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## Critical Analysis of Attainment of Arabic Language Learning Outcomes in Competency-based Curriculum at Elementary Islamic Schools

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### Abstract

This research aims to assess students' proficiency in the 2004 competency-based curriculum for learning Arabic. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, the study thoroughly delves into the subject matter, providing a comprehensive and detailed analysis. The data analysis methodology raises concerns about the quality of teaching aids employed in Grade V of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) for Arabic language instruction. The findings of this study reveal that the case falls short of meeting the criteria for all four 2004 Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) competencies. The academic competence lacks clarity as the instructional approach primarily focuses on mastering *hiwar*, *qira'ah*, and *insya' muwajjah* (dialogue, reading, and directed writing); occupational competence does not establish a tangible connection with real-world application for students; cultural competence does not incorporate materials that promote appreciation for student diversity; and temporal competence fails to establish relevant material connections. The absence of these competencies in the curriculum renders the four language skills inconsequential to students' proficiency in studying Arabic in Grade V of MI under the 2004 PBC. Consequently, further studies are imperative to ensure the effective implementation of CBC across all educational levels, including Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Madrasah Tsanawiyah, and Madrasah Aliyah.

**Keywords:** *Education, Competency-Based Curriculum, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*

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## 1. Introduction

Education is a process that can determine the quality of society, as education can shape thinking and acquire knowledge in accordance with the priorities and interests of each individual (Huda, 2015). The curriculum assumes the ability to bridge learning to fulfill educational goals. Along with the development of the education world, various innovations and government efforts have emerged to refine the curriculum to align with the conditions of students and Indonesian culture.

The development of the curriculum in Indonesia has undergone several changes. These curriculum changes include before and after Indonesia's independence (Wahyuni, 2015). Ideally, the applied curriculum needs to be implemented for at least 10 years to assess whether it is suitable or not for implementation. However, there are situations that make the curriculum dynamic and adaptive because a good curriculum is one that is in line with the development of the times. This means it must be in line with students' abilities, whether it meets the current and future needs of students (Pawero, 2018).

Looking at the previous syllabus, the 1994 curriculum was deemed in need of improvement, leading to the idea of a competency-based curriculum in 2004. However, this curriculum change is not only influenced by the demands of the times and the development of knowledge but also by external factors such as political, economic, and cultural factors. Certainly, to ensure that this change is not just a mere change in name, it should be accompanied by changes in society that will later need to adapt to the new regulations in effect. It is also stated (Dewi, 2022) that curriculum changes are not intended as mere updates but should consider compatibility and represent the demands and expectations of the community (Fitrian, et al. 2022).

The difference between competency-based curriculum and the previous curriculum, namely the 1994 curriculum, can be seen from its approach. The 1994 curriculum utilized a content mastery approach which was deemed to have excessive content and overlapping materials, while the competency-based curriculum employed a competency approach, featuring fewer but more in-depth materials (Yantiee, 2012).

A competency-based curriculum is a set of plans and agreements related to the competencies and learning outcomes achieved by students, assessment, teaching and learning activities, and the enhancement of educational resources in school curriculum development (Purba et al., 2021). This curriculum has at least two effects: (1) the expected outcomes and effects are visible to students through meaningful learning experiences and (2) diversity that can be implemented according to needs (Widuri, 2015). A competency-based curriculum comprises four competency components that must be achieved according to Sanjaya (2015): academic competence, occupational competence, cultural competence, and temporal competence (Khaulani, et al. 2020).

The hope from analyzing the achievement of the 2004 competency-based curriculum in Arabic language learning for fifth-grade students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) is to develop the potential of students so that they can face the future by exploring the skills of each individual. The term "skill" here refers to a student's willingness and ability to face life problems without feeling overwhelmed, by seeking solutions to resolve these problems.

The focus of this study is to examine how the competency-based curriculum is implemented in a comparable educational setting of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. Based on several previous explanations, the competency-based curriculum needs to be reviewed in terms of the

competencies that must be achieved by students, especially at the level of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. This is because it should be remembered that the competency-based curriculum demands that graduates can apply the pillars of education universally, namely learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together (Fitrian, et al. 2022).

## **2. Research Method**

The research methodology employed in this study is qualitative descriptive, a method known for offering a thorough and detailed depiction of a subject (Lindgren et al., 2020) (Wijaya, 2019). This approach is chosen to delve deeply into the topic at hand, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

To gather data for this study, a variety of documents were collected and reviewed. These documents included scholarly articles and books that are directly relevant to the study of the competency-based curriculum (CBC). These sources were selected as primary sources of information due to their credibility and relevance to the research topic. By utilizing this method, the study seeks to establish an in-depth understanding of the chosen subject.

