

AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRESSION OF QUR'AN AND HADITH CONTENT IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ACROSS ELEMENTARY, JUNIOR HIGH, AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL LEVELS

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ABSTRACT

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is a key component of primary and secondary schooling in Indonesia, with the Qur'an and Hadith as its foundational sources of knowledge and values. This study analyzes the vertical progression of Qur'an and Hadith content across elementary, junior high, and senior high school, examining its continuity, development, and differences. Using a qualitative document analysis design, it examines selected PAI curriculum documents and textbooks at the three levels, comparing them across six dimensions: textual mastery, comprehension, interpretation, contextualization and application, critical thinking and reflection, and interdisciplinary connections. The findings show an observable but uneven progression. Elementary content emphasizes reading, basic tajwid, memorization, and simple moral messages. Junior high shifts toward understanding meanings and messages and applying them in daily life. Senior high expands toward broader interpretation, contextualization, and issues of science, technology, the environment, justice, and social responsibility. However, progression is not consistently linear: some topics recur without proportional gains in conceptual depth, and opportunities for critical engagement and interdisciplinary connections remain uneven. The study contributes a vertical analytical mapping of Qur'an and Hadith content, showing that curriculum progression entails not only adding more complex topics but also deepening interpretation, contextual application, reflection, and cross-field connections. The findings underscore the need to strengthen continuity and gradually increase cognitive and contextual demands across PAI curriculum levels.

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INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an and Hadith occupy an important position in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) because they constitute fundamental sources for Islamic teachings, values, and ethical guidance. Within PAI in Indonesian schools, Qur'an and Hadith learning is directed not only toward textual mastery but also toward understanding religious messages and applying Islamic values in everyday life. Recent research on Qur'an and Hadith learning likewise shows that the learning process can be directed toward the internalization and application of Qur'anic and Hadith values in students' everyday lives, rather than remaining at the level of textual knowledge (Aulia & Nafiisah, 2023). The content therefore needs to be presented progressively in accordance with the learning demands of different educational levels. Previous analysis of PAI materials shows that the characteristics and depth of Qur'an and Hadith content differ across elementary, junior high, and senior high school levels, indicating the importance of examining how such content develops across educational stages (Alfiannur & Barni, 2024).

The development of the PAI curriculum in Indonesia has increasingly emphasized the development of religious knowledge, attitudes, and skills. The official *Capaian Pembelajaran* (CP) for PAI and *Budi Pekerti* describes PAI as a subject intended to provide religious knowledge while developing students' attitudes, personality, and skills in practicing Islamic teachings in everyday life. This orientation is also reflected in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, in which PAI learning is connected with character development and the formation of students' religious competencies rather than being restricted to the transmission of factual knowledge (Suja'i et al., 2023). The curriculum therefore places Qur'an and Hadith learning within a broader process of understanding and practicing Islamic teachings rather than limiting it to the mastery of religious texts (Agency for Educational Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment, 2025). Moreover, recent discussions of PAI curriculum implementation indicate that the *Capaian Pembelajaran* functions as a basis for developing learning objectives and learning sequences across educational levels, including the Qur'an and Hadith element (Afiyah et al., 2024).

Previous studies have examined different aspects of Qur'an and Hadith content within Islamic Religious Education. Khalijah and Zuliana (2024) analyzed the content of PAI in the Merdeka Curriculum and found that the curriculum contains Islamic values and teachings intended to broaden knowledge, develop skills, and strengthen students' religious character. Their study provides a general picture of the content of PAI within the Merdeka Curriculum, but it does not specifically examine the progression of Qur'an and Hadith content across educational levels.

More specifically, Alfiannur and Barni (2024) analyzed the characteristics of Qur'an and Hadith materials at the elementary, junior high, and senior high school levels using curriculum documents and PAI textbooks. Their findings indicate differences in the type, weight, and depth of materials across educational levels. At the elementary level, the materials emphasize basic Qur'an and Hadith knowledge; at the junior high level, the content becomes more detailed and begins to relate religious teachings to everyday life; while at the senior high school level, the materials involve deeper discussion and interpretation.

