

BENTO Curriculum Design for Eating Habits of Early Children

Dewi Mulyani¹, Dinar Nur Inten², Helmi Aziz³

¹ Universitas Islam Bandung, Bandung, Indonesia; dewimulyani@unisba.ac.id

² Universitas Islam Bandung, Bandung, Indonesia; dinarnurinten@unisba.ac.id

³ Universitas Islam Bandung, Bandung, Indonesia; helmiaaziz@unisba.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

The BENTO (*Bersih, Sehat, Halalan Thoyyiban*) Curriculum was developed to instill early childhood eating habits that are clean, healthy, and halal, incorporating religious values into daily routines. This study assesses the curriculum's development and effectiveness in promoting these values. The curriculum was designed and tested using the ADDIE model, which includes the Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation phases. This structured approach allowed researchers to methodically develop and refine the curriculum based on its goals. The BENTO curriculum emphasizes a holistic, integrative approach, focusing on health, safety, and the meaningful incorporation of Islamic principles in early education. Through activities, children learn about the health and religious benefits of eating according to Islamic practices. Content areas include basic needs, animals, professions, plants, and culture, with learning resources drawn from children's personal experiences, community environments, events, and designated learning times. The curriculum fosters moral education by teaching, internalizing, and adapting religious values in eating habits. It utilizes engaging and child-centered strategies to make the learning experience both enjoyable and meaningful, contributing to the development of moral awareness and actions in young children. The BENTO curriculum provides an effective framework for integrating religious and health-related values into early childhood eating habits. The authentic evaluation process highlights its potential for meaningful impact in early education. Further research should explore its applicability in diverse cultural contexts.

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Corresponding Author:

Dewi Mulyani

Universitas Islam Bandung, Bandung, Indonesia; dewimulyani@unisba.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

The golden age period is a time full of wonders, namely fundamental growth and development, that become the foundation for the lives of human children for the next period. Early childhood is a fertile period for planting the seeds of attitudes, values, and interests. This period is the beginning of learning and exploring children's potential (D Mulyani et al., 2018). At this age, the foundation that will become the basis for children's physical and mental strength is based on good nutritional intake. According to Harlistyarintica & Harlistyarintica, Y., & Fauziah (2020), the habit of consuming healthy and nutritious

food at an early age has a big influence on children's development, both cognitive and physical, which also influences children's health at a later age.

Humans in their early years are called early childhood. Their age range is in the range of 0 to 6 years. Some experts believe that their age range is 0 to 8 years (Masnival, 2013). Early childhood in Islam is in the pre-*tamyiz* phase. The pre-*tamyiz* phase is the phase that prepares the child to enter the *tamyiz* phase. Meanwhile, the *tamyiz* phase itself is a phase where children can differentiate between good and bad according to Allah and the Messenger of Allah, carry out His commands, and solve problems according to their age according to Allah's rules, but they do not yet have the obligation to carry them out (Hikmah, 2023). Therefore, what is needed in the pre-*tamyiz* phase is the development of manners and morals in children, which is an effort to prepare children to enter the *tamyiz* phase. Children, as the buds of the nation's generation, must be cared for, educated and nurtured, so that they become a healthy, tough, intelligent and productive generation in the future. The importance of educators from an early age is a shared awareness and responsibility, so that we do not leave behind a weak generation (Mulyani, 2011).

The integrated early childhood education program is also supported by the government with the Holistic Integrative early childhood education program which consists of 5 types of services, namely: (1) educational services; (2) caregiving services; (3) security services; (4) health services; and (5) nutrition services. By integrating health and nutrition in learning, our task as educators and observers of children is to increase children's awareness of good eating patterns. This is very important to implement considering that the food children eat plays a big role in their future lives. A child's eating pattern from an early age will most likely influence the child's eating pattern until he becomes an adult (Inten, D.N., & Permatasari, 2019). In Islamic teachings, a good diet not only talks about cleanliness and adequate nutrition, but also talks about the blessings of food. Islam teaches the concept of eating *halal thoyyiban*, namely food that is halal, healthy and good. (Wahyudin, D., Rahmawati, Y., & Suwirta, 2018). In the context of planned and systematic learning, these teachings need to be outlined in a learning design or curriculum. Through the curriculum, we formulate a learning program about clean, healthy food and *halal thoyyiban* in early childhood education.

