Enhancement of Madrasah Students' Literacy through AKMI Program Integrated in Educational Curriculum

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Abstract
Curriculum refers to a comprehensive compilation of scientific disciplines studied systematically in an educational institution, which impacts increasing student proficiency. The Indonesian Madrasah Competency Assessment (AKMI) was introduced by the Indonesian Ministry of Religion in 2021 to evaluate educational progress and student achievement in the curriculum. AKMI can be included in every subject taught at school. This research aims to analyze the increase in literacy of madrasah students through the integrated AKMI program in the education curriculum. The research method used is survey research. Data was collected from an online assessment held by AKMI organizers at the 2022 national seminar of the KSKK Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Indonesia. The survey instrument used was AKMI questions, validated and proven reliable, with quantitative data analysis techniques using a descriptive approach. The research results show that AKMI is a tool for madrasa teachers to evaluate students’ skills in achieving the goals outlined in the curriculum. By utilizing these results, teachers can identify areas that need improvement and implement strategies to improve learning outcomes. Then, integrate learning outcomes (CP) in the curriculum with competency achievements (CK) at AKMI during the learning process at MI, MTs, and MA-level madrasas. AKMI is not a curriculum but can be integrated into the curriculum.

Keywords
AKMI Program; Educational Curriculum; Curriculum Development; Students’ Literacy

1. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary educational framework of the 21st century places significant emphasis on enhancing students' critical thinking abilities, specifically concerning applying knowledge acquired in madrasah to real-world contexts. This approach also underscores the importance of effectively utilizing information technology and fostering collaborative communication skills among students. Following these requisites, the Indonesian government, under the purview of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, initiated a program in 2021 known as the Indonesian Madrasah Competency Assessment (AKMI) to enhance the educational standards in madrasahs. The primary objective of AKMI is to assess students' competency in four critical areas of literacy: reading, numeracy, scientific,
and socio-cultural. This assessment is conducted to gauge the achievement level in student literacy competence.

AKMI is specifically developed to evaluate the literacy competence of students across different courses within the curriculum. Hence, the outcomes of the AKMI assessment do not pertain to students' achievement or lack thereof in a specific subject. Instead, they reflect students' proficiency levels in many literacies, including reading, numeracy, scientific, and socio-cultural, as they engage in learning and problem-solving activities. The outcomes of the AKMI assessment can subsequently inform educators in developing efficacious and high-quality pedagogical approaches (Zainiyati & Suyitno, 2022). This can be achieved by incorporating the attained capabilities in each reading domain into the instructional and learning practices inside the classroom, aligning them with the adopted curriculum. The development of the education curriculum in Indonesia, which increasingly considers the achievement of each student's competence in living life in the 21st century is very suitable to be integrated with the competency achievement in AKMI.

The current educational landscape has witnessed the rise of the autonomous learning movement, particularly in the context of madrasas. This movement, facilitated by the Independent Curriculum, emphasizes enhancing students' literacy skills. Furthermore, the Independent Curriculum also aims to bolster the development of Pancasila students, aligning with the principles of AKMI (Sari et al., 2023). The Independent Curriculum incorporates a Minimum Competency Assessment (AKM) as a primary component of the National Assessment, serving as an alternative to the National Examination. The AKM assessment evaluates students' proficiency in literacy across three domains: reading, numeracy, and science. The assessment known as AKMI, which evaluates students' literacy proficiency in reading, numeracy, scientific, and socio-cultural domains, resembles the description above. The socio-cultural literacy that emerged due to the religious moderation movement advocated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia has led to the development of distinct literacies, distinguishing between National Assessment and AKMI.

The Independent Curriculum places emphasis on fundamental materials, the cultivation of character, and the development of literacy competencies among students, aiming to enhance the educational standards inside schools (Barlian et al., 2022). In line with this, AKMI aims to improve the level of education in madrasas. Therefore, AKMI must be integrated into the curriculum and not only as an external evaluation. This article explores the incorporation of AKMI into the educational curriculum, particularly within the Independent Curriculum, to enhance students' reading skills. The integration of AKMI is proposed as a diagnostic tool to enhance the overall quality of education in madrasahs.

2. METHODS

The research design used in this research is a survey research design. Survey research design is a quantitative research procedure carried out to describe the attitudes, behaviors, and characteristics of a population obtained through samples of the population (Creswell, 2015). This study was carried out to assess the implementation of the AKMI program, which aims to evaluate the literacy skills of students attending madrasahs in 2022.