Nevertheless, previous research has not sufficiently explained the progression of Qur'an and Hadith content across educational levels through a common analytical framework that examines not only differences in topics but also differences in learning demands and depth. Alfiannur and Barni (2024) provide an important cross-level

description of the characteristics of Qur'an and Hadith materials, but further analysis is needed to identify how textual mastery, comprehension, interpretation, contextual application, critical reflection, and interdisciplinary connections develop across educational levels. Similarly, Khalijah and Zuliana (2024) examine the content of PAI within the Merdeka Curriculum in general rather than systematically comparing the progression of Qur'an and Hadith content from elementary to senior high school. From a broader curriculum perspective, learning progression is understood as a sequence in which students' understanding becomes increasingly sophisticated over time, while curriculum coherence requires meaningful connections among learning across different stages (Alonzo et al., 2022).

A cross-level analysis is therefore necessary to identify whether Qur'an and Hadith materials demonstrate coherent progression from basic textual mastery toward deeper understanding, interpretation, and contextual application. Such an analysis can reveal not only differences between educational levels but also patterns of repetition, gaps in development, and areas in which contextualization or critical engagement remains limited. This concern is consistent with curriculum research showing that disconnects in learning progression across educational levels can contribute to repetition of content, while progression organized around increasing levels of complexity can support continuity across grades (OECD, 2020). This approach is particularly relevant because the official curriculum establishes learning expectations across different phases, allowing the progression of Qur'an and Hadith content to be examined systematically rather than through isolated topics. The Indonesian national curriculum framework itself explicitly refers to learning progression in adjusting the scope of learning content according to students' development at each educational level (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education of the Republic of Indonesia, n.d).

Based on this research gap, this study aims to analyze the progression of Qur'an and Hadith content within Islamic Religious Education across elementary, junior high, and senior high school levels. The analysis focuses on six dimensions: textual mastery, comprehension, interpretation, contextualization and application, critical thinking and reflection, and interdisciplinary connections. Rather than assuming that content becomes progressively more complex, the study examines the extent to which such progression is actually represented in curriculum documents and textbooks. The inclusion of critical thinking and reflection is also supported by research demonstrating that contextual approaches to Qur'an and Hadith learning can connect religious content with students' real-life contexts while developing critical thinking (Nisa & Muhtadi, 2025). The study therefore contributes a cross-level analytical mapping of Qur'an and Hadith content, including patterns of progression, repetition, gaps, and uneven contextualization across educational levels.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A. Cognitive Development and Curriculum Progression

Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development explains that students' cognitive abilities develop progressively through different stages, including the concrete operational and formal operational stages (Piaget, 1972). However, these stages should not be used to classify students rigidly according to school level because cognitive development occurs gradually and may vary among individuals. Contemporary interpretations of cognitive development similarly caution against treating developmental stages as rigid boundaries, emphasizing instead the gradual and context-sensitive development of reasoning abilities through learning and experience

(Lourenco, 2016). In curriculum analysis, Piaget's theory is therefore used in this study as a developmental reference for examining whether the complexity of Qur'an and Hadith content broadly corresponds to increasing cognitive demands across educational levels, rather than as a fixed classification of students based on age or school level.

Previous studies indicate that cognitive development influences how students understand and engage with learning materials. Nurhadi and Fitriani explain that learning for adolescents should not be limited to memorization but should provide opportunities for thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving activities (Nurhadi & Fitriani, 2024). Sakhazuroh and Umroh Makhfudhoh similarly emphasize that contextual and experience-based learning can support students' comprehension by connecting learning content with their experiences (Sakhazuroh & Makhfudhoh, 2024). These findings suggest that curriculum progression should involve not merely an increase in the amount of material but also an increase in the complexity of understanding and the ways in which students engage with learning content. This perspective is consistent with research on learning progressions, which conceptualizes progression as increasingly sophisticated ways of understanding disciplinary ideas rather than simply increasing the quantity of information presented to learners (Alonzo, 2022).

