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Analysis of International Curriculum Policy A Multisite Study at Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya and Al Falah Deltasari Junior High School in Sidoarjo

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Abstract: In this era of rapidly advancing globalization, Islamic educational institutions are striving to improve their educational curriculum standards. Many of these institutions utilize an integrated curriculum. In addition to implementing the Cambridge curriculum as their primary international curriculum, these institutions also use the national curriculum and the Islamic curriculum to reinforce religious values and preserve local culture. This is the case at Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya and Al Falah Deltasari Junior High School in Sidoarjo. The research method employed a qualitative approach with a multisite design. Data collection was conducted through interviews, observations, and documentation. Data validity testing included credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The objective of this study was to examine policy analysis according to Thomas R. Dye, covering Agenda Setting, Policy Formulation, Policy Implementation, and Policy Evaluation. The results indicate that the agenda setting phase in the policy process addressed the initial issues leading to changes in the international curriculum. Policy formulation addresses the process of aligning the international curriculum with the use of an integrated curriculum. Policy implementation involves strengthening resources and socializing the international curriculum to the school community. Policy evaluation involves an initial assessment of the use of the international curriculum as well as the impact of the policy on the implementation of the international curriculum.

Keywords: Policy Analysis; Agenda Setting; Policy Formulation; Policy Implementation; Policy Evaluation.

INTRODUCTION

The education decentralization policy aims to grant autonomy to educational institutions, including in curriculum development (Siahaan, 2023). Law No. 20 of 2003, Article 38, Paragraphs (1) and (2), stipulate that the basic framework and structure of the curriculum fall under the authority of the Government, while its development is carried out contextually by educational institutions under the coordination of the local education office or the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Although the national education system still faces challenges such as frequent curriculum changes, limited teacher training, inadequate infrastructure, and low public awareness, many institutions are now adopting an integrated curriculum: an international curriculum as the primary curriculum, the national curriculum, and the Al-Islam curriculum as a distinctive feature of the foundation.

The implementation of the Cambridge Curriculum in Indonesia occupies a complex position both sociologically and in terms of regulation. The autonomy of educational institutions is recognized by Law No. 20 of 2003 and reinforced by Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 however, schools adopting foreign curricula are required to transform into Collaborative Educational Institutions (SPK) that comply with both national standards and global assessment standards (Faizah et al., 2024). The Cambridge curriculum promotes five learner profiles confident, responsible, reflective, innovative, and engaged rooted in the Western rational-empirical pedagogical tradition (Education, 2019). Its integration into the Islamic school ecosystem gives rise to an epistemological and institutional dialectic namely, the effort to balance international standardization based on scientific logic with Islamic doctrinal principles and the moral authority of the school's foundation. The integration of these three curriculum pillars is exemplified at Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya through the Akuba Curriculum and at Al Falah Deltasari Junior High School in Sidoarjo through the KAFA Curriculum.

Curriculum internationalization in developing countries is often understood as "policy borrowing and lending." (Phillips & Ochs, 2004) conceptualize this process through four phases: initial impetus, decision-making, implementation, and internalization. However, cross-national curriculum transfer does not occur in a neutral or linear manner. (Steiner & Khamsi, 2004) asserts that the adoption of international curricula is often not based solely on the technical need for quality improvement but serves as an instrument of external legitimization and a signal of prestige to build institutional bargaining power; the label of a foreign curriculum is used as a symbol of modern accountability to attract the upper-middle-class market niche. Silova (2009) adds that when global curricula are transferred into local institutional contexts,

selective recontextualization in the form of hybridization and appropriation occurs to avoid provoking cultural resistance.

Policy governance in Islamic schools in Indonesia does not rely entirely on state bureaucratic regulations but is predominantly controlled by the faith-based authority of the foundation, the hierarchy of religious leaders (kiai), or the foundation's directorate, as well as dogmatic theological doctrines. These authorities possess the legitimacy to modify, filter, or even set aside the rationality of formal state policies as well as the secular demands of the Cambridge Curriculum to uphold the moral orthodoxy of students. Consequently, the stages of agenda setting, formulation, implementation, and evaluation do not proceed linearly as in Dye's theory but transform into a hybrid arena of negotiation between compliance with state regulations, global commercial interests, and the defense of religious identity. A critical analysis that examines the limits and flexibility of Dye's model within the hybrid curriculum regime in private Islamic schools represents a fundamental theoretical gap, given that previous studies have tended to be descriptive-operational merely documenting class schedules or test score outcomes (Firdianti et al., 2025), (Pratiwi et al., 2025), (Salsabila et al., 2025). without analytically examining how Dye's policy cycle undergoes distortion and reconfiguration within a religion-based power structure.

This study employs Thomas R. Dye's (Dye, 2017) theory, which encompasses six stages of the policy analysis cycle: problem identification, agenda setting, policy formulation, policy legitimation, policy implementation, and policy evaluation. However, this study focuses only on four stages: First, agenda setting, which involves determining the issues and problems to be addressed. Second, policy formulation, which involves proposing policy formulations to institutional leaders (Nugraha et al., 2021). Third, policy implementation, which involves the operationalization and demonstration of the consequences or impacts of the policy at the practical level (Nugraha et al., 2021). Fourth policy evaluation, which involves assessing the substance, implementation, and impacts through program studies, reports on output achievements, and assessments of the policy's effects on both target and non-target groups.

The decision to adopt the Cambridge Curriculum at both schools was not made without reason. In addition to competing at the international level, both institutions have integrated the Cambridge, national, and Al-Islam curricula (Nisa' Adilah et al., 2023). The Al-Islam curriculum at SMP Islam Al Azhar 13 in Surabaya is called the Akuba Curriculum, while at SMP Al Falah Deltasari in Sidoarjo it is known as the KAFA Curriculum (As-Tsauri & Erihadiana, 2022). This unique approach ensures that students are equipped not only with a secular

education but also with a religious education as the foundation of their lives. At Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya, a policy implemented in 2022 provides a strong academic foundation: seventh-grade students use eighth-grade Cambridge textbooks, and eighth-grade students use eleventh-grade textbooks, allowing eleventh-grade students to focus on checkpoint exams during the odd semester (Pratiwi et al., 2025) and fully transition to the national curriculum during the even semester to prepare for school exams.

Islamic activities such as Amaliah Ramadan, charity programs, field trips based on local wisdom (Andini & Sirozi, 2024), and participation in traditional arts competitions serve as pillars of balance between global perspectives and local identity. Meanwhile, at Al Falah Deltasari Junior High School in Sidoarjo, the development of English proficiency for high-achieving students is directed toward Enrichment Classes (Marina et al., 2023), while students who need accelerated learning support are assisted through Remedial Classes (Radhiyani et al., 2026). Exposure to foreign languages is implemented on Wednesdays (English), Thursdays (Japanese), and Fridays (Arabic), as well as through the requirement to speak English in the teachers' lounge and the principal's office (Zainuri et al., 2026). This school also received the School Religious Culture (SRC) award from the Sidoarjo Regency Ministry of Religious Affairs through the Qur'an Memorization Learning & Certification Program, which includes daily Qur'an memorization sessions supported by recitation (tasmi'), oral examinations (munaqasyah), and memorization certification tests, as well as daily religious character-building practices (the 3S culture, congregational Dhuha prayer, review sessions, tadarus), as well as the integration of Qur'anic and Hadith values into learning combined with the Merdeka and Cambridge Curricula (Syakdiyah et al., 2025), (Salsabila et al., 2025).

Both schools are considered important research sites because they embody local cultural characteristics that teach Islamic values and a love for the homeland with a global perspective. With the Cambridge curriculum serving as the primary international-standard curriculum, integrated curriculum activities are carried out through co-curricular and extracurricular programs, various global educational competitions, and the reinforcement of religious beliefs to ensure that students' scientific understanding remains aligned with their spiritual convictions (Firdianti et al., 2025) This study is significant as a scholarly work that motivates other educational institutions to develop and adopt a global perspective, while also analytically and critically examining the dynamics of international curriculum policy and providing a theoretical contribution regarding how Dye's policy model operates, adapts, and encounters its limitations. Specifically, the study focuses on the dynamics of international curriculum policy at Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya and Al

Falah Deltasari Junior High School in Sidoarjo; Through an in-depth exploration of the agenda-setting, formulation, implementation, and evaluation phases, this study not only reveals strategies for integrated curriculum harmonization in the field but also offers a theoretical contribution regarding how Dye's policy model operates, adapts, and encounters its limitations within the context of education governance based on religious authority.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach aimed at describing the phenomena under study in terms of their meaning, processes, and interactions. (Sugiyono, 2020). The research design used was a multi-case study, which is a qualitative research strategy involving the analysis of two or more purposively selected cases. This approach allows researchers to gain a more comprehensive and comparative understanding of the phenomenon under study. (Faiqoh & Makinuddin, 2025).

