

Curriculum Management in Building the Branding of the Institute of Islamic and Arabic Studies (LSIA) in the Digital Era

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the planning and implementation of the curriculum at the Institute of Islamic and Arabic Studies (LSIA) as a response to the needs of students who are oriented towards studying in the Middle East. The approach used is descriptive qualitative, with data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation studies. The results of the study indicate that the LSIA curriculum is designed holistically, adaptively, and participatory, involving various stakeholders. The design is based on three main pillars: philosophical-religious values, adolescent development psychology, and international academic standards. The implementation of the curriculum reflects the integration of classical and digital learning media, as well as contextual methods such as talaqqi, muhadatsah, and khitobah. Evaluation is carried out periodically and incidentally to ensure dynamics and relevance. The learning strategy is individual, with initial mapping, remedial classes and acceleration. Hidden curriculum such as tahfiz, ruhiyah bina malam, and social activities contribute to the formation of Islamic character. In addition to being a pedagogical tool, the curriculum is used as a strategy to build the image and reputation of the institution. LSIA utilizes social media, alumni networks, and national and international forums to strengthen branding as a valuable, locally relevant, and globally competitive Islamic educational institution. This study fills the gap in studies that link curriculum management and institutional communication strategies, and offers a practical model of curriculum management as an academic instrument as well as branding of institutions based on Islamic values.

INTRODUCTION

The curriculum not only functions as a pedagogical tool, but also becomes a strategic element in building the image and excellence of educational institutions (Oktaviani and Sutarsih 2024). In the context of the Institute of Islamic and Arabic Studies (LSIA), which has an international orientation, especially to the Middle East, effective and adaptive curriculum management is the key to producing superior graduates and strengthening institutional branding (Aini, 2024; Munawaroh, 2024). Amidst competition between Islamic educational institutions, a quality and relevant curriculum is a significant differentiating factor. However, there are still few studies that directly link curriculum management and institutional branding efforts based on Islamic values (Dace, 2025; Chala, 2025). Therefore, this study

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contributes to filling the gap in literature and provides a practical overview of how the curriculum can be managed as an academic instrument as well as an institutional communication strategy to build a credible and competitive reputation.

Previous studies related to curriculum management and branding of educational institutions can be mapped into four main groups: (1) Arabic Language Curriculum Management in Madrasahs This study highlights the importance of curriculum management in Arabic language learning in madrasahs, including curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation. A study by Rahman et al. identified challenges in Arabic language curriculum management in madrasahs, such as limited resources and lack of training for teachers (Aulia Rahman, Wahid Murni 2024). (2) Curriculum Innovation to Improve Islamic Education Branding This study focuses on curriculum innovation as a strategy to improve Islamic education branding. Hotimlana and Hidayah found that the implementation of an integrated curriculum at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Zainul Falah succeeded in improving the image of the institution and the quality of education (Hotimlana & Ulil Hidayah 2024). (3) Application of Islamic Education Management Principles in Curriculum Development A study by Sabrifha et al. analyzed the application of Islamic education management principles in the development of Islamic school curriculum, using a scientific literature review (Sabrifha, E., Zatrahadi, M. F., & Istiqomah 2023). However, most studies still separate the curriculum aspects and branding strategies. A dimension that has not been widely studied is how integrated curriculum management is used as an instrument for branding institutions based on Islamic values, especially in institutions with an international orientation such as LSIA. This study fills this gap by connecting curriculum quality, character building, and institutional branding strategies.

The purpose of this study is to fill the research gap in curriculum management studies, especially regarding its role in building branding of Islamic and Arabic-based educational institutions. Previous studies have focused more on technical curriculum management including planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning, but not many have explicitly linked it to the institution's branding strategy. In fact, in the context of institutions such as the Institute for Islamic and Arabic Studies (LSIA), branding success is not only determined by promotion, but also the quality of the curriculum and its graduates. Therefore, this study aims to explore in depth how the curriculum is not only an instrument of learning, but also a strategic tool to build the image and competitiveness of institutions in the midst of global education competition. These findings are expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions in the development of curriculum management based on values and strategic objectives.

