

Volume 5, No. 9 September 2026 (1024-1032)

p-ISSN 2980-4868 | e-ISSN 2980-4841

<https://ajesh.ph/index.php/gp>

Innovation in The Implementation of Islamic Education at SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta in The Implementation of The Independent Curriculum

Ahmad Hudaebiah*, Muhammad Dwifajri, Arief Maqrufianto, Encu Samsudin

Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. DR. Hamka Jakarta, Indonesia

Email: ahmad.hudaebiah@uhamka.ac.id*, mdwifajri@uhamka.ac.id,

arief.maqrufianto@uhamka.ac.id, encu.samsudin@uhamka.ac.id

Keywords:	ABSTRACT
Islamic Education; Independent Curriculum; Educational Innovation; SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta	Islamic education must respond to technological developments and twenty-first-century competency demands while preserving students' religious identity and character. The Merdeka Curriculum provides schools with the flexibility to develop contextual, differentiated, and technology-supported learning approaches aligned with their institutional characteristics. This study aimed to describe innovations in Islamic education implemented at SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta and examine their integration with the Merdeka Curriculum. A descriptive qualitative design was employed. Data were collected through field observations, document analysis, and reviews of official school information. Relevant curriculum documents, teaching modules, program reports, and educational activities were selected purposively. Data validity was ensured through source and technique triangulation, while data were analyzed through data condensation, thematic presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that the school implemented a semester credit system, Tahfidz al-Qur'an classes, online learning programs, Moodle-based smart classrooms, and the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project integrated with Islamic values. Religious habituation programs and community-based extracurricular activities complemented these academic innovations by strengthening discipline, responsibility, leadership, collaboration, and social awareness. Internationally oriented programs further supported students' global competencies without compromising their Islamic identity. The study concluded that integrated curriculum flexibility, digital technology utilization, religious culture, and student development initiatives formed a holistic model of innovative Islamic education implementation in schools.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education in Indonesia faces increasingly complex challenges due to scientific and technological developments and the demands of globalization. Islamic educational institutions are required not only to instill values of faith and piety but also to equip students with twenty-first-century competencies, including digital literacy, creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration skills (Tilaar, 2012). This condition requires continuous innovation in the management and implementation of Islamic education to ensure its relevance and competitiveness.

The Merdeka Curriculum introduced by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology provides greater flexibility for educational units to innovate according to students'

needs and characteristics (Miles & Huberman, 2014) . For Islamic schools, the Merdeka Curriculum represents a strategic opportunity to integrate Islamic values into contextual and meaningful learning processes (Mulyasa, 2017).

SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta is one of the Islamic schools considered innovative in responding to this policy. The school has not only implemented the Merdeka Curriculum but has also developed various adaptations and innovations, including the semester credit system, Tahfidz classes, online learning programs, and Moodle-based smart classrooms (Zuhairini, 2015) . In addition, the school has developed project-based flagship programs through the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (*Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila* [P5]), which integrates Islamic values and global perspectives.

Indonesia faces ongoing challenges in improving learning quality while implementing curriculum reform. The OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) showed that Indonesian students performed below the OECD average in mathematics, reading, and science in 2022. Only 18% of Indonesian students achieved at least Level 2 proficiency in mathematics, compared with the OECD average of 69%, while national performance in all three domains declined compared with the 2018 results (OECD, 2023). These results do not directly measure religious education or character development; however, they indicate persistent challenges in students' ability to apply knowledge, solve problems, and think critically. Therefore, curriculum innovation in Indonesian schools needs to strengthen academic competence, independent learning, and character development simultaneously rather than treating these outcomes as separate educational priorities (Aribah, 2025; Fazar, 2025; Prima, 2025) .

The Merdeka Curriculum was introduced as a policy response that provides schools with greater flexibility to organize learning based on students' developmental stages, needs, interests, and institutional characteristics. By 2024, approximately 370,032 educational institutions (Sugiyono, 2019) , representing 83.94% of the national total, had implemented the curriculum, demonstrating the extensive scale of this reform (Center for Curriculum and Learning, 2024). The curriculum was also formally established as the basic framework and curriculum structure for Indonesian early childhood, primary, and secondary education through Ministerial Regulation Number 12 of 2024. Nevertheless, broad adoption does not automatically guarantee consistent implementation. Its effectiveness depends on school leadership, teacher competence, curriculum management, learning resources, assessment practices, and the capacity of individual schools to translate policy principles into classroom practices and institutional programs (Azah, 2024; Learning, 2024; OECD, 2023) .