The first location for this study was SMP Islam Al Azhar 13 Surabaya. The second location for this study was SMP Al Falah Deltasari Sidoarjo. The analytical approach used was descriptive deductive (Sinaga, 2022) which involves descriptive analysis in qualitative research to examine specific issues and then generate more specific findings. Data analysis was conducted through a three-stage thematic coding procedure. First open coding, which involves initial coding of interview transcripts and field notes. Second axial coding, which groups similar codes into more focused categories. Third selective coding, which synthesizes categories into core themes aligned with the stages of the policy cycle. Data saturation was considered achieved when follow-up interviews and document reviews at both locations no longer yielded new codes, variations in the data, or new conceptual insights regarding the dynamics of curriculum policy (Miles et al., 2014). This approach is grounded in informant-truth theory, which assumes that scientific statements are true if they correspond to empirically observable facts in the field.

This research design was systematically developed to thoroughly examine all stages of the research. As noted by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), a qualitative research design allows researchers to move iteratively between data collection, analysis, and interpretation to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. As illustrated in the research design diagram below:

The data sources in this study are divided into two main categories. primary data and secondary data (Sugiyono, 2025). According to (Zakariah & Afriani, 2021), Primary data sources make it easier for researchers to evaluate

the credibility and relevance of the information used in research studies. Secondary data refers to information that is not obtained directly from research subjects but rather through intermediaries such as documents, archives, literature, or audiovisual materials. Sugiyono (2018) and Burhan Bungin (2012) state that this type of data is obtained from third parties to enrich the substance of the research study.

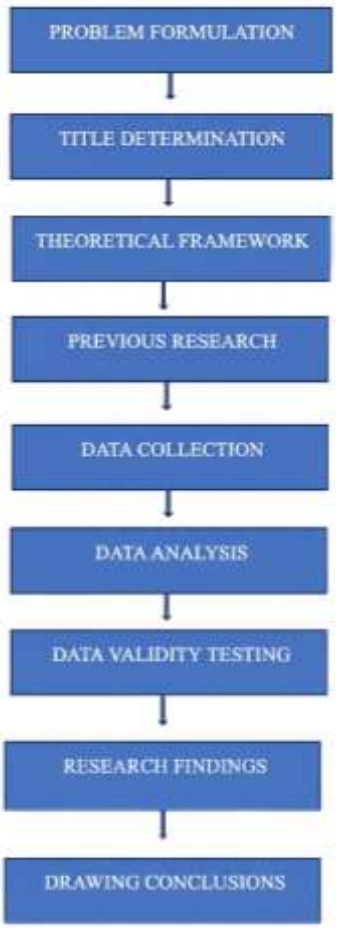


Figure 1. Research Design Flowchart

The data analysis approaches used in this study fall into two categories: single site data analysis and multisite data analysis (Nasarudin et al., 2024). First, a single-site analysis (within-case analysis) was conducted for each site namely, Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya and Al Falah Deltasari Junior High School in Sidoarjo separately and comprehensively. Second, a cross-site analysis (cross-case comparison) was performed to compare the findings

from both sites using a comparative matrix (cross-case matrix). The researchers identified patterns of convergence such as similarities in policy patterns, including the three-pillar hybrid curriculum strategy, classroom differentiation, and the use of external assessments as well as patterns of divergence, namely differences in bureaucratic governance, the relationship between the central and branch foundations, and exam mitigation strategies. This comparative synthesis integrates all cross-case propositions into a holistic model of the international curriculum policy cycle in private Islamic schools.

Analysis of a Multisite Study (Hasiara, 2018) is one of the approaches in qualitative research that aims to provide a comprehensive and in-depth description of a particular context, object, or event. This study employs a multisite research design, which allows for an in-depth empirical investigation of the phenomenon of international curriculum policy analysis at two Islamic educational institutions. Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya and Al Falah Deltasari Junior High School in Sidoarjo.

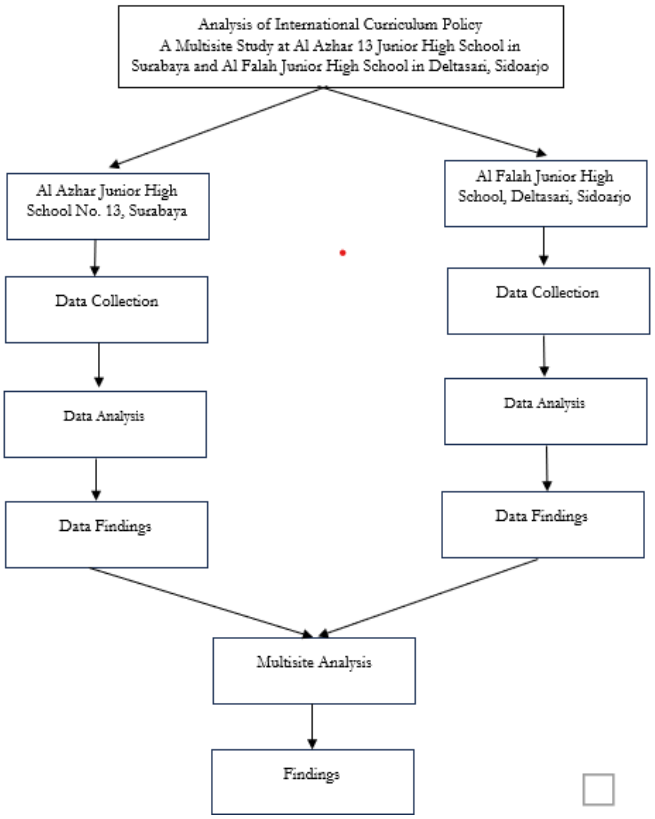


Figure 2. Multisite Analysis Comparative Model

Data collection for this study was conducted based on the model developed by Miles and Huberman. (Miles et al., 2018) Interviews, Observations, and Documentation. Interviews: The researchers conducted structured, in-depth interviews with key informants who were selected through purposive sampling. There were eight informants in total: two school principals, two curriculum coordinators, two teachers, and two students. School principals were selected because they are stakeholders involved in policy formulation. Curriculum coordinators were selected because the implementation of the Cambridge curriculum requires critical thinking skills to analyze the standard operating procedures for using the Cambridge curriculum. Teachers were selected as the primary implementers of the curriculum. Students were selected as the recipients of the policy and to measure its impact and evaluate its effectiveness. These questions are based on Dye's four policy cycles. Specifically, they address the process of agenda setting, who is involved in policy formulation, what resources are needed for policy implementation, and how to measure the impact and evaluate the policy. Interviews with informants lasted 30–60 minutes per informant.

Observation the researcher conducted nonparticipant observation, in which the researcher merely observed the implementation of the Cambridge curriculum at SMP Islam Al Azhar 13 in Surabaya and Al Falah Deltasari Junior High School in Sidoarjo. Documentation the researcher conducted a document review of the schools' official websites, articles, photographs, and documents from Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya and Al Falah Deltasari Junior High School in Sidoarjo. This study was conducted from May 2026 to September 2026.

The researchers used four criteria for testing data validity as suggested by (Miles et al., 2014) These four criteria serve as a tool to ensure the trustworthiness of all findings, which includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Research at both locations was conducted following the submission of a formal letter requesting research permission and a research proposal to the school administrators. In accordance with applicable local research regulations and institutional norms, participant consent was obtained through administrative authorization from the school administrators, accompanied by voluntary verbal informed consent before each interview session began. Prior to the interviews, all informants were provided with an explanation of the research objectives, the voluntary nature of their participation, and data privacy protections. Adult informants gave verbal consent to be interviewed and recorded. As for student participants, their participation was facilitated under the supervision of school officials (in loco parentis), with students expressing their willingness verbally without any

academic consequences. All data were stored on password-protected digital media. The researcher served as an independent external academic with no structural affiliation to either school.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Nature of Policy According to Thomas R. Dye (in Edi Suharto, 2005:44) defines public policy as any form of action whether taken or not taken by the government. If the government decides to act, that action must have a clear objective, given that public policy encompasses all government activities, not merely rhetorical statements without actual implementation (Dye, 2017). This study addresses four topics in policy analysis: agenda setting, policy formulation, policy implementation, and policy evaluation.