The curriculum is an important instrument in the implementation of education and teaching. Implementing education without a reference in the form of a curriculum can make education less focused. The curriculum in the field of education is the main guideline and foundation for the continuity of the learning process in all educational institutions, both formal and non-formal educational institutions (Yamin, E. S., Rasyid, A. M., & Aziz, 2021). The curriculum is not limited to several subjects, but it also includes everything that can influence student development, such as: school buildings, learning tools, school supplies, libraries, administrative employees, pictures, school grounds, etc. (Oemar Hamalik, 2006). Another opinion expressed by (Oliva, P. F., & Gordon II, n.d.) said that the curriculum is a plan or program for all experiences that students encounter under the direction of the school.

Saylor and Alexander formulated curriculum as "the total effort of the school to go about desired outcomes in school and out-of-school situations" (Saylor, J. G., & Alexander, 1956). This definition not only includes subjects, but it is also about all efforts of a school to achieve the desired goals. In addition, the curriculum is not only about the situation inside a school but also outside a school (Roziqin, 2019). Another opinion expressed by (Rusman, 2012) said that the curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding objectives, content and learning materials as well as the methods used as guidelines for implementing learning activities to achieve certain educational goals. Efforts to obtain a good and appropriate curriculum require good design. The most common curriculum design refers to the arrangement of curriculum components or elements. Often the term "curriculum organization" is used to denote curriculum design. Usually, the components or elements included in the curriculum are (1) aims, objectives and targets; (2) subject matter or content; (3) learning activities; and (4) evaluation. Thus, the nature of these elements and the organizational pattern in which these elements are brought together as a unified curriculum constitute the curriculum design. It should be emphasized here that the term "curriculum design" symbolizes a substantive unity that does not refer to a process (Zais, 1976).

Often, the most prominent feature of curriculum design is the pattern of organizing its content. Thus, the nomenclature used to identify various curriculum designs usually refers to content organization. Some of the more familiar designs that take organizing principles from content include subject designs, discipline designs, and broad field designs. A design that is not yet content-centered is an activity curriculum, the organizing principle of which is taken from the needs and interests of students. The design of the life sector is centered on the social functions that students must carry out as adults, while the design of social problems, as the name suggests, is prepared based on current social problems (Coşkun Yaşar, G., & Aslan, 2021).

Curriculum design refers to the way we position curriculum components. All curriculum designs attempt to address the four components of the curriculum, namely: Why do we start teaching or objectives? What should we teach to realize the goals and objectives we set? How can we connect targets to learning experiences? What have we realized, and what actions should we take? Then, take appropriate action in relation to the teaching program, students and teachers (Zais, 1976). The models that form the basis of design, for example learning material-based design, prioritize logically organizing content, while student-centered design, which focuses on students and their needs, requires different treatment of the four curriculum components. These models will involve an overview of related primary sources, curriculum conceptualization and stages of curriculum design, in addition to modern issues of classroom-level teacher curriculum design and classroom-level teacher professional development. Curriculum development is a process based on planning, namely a progressive process that is directed and systematic (L. Dewi, 2017). Several components in curriculum design will be discussed in the following section.

The first component is the curriculum objectives. Curriculum objectives relate to expected results. On a broad scale, the formulation of curriculum objectives is closely related to the value system or life philosophy adopted by society. More than that, the formulation of goals can describe the vision of the society we aspire to. On a micro scale, curriculum objectives relate to the school's mission and vision as well as narrower objectives, such as the objectives of each subject and the objectives of the learning process. According to Nuraini (2011), the aim of early childhood education is to develop the knowledge and understanding of parents and teachers as well as parties involved in early childhood education and development. Specifically, the objectives to be achieved are: (1) identifying the physiological development of early childhood and being able to apply these specific results to the physiological development in question; (2) being able to understand the development of creativity in early childhood and efforts related to this development; (3) being able to understand the relationship between multiple intelligences and early childhood development; (4) being able to understand the importance of play in early childhood development; (5) able to understand learning approaches and their application to child development.