B. Qur'an and Hadith Content in Islamic Religious Education

Within Islamic Religious Education (PAI), Qur'an and Hadith content has an important role in developing students' understanding of Islamic teachings and their application in everyday life. The learning of Qur'an and Hadith involves interconnected abilities, including reading texts, memorizing selected verses or Hadith, understanding their meanings, interpreting religious messages, and applying Islamic values in relevant contexts (Agency for Educational Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment, 2025). Therefore, the progression of Qur'an and Hadith content can be examined not only from the quantity of material but also from the increasing depth of understanding and application required at different educational levels. This approach is compatible with competency-oriented religious education, in which knowledge is expected to be connected with interpretation, values, and the ability to apply religious understanding within students' social and everyday contexts (Hashim & Langgulung, 2021).

In the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, Khalijah and Zuliana explain that PAI materials are oriented toward the development of students' competencies and character rather than solely the acquisition of factual knowledge (Khalijah & Zuliana, 2024). This orientation provides a basis for examining whether Qur'an and Hadith content progresses from basic textual mastery toward understanding, application, and contextual engagement. Rohmah's research also indicates that Qur'an and Hadith learning can provide opportunities for critical thinking through activities such as discussion, analysis, and reflection on learning materials (Rohmah, 2024). These findings reinforce the importance of examining the extent to which increasingly complex learning demands are reflected across school levels.

C. Analytical Dimensions of Curriculum Progression

Based on the preceding literature, curriculum progression in this study is understood as the gradual development of content complexity and learning demands across educational levels. Progression is not determined solely by the appearance of different topics but by whether students are increasingly required to move from basic recognition and textual mastery toward deeper comprehension, interpretation,

contextualization, application, and critical engagement (Duschl, Maeng, & Sezen, 2011). Such a perspective is also consistent with curriculum research that distinguishes between curriculum coverage and curriculum coherence, emphasizing that concepts should be connected and revisited with increasing depth across successive levels of learning (Sullanmaa et al., 2022). Accordingly, the analysis in this study considers six dimensions: (1) textual mastery, including reading and memorization; (2) comprehension of Qur'an and Hadith meanings; (3) interpretation and understanding of religious messages; (4) contextualization and application in everyday life; (5) opportunities for critical thinking and reflection; and (6) connections between Qur'an and Hadith teachings and contemporary or interdisciplinary issues.

These dimensions provide an analytical framework for comparing Qur'an and Hadith content across elementary, junior high, and senior high school levels. The analysis does not assume that every elementary, junior high, or senior high school student has reached a particular cognitive stage. Instead, the framework examines whether curriculum documents and textbooks present increasingly complex learning demands that are broadly consistent with students' developmental progression. This position is consistent with the view that learning progression should describe increasing sophistication in students' understanding rather than simply assign particular forms of thinking to fixed age groups (Duschl et al., 2011).

Thus, Piaget's theory functions as a supporting developmental lens, while curriculum progression and content analysis provide the main analytical framework of the study. The relationship among these concepts leads directly to the analytical procedure: Qur'an and Hadith content in curriculum documents and textbooks is identified, categorized according to the analytical dimensions, compared across elementary, junior high, and senior high school levels, and then examined for patterns of progression, continuity, repetition, gaps, and contextualization. Through this framework, the study evaluates not whether students have reached a particular cognitive stage, but whether the curriculum provides an increasingly complex and meaningful progression of Qur'an and Hadith learning across educational levels.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative document analysis design to examine the progression of Qur'an and Hadith content within Islamic Religious Education (PAI) across elementary, junior high, and senior high school levels in Indonesia. The study focused on systematically examining, categorizing, comparing, and interpreting curriculum documents and PAI textbooks rather than directly investigating classroom practices or measuring students' learning outcomes. Document analysis was used because curriculum documents and textbooks provide textual evidence of the competencies, content, learning demands, and forms of application expected at different educational levels (Bowen, 2009).

