Analysis of Full Day School Policy on Islamic Religious Education Learning at SDIT Plus Usman Bin Ali Medan

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the full day school policy in Islamic Religious Education learning at SDIT Plus Usman Bin Ali Medan. This research employs a qualitative method with a descriptive study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and observations regarding the full day school policy in Islamic Religious Education learning at SDIT Plus Usman Bin Ali Medan. The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model and validated through triangulation. The results show that the full day school policy in Islamic Religious Education learning at SDIT Plus Usman Bin Ali Medan has proven to be an effective solution in shaping a *rabbani* generation that is intelligent and possesses noble character, in line with the school's vision and mission. It is expected that this research can serve as an additional reference and provide insight for other SDIT Plus schools or, more broadly, regarding the implementation of the full day school policy in Islamic Religious Education.

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Introduction

The full day school policy has become one of the government's efforts to respond to the complex challenges of education in the era of globalization (Setyawan et al., 2021; Netti & Hidayati, 2023). By extending students' learning hours at school, this policy is expected to improve the quality of education, strengthen character education, and protect the younger generation from negative external influences (Z & Akbar, 2025). However, this phenomenon has drawn considerable criticism, particularly regarding student fatigue and academic stress(Fauzi & Irawan, 2025).

Research at SD Islamic Center Samarinda revealed that students experienced exhaustion, boredom, and a lack of focus due to the excessively long duration of daily learning activities, which in turn affected their motivation (Rahmayani et al., 2020). In addition, a quantitative study at MI Al-Washliyah Cirebon found a strong correlation between the implementation of full day school and increased stress levels among fifth-grade students (r = 0.408; significant) (Nurhayati & Alfiani, 2023).

From a psychological perspective, research at SMP Islam Terpadu Tangerang showed positive impacts on students' psychological development ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$), yet it did not delve deeply into the context of religious education (Halimah et al., 2020). Meanwhile, in terms of school well-being, a comparative study between full day and regular schools in Malang found that full day students experienced lower school well-being than their regular counterparts, indicating a potential decline in psychological well-being at school during the implementation of the full day policy (Istiqomah & Rahmawati, 2020).

In practice, implementing full day school—especially within the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at SDIT—often faces a dual challenge: adjusting the extended learning duration to accommodate religious content rich in values and spiritual practices (Wulandari, 2024). SDIT Plus Usman Bin Ali Medan, as one of the Islamic educational institutions applying the full day school model, implements an Islamic Religious Education curriculum that focuses not only on cognitive aspects but also on character formation and the habituation of daily worship. Nevertheless, field realities indicate that even with increased learning intensity, the impact on students' comprehension and internalization of religious values is not necessarily proportional. This raises a critical question: is the full day school policy truly effective in enhancing the quality of Islamic Religious Education, or does it instead become an additional burden for students?

The body of literature directly related to Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in the context of full day school remains limited. However, several studies describe trends in integrated Islamic schools. Endah Wulandari et al. (2022) found in the context of SD Muhammadiyah 4 Malang that the full day school model supports character formation through various academic and religious activities, but faces obstacles such as a lack of parental support and inadequate facilities (Wulandari et al., 2018). On the other hand, research at SD Nasima Semarang revealed that this model increases learning motivation and the development of religious character, although it also raises issues of fatigue and the need for more varied teaching methods (Luthfatul Maghfiroh et al., 2024).

Although a number of studies have discussed the theme of full day school in the context of Islamic education, there is a clear gap in research that specifically analyzes how this policy affects PAI learning at the level of integrated Islamic elementary schools, particularly in the Medan area. This study seeks to fill that gap by highlighting concrete experiences at SDIT Plus Usman Bin Ali Medan. Few studies have examined in depth the implementation of the policy, its advantages and challenges, as well as its effectiveness for PAI learning at this school. Most previous research remains general or focuses only on students' character formation at a macro level, without directly linking it to the strategies and dynamics of PAI instruction within the full day school system.

Based on this description, the main focus of this research is to analyze the full day school policy in relation to Islamic Religious Education learning at SDIT Plus Usman Bin Ali Medan, with three research questions: (1) how the policy is implemented, (2) what advantages and challenges arise in its application, and (3) how effective it is and what impact it has on PAI learning. The purpose of this study is to obtain a comprehensive picture of the dynamics of implementing the full day school policy in PAI subjects, as well as to identify supporting and inhibiting factors in its execution.