The second component is the learning content. The content of the curriculum concerns all aspects related to knowledge or subject matter, which is usually reflected in the content of each subject given, as well as student activities. Both material and activities are directed toward achieving specified goals. Many curriculum experts include these elements as content. For example, Hyman (1973) in (Zais, 1976) define content as knowledge (i.e., facts, explanations, principles, definitions), skills and processes (reading, writing, calculating, dancing, critical thinking, decision making, communicating), and values (i.e., beliefs about things related to good and bad, right and wrong). Even though strictly speaking, the curriculum content includes these three elements. However, for the purposes of inquiry and analysis in general, we will find it much more productive to limit the meaning of the term "content" as Saylor and Alexander do to substantive matters such as information, ideas, concepts, generalizations, principles, and the like. Even if we stick to a broad but well-defined definition, our investigation is not an easy task.

The third component is the learning activities. It represents the core of the curriculum because they are very influential in shaping the learner's experience and education. "The learning experience, and not its content, is the means to achieve all ends other than knowledge and understanding" (Taba, 1962). Good intentions, good aims and objectives, good content, and evaluation procedures will be in vain if the learning activities carried out by students do not provide them with educational experiences.

Learning activities in many schools have traditionally been limited to reading, listening, and answering teacher questions (reading). These are conducted comprehensively and integratively because they do not involve knowledge, processes, and values. In fact, learning familiarizes oneself with the process of critical thinking, searching for meaning, exploring and developing potential, and growing a love for lifelong learning (Patmonodewo, 2000). Apart from that, we also need to pay attention to the principles of curriculum implementation in the learning process, namely the provision of equal opportunities for students, student-centered, student-focused approaches, partnerships between all educational components and appropriate policies (Rusman, 2012).

The fourth component is curriculum valuation. Curriculum development is a never-ending process (Gordon et al., 2019). The process includes planning, implementation, and evaluation. Evaluation, the fourth component of the curriculum, is perhaps the most narrow aspect of the educational endeavor. In most curriculum books that discuss the topic, it is almost always discussed exclusively in relation to evaluating student achievement, which often involves assigning "rankings" or "grades." Even in a comprehensive text, the scope of curriculum evaluation is much broader than in most treatments of the curriculum. The focus of evaluation in principle is on "the extent to which students achieve goals" (Taba, 1962). What is considered a curriculum evaluation today is almost always a "student-centered product evaluation and based on a technical model of the curriculum."

While evaluation of student achievement (product evaluation) is certainly an important part of curriculum evaluation, it in no way approaches what can generally be understood as a comprehensive curriculum evaluation (a comprehensive evaluation, for example, will also emphasize considerations such as the correspondence between stated objectives and curriculum content as well as evaluation of the objectives themselves). Greater reliance on product evaluation is especially appropriate in situations involving training, techniques, and curriculum development models. However, an important evaluation principle in the learning curriculum is that the learning process and outcomes must be evaluated with authentic assessment (L. P. Dewi & Djohar, 2018). Curriculum evaluation is carried out in two ways, namely summative evaluation which refers to the final assessment of a program and formative evaluation which provides information to guide the program while it is still running. Evaluation consists of antecedents (e.g., assessing goals, material, student talents) and transactions (e.g., assessing classroom processes, interactions between students and teachers), and outcomes experienced by students (William H. Schubert, 1986).

While considerable research has highlighted the significance of early childhood as a "golden age" for foundational development across cognitive, physical, and moral domains, there remains a lack of curriculum models that holistically integrate health, nutrition, and Islamic ethical principles in early childhood education. This gap limits educators' ability to address both physical and moral aspects of child development comprehensively within structured learning environments. Consequently, this study introduces and evaluates the BENTO (Bersih, Sehat, Halalan Thoyyiban) Curriculum, a culturally responsive curriculum model designed to embed clean, healthy, and halal eating habits grounded in Islamic teachings for early childhood.