A. Data Sources and Document Selection

The primary data consisted of official curriculum documents and PAI and Budi Pekerti textbooks representing the three educational levels. The main curriculum reference was the *Capaian Pembelajaran* (CP) for PAI and Budi Pekerti, particularly the Qur'an and Hadith element, covering Phase A, Phase B, and Phase C at the elementary level, Phase D at the junior high school level, and Phase E and Phase F at the senior high school level. The curriculum documents were examined to identify the competencies and learning demands expected at each phase. PAI and Budi Pekerti textbooks were used as complementary documents to examine how these curriculum

expectations were represented through Qur'an and Hadith topics, explanations, activities, applications, and contextual connections.

The curriculum documents were selected purposively according to the following criteria: (1) they contained the official learning outcomes or curriculum provisions for PAI and Budi Pekerti; (2) they represented one of the educational phases examined in the study; (3) they were officially issued or recognized by the relevant educational authority; and (4) they contained information relevant to the Qur'an and Hadith element and the analytical framework. Textbooks were selected when they were officially published or recognized as PAI and Budi Pekerti learning resources and contained Qur'an and Hadith materials relevant to the educational level under examination. Documents that were unrelated to Qur'an and Hadith within PAI, duplicated other documents, or did not provide sufficient information for analysis were excluded.

The document corpus was recorded in a document inventory containing the document title, publication year, issuing institution or publisher, educational level, phase or grade, and document type. The curriculum documents functioned as the primary reference for identifying the expected progression of competencies, while textbooks provided additional evidence of how the content and learning demands were presented. Scholarly journal articles, academic books, research reports, and other relevant publications were used as secondary sources to support the interpretation of curriculum progression, cognitive development, contextual learning, critical thinking, and Islamic Religious Education.

B. Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis was Qur'an and Hadith learning content presented in the selected curriculum documents and textbooks. The analysis covered learning objectives, Qur'an and Hadith topics, textual materials, explanations of meanings, interpretation-related content, learning activities, applications of Islamic teachings, and connections with contemporary or interdisciplinary issues.

The analysis did not treat educational levels as rigid representations of students' cognitive stages. Piaget's theory of cognitive development was used only as a supporting developmental perspective to consider whether the increasing complexity of Qur'an and Hadith content broadly corresponds with developmental demands across educational levels. This approach recognizes that cognitive development occurs gradually and that individual learners may differ in their developmental characteristics.

C. Analytical Framework

The content was analyzed using six dimensions developed from the literature on curriculum progression, cognitive development, and Islamic Religious Education: (1) textual mastery, including reading and memorization; (2) comprehension, referring to understanding the meanings and messages of Qur'an and Hadith; (3) interpretation, referring to explaining religious messages and their significance; (4) contextualization and application, referring to connecting Qur'an and Hadith teachings with everyday life and contemporary issues; (5) critical thinking and reflection, referring to opportunities to examine, discuss, question, analyze, and reflect on religious content; and (6) interdisciplinary connections, referring to relationships between Qur'an and Hadith teachings and scientific, social, technological, environmental, or other areas of knowledge.

These dimensions served as analytical categories rather than predetermined conclusions about the progression. The researchers examined the presence, depth, and

treatment of each dimension within and across educational levels. Therefore, the recurrence of a topic at different levels was not automatically interpreted as progression. Instead, progression was determined by examining changes in the learning demands, depth of treatment, contextualization, application, critical engagement, and interdisciplinary connections.

D. Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis was conducted through qualitative content analysis following a systematic process. First, the researchers identified and selected the curriculum documents and textbooks according to the predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Second, relevant sections containing Qur'an and Hadith learning content were extracted from each document. Third, the extracted data were coded according to the six analytical dimensions. In qualitative content analysis, coding involves organizing textual material into categories that are systematically derived from either prior theoretical knowledge or the data itself, followed by an organized process of preparation, categorization, and reporting (Elo & Kyngas, 2008). Fourth, the coded data were compared across elementary, junior high, and senior high school levels to identify patterns of progression, continuity, repetition, and gaps. Fifth, the identified patterns were interpreted in relation to curriculum progression, developmental considerations, and the objectives of Qur'an and Hadith learning within PAI.