Agenda Setting

Problem Identification

The formulation of the agenda marked the beginning of the transformation of Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya into a "...Satuan Pendidikan Kerjasama (SPK, Cooperation Educational Unit) ..." with the Cambridge Curriculum, a process that took place intensively from late 2016 to early 2017. This policy was not a one-off event, but rather a planned response to internal momentum and the demands of external regulatory changes. There were three fundamental factors underlying this decision. First, curriculum continuity since the Al Azhar Elementary School had previously held "...Rintisan Sekolah Bertaraf Internasional (RSBI, Pioneering International Standard School)..." and had already implemented the Cambridge Curriculum, Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya needed to provide an integrated international curriculum. Second, the fulfillment of the institution's vision, namely to produce competitive graduates with a global perspective through exposure to academic standards and international activities. Third, changes in government regulations in 2014 standardized "international" schools and mandated collaboration with foreign educational institutions through the SPK scheme, thereby prompting the school to pursue official licensing until the SPK permit was issued in August 2017. This aligns with the principal's statement, namely:

"What I understood from the policy at that time was that we were continuing the RSBI program. So, since the RSBI elementary schools were already using the Cambridge Elementary curriculum, to ensure the school's continuity, the junior high school had to offer the Cambridge program we had to adopt the Cambridge curriculum." (Interview, Principal of SMP Islam Al Azhar 13 Surabaya, June 17, 2026).

The process of identifying issues in agenda setting also took place at Al Falah Deltasari Junior High School in Sidoarjo, which chose the Cambridge Curriculum as a priority agenda item to respond to external disruptions and internal needs. This was stated during an interview with the principal, who said:

"We analyzed current trends and recognized that we are now in the era of IT and globalization, so we felt it was necessary to seek a new breakthrough in our curriculum that would enable our graduates to compete on the international stage and, in the future, become highly qualified professionals specifically in IT and global perspectives, particularly in their mastery of the English language." (Interview with the Principal of Al Falah Junior High School, Deltasari, Sidoarjo, July 22, 2026).

This policy is based on four factors. First, the demands of the era of digital disruption for 21st-century graduates who are digitally literate and capable of communicating internationally. Second, intense competition among private schools in Surabaya, Sidoarjo, and the surrounding areas, which requires a level of quality on par with leading international schools. Third, the expectations of educated middle-class parents for a balanced education that integrates faith and global perspectives (Islamic character, religious practice, English, and international certifications). Four, the institutional dependence on the parent school, which means the school must be self-sufficient in obtaining authorization as an Official Center to strengthen its bargaining position. To realize an institution with a global perspective, local culture, and Islamic values, the principal highlighted the following key points:

"Al Falah Junior High School in Deltasari, Sidoarjo, actually has three curricula. First, the Merdeka curriculum; second, the Al Falah-specific curriculum which is the curriculum applied internally within the Al Falah Mosque Foundation; and third, the Cambridge International School curriculum." (Interview with the Principal of Al Falah Junior High School in Deltasari, Sidoarjo, July 22, 2026).

By utilizing an integrated curriculum, both educational institutions have complied with the regulations established by the government based on the 2003 National Education System Law and Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005.

Priority Issues

In formulating its policy agenda, the school has identified four strategic issues as priorities for integration into the learning system. First, the implementation of active learning that accommodates the characteristics of the Cambridge Curriculum (critical thinking) through a student-centered approach in inquiry-, problem-, and project-based learning models. Second, the standardization of facilities and safety measures particularly in science

laboratories which are directly verified by Cambridge through technical equipment requirements such as exhaust fans and fire extinguishers. Third, the alignment of the integrated curriculum to address overlaps between the National Curriculum and the Cambridge Curriculum through the synchronization of content and curriculum mapping without compromising the essence of either. This is in line with the statement by the curriculum coordinator, who stated:

"Cambridge has these values like active learning and so on and at our school, we have something called REAL. Religious, Entrepreneurial, Environmental, and Learning for example, active learning implemented in the classroom can take the form of inquiry-based learning or project-based learning." (Interview with the Curriculum Coordinator at Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School, Surabaya, June 17, 2026).

Fourth, the application of Islamic beliefs and values, as described by the curriculum coordinator:

"It's more about Islamic values, in my opinion, because Al Azhar schools are clearly what are called 'faith schools' schools based on religion. In Cambridge, there are no religious values; everything is truly grounded in knowledge and logic. It's called the AKUBA curriculum." (Interview with the Curriculum Coordinator at Al Azhar Islamic Junior High School 13 in Surabaya, June 17, 2026).

Priority issues at Al Falah Deltasari Junior High School in Sidoarjo have been included in the policy agenda. The top priority is the legitimacy and autonomy of the license as an Official CAIE Center, ID No. 251 (headquartered at Al Falah Darmo), which grants formal legal authority to administer Progression Tests and Checkpoint Tests and to issue international certificates independently without affiliation to a parent organization. The next priority is the substantive integration of three curriculum frameworks. the Merdeka Curriculum, KAFA, and Cambridge into a single formal legal document (KOSP), for example, through alignment with Cambridge learning outcomes, as stated by the principal:

"Cambridge has three subjects, but we don't neglect our own specific curriculum so they're integrated. "So, we incorporate both international and Islamic elements into student learning. Although we still link mathematics to Al Falah's own official curriculum by adding hadiths or verses from the Quran." (Interview with the Vice Principal for Curriculum at Al Falah Junior High School, Deltasari, Sidoarjo, September 9, 2026).

In addition, the curriculum is mapped across grade levels (Primary Lower Secondary A-Level) to minimize overlap and ensure continuity in difficulty levels and student proficiency through an initial placement test in 7th grade and academic differentiation services (Clinic Classes for English remediation or acceleration and Enrichment Classes for high-achieving

students). A balance between language culture and identity is maintained through rotating daily language regulations. English Zone (Wednesday), Javanese Day (Thursday), Arabic Day (Friday). as well as the requirement to speak English in administrative offices and the teachers' lounge. Finally, academic quality assurance and integrated evaluation are scheduled through examination scenarios outlined by the principal, as follows:

"After we complete the STS and SAS exams, we move on to the progression test. We conduct them as a single series. It usually takes about 10 days. Then there is a 1–2-day break, followed by the progression test. The progression test is conducted in just one day because it covers only one subject: English." (Interview, Principal of Al Falah Junior High School, Deltasari, Sidoarjo, July 22, 2026).

Exams are administered by educational institutions in close succession so that students do not keep procrastinating on their studies.

Policy Objectives

The curriculum policy of Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya has three strategic objectives to produce graduates with a global perspective, to measure student competitiveness through international benchmarking, and to integrate academic excellence in science with the strengthening of Islamic character and local wisdom. First, Its success is evidenced by the official Cambridge Checkpoint scores for 9th grade (Science, Mathematics, English) which serve as an external measure of students'. Second, academic competence as well as the school's success in maintaining its status and accreditation, as explained by the principal below:

"In 2017, SMP Al Azhar 13 Surabaya transitioned to an SPK school because, as far as I understand from the policy decisions made at that time, we were continuing the RSBI program since the RSBI elementary schools were already using the Cambridge Elementary curriculum and to ensure the school's continuity, the junior high school had to offer the Cambridge program." (Interview, Principal of Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School, Surabaya, June 17, 2026).

Third, the academic resilience of students, reflected in their gradual mastery of subject matter through a spiral learning approach, thereby strengthening long-term retention of understanding. Fourth, students' high productivity in producing scientific works and technological innovations, as explained by the principal in the interview:

"Regarding extracurricular activities, there's the KIR (Youth Scientific Works) program it's the only extracurricular activity at the school with over 100 participants. Some of these scientific works take the form of extended abstracts. Some take the form of products, and at our school, these are generally technology-based. For example, students have created a kind

of cane to assist the visually impaired. Others recently developed a trash bin that can automatically sort organic from non-organic waste." (Interview with the Curriculum Coordinator at Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya, June 17, 2026).

The formulation of policy objectives for the Cambridge Curriculum at Al Falah Junior High School in Deltasari, Sidoarjo, was carried out systematically and aligned with the school's Vision, Mission, and Achievement Indicators. This is in line with the principal's statement, namely:

"The KOSP (Educational Unit Operational Curriculum) serves as the fundamental foundation or core structure for the operation of a school, where the school's vision and mission, school objectives, student characteristics, teacher and educational staff characteristics, as well as the implemented curriculum are all outlined within the KOSP. Thus, the importance of the KOSP lies in its role as our foundation for implementing an educational structure at the school." (Interview with the Principal of Al Falah Junior High School, Deltasari, Sidoarjo, July 22, 2026).

First, to improve academic quality, information technology proficiency, and the global competitiveness of graduates by providing official Cambridge Checkpoint and Progression Test certifications as international qualification benchmarks (external benchmarks). Second, implementing an international curriculum while preserving Islamic spiritual and moral values by integrating the Cambridge Curriculum, the Al Falah Special Curriculum (KAFA), and the Qur'an Memorization Program into the KOSP. Third, to develop proficiency in global languages without neglecting local and national cultural roots by balancing daily language practice across three language zones. English Zone (Wednesday), Javanese Day (Thursday), and Arabic Day (Friday). Fourth, ensuring an interactive, critical-thinking, and student-centered learning process through the application of Cambridge's distinctive active learning and reflective learning methods, with regular academic supervision by the Principal. This aligns with the principal's statement:

"We implement active learning and reflective learning, and of course there is supervision for general subjects taught by non-Cambridge teachers, as well as specialized supervision for Cambridge teachers. We differentiate between them even though the format is the same, the areas of improvement differ so we ensure quality and standards by conducting both structured and unstructured supervision." (Interview with the Principal of Al Falah Junior High School, Deltasari, Sidoarjo, July 22, 2026).