To address this gap, our study seeks to answer two primary questions: (1) How does the BENTO curriculum impact early childhood understanding and practice of clean, healthy, and halal eating habits? and (2) What strategies within the curriculum effectively foster these values among children? The primary objective is to evaluate the BENTO curriculum's effectiveness in promoting holistic growth, aligning with religious and cultural principles while fostering lifelong healthy eating habits.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to contribute a structured, culturally relevant curriculum model to early childhood education. By embedding Islamic dietary ethics into the learning process, the BENTO curriculum could serve as a reference for similar initiatives globally, enhancing educational practices that respect cultural diversity while promoting comprehensive health and moral development in early childhood.

2. METHODS

This research used the ADDIE model development method (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation). This research involved six Early Childhood education institutions located in Bandung Regency. The ADDIE model used as curriculum design is described as the following stages:

- a. Analysis. Researchers analyzed the needs related to the BENTO curriculum to introduce *halalan thoyyiban* eating behavior in early childhood through group discussion forums inviting early childhood education institutions in Bandung Regency. Needs analysis was carried out for feasibility studies and requirements for creating curriculum designs. The analysis stage was carried out by asking several questions, for example: (1) What is the eating behavior of children? (2) Is the BENTO curriculum able to overcome the learning problems faced in introducing *halalan thoyyiban* eating behavior? (3) Does the BENTO curriculum have facility support for implementation? (4) Are teachers able to implement the BENTO curriculum?
- b. Design. Design or planning went through several stages: designing curriculum objectives, materials/content, learning processes (scenarios or teaching and learning activities, designing learning tools), and evaluating curriculum and learning. This curriculum design was still conceptual and would underlie the subsequent implementation testing process.
- c. Development. This stage is the curriculum development process. In the design stage, the conceptual framework for implementing the new model curriculum was prepared from the BENTO curriculum. In this design development stage, the framework that was still conceptual in stage two was realized into a BENTO curriculum product that was ready to be implemented. At the design stage, the use of a new curriculum, which was still conceptual, had been designed, then at the design development stage learning tools were prepared or created with the new model/method, which included activity scenarios, weekly and daily programs, tools and media, as well as materials in the form of the BENTO curriculum.
- d. Implementation. The implementation stage was the use of the curriculum in learning at early childhood education institutions, namely implementation as a direct application of the curriculum to classroom learning. In this case, the BENTO curriculum design that had been developed was applied to actual conditions. Material was delivered using relevant new models or methods. During the implementation process, assessments were carried out to provide feedback on the curriculum design used.
- e. Evaluation. The evaluation process is carried out to assess the feasibility and reliability of the curriculum. The assessment was carried out in two forms, namely formative and summative evaluation. Formative evaluation was carried out at the end of each face-to-face meeting, for example a weekly cycle, while summative evaluation was carried out after the activity ends as a whole (semester). Summative evaluation measured the process, while formative evaluation measured the final competency of the subject or learning objectives. The evaluation results were used to provide feedback to the BENTO curriculum compilers. In the evaluation stage, reflection and revision also took place in the BENTO curriculum. The success criteria were seen from the curriculum objective indicators, in the form of increasing students' understanding of *halalan thoyyiban* clean eating behavior, changes in students' attitudes towards *halalan thoyyiban* eating behavior, increasing self-competence after receiving a series of activities in the BENTO curriculum, and the impact on parents and early childhood education institutions that used the BENTO curriculum.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Findings

An educational program to get used to Islamic eating patterns is an important thing that parents must do. Meeting food needs is not a trivial matter. There are important factors that must be considered, namely whether it is clean, has adequate nutrition, is halal in terms of the source of food obtained, and

is halal in terms of the food ingredients used. The BENTO curriculum introduces, teaches and practices Islamic eating patterns through habituation, so that children understand the reasons for the importance of eating right from religious and health aspects. Children were introduced to the concepts of nutritious and halal food. Children were involved in meaningful experiences which aim was to instill correct eating habits. The BENTO curriculum was designed to present an innovative Islamic pedagogical design for dietary education in early childhood.

In the BENTO curriculum, early childhood education services implemented holistic, integrative education, namely paying attention to aspects of health, nurturing, security, protection and the meaningfulness of education itself. With the BENTO curriculum, substantive activities with children were also carried out, such as activities to understand the benefits of eating according to Islam and health. Apart from that, in terms of SDGs, we introduced green living, namely the use of local resources that did not produce a lot of carbon which could poison and pollute the environment. In this case, children were introduced to local food sources that were of no less quality, namely local regional food. By designing an eating habits curriculum called "BENTO", an Islamic pedagogical model teaching how to eat properly could provide innovative solutions to children's eating habits to eat clean, healthy and *halalan thoyyiban*.