The analysis emphasized the difference between the presence of content and the depth of its treatment. For example, when the same Qur'an or Hadith theme appeared at more than one educational level, the researchers examined whether the higher level required greater comprehension, interpretation, contextual application, critical reflection, or interdisciplinary connection. This procedure allowed the analysis to distinguish repetition of content from actual progression in learning demands.

Following Schreier's (2012) qualitative content analysis approach, the researchers applied a consistent coding framework across the selected documents. The analytical records included the source document, relevant textual evidence, assigned category, comparative observations, and interpretation. The comparison was conducted across educational levels to identify both increasing complexity and areas in which progression was limited or uneven. The final interpretation was therefore based on patterns found across the document corpus rather than isolated examples.

E. Credibility of the Analysis

The credibility and consistency of the analysis were maintained by applying the same analytical categories and coding procedures to all selected documents. A document inventory and analytical record were maintained so that each interpretation could be traced to its source. Findings were also compared across curriculum documents and textbooks and examined against relevant scholarly literature. Such cross-source comparison is important for establishing the trustworthiness of qualitative content analysis because credibility depends on appropriate data selection, systematic organization of categories, and transparent reporting of the analytical process (Elo et al., 2014). Similar or recurring topics were not automatically classified as evidence of progression; their depth, learning demands, contextualization, and application were examined before concluding.

Because the study relied on documentary evidence, the findings describe the progression represented in curriculum documents and textbooks. They do not directly demonstrate students' classroom experiences, responses, learning outcomes, or actual development of critical thinking. This methodological limitation was considered when interpreting the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the selected PAI curriculum documents and textbooks shows an observable but uneven progression of Qur'an and Hadith content across elementary, junior high, and senior high school levels. The progression is mainly reflected in the increasing emphasis on textual mastery, comprehension, interpretation, application, and contextualization. However, the progression is not linear because some foundational materials recur across levels, while critical engagement and interdisciplinary connections do not consistently increase at the same rate.

At the elementary school level, Qur'an and Hadith learning mainly establishes foundational knowledge and skills. The content emphasizes reading selected surahs, basic tajwid, memorization, short Hadith, and simple moral messages. The application of these teachings is generally connected with concrete behaviors such as honesty, gratitude, respect, and helping others. Thus, textual mastery and basic moral practice function as the main foundation for subsequent learning.

At the junior high school level, the content increasingly moves toward understanding the meanings and messages of Qur'anic verses and Hadith. The materials also connect religious teachings with everyday behavior, including responsibility, tolerance, cooperation, interpersonal ethics, and environmental awareness. Nevertheless, some foundational materials, particularly tajwid and memorization, continue to appear. This repetition does not necessarily indicate a lack of progression because foundational knowledge may require reinforcement. The issue is whether repeated content is accompanied by greater conceptual depth, interpretation, reflection, and application.

At the senior high school level, Qur'an and Hadith content becomes broader and more contextual. The analyzed materials include the nature and function of the Qur'an, Hadith and its elements, as well as themes related to science, technology, environmental sustainability, justice, and social responsibility. These themes provide greater opportunities to connect Islamic teachings with contemporary issues. However, the presence of contemporary topics does not automatically indicate deeper critical analysis because some materials remain descriptive or normative. The cross-level comparison is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Vertical Progression of Qur'an and Hadith Content across Educational Levels