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The policy objectives include. First, improving the academic quality, information technology proficiency, and global competitiveness of graduates through official Cambridge Checkpoint and Progression Test certifications as international benchmarks. Second, implementing an international curriculum that upholds Islamic spiritual and moral values through the integration of the Cambridge Curriculum, KAFA, and Qur'an memorization into the KOSP. Third, the development of global language proficiency without neglecting local and national cultural roots through three daily language zones English Zone (Wednesday), Javanese Day (Thursday), and Arabic Day (Friday) and Fourth ensuring interactive, critical, and student-centered learning through Cambridge's distinctive active learning and reflective learning approaches, with regular academic supervision by the principal. This is in line with the principal's statement:

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Table 1. Results of a Multisite Study on Agenda Setting

Sub Focus	Site 1	Site 2	Findings
Problem Identification	Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya has designated itself as a Cambridge Curriculum-based Cooperative Educational Unit	The agenda setting for the Cambridge Curriculum Policy at Al Falah Deltasari Junior High School in Sidoarjo was established as a strategy to address	A cross-site analysis of the agenda setting for the Cambridge Curriculum at Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya and Al Falah Deltasari Junior High School in Sidoarjo shows that this

	(SPK) (2016–2017) as a planned strategic step to ensure continuity of the international curriculum from the elementary school level, realize its vision of global competitiveness, and comply with evolving government regulations.	the challenges of digital disruption, competition among private schools, parents' expectations for a balance between religious faith and global perspectives, and the need for institutional autonomy.	policy is driven by the synergy between internal factors (curriculum continuity and institutional autonomy) and external factors (SPK regulations, digital disruption, and stakeholder expectations regarding a balance between religious beliefs and global perspectives). Both institutions prioritize the harmonization of the national curriculum, the Cambridge curriculum, and local/religious content (Akuba or KAFA), supported by active learning, academic differentiation, Official Center status, and a culture of daily language use. As a result, holistic educational quality and academic excellence meeting international standards can be achieved without sacrificing Islamic identity, local wisdom, or compliance with operational legal requirements.
Priority Issues	The implementation prioritizes four aspects: the application of active learning methodologies, the alignment of curriculum mapping between the national and international curricula, compliance with standards for resources and facilities, and the reinforcement of Islamic faith values through the Akuba curriculum.	Its policy priorities include obtaining Official Center status (ID Number 251), the integration of the Merdeka Curriculum, the Al Falah-specific curriculum (KAFA), and the Cambridge curriculum into the KOSP, curriculum mapping across grade levels, academic differentiation services (Clinic Classes and Enrichment), the harmonization of integrated exams, and the establishment of a rotating daily language culture (English, Javanese, and Arabic Days).	
Policy Objectives	The success of this policy is evident in the official scores on the Cambridge Checkpoint Exams, the renewal of SPK's operating	This policy has succeeded in improving academic quality and global competitiveness through official international	

	license, students' academic resilience through spiral learning, and students' productivity in producing scientific works and science-based technological innovations.	certification, while also preserving an Islamic identity that is integrated with science, preserving local wisdom, and ensuring active, student-centered learning.

Policy Formulation

Actor

In the formulation of the Cambridge Curriculum policy at Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya, there are five stakeholder groups, each with its own role. As explained in an interview by the principal:

"So back then, I wasn't anyone special I was just an ordinary teacher, not yet the curriculum coordinator. The principal and vice principal were the main stakeholders at the time. They provided approval because it had to be done on behalf of the Foundation. And by 'Foundation,' I mean the East Java branch foundation, since our school has both a Central Foundation and a branch foundation. Additionally, CAIE (Cambridge Assessment International Education) handles the curriculum." (Interview, Principal of Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School, Surabaya, June 17, 2026).

Furthermore, external parties and partners namely the government serve as providers of the legal framework for the SPK, while parents act as partners supporting learning and as an interactive audience in the Student-Led Conference (SLC) forum.

This also occurs in the implementation of the Cambridge Curriculum policy at Al Falah Junior High School in Deltasari, Sidoarjo, where there are six actors, each with their own roles. As explained in an interview with the vice principal for curriculum:

"The director of the Al Falah Mosque or the director of the educational institution, along with their staff. Then, together with the principals of each educational level. The principals gather the subject teachers. Next, the school committee serves as a bridge between the school and parents. We have a central school committee and school committees at each educational level. Then there is the public relations team, which assesses current community conditions and future trends for the next 10 to 20 years. This ensures that policies are based on research findings." (Interview with the Deputy Curriculum Coordinator of Al Falah Junior High School in Deltasari, Sidoarjo, September 9, 2026).

Finally, the School Committee and parents although not directly involved in formal decision-making forums at the directorate level convey their aspirations through the School Committee, regular coordination meetings held on Thursdays, and periodic report card meetings, all of which serve as fundamental considerations in setting the priorities for the school's agenda.

Process

The formulation of the Cambridge Curriculum policy at Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya was carried out through a four-stage systematic process: initial identification and testing (2018) and legal validation. As described by the curriculum coordinator:

"At that time, the situation was indeed dynamic in the early stages; for the three national subjects and math, science, and English there was no full Cambridge curriculum. We adopted the full Cambridge curriculum later on. However, after evaluation, we found that the national curriculum was indeed necessary. Consequently, the current approach combines the national curriculum with the international curriculum." (Interview, Curriculum Coordinator, Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School, Surabaya, June 17, 2026).

Third, a curriculum review and mapping meeting was held at the start of the school year to develop the curriculum (curriculum mapping). This was also mentioned in the interview with the curriculum coordinator, as follows:

"The international curriculum is also in place. There are about four sessions per semester. The difference between the annual program (prota) and the semester program (prosem) is that the prota is the annual program it outlines all the material covered in a year. As for the prosem, it breaks down the material by timeline. Then, when it comes time for assessment which at our school is called ASTS we use this opportunity to evaluate whether students have met the timeline. Similarly, ASAS is conducted four times per semester to evaluate the achievement of classroom learning targets and formulate remedial measures." (Interview with the Curriculum Coordinator at Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School, Surabaya, June 17, 2026).

In the process, the school faced a major challenge: curriculum alignment due to fundamental differences in content structure, pedagogical approaches, and assessment systems between the National Curriculum and the Cambridge Curriculum, as well as external regulatory dynamics in the form of changes to the Cambridge Checkpoint Exam regulations in 2022. This was conveyed during an interview with the curriculum coordinator, namely:

"There have been changes from Cambridge. In the past, for science—for example, a topic like photosynthesis it was only taught in 9th grade. It wasn't covered in 7th or 8th grade. Now, it's taught in all three grades: 7th, 8th, and 9th. Due to changes in the Cambridge curriculum structure, the school has intervened in the learning process by involving teachers to

review the material. (Interview with the Curriculum Coordinator at Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya, June 17, 2026).

A similar process was undertaken by Al Falah Deltasari Junior High School in Sidoarjo, proceeding procedurally through structured stages involving interaction between the Foundation or Directorate and the school's operational staff. These stages included a needs assessment to map the impact of technological disruption, global language requirements, and competitive pressures among private schools in the Surabaya - Sidoarjo, the gathering of feedback and market exploration by the Public Relations Team and school leadership through regular meetings, report card distribution, and school committee dialogues which confirmed high market demand for an education that combines international accreditation with Islamic values. Finally, the development of a curriculum mapping framework was presented by the vice principal for curriculum, as follows:

"The educational institution's directorate maps the assessment program. This mapping for example, checkpoints is then passed down to the school principal." (Interview, Vice Principal for Curriculum at Al Falah Junior High School, Deltasari, Sidoarjo, September 9, 2026).

The narrative from the interview with the Deputy Head of Curriculum was reinforced by remarks from the principal, as follows:

"The KOSP is valid for one academic year. If changes or adjustments are deemed necessary, the KOSP can be revised, amended, and then approved by the Department of Education." (Interview with the Principal of Al Falah Junior High School, Deltasari, Sidoarjo, July 22, 2026).

This is followed by a routine Thursday coordination meeting involving the principal, vice principal, and management team to evaluate daily issues and learning challenges, as well as a Post-Test Evaluation Meeting involving the principal, the Cambridge Program Coordinator (PIC), teachers, and homeroom teachers to analyze the Checkpoint test items in order to identify learning gaps.