3.1.1 Objectives of BENTO Curriculum

The aim of the BENTO curriculum was to introduce children to clean, healthy, *halalan thoyyiban* food through the BENTO curriculum which promoted religious values in eating routines. Religious behavior when eating was an attitude and behavior that adheres to religious principles which were reflected in the values of obedience and goodness achieved through the habituation process when eating. Eating activities through the implementation of the BENTO curriculum could instill religious values in children through the process of learning values (cultural knowledge), internalizing values (moral awareness), and adapting to values (moral actions). However, according to Wahyudin, D., Rahmawati, Y., & Suwarta (2018) and Hudrasyah (2017), the extent to which a person consumes halal food will also depend on other factors, such as the availability of halal food, opportunities, knowledge, and resources include money. Thus, education and habituation are important activities that introduce children from an early age to consuming halal food. Islam teaches the importance of consuming halal food as Allah commands in the Al-Qur'an surah Al-Baqarah verse 168, which reads: "O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy." Through His word, Allah commands the believers to obtain sustenance in good ways and abandon haram methods that are not approved by Allah. Allah also gives humans the freedom to utilize the sustenance He has given. The essence of this verse is that Allah wants humans as His creatures to always be grateful by carrying out worship as a form of obedience and acceptance of what Allah SWT has bestowed (Ilmia, A., & Ridwan, 2023).

The curriculum packaged for early childhood considers factors that must be considered as quoted from (Wittmer, D. S., & Petersen, 2013), namely, 1) during infancy and childhood, children always learn holistically; 2) relationships/attachments are the main thing for development; 3) culture at home is also something that needs to be considered; 4) children are active and self-motivated learners; 5) children are individuals with unique characteristics; 6) language skills and habits develop from an early age; 7) the environment provides a strong influence; 8) adults show strong emotions and opinions for children during parenting.

3.1.2 Content of BENTO Curriculum

In organizing material or content, the BENTO curriculum used a thematic approach by selecting topics. There were simplified and new things that are easier and more interesting to apply in learning. The Pancasila Student Profile was an explanation of National education goals. The Pancasila Student Profile Improvement Project in the context of implementing an independent curriculum was always linked to three components of early childhood education development, namely: religious values,

character, identity, pre-reading, writing, mathematics, science, technology, and art. This unique curriculum was in line with the concept of free play in early childhood education. This curriculum provides opportunities for educators and students to foster imagination and creativity through various learning activities (Ashfarina & Soedjarwo, 2023). Determining the form of these topics is expected to provide opportunities for children to learn facts in a meaningful and meaningful context in developing children's skills and knowledge, so that children will develop according to the objectives of the activities and objectives of the BENTO curriculum.

In learning management, the curriculum was integrated into the learning process. In this case, teachers could arrange conditions in the classroom so that children learned many things. The teacher linked the theme to counting, reading and writing activities. For example, when children learned about the activity of visiting a shop to buy food ingredients, children would also learn to communicate, count items, get to know various food ingredients, socialize with traders, apply Islamic law regarding scales, so that the buying and selling process became halal and would produce results *halalan and thoyyiban* food in the future.

BENTRO's integrated curriculum approach made children more aware of their environment. Children developed a concept through the association process they obtained through their experiences. Organizing experiences through a theme could be very productive. However, a thematic approach would be successful if the theme was chosen carefully, activity planning was done well and evaluation was done correctly and carefully. The grouping of themes referred to the consideration of learning resources, namely: children themselves (their needs), community environment (people/professions, shops, markets), events (*Kamis Nyunda*), Places (Tofu Factory, Chicken Coop, garden), Time (Snack Time, Lunch).