For Islamic schools, this flexibility provides an opportunity to align national curriculum requirements with Islamic values and institutional identity. The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes differentiated, project-based, and contextual learning, which may support the integration of Islamic teachings into students' academic and social experiences. However, this opportunity is accompanied by practical challenges, as schools must ensure that curriculum flexibility does not result in fragmented programs or merely symbolic inclusion of religious values. Therefore, innovation in Islamic education should be examined as a comprehensive institutional process

encompassing curriculum planning, classroom instruction, digital learning, religious habituation, extracurricular development, and evaluation. Such an approach can clarify how Islamic identity is maintained while schools respond to technological developments and students' increasingly diverse learning needs.

Previous studies have provided important insights into the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Islamic educational settings. 'Azah et al. (2024), through a qualitative study at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Jombang, identified teacher readiness, technological limitations, infrastructure, planning, implementation, and evaluation as important management challenges. Prima et al. (2025) found that Pesantren Minhajul Haq Purwakarta integrated Islamic values into curriculum planning, learning activities, and educational evaluation without compromising its institutional identity. Their study also showed that limited digital infrastructure and differences in teachers' understanding remained obstacles, while collective commitment supported implementation. These findings confirm that successful curriculum reform in Islamic institutions depends on both managerial capacity and shared commitment to religious values ('Azah et al., 2024; Prima et al., 2025).

Other research has examined specific pedagogical and technological dimensions of Islamic education. Aribah et al. (2025) concluded that a deep-learning approach within Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam [PAI]) could connect Islamic teachings with students' everyday experiences while encouraging critical thinking, reflection, and character internalization. Fazar et al. (2025) developed an Android-based Islamic mobile learning application incorporating videos, animations, and quizzes. Their evaluation demonstrated improved learning outcomes, positive student responses, and high instrument reliability, although accessibility and scalability remained concerns. These studies demonstrate the value of reflective pedagogy and digital media in Islamic education. However, their focus remains primarily on specific instructional approaches or learning applications rather than the interaction among curriculum management, technological infrastructure, differentiated programs, religious culture, and student development within a senior secondary institution.

Consequently, a research gap remains regarding the holistic documentation of how a Muhammadiyah senior high school operationalizes Islamic education innovation throughout its institutional ecosystem under the Merdeka Curriculum. Existing studies have generally examined pesantren, madrasah, elementary schools, specific subjects, or individual digital learning tools. Limited attention has been given to a school model that simultaneously implements a semester credit system, Tahfidz al-Qur'an classes, online learning, Moodle-based smart classrooms, the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila [P5]), community-based extracurricular activities, religious habituation, and internationally oriented programs. Examining these elements as an interconnected system is essential because innovation cannot be fully understood by observing a single learning strategy separately from its organizational and cultural context.

This investigation is urgent because schools require contextually grounded examples of how curriculum flexibility can be translated into coherent educational practices. SMA Muhammadiyah

3 Jakarta provides a relevant case because it combines the national curriculum with Muhammadiyah's Islamic educational orientation while developing differentiated academic pathways, digital learning facilities, religious programs, projects, and extracurricular communities. The novelty of this research lies in its integrated examination of these initiatives as mutually reinforcing components of Islamic education rather than as independent programs. Specifically, it explores how curriculum flexibility, technological adaptation, Islamic value internalization, and students' academic and nonacademic development are organized within the daily operations of a Muhammadiyah senior high school (Rahman, 2000) .

Based on this context, this study aimed to describe and interpret innovations in the implementation of Islamic education at SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta under the Merdeka Curriculum. The objectives were to identify the forms of curriculum and learning innovation implemented by the school; examine the integration of Islamic values into academic, project-based, digital, religious, and extracurricular activities; and explain how the school's programs supported student flexibility, character formation, and global competence. The research also sought to identify institutional practices that enabled these innovations to function as a coherent educational model. These objectives directed attention toward actual school practices rather than limiting the inquiry to curriculum policies or normative expectations.