Content

The formulation of the Cambridge curriculum policy at Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya resulted in four strategic decisions, as outlined in an interview with the curriculum coordinator, namely:

"The three Cambridge subjects (Mathematics, Science, and English) total 4 JP. However, this 4 JP allocation is specifically for Mathematics and Science, with 2 JP allocated to the national curriculum and the remaining 2 JP to the Cambridge curriculum. For English, all 4 JP are dedicated to the international curriculum. Currently, starting in 2022, 7th

graders are given Cambridge textbooks intended for 8th grade, while 8th graders use those intended for 9th grade. Ninth graders don't need them, since there have also been changes in the Cambridge curriculum regarding the checkpoint. Cambridge is only for 9th grade, so Saturdays are specifically dedicated to the 9th-grade Cambridge curriculum. Classes start at 8:00 a.m. and end at 12:00 p.m., since the goal for the first semester is the Cambridge checkpoint. (Interview with the Curriculum Coordinator at SMP Islam Al Azhar 13 Surabaya, June 17, 2026)".

Finally, all policies are formalized into official documents such as the School's Vision and Mission, SPK Licensing, Prota, Prosem, and the Macro-Curriculum Evaluation Report, to ensure legal certainty and institutional accountability.

Similarly, the content of the Cambridge Curriculum policy at Al Falah Deltasari Junior High School in Sidoarjo encompasses formal documentation, operational strategies, core values, and quality assurance instruments. The core substance is the integration of the three pillars of the curriculum namely, the Cambridge Curriculum implemented alongside the National Curriculum and the Foundation's Local Content which are hierarchically outlined in the KOSP and translated into teaching modules by teachers, with Cambridge science, mathematics, and English lessons linked to relevant verses from the Qur'an or hadiths. The operational regulations were explained in an interview by the vice principal for curriculum, as follows:

"English classes are held in the morning. Then there are enrichment classes and remedial classes. In the afternoon, students attend remedial classes. The enrichment classes are for high-achieving students whose abilities are strong and whose grades are above average." (Interview, Deputy Curriculum Coordinator, Al Falah Junior High School, Deltasari, Sidoarjo, September 9, 2026).

Finally, there is the implementation of language-focused activities through "English Zone" (Wednesdays), "Javanese Day" (Thursdays), and "Arabic Day" (Fridays), as well as assessment evaluations in the form of Progression Tests for grades 7–8, Checkpoint Tests for grade 9, and an intensive program for grade 9 featuring monthly practice drills, structured mock exams, and diagnostic assessments.

Table 2. Results of a Multisite Study on Policy Formulation

Sub Focus	Site 1	Site 2	Findings
Actor	The formulation of the Cambridge Curriculum policy at Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in	The formulation of the Cambridge Curriculum policy at Al Falah Deltasari Junior High School	A cross-site analysis of the policy formulation process for the Cambridge Curriculum at Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School

	Surabaya involves a multi-stakeholder collaboration among school administrators, teachers, YPI Al Azhar, CAIE, the government, and parents, with roles ranging from quality assurance and strengthening religious principles to verifying facilities.	in Sidoarjo involves structured collaboration among various stakeholders. It begins with the LPF Directorate serving as the strategic guide, the Principal as the operational coordinator and quality assurance officer, the Public Relations Office as the entity that identifies market demands, and the Curriculum Team, teachers, and parents/School Committee.	in Surabaya and Al Falah Deltasari Junior High School in Sidoarjo shows that policy development was carried out through structured and integrated multi-stakeholder collaboration, combining the strategic authority of the foundation/directorate, the school's operational leadership, teacher professionalism, and input from parents, the government, and Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE). The formulation process is gradual and adaptive, ranging from market needs analysis and legal licensing requirements to curriculum mapping that integrates three pillars—the national curriculum, the Cambridge curriculum, and distinctive Islamic content based on the Qur'an and Islamic beliefs—while addressing technical challenges such as scheduling conflicts and evaluation adjustments through periodic reviews. This formulation resulted in concrete and accountable policy decisions regarding content, such as the allocation of class hours, placement tests, enrichment classes/clinics, daily language immersion programs (English, Javanese, Arabic Day), and formal licensing (Official Center), to ensure a balance between global academic competencies and the continuous development of
Process	The process has proceeded in stages, from curriculum enrichment (2017) and SPK licensing (2018) to periodic mapping and evaluation, despite challenges such as curriculum alignment, changes in Checkpoint regulations, conflicts with the national schedule, and the burden of manual grading on teachers.	The process involves needs analysis, market research, curriculum mapping, KOSP approval, and periodic evaluations (Thursday meetings and post-exam sessions). The result is the integration of the three pillars of the National, Cambridge, and Al Falah (KAFA) curricula, which combine three Cambridge subjects with verses from the Qur'an. This policy is supported by operational regulations such as placement tests, Clinic/Enrichment Classes, language culture zones (English, Javanese,	

		Arabic Day), as well as Progression and Checkpoint Test evaluations.	students' spiritual character.
Content	As a result of the policy formulation, strategic decisions were made regarding the allocation of class hours (full Cambridge curriculum for English), the accelerated use of textbooks, extra classes on Saturdays to simulate past exam papers, and the formalization of all policies into official institutional documents to ensure accountability in the implementation of the SPK.	Its success is marked by its independent license (Official Center ID 251), a balance of global competencies grounded in spiritual character, and the sustained achievement of academic indicators and the development of students' communication skills.	

Policy Implementation

Socialization

Outreach regarding the Cambridge Curriculum policy at Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya has been conducted since the school's status was changed to SPK through primary communication channels. This was mentioned during an interview with the principal, who stated:

"Dissemination at the very beginning is indeed a routine activity we carry out. First, there's the beginning-of-the-year parent meeting, and we also regularly hold parenting webinars like that. For the initial dissemination, we used the parent handbook as a guide for parents regarding the exams required under the Cambridge curriculum. Initially, we conducted outreach during parent meetings for all parents. It began with a meeting with the school committee, followed by a meeting with all parents. Since the adaptation process started at the lowest grade level 7th grade we focused our outreach on the parents of 7th-grade students." (Interview, Principal of Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School, Surabaya, September 2, 2026).

A similar process occurred during the rollout of the Cambridge Curriculum policy at Al Falah Junior High School in Deltasari, Sidoarjo. As explained by the curriculum coordinator:

"First, the administration of the Al Falah educational institution requested permission from the Foundation. Once approved by the Foundation, we immediately submitted an application for an ID Center. In the first year, we were still affiliated with another educational institution. Then, in the second year, we had our own ID Center. For the dissemination process, the principal first summoned the teaching staff to solidify the program and so on. Only then did the principal disseminate the information to the entire school community. The principal then disseminated information to the school community using materials such as flyers and the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between LPF and Cambridge International." (Interview with the Vice Principal for Curriculum at Al Falah Junior High School in Deltasari, Sidoarjo, September 9, 2026).

Although the program was temporarily suspended and reverted to regular classes, the reactivation of the Cambridge Curriculum in the 2023–2024 school year was viewed as something familiar and not unfamiliar to the school community.

Resources

The successful implementation of the policy at Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya was supported by the availability of resources covering two main aspects. As explained in an interview with the principal:

"Every year, there is a visit from Cambridge. Cambridge focuses heavily on one specific area for example, the science laboratory. They check whether the lab meets Cambridge's requirements, such as ensuring electrical outlets are protected from water exposure. Then there's the presence of fire extinguishers. Also, facilities for handwashing and eye-washing. In addition to the science lab, another prerequisite that is always checked is the availability of a storage room for Cambridge exam materials. "Furthermore, the Administrative Office, as a governance resource, collaborates with the finance department to assist in the process of calculating and budgeting funds." (Interview, Principal of Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School, Surabaya, September 2, 2026).

This is complemented by the full commitment of the leadership team, who serve as strategic guides and decision-makers at the executive level.

Similarly, the resources supporting the Cambridge Curriculum policy at Al Falah Junior High School in Deltasari, Sidoarjo, include facilities and infrastructure as well as human resource capacity building. This was explained in an interview with the vice principal for curriculum, who stated:

"The facilities and infrastructure have been adequate from the start; in terms of facilities and infrastructure, they are sufficient. The process involves the school submitting requests to the Darmo Foundation. This was long before the Cambridge program. However, the focus of preparation must be on human resource capabilities, particularly regarding the

training of educators and educational support staff." (Interview with the Deputy Head of Curriculum at Al Falah Deltasari Junior High School in Sidoarjo, September 9, 2026).

Regarding human resources and capacity building, the primary focus is on enhancing educators' pedagogical competencies and language proficiency, as explained in the interview with the Deputy Head of Curriculum:

"Students' abilities vary compared to when they were in elementary school. Some of our students are not Cambridge graduates, and many come from diverse educational backgrounds. That is what sometimes hinders learning. So the solution is for teachers to use a bilingual approach. Therefore, we implement a different approach at each grade level. In 7th grade, we administer a placement test to assess basic English language proficiency. Based on the results of that placement test, for students who require instruction in English for their coursework, we implement a hybrid or bilingual approach." (Interview with the Principal of Al Falah Junior High School in Deltasari, Sidoarjo, July 22, 2026).