The total population in this study was 314,619 MI-level madrasahs throughout Indonesia who took part in the survey. The survey activity was attended by each Head of Education Unit, all educators, and Class V, VIII, and XI students selected as samples in the education unit (35 students per elementary school and 45 students per secondary school). AKMI organizer at the national seminar on the results of AKMI (Directorate of the KSKK Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022). In this activity, the researcher acts as a member of the 2022 AKMI team. Then the survey instrument used in this research is in the form of AKMI questions, which have been validated and proven reliable. These
questions were prepared by a team of skilled instrument compilers from AKMI, each with expertise in various literacies. The construction of the instrument takes into account the student’s level of proficiency to produce a HOTS (High Order Thinking Skill) instrument that is in line with the level of student proficiency in the madrasa environment.

Then, in this survey research, the data analysis technique used is a quantitative data analysis with a descriptive approach. The quantitative approach is a research approach that primarily uses a postpositivist paradigm in developing science (such as thinking about cause and effect, reduction to variables, hypotheses, and specific questions, using measurements and observations, and testing theories), using research strategies such as experiments and surveys. Requires statistical data (Emriz, 2015). This data analysis activity was carried out to analyze the literacy level of Madrasah students through the Integrated AKMI Program in the Education Curriculum.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The evolution and modifications in the curriculum within Indonesia will directly or indirectly impact the educational quality. The necessity for adaptation among teachers and students in response to curriculum changes is indisputable. Per our understanding, the curriculum encompasses multiple disciplines wherein predetermined learning outcomes necessitate student attainment. Essentially, each curriculum objective within the subject aims to enhance students’ proficiency, particularly in literacy competence, enabling them to address challenges encountered in their daily lives effectively. This aligns with the primary objective of AKMI, which is to enhance educational standards by conducting literacy evaluations of students enrolled in madrasahs (Amarulloh & Aswie, 2024; Hidayat & Hidayati, 2020).

Currently, the concept of independent learning, as facilitated by the independent curriculum, is being implemented in numerous educational institutions across Indonesia. The notion of Merdeka Belajar entails implementing a literacy movement within educational institutions, aiming to enhance students’ literacy skills (Widayanti et al., 2023). AKMI aims to promote a literacy culture by implementing an autonomous curriculum (Rusli, 2023). This initiative encourages teachers and madrasahs to engage in healthy competition to enhance the quality of classroom instruction by including literacy practices across different courses (Sundari et al., 2023). Integrating various learning models, such as project-based learning, problem-based learning, discovery learning, and Literacy Orientation collaboration–reflection, can facilitate the incorporation of AKMI literacy into curriculum implementation. AKMI assesses students’ literacy abilities across multiple domains, including reading literacy, numeracy literacy, science literacy, and socio-cultural literacy.

Each literacy ability at AKMI is associated with a certain level or level of competency. This indicator is used to measure madrasah students’ competency, including reading, numerization, scientific, and social and cultural literacy. Then, the level of competency in AKMI requires essential, competent, skilled assistance and space for creation. Because each literacy has different competencies, the differentiated competency levels in AKMI aim to determine students’ abilities in the measured literacy and help teachers develop learning strategies that are appropriate to students’ competency levels (Luthfi et al., 2023; Mamlu‘ah et al., 2024). In 2022, the AKMI initiative, which primarily centers on measuring Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), will include a hierarchical structure consisting of five degrees of expertise, as outlined below:
The illustration above, Figure 1, indicates that in 2022, the achievement of literacy skills among MI students in reading remains at the primary level, while numeracy literacy, science literacy, and socio-cultural literacy are at the proficient level of skills (Direktorat KSKK Kementerian Agama RI, 2022). It is crucial to augment the literacy movement within madrassas. The following dataset presents a comprehensive analysis of the AKMI literacy outcomes for the year 2022:

The findings about the reading proficiency of madrasah students ascertained through the implementation of the AKMI program might provide valuable insights for schools and educators to assess the level of literacy skills among their students in madrasahs. In order to enhance the literacy skills of students in madrasah, some measures need to be undertaken. In order to enhance students’ literacy skills, educators must possess a comprehensive understanding of the underlying issues. Consequently, teachers should employ diagnostic tools such as AKMI to identify the root causes of the problem. Subsequently, educators should engage in self-reflection and demonstrate unwavering commitment to enhancing the learning process, thereby fostering improvements in students’ literacy abilities and the overall quality of education within madrassas (Mundaryati, 2022).