Table 1. Summary of BENTO Curriculum Content

Needs	Foods and Drinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clean, Healthy and Halal Food ▪ Clean, Healthy and Halal Drinks
Animals	Land and Sea Animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Animals that are halal to eat ▪ Animals that are forbidden to eat
Profession	My Dreams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Become a Smart Chef ▪ Be an Honest Trader
Plants	Grains Vegetables Fruits Tubers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Food ingredients rich in nutrients ▪ Benefits of healthy food for the body
Culture	Typical regional food and drinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Typical regional food ▪ Typical regional drinks

3.1.3 Learning Activities with the BENTO Curriculum

The target of the BENTO Curriculum was early childhood in all age groups in Early childhood education programs.

- 1) BENTO *Halalan Thoyyiban* Food Introduction Program for daycare age (0-2 years) was implemented in daycare services by providing children's basic needs, namely meeting health and nutritional needs, love needs, and stimulation needs.
- 2) In play groups (3-4 years), there was teaching stimulation and getting used to independence was on the agenda in learning activities, one of which was learning to eat alone. Teachers taught good, correct and orderly eating. In this case, teachers let the students learned, got examples and guidance. Apart from that, teachers could teach them to eat alone and invite them to

manage eating activities, as well as giving Amanah children to prepare eating utensils, leading a group meal, guiding prayer before eating, reviewing the *halalan thoyyiban* menu that would be eaten if the menu was the same, guiding prayer after eating and put away cutlery.

- 3) For the Kindergarten group (4-6 Years), various approaches were carried out in the framework of the BENTO curriculum implementation program in Kindergarten, namely: (a) promotion and education program for clean, healthy and *halalan thoyyiban* food (Child Promotes Food Methods), (b) gardening, which taught hard work and love to produce plants that children could consume (Gardening Methods), (c) fun cooking methods, which invited and taught children to try directly the process of making food (Fun Cooking Methods), (d) direct visits to the field (Field Trip Methods) to see the process of making food or see the processing of food ingredients (for example to a tofu factory).

The BENTO curriculum was implemented through a daily routine program. The program launched was "Healthy and Halalan Thoyyiban Packed Meals". Through this program, introduction, habituation and efforts were made to foster children's interest in *halalan thoyyiban* food. It is hoped that this activity would result in the habit of always eating halal food, accompanied by enrichment regarding learning good eating etiquette according to Rasulallah. In other words, religious and moral values were taught to children. Apart from that, children also learned that eating was a necessity to achieve blessings.

Introducing healthy, *halal* and *thoyyib* food to children through the implementation of the BENTO curriculum was an effort to foster religious character in eating activities. Students were taught *halalan thoyyiban* food in terms of sources, substances, and processing. When eating, children were taught not to waste food and not eat too much. On the other hand, children were taught to share or donate food if someone didn't bring it.

3.1.4 Evaluation of BENTO Curriculum

Evaluation of the BENTO (Clean, Healthy, and *Halalan Thoyyiban*) Curriculum was carried out by looking at the curriculum documents and the implementation. Learning planning documents were prepared by evaluating daily activity documents, activity scenarios and weekly activity plans. Implementation documents were built by referring to daily reports and daily evaluation notes. The assessment of evaluation documents was carried out by analyzing observation sheets, performance assessment sheets and interview reports.

The BENTO curriculum used summative evaluation and formative evaluation. Summative evaluation was carried out through actual assessments starting from the preparation process until the completion of learning activities. Curriculum evaluation used several instruments, namely observation sheets, performance assessment sheets, and interview sheets. The observation sheets were used to see and assess the extent of overall learning activities. The worksheet was used to assess the project-based learning process. Interviews were conducted to obtain information regarding the process, attitude and enthusiasm during participating in the program. Work results were assessed to see the process of activities and learning outcomes using the BENTO curriculum.

The evaluation was carried out by adhering to comprehensive principles that were objective, open, meaningful, appropriate and educational. Assessments of children's learning were also delivered in narrative form so that the uniqueness, abilities and level of development of each child were revealed and mapped well and systematically. The instrument sheet used four assessment scales, namely, Not Yet Developing, Starting to Develop, Developing According to Expectations, and Developing Very Well. The topics evaluated included indicators for eating manners, eating patterns, and awareness of food choices. All topics were chosen to provide education on eating behavior that paid attention to the permissible and blessings of food.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Curriculum Objectives