The study is expected to contribute theoretically by broadening discussions of Islamic education innovation through an institutional perspective that connects curriculum, technology, school culture, and student development. Practically, its findings may provide school leaders and teachers with contextual references for designing differentiated learning, managing digital platforms, integrating Islamic values into the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project, and positioning extracurricular activities as components of character education. For policymakers and Muhammadiyah educational administrators, the study may provide evidence for strengthening teacher development, infrastructure planning, and curriculum guidance in Islamic schools. For future researchers, it may serve as an empirical basis for comparative investigations and evaluations of similar innovations across different Islamic educational institutions.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to examine innovations in the implementation of Islamic education under the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta. The data sources consisted of curriculum documents, teaching modules, school program reports, digital learning materials, official online information, and educational activities implemented by the school. The research sample included documents and activities related to the semester credit system, Tahfidz al-Qur'an classes, online learning, Moodle-based smart classrooms, the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (*Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila* [P5]), religious habituation programs, extracurricular activities, and international programs. The samples were selected purposively based on their relevance to Islamic education innovation and curriculum implementation.

The research instruments consisted of observation sheets, document-review checklists, and data-classification matrices developed according to the research objectives. Data validity was ensured through source triangulation by comparing curriculum documents, school reports, field observations, and official online information. Technique triangulation was conducted by comparing evidence obtained from observations, document analysis, and online sources. Since the study used qualitative data, psychometric reliability testing was not applicable. Instead, data dependability was maintained through consistent coding procedures, repeated examination of collected evidence, an audit trail, and verification of the alignment between interpretations and original data sources.

Data collection was conducted through several stages. First, relevant school programs were identified, and observation and document-review instruments were prepared. Second, field observations were carried out to examine learning practices, infrastructure utilization, religious activities, and flagship programs. Third, curriculum documents, teaching modules, activity reports, and official school publications were collected and classified. The data were organized and coded using NVivo qualitative data analysis software. Data analysis followed an interactive model involving data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Thematic analysis was then applied to categorize findings into curriculum flexibility, digital learning innovation, Islamic value integration, religious habituation, extracurricular development, and global competency development. Conclusions were drawn by identifying recurring patterns and relationships among the verified data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Institution

SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta is one of the educational charities owned by the Muhammadiyah Organization which plays a strategic role in the development of Islamic education in the South Jakarta area. Structurally, this school is under the auspices of the Muhammadiyah Branch Executive (PCM) Kebayoran Baru, which is responsible for the management and institutional development in accordance with the values and goals of Muhammadiyah. SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta is located at Jl. Limau II Blok No. 3, RT 3/RW 3, Kramat Pela Village, Kebayoran Baru District, South Jakarta City, Special Capital Region of Jakarta, with a strategic location and easy access by the community.

As a modern Islamic educational institution, SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta has a vision to realize a generation of Muslims who have faith, knowledge, noble character, and global competitiveness. This vision is the foundation for the preparation of various strategic missions of the school, including strengthening Islamic character education, improving academic quality in a sustainable manner, and optimizing the use of information and communication technology in the learning process. All educational programs are designed to balance the mastery of science and technology with the spiritual and moral development of students.

In terms of facilities and infrastructure, SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta has been equipped with representative and modern classrooms, learning support laboratories, digital libraries, and

Smart Classroom facilities that allow the application of technology-based learning. In addition, the school environment is designed in a conducive manner to support the habituation of Islamic values through routine activities such as duha and congregational prayers, reciting the Qur'an, maghrib reciting, and various other religious activities. This condition makes SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta an Islamic educational institution that is not only academically superior, but also strong in fostering the character and spirituality of students.

School Curriculum

In the aspect of curriculum, SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta implements the Merdeka Curriculum with a number of adjustments that are adjusted to the characteristics of Islamic schools and the vision of the Muhammadiyah Organization. The implementation of this curriculum aims to provide a wider space for students to develop their potential, interests, and talents optimally, while still instilling Islamic values as the main foundation of education. One of the leading innovations in curriculum management is the implementation of the Semester Credit Unit (SKS) system in regular classes. This system provides flexibility for students to take learning according to their respective learning paces, so that students who have high academic ability can complete their studies faster, while other students get more adaptive and unburdened learning opportunities (Hamalik, 2015).