The educational institution and its faculty members do not exist in isolation. In this instance, the government, represented by the organizing committee of the Realizing Education Promise-Madrasah Education Quality Reform (REP MEQR) program under the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, will extend support in two ways. Firstly, they will offer online training to...
Integrating each literacy competency achievement into the curriculum is one way to improve students’ literacy competencies in madrasah. In 2023, the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, through the AKMI program, changed the literacy competency achievement level in madrasah. This level or level of proficiency is divided into nine competency achievements that we know as the nine competency achievements. The following is an overview of the level or level of achievement of learner literacy competencies in each competency achievement:

![Figure 2. Competency Achievement (CK) of Literacy AKMI at MI](image1)

![Figure 3. Competency Achievement (CK) of Literacy AKMI at MTs](image2)

![Figure 4. Competency Achievement (CK) Literacy AKMI at MA](image3)

In the picture above, we can see that if a student has not been able to achieve the required level of competency achievement (CK), then he will be given a literacy assessment below the required CK level; otherwise, if a student can achieve the required (CK), then he will be given a literacy assessment above the required CK level. For example, a student in grade IV MI is in CK-3. When he is given a literacy assessment in CK-3 he is unable to answer it, then his CK level will be lowered one level below him to CK-2; otherwise, if he can answer the literacy assessment in CK-3, then he can be raised one level of CK above him to CK-4, and so on the same applies to MTs and MA levels. On an ongoing basis, CK at each level is a continuum that shows continuous CK gain. The slice of each CK can be seen in the image below:
Figure 5 shows that an MI student has a minimum CK-1 and a maximum CK-5. If he masters CK-3, it means that he is at the middle level of CK at the MI level or the lowest level of CK at the MTs level. If he masters CK-5, he is at the highest CK of the MI level, CK of the middle level of MTs, or the lowest CK of the MA level. Conversely, an MTs level student who masters CK-3 is at the lowest level of CK mastery for the MTs level or intermediate level for the MI level, but if the student masters CK-5, it means that he is at the middle level of mastery of CK at the MTs level or the highest level of CK mastery for the MI level or the lowest level of CK mastery at the MA level. If students master CK-7, they have the highest CK mastery at the MTs level or intermediate CK at the MI level or the highest level of CK mastery at the MA level. For MA level students, if he is at CK-5, it means he is at the lowest CK for MA level or intermediate CK for MTs level and the highest for MI level. Conversely, if he is at CK-7, it means being at the middle level of MA level CK or the highest level of MTs level CK.

Here are some competencies in each AKMI literacy in 2023:

Table 1. Competencies of Each Literacy in AKMI Program in 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literacy</th>
<th>Competency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>1. Finding and accessing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Interpreting and integrating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Evaluating and reflecting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>1. Representing objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Representing objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>1. Explaining phenomena scientifically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Evaluating and designing scientific investigations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Interpreting scientific data and evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social-culture</td>
<td>1. Finding and Explaining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Applying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Analyzing, evaluating, and creating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each AKMI literacy competency above can be integrated with the education curriculum, especially with the new movement from the Ministry of Education regarding independent learning through an independent curriculum, schools consisting of principals and teachers. They are free to plan to learn in madrasas, so students are expected to have critical thinking skills, communication, collaboration, and creativity (4C). Since philosophically, the curriculum should be able to lead students to master specific
knowledge and skills that will shape the noble character of students, contribute positively to the community where they live (Suryaman, 2020). When looked at further, the independent curriculum makes students more critical and creative in learning and makes teachers more innovative in managing learning in the classroom (Anggreini & Priyojadmiko, 2022).

The era of Society 5.0, characterized by the use of the Internet of Things and artificial intelligence, provides freedom to anyone to access information openly whenever and wherever we are as long as we are connected to the Internet network (Marisa, 2021). In line with this, the independent curriculum gives freedom to teachers and students to learn to utilize the available technology intelligently and carefully. This inevitably requires students to improve their literacy skills because good literacy skills will help students solve problems at school and in social life. Therefore, AKMI and the independent curriculum want to improve learners' literacy skills so that they can answer and face the existing problems.

In addition, the improvement of madrasah students through integrating AKMI into the independent curriculum increases student proficiency by 1 or even 2 levels. In reading literacy, in the early stages, students only have a basic understanding of reading and comprehending text. They can read individual words and sentences but struggle to find and access information from more complex texts. After some time, students begin to develop the ability to search for and select relevant texts to read. They learn how to use the library or online resources to find reading materials appropriate to their study topic. Students begin to make sense of the information in the text and integrate it with their prior knowledge. They begin to use strategies such as note-taking, diagramming, or group discussions to help them process the information. In the next stage, students have developed into more critical readers. They can evaluate the reliability of information sources and reflect on how the information is relevant to other contexts. Improving students' reading literacy aligns with the integration of AKMI by providing English Digital Library facilities (Sandy, 2022).

Improving students' numeracy literacy through integrating AKMI into the Independent Curriculum can take place in several stages. The first stage is representing objects. Students start by learning how to represent mathematical objects and concepts visually. For example, they use diagrams or pictures to understand the concepts of whole, rational, and irrational numbers. They may also learn how to use graphs or tables to represent data. The second stage is applying strategies. Students learn how to apply effective problem-solving strategies. For example, they learn how to solve linear equations and inequalities of one variable or systems of linear equations with two variables using various methods. Next is reasoning and reasoning. Students then develop the ability to reason and provide logical reasoning in a mathematical context, e.g., they can be taught how to prove the Pythagorean theorem or explain the effect of proportional change of a flat shape on length, area, and volume.

