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Designing a Christian Religious Education Curriculum for Cambridge-Based SPK Primary Schools in Indonesia for Generation Alpha Learners in the Digital Age

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Abstract:

The rapid advancement of digital technologies, widespread access to internet-connected devices, and the increasing presence of artificial intelligence have reshaped children's learning experiences. In Indonesia, Satuan Pendidikan Kerja Sama schools adopting the Cambridge Primary Curriculum face challenges in integrating Christian Religious Education pedagogically and theologically while responding to the digital realities of Generation Alpha learners. As the first generation fully immersed in digitally mediated environments, these learners require faith education that connects biblical learning with digital literacy, ethical discernment, and responsible technology use. This study designs a Christian Religious Education curriculum model for Cambridge-based Satuan Pendidikan Kerja Sama primary schools in Indonesia aligned with Permendikbud Number 31 of 2014, Cambridge curriculum principles, and the developmental characteristics of Generation Alpha learners. Using a qualitative design-based research approach, the study integrates policy analysis, recent academic literature, and curriculum alignment principles to develop a coherent framework. The proposed curriculum integrates biblical literacy, Christian character formation, digital citizenship, and age-appropriate ethical reflection on artificial intelligence through inquiry-oriented pedagogy and authentic assessment. The model offers a policy-aligned, developmentally appropriate, and digitally responsive approach to faith formation in international school contexts.

Keywords: Christian Religious Education; Curriculum Design; SPK Schools; Generation Alpha; Digital Literacy

Introduction

Globalization and rapid technological development have significantly transformed educational systems worldwide, influencing curriculum design, pedagogical

approaches, and assessment practices. International curricula such as the Cambridge Primary Curriculum emphasize inquiry-based learning, transferable competencies, and global citizenship to prepare learners for complex future challenges (Cambridge Assessment International Education, 2023). In Indonesia, Satuan Pendidikan Kerja Sama (SPK) schools are permitted to implement international curricula while remaining accountable to national education policies, including the compulsory provision of religious education in accordance with students' faith traditions (Republic of Indonesia, 2003; Permendikbud No. 31/2014).

This dual accountability presents particular challenges for Christian Religious Education in SPK primary schools. Although national policy positions religious education as an essential component of holistic learner development, its implementation in international school contexts is often peripheral, resulting in limited curricular coherence and pedagogical integration. These challenges are intensified by the emergence of Generation Alpha learners, who are characterized by early and sustained engagement with digital technologies, interactive media, and algorithm-driven platforms (Brown & Lee, 2021). Contemporary research emphasizes the need to reconceptualize educational frameworks to intentionally integrate artificial intelligence and digital literacies into curriculum design, aiming to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and ethical competencies for young learners.

Christian Religious Education curriculum design must therefore move beyond traditional content transmission to integrate biblical literacy, character formation, and theological reflection with digital citizenship, ethical awareness, and responsible technology use. Empirical studies in primary education highlight the emerging importance of artificial intelligence literacy as a curricular component that encompasses interaction with AI systems, critical data literacy, and ethical considerations, suggesting that primary learners require structured opportunities to engage meaningfully with AI concepts. Previous studies have examined curriculum alignment, digital literacy, and faith-based education separately; however, coherent curriculum models that integrate these dimensions within Cambridge-based SPK primary schools remain scarce (Dewanti & Nurhadi, 2023; Priestley et al., 2021).

Accordingly, this study seeks to address this gap by proposing a digitally responsive and policy-aligned Christian Religious Education curriculum model for Cambridge-based SPK primary schools in Indonesia. The study aims to contribute theoretically and practically by demonstrating how faith-based education can be meaningfully integrated within international curriculum frameworks while maintaining theological integrity and pedagogical coherence in the digital age.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative design-based research approach to develop a Christian Religious Education curriculum model suitable for Cambridge-based SPK primary schools. Design-based research enables iterative integration of theory, policy, and practice, supporting curriculum innovation in complex educational contexts (Anderson & Shattuck, 2021). The research was conducted through four phases: contextual and policy analysis, initial curriculum design, expert validation, and analytical refinement.