The implementation of bilingual instruction by educators helps expand students' vocabulary and language skills.

Disposition

The success of policy implementation at Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya is determined, from an organizational perspective, by two factors. First, collective awareness—that is, the strong commitment and sensitivity of the entire school community toward the institution's status as an internationally accredited Cooperative Educational Unit (SPK), which is reflected in their professional attitudes and shared responsibility for achieving academic excellence. This narrative was reaffirmed in an interview with the principal, who stated:

"Another driving factor is that we are already an SPK school. This serves as a motivator: as an SPK, we must fully uphold good governance in a proper and effective manner. Other driving factors include support from parents, support from the system, and support from the Foundation, since the Foundation also permitted our school to transform from a national school into an SPK school." (Interview, Principal of Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School, Surabaya, September 2, 2026).

Second, the coordination structure, which consists of top-down coordination under the Al Azhar Central Islamic Boarding School Foundation through its East Java representative office, with two main units: the Department of Educational Development and the ID Center, which serve as policy guides at the Foundation level. Third, internal coordination led by the Principal together with the Cambridge Curriculum Coordinator to formulate operational guidelines before they are technically delegated to subject teachers as the implementers of the curriculum in the classroom.

Similarly, the disposition or commitment of policy implementers at Al Falah Junior High School in Deltasari, Sidoarjo, demonstrates a very high level of adherence and sensitivity toward the institution's identity as an international-standard school. The entire academic community from leadership to teachers and staff demonstrates a supportive commitment to policy implementation, with the full awareness that they are part of an institution implementing the Cambridge Curriculum. This commitment is manifested not only through administrative compliance but also through active participation in building an English-language culture and ecosystem within the school environment. As explained by the vice principal for curriculum, as follows:

"As a sign of the school community's enthusiasm, several proposed activities demonstrate their commitment. For example, Student Council (OSIS) activities will always incorporate English. Furthermore, if students wish to participate in competitions, they are encouraged to use English. Teachers must also conduct classes entirely in English, particularly the three teachers of those specific subjects. Additionally, the school is reviving "English Day." Thus, when entering the principal's office, students are required to speak English. (Interview with the Deputy Head of Curriculum at Al Falah Junior High School, Deltasari, Sidoarjo, September 9, 2026).

Collaborating with the Student Council is the most immediate action an educational institution can take to expand language programs within the school environment.

Table 3. Results of a Multisite Study on Policy Implementation

Sub Focus	Site 1	Site 2	Findings
Socialization	The implementation of the Cambridge curriculum at Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya is supported by outreach efforts such as parent meetings, parenting webinars, a Parent Handbook, and close coordination with the School Committee and parents of 7th-grade students.	The implementation of the Cambridge Curriculum at Al Falah Junior High School in Deltasari, Sidoarjo, was carried out in a structured and phased manner, ranging from capacity-building for internal teachers and coordination meetings involving the entire school community to the distribution of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) flyer. This process went smoothly thanks	A cross-site analysis of the implementation of the Cambridge Curriculum policy at SMP Islam Al Azhar 13 in Surabaya and SMP Al Falah Deltasari in Sidoarjo shows that policy implementation relies on a tiered, multi-channel outreach strategy, including parent forums (parent meetings, parenting webinars, parent handbooks) and internal meetings to build the school community's capacity, which are

		to the school's track record during its RSBI era.	reinforced by institutional trust and the institution's historical track record. Resource availability at both sites was met in a measured manner through the provision of standardized facilities and infrastructure verified periodically in accordance with official Cambridge SOPs (such as science laboratories meeting high safety standards) financial governance accountability, and ongoing pedagogical and language training for teachers to address the heterogeneity of student abilities. Thus, the success of implementation is supported by a solid organizational structure namely, a hierarchical chain of command from the foundation/directorate harmoniously integrated with the cultivation of school culture through the "English Zone" initiative and the use of an international language in academic activities, student organizations (OSIS/Remas), and daily interactions among the academic community.
Resources	Its success is supported by the readiness of its human resources, accountability in financial and administrative management, the commitment of senior leadership, and the provision of facilities and infrastructure that meet high safety standards in the science laboratories, which are periodically verified through Cambridge Visits.	Its implementation is supported by facilities and infrastructure that meet Cambridge SOP standards under the supervision of the Darmo LPF Directorate, the enhancement of teachers' pedagogical and language competencies through regular training, and specialized guidance to address the heterogeneity of the student body.	
Disposition	The school's organizational structure is also firmly established through the collective awareness of the school community regarding its SPK status, which is aligned with well-structured top-down coordination from YPI Al Azhar Central/East Java (Department of Educational Development and ID Center) as well as internal coordination among the principal, the Cambridge coordinator, and subject teachers.	The dedication and commitment of the academic community are also strong, as reflected in their high awareness of the school's identity as an international institution and their active participation in building a language ecosystem through the English Zone, the practice of communicating in English in administrative offices and teachers' lounges, and the integration of English into literacy activities, the Student Council (OSIS), and Remas.	

Evaluation Policy

Policy Impact

The impact of the Cambridge Curriculum at Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya is evident in three aspects. First, students' academic performance and character, as evidenced by the development of a culture of critical thinking thanks to a learning approach that emphasizes analysis and reasoning; high participation with more than 100 students in the Youth Scientific Research Program (KIR), resulting in innovative appropriate-technology outputs; and improvements in students' English proficiency. The second and third aspects are outlined in an interview with the principal, as follows:

"After each activity, there is a reflection session. Learning reflection is similar to the Student-Led Conference (SLC). Students present in front of their parents, reviewing their report cards. Students account for or describe their learning process to their parents. During the Student-Led Conference, students reflect on their learning process over the course of one minute or one semester, discussing their best achievements and the areas they believe need further development. We fully implemented the Cambridge curriculum as SPK at that time, one graduating class achieved the highest results for the first time. So, typically, we only had around 40 -50 students. That year, we had 63 students. Then, in the following year and for the next three years there were 58 students. But, thank God, the trend has been steadily increasing year after year." (Interview, Principal of Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School, Surabaya, September 2, 2026).

The impact of the Cambridge Curriculum policy was also felt at Al Falah Junior High School in Deltasari, Sidoarjo, encompassing changes experienced by the school, students, and the community, which are grouped into four main dimensions. First, the impact on students' competencies and character, most notably reflected in improved English language proficiency particularly in writing and speaking as well as growing self-confidence in communication. The vice principal for curriculum described this as follows:

"In terms of student quality, they have experienced positive changes in their English. For example, their ability to write or speak in English has improved, and they are more confident. Alhamdulillah, parents and guardians support the entire Cambridge program. There has been an increase in the number of students from 60, to 70, to 100, and now from 100 to 150. There are many factors contributing to this; it could be due to the Cambridge program, as many people have been asking about the ICP. It could also be due to SPMB enrollment. (Interview with the Vice Principal for Curriculum at Al Falah Junior High School, Deltasari, Sidoarjo, September 9, 2026).

Second, the long-term impact on graduates is still being observed, as the program has only recently been reintroduced, and the school has just graduated its first cohort under the full Cambridge Curriculum and Checkpoint exams. Success is not measured solely by the number of graduates who continue their studies abroad, given that the educational goals of each student and their parents vary.

Evaluation

The evaluation of the Cambridge Curriculum policy at Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya is conducted through four complementary stages: external quality assurance through the assessment of scores on the 9th-grade Cambridge Checkpoint Exam and the 8th-grade CEQ Exam, as well as facility safety supervision through the Cambridge Visit (SRV). Next is the macro-curriculum evaluation, which analyzes Checkpoint Exam data as a strategic foundation for improving teaching methods and mapping out the curriculum for the next cohort. This is followed by periodic classroom instruction evaluations held four times per semester to review the achievement of Prota and Prosem targets while designing remedial programs aligned with ASTS and ASAS. Additionally, there are follow-up digital and reflective evaluations utilizing CBT or LMS for rapid analysis of test items, supplemented by student-led reflection forums through Student-Led Conferences (SLC). Evaluation results, including feedback from alumni who have gone on to boarding schools or studied abroad, are used to drive continuous improvement in four key areas. This narrative was reaffirmed in an interview with the school principal, as follows:

"Many alumni continue their education at boarding schools (international schools). They provided input and feedback that exposure to the national curriculum also needs to be increased, so this has become a consideration for us in managing the Cambridge and national curricula at the school. (Interview, Principal of SMP Islam Al Azhar 13 Surabaya, September 2, 2026)."