Next is contextual use. In the Independent Curriculum, emphasis is placed on contextual applications of the mathematical concepts students learn. This can involve solving problems related to real-life situations. An example of a case is that a teacher can give students a story problem about a farmer who wants to divide his land into several equal plots for his children (applying the concept of division), but the land has an irregular shape (requires an understanding of geometry). Students must find the optimal solution by applying their learned strategies (Arahmah et al., 2021). Through this process, students develop their numeracy skills over time - from basic understanding to mastery of more advanced mathematical concepts and the ability to apply them in authentic contexts.

In science literacy, in the learning outcomes of the Independent Curriculum, students are taught to question and predict scientific phenomena. With the integration of AKMI, students are also taught to explain these phenomena scientifically, which involves understanding the basic concepts and principles of science. Students learn how to plan and conduct investigations following the scientific method, which includes hypothesis submission, data collection, data analysis, and conclusion drawing. Through this process, they also learn how to evaluate the quality of their investigations and those of others. Students develop the ability to process and analyze data from their own or other investigations. They learn to
present data in various formats (e.g., tables or graphs) and interpret patterns or relationships in the data. Students learn how to evaluate their conclusions by comparing them with existing theories and identifying the strengths and weaknesses of their inquiry process. Finally, students develop the ability to communicate the results of their investigations effectively using appropriate science language and conventions (Masus & Fadhilaturrahmi, 2020).

Finally, in socio-cultural literacy, improving students' socio-cultural literacy through integrating AKMI into the Independent Curriculum can take place in several stages. In the learning outcomes of the Independent Curriculum, students are taught to observe and question (using the 5W 1H formula) and gather information through various methods. Based on the results of a survey conducted by the AKMI team through the integration of AKMI, they also learn how to find and explain socio-cultural phenomena or concepts in more depth. For example, students are learning about customs in their area. They can be asked to find relevant sources of information such as books, online articles, and interviews with traditional leaders and then explain what they found to the class (Sampurna et al., 2022).

Based on the results of a survey conducted by the AKMI team at the applying stage, students learn how to apply the knowledge and skills they have learned to an authentic context. This involves planning and developing an investigation on a specific topic or applying socio-cultural concepts to everyday situations. For example, students could be asked to plan a group project to conduct a survey on customary practices in their local community and then analyze the survey results. In the last stage of analyzing, evaluating, and creating, students develop their analytical skills by selecting, processing, and analyzing information obtained from their investigations. They also learn how to evaluate their work and that of others. Furthermore, students are invited to be more creative by creating new products based on what they have learned, such as making digital or non-digital presentations about the findings from previous group projects (Hidayah, 2022). Thus, the integration of AKMI in the Independent Curriculum can help students understand socio-cultural concepts and apply this knowledge practically through an investigative process.

Teachers, as the first people to help implement the curriculum and AKMI in madrasah, whether they realize it or not, are also required to be literate, as those who diagnose students' literacy skills and try to improve them, so teachers must have broad literacy competencies compared to their students (Efendi, 2023). The motto of Ki Hajar Dewantara is that the teacher must be ing ngarso suntolodo from the front, providing an exemplary example, and becoming a role model for students. Literacy-literate teachers read, learn, and apply it in the classroom learning process to integrate the curriculum with the literacy Competency Achievement of students in AKMI. Thus, learning will be more meaningful, meaningful and independent.

4. CONCLUSION

There needs to be an effort to improve the literacy competence of students in madrasahs, namely through AKMI, as an assessment program of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. AKMI has an essential role in improving students' literacy skills in madrasah. Since it was held in 2021, AKMI has changed the face of the literacy of madrasah students in Indonesia. In 2023, AKMI gave a breakthrough by detailing nine Competency Achievements (CK) that teachers can easily integrate into existing subjects. The implementation adapts to the independent curriculum; it is not forced, but its presence supports the curriculum's learning objectives. The training provided to teachers and schools through a team of experts and instructors who are trained and experienced is expected to improve the literacy competence of madrasah students in Indonesia.

Integrating AKMI into the Independent Curriculum helps improve students' literacy across various essential aspects, including reading, numeracy, science, and socio-cultural literacy. Through this approach, students develop a deeper understanding of key concepts within each area and learn
how to apply their knowledge and skills in authentic contexts. This approach facilitates active and student-centered learning, where students become active in their learning process. They are taught to seek information independently, analyze and evaluate it critically, and create new products or solutions based on what they have learned. Thus, integrating AKMI with the Independent Curriculum prepares students to become lifelong learners who can adapt to future changes and challenges. It also helps them develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills essential for success in the 21st century.

REFERENCES


