

Curriculum Content Evaluation Study of Bachelor of Education Program Specialization in Islamic Education with Islamic Education Philosophy

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Abstract

Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA) (2011) reported that Bachelor of Education Program (PISMP) specialization in Islamic Education should have specific objectives and focus on the programs offered. The existing objectives in the Malaysian Teacher Education Institute (IPG) curriculum are general and seen less appropriate. There fore, this study aims to assess the context dimension in terms of suitability of the Bachelor of Education Program curriculum content Program specializing in Islamic Education at the Malaysian Teacher Education Institute (IPG). The assessment is on the context dimensions based on the CIPP Assessment Model (Context-Input-Process-Product). Qualitative method by interviewing three pre-service teachers and three lecturers and document analysis was used to answer the research questions. The findings show that the content of PISMP specialization in Islamic Education curriculum with Islamic Education Philosophy is appropriate, comprehensive, and balanced in terms of content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. Suggestions for improvements to make the curriculum syllabus more detailed have been proposed to make the PISMP curriculum content more enhanced and clear. The implication of the study found that the curriculum content is appropriate and could give a positive impact on pre-service teachers in preparing themselves to be an excellent new teacher and willing to take responsibility as a national education transformation agent.

Keywords: Assessment, curriculum, Bachelor of Education Program (PISMP), CIPP Assessment Model, Islamic Education Philosophy

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum is interpreted as an experience or a series of experiences designed to achieve a particular goal (Abu Bakar Nordin & Ikhsan Othman, 2008). The Cabinet Committee report reviewing the Implementation of the 1979 Education Policy states that the curriculum is an educational plan that contains all the knowledge and skills, values and norms, and is run by educational institutions divided into two, namely the academic curriculum and co-curriculum (Malaysia Education Ministry, 1980).

The developed education curriculum should be in line with the aspirations of the country's vision. The curriculum must also be aligned with international benchmarks to ensure students acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed in the 21st century onwards. In addition, the curriculum being drafted should also tap each student's intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical dimensions, as well as emphasize the application of knowledge and development of critical, creative, and innovative thinking (Malaysia Education Ministry, 2012).

Research Background

Bachelor of Education Program (PISMP) is a Degree Education Program with Honours under the supervision of the Malaysian Teacher Education Institute (IPGM). The aim of the program is to produce quality primary teachers in terms of proficiency in knowledge, skills and perform professionally in line with the National Education Philosophy (FPK) and Teacher Education Philosophy (FPG).

To ensure the implementation of the program is always achievable, a continuous and planned assessment is required. According to Stufflebeam (1971), assessment is a process of problem solving, selection of relevant information, and collection and analysis of information for the purpose of reporting a useful summary to decision makers (Azizi Hj. Yahaya, Jamaluddin Ramli, Shahrin Hashim, Azizi, Jamaluddin, & Shahrin, 2008; Stufflebeam, 1971).

One of the assessment dimensions by Stufflebeam (1971) is the context assessment. In general, context assessments assess the needs, problems, assets, and opportunities within a particular environment. According to Daniel L. Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007), needs include things that are necessary or useful to meet the purpose of the offered program. Problems are issues that need to be addressed to meet the needs of the target. Assets include expertise and services that can be used to help meet target goals. Opportunities means the financial resources needed to support efforts to achieve goals and solve problems. Whereas defensible purpose means what is to be achieved depends on the mission of the institution with the ethical and legal values (Daniel L. Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). The contextual aspect in PISMP Specialization in Islamic Education is the suitability of curriculum content towards FPK, FPG and Islamic Education Philosophy (FPI). Therefore, this study is important in assessing the defensible purpose and the goal of IPG to train pre-service teachers in the future to produce competent and cultivated teachers.

Problem Statement

Polemics by most parties (Abdul Rahman Idris, Hussein Haji Ahmad, Sufean Hussin, Simin Gharifekr, & Mohammed Sani Ibrahim, 2014), including the Malaysia Education Ministry (KPM) itself and related agencies (Malaysian Teacher Education Institute, 2012) which touched on the effectiveness of the program can be seen as a threat to the goals of the program. According to the Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA) (2011) report, PISMP should have specific objectives and focus on programs offered such as Islamic Education, Arabic, Malay, History, and so on. The existing objectives in the IPG curriculum are general

In addition, the curriculum presented does not apply the MQA-defined practice of teaching based on learning outcomes. Most major topics and sub topics in most courses are too general and concise. This requires the improvement and details of each topic in most courses.