Strategically designed, contextual, and participatory curriculum management at the Institute for Islamic and Arabic Studies (LSIA) not only functions as a tool to achieve academic goals, but also becomes an important instrument in building institutional branding. The curriculum designed with reference to international standards (such as the I'dad Lughawi curriculum of Muhammad bin Saud University) and adjusted to the local needs of Indonesian students is able to produce superior graduates who become ambassadors of the institution at the global level. In addition, the curriculum approach that involves Islamic values, character building through the hidden curriculum, and continuous evaluation and development, also strengthens the positive image of the institution in the eyes of the public. This study aims to

prove that the branding of Islamic educational institutions is not only formed by external aspects such as promotion, but is also greatly influenced by the quality and management of the curriculum internally.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. The focus of the study is directed at the management curriculum implemented at the Institute of Islamic and Arabic Studies (LSIA) and how the strategy contributes to building a branding institution. The selection of this case study is based on the uniqueness of LSIA as an educational institution that has succeeded in integrating foreign curricula with local contexts and producing graduates who are competitive at the international level. The data collection technique used in-depth interviews with curriculum managers and senior teachers of LSIA, Documentation, in the form of syllabus, curriculum guides, and internal evaluation reports, and Participatory observation, to directly observe the learning process and supporting activities. The data analysis technique used thematic analysis techniques, namely by: Data reduction (filtering relevant data from interviews and documents), Categorization of main themes (planning, implementation, evaluation, branding), and Drawing conclusions reflectively on the theory of curriculum management and educational branding (Rijali 2019). To maintain validity, researchers used source triangulation, namely comparing data from different sources (teachers, managers, documents) and member checks with informants to confirm the findings (Muhammad Hasan et al. 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on in-depth interviews with curriculum managers at the Institute for Islamic and Arabic Studies (LSIA), it was revealed that the curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation processes are carried out systematically and collaboratively, with a primary focus on educational quality. One source stated that "Our curriculum development is not done unilaterally. There is always a deliberation forum involving leaders, senior teachers, Middle Eastern alumni, and even parent representatives. We develop it at the end of the academic year, but it is flexible and can be revised at any time if there are changes in student needs or global dynamics." The LSIA curriculum not only aims to equip students with comprehensive Arabic language competencies (nahwu, shorof, ta'bir, qiro'ah, kitabah), but also instills a strong Islamic character as future ambassadors of Islam in the Middle East. Classroom observations show that the subject matter is closely linked to religious practices, ethical values, and students' spiritual strengthening.

The LSIA curriculum, not just academics, is designed with a holistic approach, also addressing the psychological and spiritual aspects of students. One senior teacher explained that "We understand that adolescent students need an emotional approach. Therefore, in addition to formal instruction, there is also spiritual guidance, weekly mentoring, and social activities that shape their character as a whole." Observations of activities in the dormitory revealed routines such as spiritual guidance nights, Quran memorization, and weekly religious discussions that strengthen students' non-academic aspects. This curriculum also adapts the I'dad Lughowi model from the Islamic University of Madinah, but is contextualized

to be relevant to the conditions and culture of Indonesian students. These adjustments are evident in the syllabus development, the selection of learning resources (for example, the use of the *Amtsilah Tashrifiyyah* and *Silsilah Ta'lim Lughah* books), and the *talaqqi* and *musyafahah* learning methods, which are balanced with digital and audio-visual media.

LSIA utilizes the curriculum as a dynamic instrument for building educational quality and institutional image. The curriculum is regularly evaluated through annual reflections, student and parent surveys, and assessments of learning outcomes. An academic evaluation staff member stated that "Evaluation is not only based on test scores, but also on character development, mentoring outcomes, and feedback from parents." These evaluation results serve as the basis for curriculum revisions and teacher professional development through regular training and forums for sharing good practices. To build the institution's image (branding), LSIA utilizes social media to document academic and non-academic activities and to network with alumni in the Middle East. Observations of LSIA's official accounts reveal regular publications related to alumni successes, classroom activities, and involvement in national and international education forums. All of this demonstrates that curriculum management at LSIA focuses not only on learning content but also on graduate quality and public perception of the institution.