Through an extensive examination of existing literature and expert opinions, this approach aims to uncover nuanced insights and perspectives related to the competency-based curriculum. This allows the research to go beyond surface-level understanding and delve into the complexities and intricacies of the curriculum's implementation and impact. By adopting a qualitative descriptive approach, the study aims to contribute to a comprehensive comprehension of the subject matter and offer valuable insights for both scholars and practitioners in the field.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

### **3.1 Analysis of Academic Competency Achievement**

Competency-based curriculum consists of four components that students must possess: academic competence, occupational competence, cultural competence, and temporal competence. These four competencies in the competency-based curriculum will be associated with the four language skills in learning Arabic, namely listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills. Can Arabic language learning in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah fulfill these four competencies? It is important to note that there are several aspects that need to be emphasized in the desired competencies, including:

Academic competence is defined as the competence that students must achieve in terms of independently solving problems. From the narrative, it can be understood that someone within the age range of 7-12 years, especially in grade V of MI, should be able to solve problems individually. However, in the competency-based curriculum (CBC) learning for grade V in MI, it still falls within the age of learning and observation, meaning they are still in the process of self-recognition after transitioning from childhood and imitating what is presented around them. This opinion aligns with Trianingsih's statement (2016) about learning, which indicates that the thinking process of children aged 7-11 is different from that of preschool children and adults. They tend to logically observe their environment regarding concrete things and are not yet capable of analyzing abstract concepts (Khaulani, et al 2020).

Building upon the earlier point, it can be said that the term “independent” when juxtaposed with the learning age of 7-12-year-old children might only be applicable within the internal scope of each individual student. For instance, in the Arabic language learning of grade 5 MI, they read discourses about classrooms, home gardens, living rooms, school libraries, city parks, public libraries, study rooms, and the human body (Suyuti, et al., 2006). None of the content addresses how to solve problems, be it in terms of *hiwar* (conversation), *qira’ah* (reading), or *insya’ muwajjah* (writing). Students still need guidance from their surroundings, especially from educators and parents, to develop the critical thinking of students in addressing the problems around them. Moreover, it is appropriate for a subject, particularly Arabic language, not only to teach language but also to include learning about social issues, so that students mature in developing their critical thinking in problem solving.

### **3.2 Occupational Competency Achievement Analysis**

The definition of occupational competence directs towards the abilities of students in the world of work. Returning to the previous explanation that the age of 7-12 is still a process of self-recognition. During their time in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, students asked about their aspirations typically choose common occupations that they frequently see and hear. In reality, the content of Arabic language learning in grade V does not exemplify the development of students’ competencies in facing the world of work in the future. The presented material only relates to things such as the classroom, home garden, living room, school library, city park, public library, study room, and the human body. This proves that students aged 7-12, who are still in the learning phase, are not capable of preparing themselves thoroughly due to the lack of material related to this competency, which pertains to facing the working world after their school completion.

The realm of work as envisioned by students aged 7-12 is not yet capable of fully analyzing the jobs they dream of. For instance, challenges related to time, one’s mental readiness to face the working world, all of this is beyond the capacity of students aged 7-12 to envision. They still need to further develop themselves through learning in junior high school to explore their surroundings. The world of work also requires emotional maturity in a person, so for those aged 7-12 who are still grappling with their emotions, learning and getting to know their surroundings is necessary.

### **3.3 Analysis of Cultural Competency Achievement**

Cultural competence refers to how students can instill pluralistic values within society. Pluralism in education entails being open and interpreting religious and cultural diversity (Nurmalina and Andi, 2022). If connected with Arabic language learning in grade V of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, students must understand that every individual holds differences, enabling them to handle such differences in a community setting. Students should also be instilled with the value of religious diversity, aiming for them to comprehend the concept of religious diversity for the sake of creating peace.

Regarding cultural competency in Arabic language learning in grade V of MI, it is generally observed that there is a lack of material related to values of diversity and culture, as students are only taught to recognize places and objects in their surroundings, such as the classroom, home garden, living room, school library, city park, public library, study room, and the human body. This should be an evaluation point for the competency-based curriculum in grade V of MI, to

incorporate materials related to diversity. This will equip students to refrain from hastily judging people who are different from them and to respect the diversity present in Indonesia.

### 3.4 Analysis of Achievement of Temporal Competence

The analysis of the achievement of temporal competence involves assessing how well students are able to integrate the three preceding competencies into their daily lives. The term “exist” in this context can be interpreted as “learning”. This implies that students shouldn’t confine their understanding within the classroom but should be capable of applying these three competencies in various aspects of their lives, particularly within the educational and familial contexts. Moreover, the term “exist” also suggests that students should not merely passively experience life, but should actively seek to understand their place and purpose in life.

In the case of learning Arabic in a fifth-grade Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic primary school) class, it’s quite natural for students to be inquisitive and eager to explore. They are driven by curiosity, and they seek to apply the knowledge they gain during their studies as a practical guide for their ongoing existence. This signifies a deeper level of learning, where students don’t just absorb information for the sake of exams but internalize it for meaningful application in their lives.

However, the effectiveness of this curriculum depends on how well these four competencies are interwoven. If there’s a disconnect between the learning materials and the overarching competency-based curriculum (CBC), the curriculum might lose its purpose and impact. In essence, the CBC should not only introduce these competencies but also ensure they are actively practiced and integrated, enriching students’ lives beyond the classroom and assessments. Without proper implementation, the curriculum’s potential remains untapped.

## 4. Conclusion

Competency-based curriculum is a curriculum that prioritizes one’s competence to survive in the era of globalization and very tight competition and a life full of challenges. Regardless of the reviewer’s opinion about the competency-based curriculum, if it can contribute to the view that the curriculum needs in-depth study before it is implemented. So that all levels of education can implement the goals of implementing the curriculum. Curriculum changes are not always good when implementation seems rushed and there is no deeper experimentation. Finally, we always agree on the question whether the curriculum is in accordance with the times and developments in science or needs to be changed.

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