A needs analysis was conducted to address the critical reasons behind the design of the BENTO curriculum. The BENTO curriculum draws inspiration from the Merdeka curriculum, simplifying its structure to enhance its applicability and engagement in the learning process. Central to this curriculum is the Pancasila Student Profile Improvement Project, which aims to implement an independent curriculum that integrates three key components of early childhood education: religious values, character and identity formation, and foundational skills in literacy, numeracy, science, technology, and the arts. This approach aligns with the principles of free play in early childhood education. Consistent with its goals, the curriculum creates opportunities for educators and students to cultivate imagination and creativity through diverse learning activities. These activities address practical issues such as children's eating habits and the significance of proper nutrition. Fundamental questions explored include why teaching appropriate eating practices early in life is crucial, and how fostering healthy eating habits can align with child development, health considerations, and religious values.

In terms of preparing curriculum objectives, BENTO was designed by taking into account objectives on a macro and micro scale. In terms of broad objectives, this curriculum considered important aspects, namely the philosophy and value system of society that is adhered to. This could be seen in the formulation of the content, that in Islamic society, there is a system of values and culture that is raised regarding the teachings of halal and good eating. This illustrates that there are things that need to be considered in the long term of a child's life, namely blessings. On a small or micro scale, the BENTO curriculum was designed to suit the school's mission and vision as well as narrower goals, such as the goals of each subject and the goals of the learning process. In this case, schools had an obligation to develop all aspects of children's development by paying attention to the best needs of children, one of which was the need to eat well according to Islamic values. All programs were derived from curriculum formulation and contained in learning planning and then implemented in the learning process at school using a thematic approach.

The formulation of objectives in the Bento curriculum took into account the objectives of early childhood education, namely ensuring that the curriculum was friendly to children's development in critical periods, encouraging the development of children's creativity, and implementing differentiated education through meaningful play activities as explained by Nuraini (2011) and Masnipal (2013). Apart from that, goal determination was also based on the principles of spirituality and culture, which did not result in children being separated from religious teachings and local wisdom principles in their cultural environment. These things were efforts to optimize early childhood stimulation in the golden period.

3.2.2 Learning Content

The learning content in the BENTO curriculum was designed to present learning experiences that students might have that were related to the context and objectives of the curriculum. All aspects of learning were integrated in every material taught and activities introduced in various children's activities. The learning content elements concerned knowledge and facts that children found in everyday life, such as daily events resulting from consuming unhealthy and good food, which were conveyed through various media such as videos, media information, and books. Apart from that, children also received a substantive explanation of material regarding *halalan thoyyiaban* food, including principles, types, benefits, and consequences.

The process was carried out through engaging, interactive, meaningful, and enjoyable activities. Within the BENTO curriculum design, the learning content was enriched with skill-building components, such as the ability to identify, differentiate, and select foods that are appropriate and beneficial for consumption. A simple yet impactful activity involved children selecting images of halal and haram foods. They also determined the contents of their lunch boxes through creative drawing exercises. Additionally, children were trained to independently prepare their own meals by selecting

items based on the *halalan thoyyiban* concept, emphasizing the importance of wholesome and permissible food choices. This approach aimed to develop foundational skills across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. It was part of instilling life principles, enabling children to make informed and virtuous decisions as responsible individuals and servants of God. The overarching goal was that, as they matured, these children would maintain their commitment to intelligently choosing *halalan thoyyiban* foods.

The BENTO curriculum design was presented with a variety of activities that were in accordance with children's competency standards. The learning process involved activities such as pre-reading by recognizing the first letters of halal and haram foods, writing letters and words for selected halal foods, counting halal and haram foods shown in pictures, and free drawing of children's favorite healthy foods. Activities that involved motor skills were one of the interesting activities, such as dancing and singing while introducing *thoyyiban* and *haram halal* food. Children were also occasionally invited to watch films to train children's analysis of the films or videos shown. Children were trained to think and give opinions on relevant topics. In addition, during the learning process, children were trained to communicate their choices and ideas so that they could express their choice of *halalan thoyyiban* food.