Based on these evaluation results, the school conducted a self-evaluation as follows. First, continuous curriculum adjustments (curriculum mapping) to maintain a balance between the Cambridge and national curricula. Second, the implementation of a hybrid assessment system that combines rapid analysis based on CBT/LMS with paper-based exams to develop students' written analytical skills. Third, the development of enrichment and remedial programs that are more targeted and responsive to students' individual needs. Fourth, the maintenance and improvement of school facilities and infrastructure standards to ensure the sustainability of SPK status and the quality of international-standard education.

This approach was also evident in the evaluation of the Cambridge Curriculum policy at Al Falah Deltasari Junior High School in Sidoarjo, which examined the mechanisms, indicators, and utilization of evaluation results to formulate follow-up actions for learning policies. This was detailed in an interview with the vice principal for curriculum, as follows:

"The assessment indicators used include students' exam scores, their daily performance, and Cambridge program exams such as progression tests and checkpoints. During report card distribution, students initially gave presentations to their parents in Indonesian, but now they do so in English. Practice begins with the student assembly at the start of the month. Students write texts on predetermined themes and then create their own narratives for those texts. At the end of the month, they practice speaking about these texts in front of their teachers and fellow students." (Interview with the Deputy Head of Curriculum at Al Falah Junior High School, Deltasari, Sidoarjo, September 9, 2026).

The evaluation mechanisms and instruments include a Progression Test administered once a year for students in grades 7, 8, and 9 to measure periodic learning progress. This was explained in an interview with the Deputy Head of Curriculum as follows:

"Since the goal is a checkpoint, this year I designed the program so that students in grades 7 and 8 are already introduced to checkpoint questions. All students in grades 7, 8, and 9 take a diagnostic assessment for the checkpoint starting in 7th grade, which is then analyzed. After that, students in grades 7 and 8 are introduced to the question formats. This way, students become familiar with the checkpoint question models. During learning activities related to these questions as well as listening and writing exercises the goal is to shape students' mindset regarding English, especially for those without a Cambridge background. Then, in October, 9th graders began taking the Checkpoint exams. So, starting in July, students have been practicing these question types during their English lessons. Additionally, specifically for 9th graders, there are practice exams held once a month to prepare for the Checkpoint exams. To further support the Cambridge program, the school organizes activities in collaboration with the "Remas" Student Council." (Interview with the Vice Principal for Curriculum at Al Falah Junior High School, Deltasari, Sidoarjo, September 9, 2026).

The evaluation results are systematically followed up through a Post-Exam Evaluation Team Coordination Meeting involving the Principal, the Vice Principal for the Cambridge Curriculum, subject teachers, and homeroom teachers; these findings then serve as the basis for designing follow-up strategies for the following year.

Table 4. Results of a Multisite Study on Policy Evaluation

Sub Focus	Site 1	Site 2	Findings
Policy	The evaluation of the	An evaluation of the	A cross-school analysis

Impact	Cambridge Curriculum at Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya has had a positive impact academically, institutionally, and in terms of public trust, as evidenced by the growth of a culture of critical thinking, high student participation in the Youth Scientific Research (KIR) extracurricular program, improved English proficiency, an increase in the number of new student enrollments (reaching 63 students in the initial stage of the Student Selection Process), and the strengthening of the school's image as a Faith-Based Global School through the Student-Led Conference (SLC).	Cambridge Curriculum at Al Falah Junior High School in Deltasari, Sidoarjo, showed positive impacts on students' English proficiency (particularly in writing, speaking, and self-confidence), increased parental trust, and a rise in the number of new students to 150, although graduation rates for the first graduating class are still being monitored. To ensure quality, the school implements structured evaluations through Progression Tests, Checkpoint Tests, diagnostic assessments, and item analysis to measure academic achievement and language proficiency.	of the evaluation of the Cambridge Curriculum policy at Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya and Al Falah Deltasari Junior High School in Sidoarjo shows that the implementation of the policy has had significant multidimensional impacts, including the strengthening of critical thinking, improved English language skills (speaking, writing, and self-confidence), student leadership through Student-Led Conferences (SLCs), and a surge in public trust reflected in the increase in new student enrollment figures (PPDB). This success was supported by a structured, multi-layered evaluation mechanism that combines internal quality assurance (periodic classroom evaluation, diagnostic assessments, LMS/CBT, and post-exam meetings) with external quality assurance (Progression/Checkpoint Tests, Cambridge Visits, and CEQ) as both diagnostic and formative tools. Evaluation findings are then systematically addressed based on the principle of continuous quality improvement through refinements to curriculum mapping, the provision of academic
Evaluation	To maintain quality, the school implements a multi-tiered evaluation system: external quality assurance (Checkpoint, CEQ, Cambridge Visit), macro-curriculum evaluation, periodic teaching and learning reviews four times per semester, and digital evaluations based on LMS/CBT and SLC. Evaluation results and alumni	The findings of the evaluation were systematically addressed during the Post-Exam Coordination Meeting to develop academic differentiation programs (Enrichment Classes and Clinic Classes), introduce test formats starting in 7th and 8th grades, provide intensive test preparation for 9th graders, and strengthen the	

	feedback are used for continuous improvement, including adjustments to curriculum mapping, the implementation of hybrid assessments (CBT and paper-based), the development of more responsive remedial and enrichment programs, and the consistent maintenance of facility standards required for SPK status.	English-language ecosystem through assemblies, Student Council (OSIS), and Remas activities.	differentiation services (Clinic Classes and Enrichment Programs), tiered test-drilling strategies, and the revitalization of the international language ecosystem in school activities to consistently maintain quality and the sustainability of the institution's status.

Discussion Of Policy Analysis

Agenda Setting

The agenda-setting phase at Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya and Al Falah Deltasari Junior High School in Sidoarjo indicates that the decision to adopt the Cambridge Curriculum was not merely a neutral managerial response, but rather an instance of educational policy borrowing that was heavily laden with political and symbolic significance. (Phillips & Ochs, 2004). From the perspective of (Dye, 2017), Agenda setting is understood as a policy system's response to environmental demands; however, findings at both sites reveal that the "environment" faced by private Islamic educational institutions is far more complex than the Western liberal democratic model assumed by Dye. On the one hand, schools respond to external pressures in the form of demands for compliance with the formal regulations of the Cooperative Education Unit (SPK) and the dynamics of the urban education market (Steiner & Khamsi, 2004) On the other side, schools are driven by internal pressures stemming from the foundation's value system and the expectations of educated, middle-class Muslim parents regarding the commodification of quality. (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010).

This pattern reveals the identified phenomenon (Steiner & Khamsi, 2004) as a means of utilizing international labels for external legitimacy and as markers of symbolic excellence (scandalization and certification), such that the adoption of the Cambridge program serves as an instrument of class distinction within the competitive private Islamic education market. In contrast to

conventional policy theories that often lead to full imitation (isomorphism), both schools established theological boundaries from the outset: the priority on their agenda was not the Cambridge curriculum in and of itself, but rather a hybrid version of Cambridge adopted as a tool for enhancing instrumental competitiveness (science, mathematics, English), while the Akuba curriculum at Al Azhar and the KAFA curriculum at Al Falah were established as dogmatic guardians of Islamic identity. This finding expands Dye's agenda-setting framework by demonstrating that, in the context of faith-based schools, the foundation's religious authority (faith-based authority) possesses the power to filter the public agendas of the state and the market before they are institutionalized as formal institutional priorities.

Policy Formulation

The policy formulation phase reveals unequal power dynamics in the development of an integrated curriculum. (Dye, 2017) interpreting formulation as the process by which technocratic actors and government officials devise alternative solutions. However, at the empirical level of private Islamic schools, curriculum formulation takes place through an institutionalist elite model centered on the leadership of the foundations (YPI Al Azhar and the Directorate of Al Falah Educational Institutions). Empirical evidence shows that curriculum integration does not result from an equal, deliberative dialogue among teachers, school committees, and foreign curriculum authorities rather, the authority to define curricular orthodoxy lies entirely with the foundation's board. Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE) serves as the provider of pedagogical standards and legally rational assessments, while the foundation holds a veto over spiritual values to reject or modify content deemed contrary to doctrinal principles, and educators along with school leaders at the local level perform only technical-administrative functions. This division of roles results in a formulation strategy that Silova (2009) terms "selective recontextualization," meaning that the two schools do not substantively merge their curricula into a single, cohesive entity but rather construct a fragmented model of functional coexistence.

This condition is clearly evident in the formulation of policy content, including a rigid allocation of class periods (2 class periods for the Cambridge curriculum and 2 class periods for the National curriculum at Al Azhar) as well as an accelerated schedule (accelerated tracking of textbooks for grades VII–VIII to meet the Checkpoint requirements in the odd-semester of grade IX). At Al Falah, selective recontextualization is implemented through the formulation of the KOSP, which integrates the "kauniyah" verses of the Qur'an into the Cambridge science and mathematics syllabi, as well as through the institutionalization of a differentiation scheme (Clinic and Enrichment Classes).