The following table presents the interview results:

| Theme | Main Information |
|----------------------------|---|
| Curriculum Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve Arabic language skills comprehensively (<i>nahwu</i>, <i>shorof</i>, <i>ta'bir</i>, <i>kitabah</i>, <i>qiro'ah</i>). - Form Islamic and spiritual characters of students to become ambassadors of Islam. |
| Curriculum Planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carried out collectively by a team consisting of leaders, senior teachers, Middle Eastern alumni, and curriculum experts. - Involve representatives of parents. - Compiled at the end of the school year, but can be revised at any time if necessary. |
| Curriculum Foundation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Philosophical: Islamic values as the basis of character and life goals. - Psychological: adapting to adolescent cognitive development. - Academic: refers to the university curriculum in the Middle East. |
| Learning Media and Methods | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Media: classic books, printed modules, digital materials, audio-visual. - Methods: <i>talaqqi</i>, <i>musyafahah</i>, daily <i>muhadatsah</i>, <i>hifzhul mufrodat</i>, sermons. - Book of <i>Silsilah Ta'lim Lughah</i> (UIM Riyadh). - Summary of the Jurisprudence & <i>Mutamminmah</i> (<i>nahwu</i>), <i>Amtsilah Tashrifiyyah</i> (<i>shorof</i>). |
| Learning Resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arabic-Arabic dictionary, video from the official Middle East institution. - Teacher-made materials. |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Learning & Curriculum Evaluation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning: daily, monthly, semester, end of program exams. - Curriculum: end-of-year reflection, student and parent surveys, incidental evaluations. - Initial mapping: Arabic language and Quran reading tests. |
| Individualization of Learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual approach by teachers, remedial, intensive, and acceleration classes. - Routine observation of student development. - Analysis of the context of student needs and challenges of studying abroad. |
| Steps in Preparing a Curriculum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluation of the previous curriculum. - Preparation of syllabus and target documents. - Internal validation (teachers & alumni). - Early year implementation. - Evaluation and revision. - Curriculum as a living document. |
| Quality Culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher involvement in curriculum development. - Routine teacher training and input from alumni and university partners. - Adapting the I'dad Lughawi curriculum from UIM Riyadh. |
| Curriculum Adaptation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contextualization to be relevant to Indonesian students. - The curriculum includes active/passive Arabic and basic sharia material. - Many graduates are accepted at renowned universities in the Middle East. |
| Implementation Results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation runs according to the vision and mission, with regular monitoring. - Tahfiz, ruhiyah guidance nights, social activities, weekly mentoring. |
| Hidden Curriculum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aims to strengthen Islamic character. |
| Teacher Competency Improvement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training, class observation, feedback, sharing forums between teachers. - Maintaining the quality of graduates. |
| Branding Strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publication of activities through social media. - Collaboration with overseas alumni. - Participation in national and international education forums. |

Discussion

Holistic and Needs-Based Curriculum Design at LSIA

LSIA designs its curriculum based on the real needs of students, particularly those who wish to continue their studies in the Middle East (Busri, 2023). This curriculum is based on the I'dad Lughawi model from Muhammad bin Saud University, but is adapted to the characteristics and context of Indonesian students (Buchari & Saleh, 2017). The adjustment process is carried out through needs analysis, evaluation of previous experiences, and

discussions with the teaching team (Prasetyo and Hamami 2020). Using a participatory approach, curriculum development involves institutional leaders, senior teachers, alumni, curriculum experts, and parent representatives. This demonstrates that the LSIA curriculum is flexible and contextual, and designed to truly address students' academic challenges (Nadia aulia tasya 2025). The LSIA curriculum is based on three main aspects: Islamic values as the basis for character building, adaptation to adolescent psychological development, and academic standards for universities in the Middle East. Islamic values are not only taught as subject matter but also serve as the foundation for moral and spiritual education (Sabriadi HR and Wakia 2024). The curriculum also considers the psychological needs of adolescent students who are in the process of discovering their identity. Academically, the curriculum is designed to prepare students to face the challenges of studying in an international environment, particularly in the Middle East, without experiencing a gap in ability (Musthofa & Hanun, 2023; Muzakir & Susanto, 2023). The primary goal of the LSIA curriculum is to produce graduates with a comprehensive command of Arabic and a strong Islamic character. Teaching encompasses language skills such as grammar, grammar, reading, and reading, which serve as an essential foundation for further study in the Arab world (Harmita and Aly 2023). Furthermore, its spiritual mission is to produce graduates with noble character and capable of representing Islam well in society (Ridlo and Ardiyanto 2024). Thus, the curriculum is not only academic but also transformational shaping individuals who are intellectually intelligent and spiritually mature, in accordance with the concept of the perfect human being in Islamic education.