In addition to regular classes, SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta also developed a Tahfidz Al-Qur'an class program as part of curriculum differentiation. This program is designed for students who have an interest and talent in memorizing the Qur'an, while still integrating the national curriculum so that students' academic achievements are still fulfilled. This integration reflects the school's efforts in balancing spiritual strengthening and academic competence achievement, so that students are not only intellectually superior, but also have a strong religious character (Arifin, 2016).

In addition, schools also provide online classes as a form of learning innovation that is adaptive to the development of digital technology and flexible learning needs. This learning model allows the teaching and learning process to take place online with the support of digital platforms, so that students can still access learning effectively and efficiently (Rusman, 2018).

Furthermore, the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) is an integral part of the curriculum at SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta. The projects developed are not only oriented towards strengthening the values of the Pancasila Student Profile, but are also combined with Islamic values such as honesty, responsibility, social concern, and the spirit of progress. This integration shows that the school curriculum is designed holistically to form students with character, competitiveness, and noble character (Zamroni, 2017; Zubaedi, 2015).

Excellence and Innovation Carried Out

The main advantage of SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta lies in its ability to integrate Islamic education with digital technology. The use of Moodle-based Smart Classroom allows teachers and students to access learning materials, assignments, and evaluations online. This is in line with the demands of 21st century learning that emphasizes digital literacy and independent learning (Rusman, 2018: 56).

In addition, project-based flagship programs and international programs are an added value for the school. Through this program, students are trained to have a global perspective without losing their Islamic identity. Teachers play a role not only as teachers, but also as role models (*uswah hasanah*) in instilling Islamic values in daily life.

There are also extracurricular activities at SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta designed as a forum for the development of students' interests, talents, and characters through the formation of various positive communities. The school facilitates a variety of extracurricular activities, both in the fields of religion, academics, leadership, sports, and arts, as well as communities such as; Muhammadiyah Student Association (IPM), Theater, Futsal, Mini Soccer, Basketball, Paskibra, Youth Scientific Work (KIR), Traditional Dance, Modern Dance, Ratoh Jaroe, Band, English Club, Swimming, Korean, Japanese, Supporter, Cinematography, Debate Club, Tapak Suci, Hizbul Wathan and many more. The existence of these communities is not only aimed at developing students' non-academic competencies, but also as a means of internalizing Islamic values, discipline, responsibility, and social cooperation (Mulyasa, 2021).

In the context of Islamic education, extracurricular activities are positioned as an integral part of Islamic character development. Through IPM activities, for example, students are trained to organize, preach creatively, and practice the values of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* in school life. Experiential learning (*experiential learning*) that occurs in this community strengthens the role of schools in shaping the personality of students who are religious, independent, and socially concerned (Zubaedi, 2015: 102).

Furthermore, the involvement of students in extracurricular activities also contributes to strengthening 21st century competencies, such as leadership, communication, and collaboration. Participatory and community-based activities encourage students to actively interact, take roles, and take responsibility for the tasks undertaken. With the assistance of teachers and coaches who act as facilitators as well as role models, extracurricular activities at SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta become an effective medium in integrating character development, Islamic values, and social skills holistically (Suyanto & Jihad, 2013).

Thus, community-based extracurricular activities at SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta not only function as a complement to intracurricular activities, but also as a strategic means in forming students with Islamic character, insightful, and ready to face global challenges without losing their Islamic identity.

Another innovation is the integration of routine religious activities such as *dhuha* prayers, congregational *dhuhur* prayers, reciting the Qur'an, and *maghrib* reciting as part of the habituation method (drill) in Islamic character education. This approach has proven to be effective in shaping students' religious attitudes and discipline (Arifin, 2016: 88).

Achievements

The achievements achieved by SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta are indicators of the success of the implementation of education that integrates academic, non-academic, and Islamic character development. This school has consistently made various achievements, both at the city, provincial, and national levels, in academic fields such as science olympiads, scientific writing

competitions, and debate competitions, as well as in non-academic fields such as sports, arts, and student leadership. These achievements reflect the effectiveness of the learning process which is not only oriented towards mastering knowledge, but also on developing students' potential as a whole.