Thus, the curriculum formulation at both schools is essentially not a seamless merger of curricula, but rather a managerial compromise to bridge the conflict between the Ministry's national standards, the demands of the CAIE global syllabus, and the foundation's theological doctrines.

Policy Implementation

The implementation stage is the most fundamental phase in which global standards and Islamic values must be reconciled in the classroom. The Cambridge curriculum is rooted in the epistemology of Western modernity, which posits rationalism, value-free empiricism, and objective scientific logic as absolute truths. (Apple, 2004) and (Tikly & Bond, 2013), Meanwhile, the epistemology of Islamic education is grounded in tawhid, which views all empirical knowledge as ayat-ayat kauniyah signs in nature that are subject to the transcendental laws of revelation. When teachers apply inquiry-based learning and the Cambridge science curriculum in the laboratory, a process of epistemological negotiation and domestication (epistemological domestication).

Teachers at both sites did not present science as a secular entity detached from divinity, but rather adopted Cambridge's critical thinking logic as a methodological tool to sharpen students' analytical reasoning, with the final conclusions of learning consistently reoriented toward God's creative power, thereby transforming the classroom into a space where Western knowledge is subordinated to local doctrinal beliefs. This analysis of implementation also reveals the fundamental limitations of Dye's classical implementation model, which tends to assume that implementers' compliance is based on the formal legal authority of bureaucracy and rational administrative incentives. The reality at both Islamic schools shows that the successful execution of the dual-curriculum policy which entails a heavy workload, including preparation for SPK accreditation, Cambridge Visit laboratory facility audits, and the adoption of a rotating daily language culture is supported by a transcendental disposition the commitment of educators and educational staff, which is not merely driven by hierarchical compliance with standard operating procedures (SOPs) but by the internalization of the values of sincerity, worship, and spiritual devotion to the da'wah institution. This religious loyalty acts as a "bureaucratic lubricant" that overcomes technical resource constraints and administrative burnout among educators in the field.

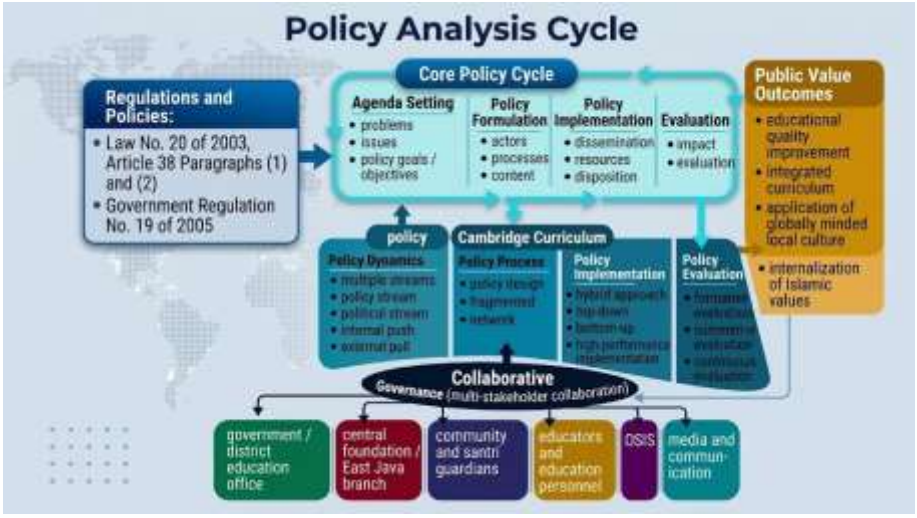
Policy Evaluation

During the evaluation phase, (Dye, 2017) emphasizes the importance of measuring policy consequences, including both intended impacts and unintended impacts. Evaluations at both schools revealed a multi-layered assessment mechanism that combines global external accountability with the

strengthening of institutional identity. The expected impacts were tangibly realized in students' critical thinking competencies, the success of technological innovations in the Youth Scientific Works (KIR) program, proficiency in English communication, and student leadership through the Student Led Conference (SLC) reflection forum at the institutional level. The success of external evaluations as measured by Checkpoint scores and the attainment of self-accreditation have driven a surge in public trust, confirmed by rising New Student Enrollment (PPDB) figures, thereby affirming that the curriculum hybridization strategy has been positively received by the urban education market. Nevertheless, this evaluation has also given rise to unintended consequences.

First, academic overload among students due to the demands of dual examinations feedback from Al Azhar alumni indicates the need to strengthen the National Curriculum component so that graduates do not encounter obstacles when advancing to public high schools. Second, the emergence of internal segmentation among students due to the implementation of placement tests and the separation of remedial and enrichment classes at Al Falah while effective from a pedagogical-diagnostic perspective, this approach has the sociological potential to reproduce academic stratification among students (Sriprakash et al., 2020). The resulting policy feedback loop is not only technically significant for improving the following year's syllabus, but also serves to renegotiate the school's identity; when evaluation results indicate a tendency for students' orientation to lean too heavily toward the West, the school immediately counterbalances this by strengthening the religious ecosystem including the revival of active participation in the Mosque Youth Group (Remas), standardized Quran memorization as mandated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and the instillation of local wisdom values.

Overall, the multisite analysis of these four policy stages yields significant theoretical implications. The policy framework (Dye, 2017) It has been proven effective as a framework for mapping out macro-level policy stages from upstream to downstream. However, its application to private Islamic educational institutions reveals the epistemological limitations of Western public administration theory. As shown in the following image.



Source: Developed by the authors based on research analysis (2026)

Figure 3. Policy Analysis Cycle Framework

First, Dye's model is based on the assumption of the sole sovereignty of the legal-rational state, whereas in private Islamic schools, a dual-governance authority system applies, meaning that the foundation's theological authority has full power to intervene in both ministerial regulations and foreign curriculum standards. Second, Dye's model interprets the policy-making process as a secular and linear action, whereas in reality, fluid cultural and epistemological negotiations take place on the ground, in which the compliance of implementers is driven by moral and religious imperatives. Thus, this study asserts that the adoption of international curricula in Islamic schools in Southeast Asia is not a passive acceptance of global hegemony, but rather an ongoing process of resistance, filtration, and compromise regarding pedagogical sovereignty aimed at harmonizing 21st-century intellectual progress with the moral integrity of Islamic doctrine. This framework can be analyzed based on the following illustration.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the policy analysis using Thomas R. Dye's model regarding the Cambridge International Curriculum at Al Azhar 13 Islamic Junior High School in Surabaya and Al Falah Deltasari Junior High School in Sidoarjo is that the implementation of the international curriculum in Islamic educational institutions does not occur independently but rather through a Hybrid-Integrated Curriculum framework. The success of the policy at both sites is reflected in the four stages of the policy cycle.

Agenda Setting The policy was driven by global disruptions, parents' expectations for a globally-oriented education that remains grounded in Islamic values, and SPK regulations. Both schools successfully developed a curriculum mapping of religious values (the Akuba/KAFA Curriculum) and the national curriculum to preserve local cultural wisdom, integrating them through reflective and active learning within the international curriculum. They also hold an official ID Center number license from Cambridge.

Policy Formulation Policies are formulated integrally through three curriculum frameworks (National, Cambridge, and Al-Islam-specific). The strategies implemented include differentiated instruction (Class Placement, Clinic Class, Enrichment Class), language immersion, preparation for checkpoint exams, and cross-grade-level curriculum mapping to prevent repetition of material.

Policy Implementation Policy operationalization is based on three pillars: transparent, tiered outreach with parents; the provision of facilities and infrastructure that meet international safety standards; and the strengthening of the academic community's collective commitment to building a language ecosystem and a learning culture grounded in critical thinking.

Policy Evaluation Evaluation is conducted comprehensively through checkpoint test results, student assessments, and progression tests. Positive impacts include improved English proficiency, the development of a culture of critical thinking, increased parental trust, and a rise in new student enrollment.

Overall, a synthesis of the findings regarding these four policy stages yields significant implications, both for national education policy and for future research agendas. At the macro-policy level, these findings call on the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Religious Affairs to develop regulatory guidelines that are more adaptable to religion-based student-centered learning (SPK). National regulations should provide flexibility in the academic calendar and harmonize assessment models, so that schools adopting global curricula do not burden educators and students with redundant, duplicate evaluations. Furthermore, the experiences of the two schools in filtering foreign curricula through distinctive curricula (Akuba and KAFA) have the potential to set a precedent for hybrid curriculum management in madrasah reform across Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, the limitations of this qualitative multisite study open opportunities for further research, including cross-level comparative studies (elementary and high school), exploration of alternative international curricula such as the International Baccalaureate (IB), and quantitative investigations into the impact of dual curricula on students' psychosocial well-being and cognitive load.■

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