The latest news, the Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA) report, (2016), questioned the transferability of skills through courses of study such as the PQE3013E *Tilawah* and *Tafsir Al-Quran* course, PQE3023E *Ulum Quran* and *Ulum Al-Hadith* course, and PQE3033E *Tarannum Al-Quran* course. This report illustrates the weaknesses and shortcomings in the implementation of the program curriculum. Hence, a review of the suitability of the PISMP curriculum content is seen as very important and needs to be continuously upgraded to equip new teachers with the skills needed to teach effectively (Economy Planning Unit, 2015). Hence, the suitability of the program curriculum requires latest and current assessment.

Research Objective

Generally, this study aims to evaluate the suitability of PISMP curriculum content with FPI at the Malaysian Teachers Education Institute.

Research Question

- i) How well is the suitability of the PISMP curriculum content with FPI at the Malaysian Teachers Education Institute?

Significance of Study

This study is important to assist IPG to evaluate, plan, and improve so that pre-service teachers become more prepared when they become new teachers after completing their studies and being placed in schools all over the country. The findings are also very important as the IPGM can utilize it to purify and draw up the program curriculum and professionalism training activities. Such efforts are critical to enable IPGM to continue play a role in ensuring the sustainability of KPM's efforts to continue providing a world class education system.

Scope of the Study

This study is limited to pre-service teachers of the June 2014 cohort and lecturers of the Islamic and Moral Education Department.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Curriculum Transformation of the Bachelor of Education Program (PISMP)

A well planned education system can produce good products, and it begins from the curriculum quality construction stage until the curriculum implementation stage. Hence the quality of the education system of a country depends on the quality of the curriculum built through effective planning and implementation stage (Kamaruddin Husin, 2004). The curriculum which is the core in education is dynamic, scientific, and always undergoing improvements in line with current needs and circumstances. Hence, curriculum evaluation is one of the stages in the curriculum cycle that needs to be done as a continuous improvement process, in parallel with the ever-changing times and current requirements (Ratnavadivel, 2000).

PISMP teacher education curriculum at IPG is a systematic plan to train prospective teachers and educators in theory, knowledge and experience. This training expects to mould prospective teachers and educators who are integrated and professional. Among the features of the teacher education curriculum at IPG are futuristic, dynamic, responsive, relevant, holistic, "Personhood of teacher's" concept, integrated, focusing on humanistic approaches, building human beings who can handle any educational challenge through theoretical application, have a continuation of effective teaching, clinical teaching and encouraging lifelong learning (IPG Darulaman Campus, 2010).

In the preparation of 21st century teachers, Islamic education curriculum in teacher education institutions must be able to produce an integrated teaching and learning process based on the idea of Islamic modernization. (Noor Hisham Md Nawi, 2012). Quantitative research by Kartini Abdul Mutalib, Ahamad Shahabudin Yahaya, and Ai'sah Abol (2012) has depicted the effectiveness of the curriculum at a high level (85.0%) in the implementation of the PISMP curriculum specializing in Islamic Education at one of the IPGs in Malaysia. In general, the study also shows an increase in technological integration skills in teaching and learning, communication skills, as well as increased understanding and awareness of teaching profession's accountability. A study by Khairatul Akmar Ab Latif, Ahmad Redzaudin Ghazali, and Mohd Rofian Ismail (2015) regarding the curriculum's objective influence on the mastery of Arabic language skills among students of the Arabic Bachelor's Program (PSMBA) in Malaysian Public Higher Education Institutions (IPTAs) found that higher influences exceeded the 50 per cent value indicating 90.8 per cent of the achievement of objectives positively compared to only 9.2 per cent which is negative.

Philosophy of Islamic Education and Curriculum

Philosophy of Islamic Education is one of the most important educational concepts in generating a positive paradigm shift in each individual's self. It also plays an important role in generating dynamic deductive people in all aspects of life. In pursuit of unlimited information technology and information communication, it is undeniable that human capital development and the construction of *rabbis* generation should be emphasized in tandem with concern for the rapid development of the country.