This study begins with the assumption that the implementation of the full day school model at SDIT Plus Usman Bin Ali Medan has provided sufficient space and time to strengthen PAI learning both theoretically and practically. However, in practice, this policy is likely to face a number of challenges that could hinder learning effectiveness, such as student fatigue, lack of innovation in teaching, or an imbalanced curriculum load. Therefore, it is important to analyze the extent to which this policy has a tangible impact on students' understanding and internalization of Islamic values.

The urgency of this research lies not only in its contribution to the development of Islamic education scholarship but also in its practical value in providing policy recommendations and instructional strategies for SDIT and similar institutions. By considering the local context and real field conditions, the results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for policymakers in designing a full day school model that is more adaptive to the needs of PAI learning.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. In qualitative research, "descriptive" refers to portraying and explaining the events, phenomena, and social situations under investigation (Adlini et al., 2022). The research was conducted at SDIT Plus Usman bin Ali Medan. Data were collected through interviews and observations to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the full-day school program at the institution. Interviews were carried out with the school principal, Islamic education teachers, and several students, while observations focused on classroom learning and student activities throughout a full school day. The collected data were then analyzed qualitatively by reducing the data, presenting it in narrative form, and drawing conclusions from relevant findings. Data validation was ensured through triangulation, which involved cross-checking all information from the various data sources.

Results and Discussion

The findings of this study show that the full-day school policy at SDIT Plus Usman Bin Ali Medan has been implemented systematically and integrated into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) instruction. The policy analysis reveals that the adoption of the full-day school system is driven by the need for comprehensive education—covering both academic and non-academic aspects—and by the aim of strengthening religious learning. This policy serves not merely as a variation of the learning system but as a strategic effort to create an educational model that integrates general education with Islamic education throughout an entire school day. Through the full-day school policy, the institution seeks to nurture a *generasi rabbani*—a pious generation distinguished by noble character, strong Qur'anic literacy, sound knowledge of science and technology, and steadfastness in worship and dakwah (Islamic outreach).

The program embodies two core values in education: integrated activities and an integrated curriculum. These two principles set the full-day school apart from conventional education systems. Under this approach, all student activities—from classroom learning and play to acts of worship—are carried out

entirely within the school environment. This design grants full-day schools unique advantages compared to other models (Nisrina et al., 2021). For example, the flagship tahfizh (Qur'an memorization) program is conducted simultaneously across all classes from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m., followed by religious subjects such as tahsin (Qur'anic recitation improvement), doa hadith (supplications and hadith), Islamic manners and ethics, Arabic language, Qur'an reading, and Islamic Religious Education with character-building. Students' daily routines focus on strengthening religious values through activities like shalat dhuha, shalat zuhur, shalat ashar, reciting shalawat and Surah Al-Kahfi every Friday, as well as murojaah (reviewing memorized verses). Extracurricular programs such as kader dakwah (preaching cadre) and tilawah (Qur'an recitation) further support deeper religious understanding, reinforcing the goal of cultivating a generasi rabbani with noble character and strong Qur'anic grounding.

An analysis of the policy's strengths shows that the full-day school system provides more instructional time for PAI, enabling teachers not only to convey theoretical knowledge but also to guide students in directly practicing what they learn. This creates a more comprehensive and applied learning experience that shapes students' Islamic character. Consequently, religious education goes beyond theoretical understanding, engaging students' emotions, attitudes, and actions. This makes the educational process more heartfelt and easier for students to apply in their daily lives.

Indirectly, the full-day school policy also strengthens the role of schools as a place for character development, not merely as institutions for knowledge transmission. In this context, the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers becomes highly strategic, as they are at the forefront of instilling noble Islamic values through exemplary behavior, guidance, and supervision while students are in the school environment. This aligns with findings from previous research (Sari et al., 2024), which state that one of the objectives of the full-day school program is to instill Qur'anic character values and cultivate a generation of leaders with an Islamic spirit. The approach of habituation and role modeling serves as a method to instill religious character values through the full-day school program. Therefore, the full-day school system can serve as an effective solution in providing religious education that is not only theoretical but also integrated into students' daily lives as part of the process of developing Islamic character.

However, the study also identified challenges, particularly regarding the physical and psychological conditions of students due to the long duration of study from morning to afternoon. This extended learning period has the potential to cause fatigue, boredom, and even a decrease in learning motivation, especially in Islamic Religious Education classes held in the final hours of the day. Similar challenges concerning students' psychological conditions due to long study hours were also found in research by Firda Rahmayani and Bahri (2020), which noted that the main issues in full-day school systems are centered on students, including adapting to longer learning hours, feelings of fatigue and boredom reflected in students' expressions, and reduced concentration and motivation during lessons. These factors affect students' seriousness in following daily school routines.