Data sources included national education policy documents, Cambridge Primary curriculum frameworks, recent academic literature published between 2020 and 2025, and expert consultations involving Christian Religious Education practitioners, SPK

school administrators, curriculum specialists, and educational technology experts. Data were analyzed using thematic content analysis to identify key curriculum principles and constructive alignment matrices to ensure coherence between learning outcomes, pedagogy, and assessment (Biggs & Tang, 2022).

Results

The results indicate that Christian Religious Education can be coherently integrated into Cambridge-based SPK primary schools without diminishing theological integrity or pedagogical quality. As summarized in **Table 1**, the proposed curriculum framework is organized around four interrelated strands: biblical literacy, Christian character formation, digital citizenship, and faith-informed global awareness. This structure enables alignment between national religious education mandates and the inquiry-based orientation of the Cambridge Primary Curriculum.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that inquiry-oriented pedagogy and authentic assessment strategies play a critical role in fostering learner engagement, reflective practice, and meaningful faith exploration among Generation Alpha learners. The intentional integration of digital technologies and artificial intelligence, when guided by clear pedagogical and theological principles, contributes to enhanced ethical awareness and contextual understanding. However, **Table 1** also highlights that effective curriculum implementation is contingent upon teacher competence, institutional commitment, and sustained professional development. These findings are consistent with recent international studies emphasizing curriculum alignment and teacher agency as key factors in successful curriculum enactment within international school contexts (Priestley et al., 2021; Dewanti & Nurhadi, 2023).

Table 1. Policy and Pedagogical Implications of the Proposed CRE Curriculum Framework

Curriculum Dimension	Key Result	Policy and Pedagogical Implications
Policy–Curriculum Alignment	Christian Religious Education can be systematically integrated into Cambridge-based SPK primary schools while remaining compliant with national education regulations	Supports the implementation of Permendikbud No. 31/201 within international curriculum without marginalizing religious education.
Core Learning Domains	The curriculum is structured around biblical literacy, Christian character formation, digital citizenship, and faith-informed global awareness.	Provides a coherent framework that balances spiritual formation, ethical development, and global competencies required in international education.
Pedagogical Orientation	Inquiry-based learning and authentic assessment enhance	Reinforces learner-centered pedagogy consistent with Cambridge principles and

Curriculum Dimension	Key Result	Policy and Pedagogical Implications
	learner engagement and reflective faith practice.	primary faith education theo
Digital and AI Integratic	Purposeful use of digital technologies and artificial intelligence enhances ethical awareness and contextual learning.	Demonstrates that digital innovation can support faith based learning when aligned with pedagogical intent and theological values.
Institutional Readiness	Curriculum effectiveness depends on teacher expertise, leadership support, and ongo professional development.	Highlights the need for polic supported teacher training a institutional capacity buildin in SPK schools.
Research Alignment	Findings correspond with international research on curriculum coherence and teacher agency in internation school contexts.	Strengthens the academic legitimacy of the curriculum model for broader adoption and further empirical study.

Conclution

This study proposes a policy-aligned and digitally responsive Christian Religious Education curriculum model for SPK primary schools in Indonesia. By integrating biblical literacy, character formation, digital citizenship, and ethical reflection on technology, the curriculum responds to the learning characteristics of Generation Alpha learners while preserving theological integrity. The model offers practical guidance for educators and school administrators and provides a foundation for future empirical research and curriculum development in faith-based international education contexts.

Suggestion

Christian Religious Education in Cambridge-based SPK primary schools should be developed and implemented as a structured curriculum that aligns with national education regulations and the Cambridge Primary Curriculum while responding to the digital learning context of Generation Alpha learners. Schools should ensure that Christian Religious Education integrates biblical understanding, character formation, digital citizenship, and ethical awareness of technology in everyday teaching practice. Institutional support through curriculum coordination, teacher preparedness, and consistent implementation is essential so that Christian Religious Education remains relevant, coherent, and meaningful within international primary school settings.

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