The curriculum at LSIA is supported by a combination of classical and modern learning media. Yellow books are used to maintain the authenticity of Islamic knowledge and Arabic, while printed modules help organize learning systematically (Aulia Rahman et al., 2024). Digital materials and audiovisual media are utilized to make learning more flexible and keep pace with technological developments. This combination reflects LSIA's efforts to adapt to the times without abandoning traditional scientific values (Yusuf et al., 2025). In terms of methods, LSIA uses an active and contextual approach that is highly suitable for language learning. Methods such as talaqqi (direct learning from the teacher), syafahi (oral practice), muhadatsah (daily conversation), hifzhul mufrodat (vocabulary memorization), and khitobah (speeches in Arabic) are used to improve Arabic language skills practically (Prasetya et al., 2020). This approach not only familiarizes students with using Arabic in everyday life but also increases their confidence and communication skills (Nurul Hikmah, 2023).

The primary learning resources come from Muhammad bin Saud University, such as Al-'Arabiyyah Baina Yadayka, Silsilah Ta'lim al-'Arabiyyah, Al-Ajurrumiyyah, and Amtsilah at-Tashrifiiyyah. These resources demonstrate LSIA's academic orientation, which aligns with Middle Eastern higher education standards. Furthermore, teacher-created materials and local learning videos are used to tailor the teaching content to students' needs. This demonstrates that the LSIA curriculum implementation focuses not only on content but also on contextual and relevant delivery (Mutiawati, 2023; Aisyah et al., 2022), creating active, meaningful learning that supports students' academic and religious goals.

Curriculum Evaluation and Development

Curriculum evaluation and development at LSIA is conducted on an ongoing basis through two main forms, namely learning evaluation and curriculum evaluation. Learning evaluation is carried out periodically in the form of daily exams, monthly exams, semester exams, and end-of-program exams. This aims to monitor the achievement of student learning outcomes in a tiered and systematic manner (Rachmawati et al., 2023). Curriculum evaluation is carried out through several mechanisms, including: End of school year reflection by the teaching team, Regular discussion between teachers, Survey to students and guardians and Incidental evaluation if urgency or problems are found in the implementation of learning (Yusuf et al. 2025). The results of the evaluation are used as the basis for curriculum revision at the beginning of each school year. This development process is supported by regular training programs for teachers as well as discussion forums involving all teachers, to ensure improved quality of curriculum implementation in the classroom (Lestari & Septiana, 2021). This finding indicates a fairly comprehensive and participatory curriculum evaluation system. Regular learning evaluations reflect consistent academic quality control of student achievement (Aziz et al. 2025),. This is in line with Ina Magdalena dkk, who state that learning evaluation serves as an important instrument in assessing the effectiveness of teaching and student learning (Magdalena, Ridwanita, and Aulia 2020). Furthermore, the involvement of various parties in curriculum evaluation, such as teachers, students and guardians, shows the application of a reflective and collaborative approach in curriculum development (Umagap et al., 2022). Such a model supports the principle of dynamic curriculum as expressed by Komalasari, where the curriculum should be continuously adapted to the needs of learners and changes in the learning environment (Komalasari 2023). Teacher training and discussion forums that accompany the curriculum revision process indicate that the institution is not only focused on changing the curriculum document, but also paying attention to implementation readiness in the field. This is important so that curriculum development is not only administrative, but has a real impact on improving the quality of learning (Wahyuni, Agustina, and Juita 2024). Based on the above, the practice of curriculum evaluation and development at this institution shows a synergy between monitoring learning outcomes and systemic improvement based on reflection and involvement of all educational stakeholders.