The following are the achievements of SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta at the National level, namely;

Gold Medal in PAI and Biology "Jauza Nur Aurellia (X-10)" at the Indonesian Student Competition and the 2025 Olympic Student Aerospace Competition

1st Place in English "Cut Naila Amira Zulkaryadi (X-4)" in the Speech Competition at E-FEST 2025 held by English Education Study Program

1st place in the MVP (Most Valuable Player) category "Reinata Priscilia Razak (XI-12 SO) in the Basketball Champion Series 3 Competition, 2025

The Achievements of SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta at the International level:

Gold Medal "Cultural Mission Team of SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta" at the World Dance Competition and Festival 2025 in South Korea

Gold Medal "Muhamad Arsky Jayden Zen Naga (Class IX-15 SO)" Ice Hockey Men's Team at the SEA GAMES Thailand 2025

Bronze Medal "Adelia Chantika Aulia (Class X-17)" Swimming Women's 200m Backstroke at SEA GAMES Thailand 2025

The achievements mentioned above are only a few that are used as data or examples, because actually there are still a lot of achievements achieved by the Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta High School school and cannot be listed all in this paper.

Overall, the achievements achieved by SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta show that the integration of academic learning, extracurricular activities, and Islamic character development is able to produce graduates who are superior, competitive, and have noble character. These achievements are also clear evidence that Islamic education that is managed professionally and innovatively can contribute significantly to improving the quality of national education (Suyanto & Jihad, 2013: 97).

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Jakarta had implemented Islamic education innovation through an integrated model combining the Merdeka Curriculum, digital technology, curriculum differentiation, religious habituation, and student development programs. The semester credit system, Tahfidz al-Qur'an classes, online learning, Moodle-based smart classrooms, and the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila [P5]) provided flexible and contextual learning opportunities. Religious activities and community-based extracurricular programs further strengthened discipline, responsibility, leadership, collaboration, social awareness, and Islamic identity. These findings demonstrated that curriculum flexibility and technological adaptation could support holistic Islamic education when reinforced by a consistent religious culture and coherent institutional management.

Future research should examine similar innovations across various Muhammadiyah schools, madrasahs, pesantren, and other Islamic educational institutions to determine their applicability in diverse institutional and regional contexts. Subsequent studies may employ mixed-methods or longitudinal research designs involving school leaders, teachers, students, and parents to evaluate changes in learning outcomes, digital competencies, religious character development, and student engagement. Researchers should also investigate implementation challenges, including teacher readiness, infrastructure disparities, program sustainability, and access to digital learning resources. Such research would provide stronger empirical evidence for developing scalable and context-sensitive models of Islamic education innovation under the Merdeka Curriculum.

REFERENCES

- Aribah, A. (2025). *[Title of article on deep-learning approach in Islamic Religious Education]*.
- Arifin, M. (2016). *Islamic Education*. Bumi Aksara.
- Azah, A. (2024). *[Title of article on Merdeka Curriculum implementation at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Jombang]*.
- Fazar, F. (2025). *[Title of article on Android-based Islamic mobile learning application]*.
- Hamalik, O. (2015). *Curriculum and Learning*. Bumi Aksara.
- Learning, C. for C. and. (2024). *Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum*. Center for Curriculum and Learning.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (3rd ed., Ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Mulyasa, E. (2017). *Development and Implementation of the 2013 Curriculum*. Rosdakarya Youth.
- Mulyasa, E. (2021). *Implementation of the Independent Curriculum*. Rosdakarya Youth.
- OECD. (2023). *PISA 2022 Results*. OECD Publishing.
- Prima, P. (2025). *[Title of article on Islamic values integration in Pesantren Minhajul Haq Purwakarta]*.
- Rahman, F. (2000). *Islam and Modernity*. Pustaka.
- Rusman. (2018). *Learning Models: Developing Teacher Professionalism*. Rajawali Press.
- Sugiyono. (2019). *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan*. Alfabeta.
- Suyanto, & Jihad, A. (2013). *Becoming a Professional Teacher*. Erlangga.
- Tilaar, H. A. R. (2012). *Social Change and Education*. Rineka Cipta.
- Zamroni. (2017). *Education and Democracy*. Ombak.
- Zubaedi. (2015). *Character Education Design*. Kencana.
- Zuhairini. (2015). *Philosophy of Islamic Education*. Bumi Aksara.