A study by Rohizan Ya, Ab. Halim Tamuri, Mohd Musnizan Jaafar, Khairul Najah Abd Rahim, and Mohd Hishamuddin Abd Hamid (2012) found that the coherence between the role of the current Islamic Education teacher and the FPI is to create students' immaturities not only to excel in academic, co-curricular, personality but also in the field of spiritual development such as morals. A study by Kamarul Azmi Jasmi, Ab. Halim Tamuri, and Mohd Izham Mohd Hamzah (2011) found four patterns of goals to be achieved by Islamic Education teachers in teaching and learning namely knowledge transfer, behavioural change, excellent students, and successful students in the world and hereafter.

Evaluation of program curriculum

According to Stufflebeam (1971), Assessment is a way of getting information and will be used in making decisions. Generally, the researcher makes the CIPP Assessment Model (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007) as the basis of the theory of the study. Based on Figure 1 the CIPP Evaluation Model below is in four dimensions of assessment namely context, input, process and product.



Figure1 : CIPP Assessment Model
Source : Stufflebeam&Shinkfield, (2007) pg.333

Figure 1 above shows a three-layer circle based on the four basic dimensions of the CIPP Assessment Model. The core values in the middle of the circle illustrate the values that constitute a basic assessment requirement for an assessor. Circle in the second layer contains elements of goals, planning, actions and outcomes that serve as an aspect of appraisal of a program that is assessed. While the squares outside of them also show dimensions of context assessment, input assessment, process evaluation, and product evaluation. The two fractions that follow indicate the reciprocal relationship between the particular focus of the assessment and the type of assessment. The goals in the program play a role in addressing context assessment questions. The planning made in a program raises the problem of the input assessment dimension. Actions in the implementation of the program lead to process evaluation. While product evaluation is the result of the implementation or effectiveness of the program that addresses the strengths, weaknesses or side effects that exist. The core values of this program are based on the roles of the four dimensions of the CIPP Assessment Model (Stufflebeam&Shinkfield, 2007).

The scope of this study is based on the CIPP Assessment Model which is only from the context dimension that is the goal aspect. Therefore the description of the model only relates to the study being made and does not involve three other dimensions namely inputs, processes and products. The context assessment focuses on the environment, where changes will occur and the environmental problems encountered. The purpose of this assessment is to determine the suitability of the environment in assisting the achievement of program goals and objectives (Azizi Hj. Yahaya, Jamaluddin Ramli, Shahrin Hashim et al., 2008). To test the effectiveness of PISMP specialization in

Islamic Education as an example, the context assessment is the suitability of PISMP curriculum content with FPI. The curriculum content was developed with the aim of meeting the aspirations of the country, the problems faced by pre-service teachers in Islamic Education specialization, the teaching proficiency of teachers and the pre-service teachers' attitude in accepting change.

Hence the assessment of the goals to be achieved as discussed earlier is reviewed through curriculum content in IPG.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed the qualitative method where data was obtained through interviews with a lecturer from the Department of Islamic and Moral Education, Teacher Education Institute of Darulaman Campus and two pre-service teachers from the Teacher Education Institute of Darulaman Campus specializing in Islamic Education. The data was then analyzed based on the theme. The researchers have used semi-structured interview protocols where the validity of the interview protocol was made through four relevant field experts from IPG and IPTA. In order to increase the reliability of data obtained, researchers have recorded the data electronically and digitally via MP3 recorder. All conversations and transcripts were verbatimally recorded, that is exactly what was spoken or written, and provided a concrete and accurate description in the field note.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Objective: The suitability of PISMP curriculum content with FPI.

Generally, the findings of the PISMP curriculum in IPG are in accordance with the requirements of FPI. The finding illustrates the curriculum content is appropriate, encompassing the need for a teacher, and is balanced between content knowledge namely the content of study and pedagogical knowledge. Interview excerpts are as follows:

"...for the suitability of the content provided to us this is particularly relevant to the Islamic Education Philosophy..." (R2)

In my opinion it is according to the philosophy of Islamic education (R3).

"...for me it justifies the reason for the curriculum provided because it already includes everything with Islamic Education Philosophy" (R1).

"...here, we are exposed to Islamic studies .. so these Islamic studies are more to the content .. even pedagogy is there .. both are well balanced..." (R2).