Branding Strategy Through Curriculum and Graduates

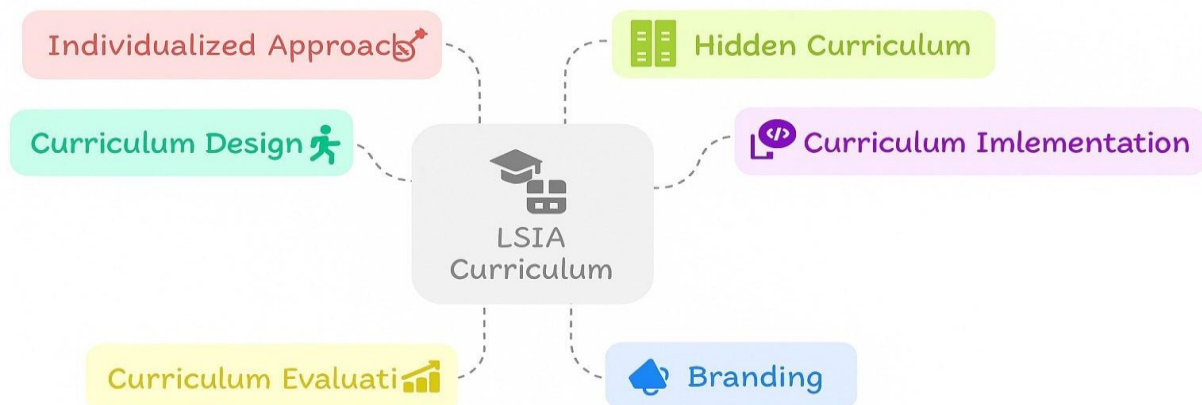
LSIA's branding is built through synchronized quality and success. Many students are accepted into Middle Eastern universities such as those in Egypt, Sudan, and Saudi Arabia (Alfarizi & Khozin, 2024). This demonstrates that LSIA's criteria are locally relevant and internationally competitive (Magdalena et al., 2023; Alifiana et al., 2024). Branding is also strengthened through social media publications, collaborations with alumni abroad, and active participation in national and international educational forums (Amin et al., 2024). This approach demonstrates that LSIA builds its institutional image not only through promotion but also through tangible quality, student achievement, and the involvement of all stakeholders. With this strategy, LSIA presents itself as a superior and adaptable Islamic educational institution in the global era (Fanisyah et al., 2022). LSIA implements an individualized approach to the learning process to tailor educational services to each student's unique needs (Nurhalimah, 2024; Suryana et al., 2022). Before beginning core learning,

students take a selection test to assess their initial abilities in Arabic and recitation. Based on the results, students are placed in intensive, remedial, or accelerated classes to ensure more targeted learning (Munawwaroh & Rahayu, 2024; Amin et al., 2024). Teachers also regularly monitor student progress through observation and formative assessments. This approach reflects the principle of differentiated learning, where each student is given the opportunity to develop according to their abilities. This demonstrates that LSIA focuses not only on academic achievement but also on equity and inclusivity in education (Rosyidatul et al., 2021).

In addition to the formal curriculum, LSIA has developed a hidden curriculum to holistically shape students' character. Activities such as tahfiz (memorization of the Koran), evening spiritual guidance, social activities, and monthly mentoring are crucial in developing students' morals, spirituality, and leadership (Ratna Sari, 2025). This hidden curriculum was consciously designed as part of a character education strategy that aligns with the institution's vision. These activities shape students into individuals who are religious, socially conscious, and possess noble character (Saputra et al., 2024). This also serves as LSIA's distinctive identity, emphasizing Islamic values throughout the learning process, both formal and informal.

Figure, 1.

LSIA Curriculum Design and Implementation



CONCLUSIONS

LSIA designs its curriculum based on the real needs of students, particularly those wishing to pursue their studies in the Middle East. This curriculum is flexible, contextual, and based on Islamic values, and is tailored to the psychological characteristics of adolescents and international academic standards. The learning process is supported by active methods, modern and classical media, and teaching resources from renowned universities. Curriculum evaluation and development are conducted periodically and participatory, involving all stakeholders. An individualized approach, a hidden curriculum, and a branding strategy through graduates and social media reinforce LSIA's identity as a leading Islamic educational institution, inclusive, and adaptive to global challenges.

This paper contributes to scientific knowledge through a curriculum development model based on students' real needs, using a participatory and contextual approach. LSIA serves as a good example of aligning Islamic values, adolescent psychological development,

and international academic standards. This study enriches the Islamic education literature by emphasizing the integration of formal and hidden curricula, active learning methods, continuous evaluation, and a branding strategy based on graduate quality. This approach is relevant for application to globally oriented educational institutions within local contexts.

While this study demonstrates the success of LSIA in developing a needs-based and contextualized curriculum, limitations lie in the lack of quantitative data on the long-term effectiveness of graduates in Middle Eastern universities. Furthermore, it lacks a detailed description of the challenges of curriculum implementation in the field, such as teacher resistance or infrastructure constraints, which are crucial for assessing the sustainability and replication of this curriculum model in other institutions.

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