Analytical Dimension	Elementary School	Junior High School	Senior High School	Interpretation of Progression
Textual mastery	Reading selected surahs, basic tajwid, memorization, and short Hadith	Continued tajwid and memorization with greater textual variety	Understanding the nature, function, elements, and terminology of Qur'an and Hadith	Moves from basic textual mastery toward broader conceptual understanding
Comprehension	Identifying basic meanings and moral messages	Understanding meanings and messages and relating them to everyday behavior	Understanding functions, purposes, and broader meanings of Qur'an and Hadith	Conceptual understanding becomes broader, although depth varies
Interpretation and analysis	Limited interpretation of	Initial discussion and	Thematic and contextual	Cognitive demand

	texts and messages	interpretation, but still relatively limited	discussion related to science, technology, environment, justice, and social responsibility	increases, but analytical engagement remains uneven
Application and moral practice	Individual behaviors such as honesty, gratitude, respect, and helping others	Responsibility, tolerance, cooperation, interpersonal ethics, and environmental concern	Social responsibility, public ethics, leadership, and character	Application expands from individual behavior toward broader social responsibility
Contextualization	Connected mainly with immediate and familiar experiences	Increasingly related to adolescent and social experiences	Connected with contemporary social, environmental, scientific, and technological issues	Contextualization becomes more visible at higher levels
Critical engagement	Limited opportunities for discussion and reflection	Discussion and reflection begin to emerge but remain limited	Greater opportunities to examine contemporary issues, although some treatment remains descriptive or normative	Opportunities increase, but not proportionally across levels
Interdisciplinary connections	Basic connections with religious and moral experiences	Connections with social behavior and adolescent experiences	Connections with science, technology, environment, and social justice	Interdisciplinary potential becomes more visible but remains uneven

Source: Researcher's synthesis based on the selected PAI curriculum documents and textbooks. The categories were constructed using the six analytical dimensions established in this study. The table is an analytical synthesis by the researcher and is not a direct reproduction of a single official curriculum document.

Table 1 indicates that the clearest progression occurs in textual mastery, comprehension, application, and contextualization. Elementary learning establishes basic textual abilities and moral understanding, junior high learning increasingly connects texts with meaning and everyday practice, and senior high learning introduces broader conceptual and contextual issues. This pattern is consistent with the concept of learning progression proposed by Duschl, Maeng and Sezen (2011), which emphasizes increasing sophistication of understanding rather than simply adding new content at higher educational levels.

The findings also complement Alfiannur and Barni (2024), who identified differences in the characteristics of Qur'an and Hadith-related PAI materials across elementary, junior high, and senior high school levels. The present study extends this perspective by examining the vertical relationship among levels, particularly the changes in learning demands across six analytical dimensions. Thus, the analysis does not only

identify what content appears at each level but also examines how the treatment of that content changes across educational levels. This focus is consistent with the concept of learning progression, which emphasizes the increasingly sophisticated development of knowledge and understanding across a sequence of learning rather than viewing curriculum levels as isolated stages (Panizzon et al., 2021).

The progression in application and contextualization is also notable. At the elementary level, application is mainly related to individual moral behavior. At the junior high level, it expands toward interpersonal and social behavior. At the senior high level, it becomes connected with broader social responsibility, justice, environmental issues, science, technology, and public ethics. This indicates that the scope of application becomes broader at higher educational levels.

However, contextualization should be distinguished from critical contextual engagement. The appearance of contemporary issues in senior high school materials demonstrates a contextual orientation, but it does not necessarily mean that learners are required to examine those issues critically. Stronger contextual engagement would involve connecting religious principles with concrete problems, considering different perspectives, and developing reasoned responses. Therefore, the findings indicate an increase in contextual content, but not necessarily a proportional increase in critical engagement. Previous research on curriculum implementation similarly indicates that the explicit inclusion of higher-order thinking in curriculum documents does not automatically guarantee its development through learning activities; contextual materials, inquiry, and reflective learning are important for translating curriculum intentions into critical engagement (Hidayah & Sari, 2021).

A similar pattern appears in interdisciplinary connections. Connections between Qur'an and Hadith and other fields become more visible at the senior high school level, particularly in relation to science, technology, environment, and social justice. Nevertheless, the analyzed documents do not consistently demonstrate systematic interdisciplinary integration. The progression is therefore more evident in the potential for interdisciplinary learning than in its systematic development. Research on interdisciplinary thematic learning suggests that meaningful interdisciplinary integration can provide opportunities for the development of critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity, particularly when learning is organized around meaningful themes or real-world problems (Ye & Xu, 2023).