The curriculum content in PISMP also includes FPI which is always working to develop the personality of a citizen who has a high intellect. Among the interview findings are:

"For example in terms of producing intellectual human capital .. which is varied .. in terms of curriculum .. intellect means that he can see from subjects of study...." (R1)

"...balanced from the various aspects of physical emotional intelligence and so on..." (P3)

Understanding the extent to which the curriculum content is compatible with the educational philosophy, the respondents have stated that the curriculum that has been enacted can nurture noble,

knowledgeable, positive personalities and be able to recognize the Qur'an and al-Sunnah. Examples of such findings:

“In my opinion, it is according to the philosophy of Islamic education, there are elements that can be applied to the contents of the Qur'an. For example, knowledge based on al-quran and al-sunnah, then there is an element to cultivate noble personality”. (R3)

“...which is to produce knowledgeable people .. with Muslim personality ..positive...”(R1)

Through the findings of lecturers' respondents explaining the emphasis of the integrity aspect inherent in the philosophy of Islamic education is the continuation of the philosophy of national education. Examples of transcriptions are as below.

“..the philosophy of Islamic education emphasizes the aspect of unity as it is also aa.. it is a continuation of the philosophy of national education .. the continuity of ... integration from all aspects (P1)

When the researcher asked for an example, the lecturer respondents explained that the course or subject of the *aqidah* study, the study of *hadith*, *ulum al-quran* have been directed towards producing the desired aims in the philosophy of Islamic education. This illustrates the suitability of PISMP curriculum content in IPG. Examples of interview transcripts are as follows:

“For example, such subjects are called akidah studies, hadith studies, ulumquran as well as fiqh studies, to me it is precisely aimed at achieving or in conformity with the philosophy of Islamic education”.(P1)

However, the findings also found that there are still room for improvements in terms of some technical aspects or course content such as the finding stated ... *“only technical aspects need to be improved or the content of the course”*(P1). Respondents clarify several examples of courses such as the content of *hadith* courses that are too general like... *“because the statement in the content is too general that causes problems with both teachers and students...”* (P2).

Commenting on this issue, the respondent explained the syllabus in the course of study only placing fields such as *iman*, *ibadah*, *amarmakruf*, and *nahimunkar* without explaining the *hadiths* which is the scope of discussion in the study. Among the examples of transcriptions are ... *but in the syllabus has only the field while we know the hadith for this is a lot ... ”*.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Suitability of curriculum content with FPI

In this study, the participants of the study have the perspective that the curriculum content based on FPI was appropriate, comprehensive, and balanced between content with pedagogy. This finding is in line with the study by Alias Mat Saad, Nik Mohd. Rahimi Nik Yusoff, and Ruhizan Mohammad Yassin (2011) which states that developing a curriculum coincides with the National Education Philosophy is essential for the ultimate goal of the curriculum in line with the image of the country. The goal of Islamic education is to mold and develop human beings to become knowledgeable, faithful, righteous and virtuous Muslims towards the completion of self and responsible as the servants of Allah and pious Caliph of Allah. Therefore the findings have also been able to support the study by Zawawi Temyati, Khadijah Abdul Razak, and S. Salahudin Suyurno (2011) stating that a sound philosophy and a clear goal in the Islamic education system are the basis for the excellence of a civilization. Asmawati Suhid, Mohd Rezduan Mat Jurit, and Fathiyah Mohd Fakhruddin (2014) stated the creation of a balanced and integrated human being that excels in the world and hereafter depends heavily on the accepted education process. With that, the appropriate curriculum content is clearly

capable of driving teachers of pre-service and lecturers to master not only knowledge but also have the ideal conduct and personality.

Although the curriculum content is compatible with FPI, there are still some improvement requirements for some courses or subjects. Among the improvements to be made are the details on the syllabus contents of several courses such as *hadith* studies. The details of the history of *hadith* that become the scope of the discussion in detail will help pre-service teachers and lecturers understand the context of the discussion. A focused discussion will help to clarify towards achieving the goals in the education curriculum and philosophy. The requirement of Islamic Education Philosophy states that "Islamic education is an ongoing effort to convey the knowledge, skills and appreciation of Islam based on the Quran and al-Sunnah to shape attitudes, skills, personalities and views of being God's servants who have the responsibility to develop themselves, the environment and the country towards achieving goodness in the world and eternal prosperity in the hereafter".

In conclusion, the study found that the content of the Islamic Education PISMP curriculum implemented at IPGM throughout Malaysia is in line with the Islamic Education Philosophy. This illustrates that all the key aspects contained in the FPI conform to what is taught and contained in the program curriculum.

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