Learning content must be rich in values, emphasizing the importance of making choices grounded in distinctions between good and bad, as well as right and wrong. In the BENTO curriculum, one key focus was teaching children about eating practices, such as consuming wholesome food, recognizing halal food that may not be nutritious, avoiding overeating, and steering clear of unhygienic food. To instill an understanding of right and wrong, the curriculum included materials guiding children to choose food in alignment with Islamic principles while avoiding haram options. This approach encouraged children to evaluate and comprehend the values underlying their decisions.

The BENTO curriculum design seamlessly integrated knowledge, processes, and values, ensuring that these elements were interwoven throughout the learning experience. Curriculum designers carefully considered these components during the construction process, selecting and organizing content that was both developmentally appropriate and conceptually accurate. The result was a curriculum aligned with children's growth and learning needs, avoiding any inclusion of unsuitable or incorrect materials.

3.2.3 Learning Activities

Experience is the best teacher. The BENTO curriculum adheres to the principle that learning must be paired with meaningful and fun games. Meaningful learning will have a good impression. In this case, the BENTO curriculum packages learning activities that were meaningful and fun, so that children would feel like returning to their activities. The activity experience was organized in such a way that it was child-friendly and supporting the children's needs. After the content or material had been formulated well, the next stage was implementing learning activities. This, of course, required strategies and methods that were suitable for children. Conventional learning patterns that were stressful and boring had been eliminated. The world of children's education is not just about reading, writing and calculating. The children's world itself needs to be made enjoyable.

Learning practices were designed to stimulate all aspects of children's development, namely social-emotional, religious-moral, cognitive, and language-communication. Implementation had to be integrated into meaningful and enjoyable activities. The BENTO curriculum was designed to train critical thinking processes, develop potential, and foster interest in learning in children. However, the aspect of inclusive education was also a matter of serious consideration by applying the principle of equality, which was child-centred, best for the child, and collaborative with the children's parents.

3.2.4 Evaluation

The evaluation was important in BENTO curriculum design. Through evaluation, an overview was obtained for improvement. Evaluation was used as a continuous cycle, where this cycle included several stages, namely planning, implementation and evaluation. In the BENTO curriculum, evaluation

was an inseparable part of curriculum development. The results of the evaluation were used to consider improvement, namely the parts that needed to be maintained and the parts that needed to be perfected.

Evaluation was also a part of seeing the effectiveness of achieving the BENTO curriculum objectives. In this case, evaluation could function to determine the achievement of the goals set in the BENTO curriculum, improvements that had to be made, as well as improvements to concepts and processes that had to be carried out. More precisely, in the BENTO curriculum, evaluation was used as feedback material to improve strategies and determine methods, approaches, and supporting media.

Considering that comprehensive curriculum evaluation was a very complex effort, in practice, comprehensive curriculum evaluation did not only involve assessing written documents. However, evaluation also involved interactions, students, teachers, materials, and the environment in an integrated and authentic manner. Ongoing evaluations not only assessed documents but also assessed the implementation process in the field in all elements of education. Sometimes, the evaluation assessed the children's attitude at home from the results of implementing the curriculum at school, especially the children's attitude regarding the *halalan thoyyiban* eating pattern at home. In fact, successful education not only has an impact on changes in knowledge capacity but also changes in attitudes and decision-making abilities.

4. CONCLUSION

The research highlights the significance of early childhood as a critical period for holistic development, particularly in establishing proper eating habits grounded in health and religious principles. To address this, the BENTO Curriculum (Clean, Healthy, *Halalan Thoyyiban*) was developed as a framework for teaching young children about clean, healthy, and halal food while embedding religious and moral values into daily routines. The curriculum's integrated approach fostered environmental awareness and concept development through experiential learning, employing fun and meaningful play as key principles. Evaluation of the BENTO Curriculum was conducted through document analysis and observation of its implementation, utilizing authentic assessment methods, including both summative and formative evaluations.

While the curriculum demonstrated effectiveness in fostering awareness and instilling values, the research was limited by the scope of its evaluation, focusing primarily on document review and immediate implementation outcomes. Long-term impacts on children's eating habits and value internalization remain areas for further exploration. Future research could expand on these findings by conducting longitudinal studies to assess the sustained effectiveness of the BENTO Curriculum, exploring its adaptability across diverse cultural and educational settings, and incorporating broader assessment tools to capture more nuanced developmental outcomes.

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