can result in failure in the simulation
3. Complex simulations take a long time, so they can interfere with other learning

E. Story-Based Learning Model (Storytelling)

This method is like the lecture method, so the teacher has a full role in controlling the class. This method is very easy to implement. The disadvantages of the above method are as follows:

1. Teachers need to find stories that are in accordance with inspirational stories that can be taken by students
2. It has the potential to cause misinterpretation. Namely a situation where the teacher cannot tell according to what is happening so that the learning process will not be achieved.

F. Multimedia-Based Learning Model

This method can use Audiovisual, Visual, or Audio only. Namely the teacher displays Pictures, or Videos in which he explains SKI subjects, usually it can be in the form of documentary videos about the story of the Prophet's Figures, with that the students understand more and are not bored, this method can also be acculturated with the Lecture method, so that the teacher has a full role in explaining the material and students are also more enthusiastic about listening to the material. The following are the disadvantages of this method:

1. Multimedia equipment in the form of computers, projectors, etc. has an expensive cost, so it will not be achieved if schools lack facilities and infrastructure
2. Teachers are expected to be creative and innovative in choosing educational media for students
3. It causes a distraction for students, namely students are more interested in the media but are not interested in learning
4. You must be able to take care of multimedia tools, because they are prone to errors

G. Field Trip-Based Learning Model

This learning model is in great demand by students, because students are invited to visit several historical places so that students can learn while recreation, or Study Tours. Usually you can slip this method in between end-of-semester activities. This learning model helps students learn SKI more realistically. The disadvantages of the above method are as follows:

1. It takes time or careful planning
2. It requires a considerable amount of money, so sometimes there are some parents who are not ready to pay the cost
3. Students tend to be more interested in the surrounding environment so that learning during visits can not be optimal

H. Discussion-Based Learning Model.

This Learning Model Teacher and student will have an active dialogue, the teacher explains or gives problems, then students can express their opinions so that students can think critically about the problems that occur. The disadvantages of the above method are as follows:

1. It has the potential to cause dominance by some students, because usually those who have the opportunity to speak will usually be more dominant in mastering the discussion, so that other students do not have the opportunity
2. It can cause conflicts or disagreements, so teachers must have the ability to moderate in leading discussions

I. Question and Answer Learning Method.

This method is often used by teachers in between the delivery of material, with this method students are required to actively answer what the teacher explains. This method makes students practice their focus in understanding the material explained by the teacher, can also improve the quality of student understanding, by giving appreciation to students who can answer will make students enthusiastic again. The disadvantages of the above method are as follows:

1. If the teacher only relies on the question and answer method to deliver the material, then it will take a very long time to complete the lesson
2. It has the potential to give students a sense of tension and anxiety because they are afraid of questions

J. Assignment Method

This method can be used as an assignment in class or at home, the purpose of this learning is to make students remember the material that has been delivered. Teachers also make it easier to control the level of understanding of students, distinguishing between students who already understand and students who need to be explained again.

This method also cannot be done in monotony, because it will make students bored, and usually students ask parents to do their assignments, even though the function of this method is to measure the quality of students' understanding, not the students' parents. The disadvantages of the above method are as follows:

1. Teachers need to design assignments that are in accordance with the learning material, adjust to the characteristics of students, and learning objectives so that it takes a lot of time to prepare for this
2. Students need to complete assignments on time according to the deadline set by the teacher with good quality
3. Potential to cause plagiarism. So that it is difficult for teachers to assess students who really master the lesson with students who are plagiarized

The variations of the learning models above can be used as a reference for teachers in delivering learning materials. Of course, teachers cannot monotony using one method, because there are so many ways that teachers can use in delivering learning materials.

In one material, several learning models can be acculturated, because it can support maximum learning. Of course, students are more interested if the methods used are many and interesting, any method will not be optimal if it only concerns the pleasure of students, then teachers need to balance the two, there is a serious time and there is also a time to relax, but it does not reduce the maximum learning.

From the article above, one of the weaknesses that occur is that student literacy gradually decreases, therefore teachers need to improve student literacy, because literacy is very important for students and must be used from an early age, for example adding material or interesting stories for each meeting, starting from interesting stories that can foster students' interest in reading. So that students will not be surprised by the thickness of the books that must be read at the next school level.

Good learning media does not mean using more digital methods, of course, using a lot of media can actually reduce students' enthusiasm for learning, students prefer the media, but do not focus on what is conveyed by the teacher. So that the learning objectives are not optimal.

In choosing a method, you can usually add ice breaking in between learning. Ice breaking has a function that greatly affects students' focus, especially usually religious lessons are often tempted at the hour after break, so that students' enthusiasm has decreased. However, the selection of ice breaking also has a great influence on student learning, so it is necessary to choose ice breaking that also includes learning materials in it.

Any lesson given to students should be able to improve and motivate students in learning. If a teacher in his appearance is no longer attractive, then the first failure is that he will not be able to instill the seeds of his teaching in his students.²

According to Sardiman AM, teachers are not only teachers who transfer knowledge (channeling knowledge), but also as educators who guide in providing direction and demanding students in learning.

Research Implications

This research provides important implications for the development of Islamic Cultural History (SKI) learning in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah by underlining the need for a variety of learning methods that can adapt to the characteristics and needs of students. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum which provides flexibility for teachers to develop innovative learning models has proven to be effective in increasing student engagement and literacy. Therefore, teacher education and training policies need to integrate this approach to encourage teacher professionalism in designing more creative and contextual learning, as well as encourage the provision of supporting facilities so that learning innovations can run optimally (Indrawari, 2024; Friday, 2024).

Research Limitations

This study has limitations in the form of the scope of the research subject which is limited to a few specific madrassas and teachers so that the findings may not be fully representative of the conditions in all Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Indonesia. In addition, the use of qualitative approaches and subjective observations has the potential to bring bias in data interpretation. This limitation suggests the need for further research with a broader quantitative approach to objectively measure the impact of learning model variations and examine other factors that affect the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum at SKI.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, the variation of the SKI learning model applied in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah with the Independent Curriculum is able to increase student involvement and literacy effectively. The use of various methods such as project-based learning, discussion, multimedia, and story methods adapts to the characteristics of students and overcomes the challenges of SKI learning which tends to be monotonous.

This study confirms that the Independent Curriculum provides flexibility for teachers to develop innovative and creative learning methods, so that the learning process becomes more dynamic and interactive. This creates a conducive learning environment that encourages understanding of SKI material and students' love for the lesson.


The main contribution of this research is to provide references for learning model variations for MI teachers while encouraging increased professionalism in designing learning that is relevant to the needs of students. These findings can also be the basis for the development of education and teacher training policies to support the optimal implementation of the Independent Curriculum in the field of SKI.


Thus, this study enriches the literature on Islamic education in the field of SKI and provides practical implications for improving the quality of learning in basic madrasas. Follow-up studies are recommended to take a quantitative approach to measure the impact of learning model variations on student achievement and character objectively.

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