In this situation, the role of teachers—particularly PAI teachers—is crucial. They are not only required to deliver instructional content but also to maintain students' enthusiasm and engagement throughout the day. Teachers are expected to be more creative and innovative in designing lessons so that the classroom atmosphere remains lively, enjoyable, and meaningful.

Thus, the challenge of extended study hours is not an absolute obstacle but rather an opportunity for PAI teachers. To overcome this challenge, the full-day school policy requires teachers to be creative and innovative in teaching, creating a fun and engaging learning environment through various methods such as learning through play, using songs to teach the pillars of Islam, and utilizing educational media such as videos and storytelling about historical narratives related to PAI material.

This study also found that the time management strategies in the full-day school program demonstrate careful planning to optimize Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. The school organizes a balanced schedule between worship, academics, and rest to avoid conflicts between religious and academic activities. PAI lessons are divided into several sessions with durations that are not too long, for example, two teaching hours in the morning, followed by additional sessions after general subjects are conducted. This approach has proven effective in maintaining students' concentration and interest in learning. Teachers also utilize time outside regular lessons to encourage students to engage in murojaah and other religious activities, creating harmony between religious and academic activities that supports the achievement of PAI learning objectives.

Such time management not only strengthens students' understanding of PAI material but also fosters discipline, responsibility, and good habits grounded in Islamic values. With a structured and value-based routine, students learn the importance of time, punctuality, and consistency in performing worship and pursuing knowledge. Teachers also have greater opportunities to build closeness and guide students, not only intellectually but also emotionally and spiritually. Relationships developed outside the classroom allow the character-building process to occur naturally. Therefore, time management strategies in full-day school become one of the main strengths in supporting meaningful and comprehensive religious education.

The study also indicates that the full-day school policy has a very positive and significant impact on students' religious understanding. Students have become accustomed to daily religious activities such as memorizing Qur'anic verses and murojaah, as well as performing obligatory and optional prayers. Even at home, students continue murojaah activities after returning from school or after Maghrib, demonstrating that the full-day school policy has successfully fostered sustainable religious habits. Students' understanding of PAI material shows positive results; they are able to learn various topics such as the stories of the Ansar and Muhajirin, Dhuha prayer, Tahajud prayer, Hadith prayers, ethics and morals, and tahfizh. They can also distinguish what is permissible and impermissible from an Islamic perspective, indicating that Islamic character formation has been successfully instilled through the implementation of the full-day school policy.

Based on a comprehensive analysis of the full-day school policy in PAI learning at SDIT Plus Usman Bin Ali Medan, it can be concluded that this policy has been successfully implemented and has produced significant positive impacts. PAI learning can be deeply and comprehensively integrated through various programs that shape students' Islamic character. Despite the long study duration from morning to afternoon, students continue to demonstrate enthusiasm in participating in every PAI teaching and learning activity. The success of this policy implementation is inseparable from the role of teachers who are able to create a safe and enjoyable classroom environment, enabling students to engage fully in learning. Positive responses from various stakeholders indicate that the full-day school policy at this school has successfully achieved its intended goals in shaping a rabbani generation that is intelligent and morally upright, in accordance with the school's vision and mission.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, the full-day school policy at SDIT Plus Usman Bin Ali Medan has been successfully implemented, particularly in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. This policy serves as an important strategy in implementing PAI that not only focuses on theory but also emphasizes the application of Islamic teachings in daily life. Flagship programs at SDIT Plus Usman Bin Ali Medan, such as tahfizh, Hadith prayers (do'a hadist), ethics and morals (adab akhlak), PAI, Qur'an studies, as well as religious activities like Dhuha prayer, Zuhur prayer, reading Surah Al-Kahfi and sending blessings (shalawat) on Fridays, muroja'ah of Qur'anic verses, and other activities, are designed to shape students' Islamic character, ensuring that they develop a strong commitment to Islamic teachings. The extended school hours allow teachers to develop learning experiences so that the material delivered can be thoroughly absorbed by the students. However, the full-day school policy also presents challenges, such as physical fatigue and student boredom. These challenges can be addressed through appropriate methods and approaches by teachers, ensuring that Islamic Religious Education learning remains effective and enjoyable. Therefore, teachers are required to provide the best possible instruction for students, both academically and religiously. The final results indicate that the full-day school policy is well received by parents and the school community and has proven to be an effective solution in shaping a rabbani generation that is intelligent and morally upright, in accordance with the school's vision and mission.

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