Another important finding is the recurrence of foundational content. Reading, tajwid, memorization, and moral themes may recur across educational levels. Such repetition should not automatically be regarded as a weakness because it can provide continuity and reinforcement. The concern arises when repeated content is presented without a corresponding increase in conceptual depth or learning demand. A theme introduced through memorization at the elementary level, for example, can demonstrate stronger progression when revisited at the junior high level through interpretation and application and at the senior high level through contextual analysis and reflection. Recent curriculum research similarly shows that revisiting concepts across educational levels supports progression when repeated content is accompanied by increasing complexity, conceptual depth, and clearer vertical articulation; repetition without such development can instead produce redundancy and shallow treatment (Dagasaan, 2022; Far & Bileluigie, 2024).

The overall pattern can therefore be characterized as progression with uneven depth. The elementary level provides a textual and moral foundation, the junior high level increasingly develops comprehension and application, and the senior high level provides

broader conceptual and contextual themes. However, critical engagement and interdisciplinary connections do not consistently develop at the same pace. The findings consequently do not support a simple assumption that Qur'an and Hadith learning automatically moves from memorization to critical analysis. Instead, different dimensions develop at different rates across educational levels.

This finding extends previous research by shifting attention from the presence and characteristics of Qur'an and Hadith materials toward their vertical curriculum progression. The analysis shows that progression should be examined not only through differences in content but also through changes in conceptual depth, application, contextualization, critical engagement, and interdisciplinary connections.

The findings also have several implications for curriculum and learning. At the elementary level, foundational reading and memorization can be maintained while being strengthened through concrete examples, stories, games, and role-play. At the junior high level, the increasing emphasis on comprehension and application can be supported through contextual discussion and reflection on issues relevant to adolescents. At the senior high level, the broader thematic orientation can be strengthened through guided inquiry, evidence-based discussion, and interdisciplinary learning. These implications are directly derived from the gaps identified in the document analysis rather than from claims about actual student learning outcomes.

Overall, the findings suggest that vertical progression should not simply involve introducing increasingly difficult topics at higher educational levels. Progression becomes more meaningful when previously introduced knowledge is revisited with greater conceptual depth, contextual relevance, opportunities for reflection, and connections with other areas of knowledge. This can maintain continuity while reducing repetition that does not produce increased learning demands and strengthen the vertical coherence of Qur'an and Hadith content within PAI.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the progression of Qur'an and Hadith content within PAI across elementary, junior high, and senior high school is observable but uneven. The progression generally moves from textual mastery and basic comprehension at the elementary level toward broader comprehension, application, interpretation, and contextualization at higher educational levels. However, the progression does not occur uniformly across all dimensions. Critical engagement and interdisciplinary connections become more visible at higher levels but do not consistently develop with the same depth as comprehension and contextualization.

The main contribution of this study lies in examining Qur'an and Hadith content as a vertical curriculum progression rather than only comparing the content available at each educational level. The analysis shows that progression cannot be determined simply by the appearance of more advanced topics. It also depends on whether previously introduced knowledge is revisited with greater conceptual depth, contextual relevance, opportunities for reflection, and broader connections. Repetition, therefore, is not necessarily problematic when it is accompanied by increased learning demands; it becomes a concern when repeated content does not demonstrate meaningful development.

The findings have implications for PAI curriculum planning. Greater attention is needed to ensure continuity between educational levels while gradually increasing the depth of interpretation, application, contextualization, critical engagement, and interdisciplinary connections. Such progression can help maintain the foundational role of

Qur'an and Hadith while providing greater opportunities for learners to relate Islamic teachings to increasingly complex social and contemporary contexts.

This study is limited to the analysis of selected PAI curriculum documents and textbooks and therefore does not provide direct evidence of students' learning experiences, classroom practices, or learning outcomes. Future research may complement document analysis with classroom observations, teacher interviews, and student perspectives to examine how the intended progression is implemented in actual PAI learning.

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