



## ANALYSIS OF ACCELERATION PROGRAM STRATEGIES IN CREATING OUTSTANDING STUDENTS

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### Article Info

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the planning and implementation process of the acceleration program in creating outstanding students and to analyze student achievements after joining the program. Using a qualitative case study approach through interviews, observations, and documentation, the research involved curriculum deputies, program teams, and students. Results indicate that the acceleration program is still being developed and continuously evaluated to suit students' needs and resolve emerging issues. The program has effectively improved academic performance, as seen from students' report cards and a 100% graduation rate in the last year. However, non-academic achievements remain less optimal due to the school's limited focus on extracurricular development. Students are given the freedom to explore their interests through available extracurricular activities.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

High-quality human resources are increasingly needed in an era of increasingly competitive globalization. It is crucial to produce the next generation who are able to compete at the national and international levels, and education is key. One of the biggest investments a country can make in its people is education. Education has the potential to improve their quality of life and contribute to the progress of the country [1]. A good education will produce graduates who are able to handle their problems and environment. This is related to the purpose of the State of the Republic of Indonesia, which is to improve the life of the nation, and as a result, every Indonesian citizen has the right to access to high-quality education that suits his or her interests and interests [2].

Students must have a wide range of intellectual capacities or understanding. The selection of learning methods must be adjusted to the conditions of the class and students so that the material taught can be easily accepted by students [3]). Education in Indonesia has made changes to meet the needs of students who have special intelligence. As a result, there are currently different classes that can be accessed according to the needs of students. The big changes that have occurred are inclusive classes for students with below-average intelligence, regular classes for students with average potential, and accelerated classes for students with exceptional or special intelligence.

Achievement in educational psychology is a special level of ability or expertise that a person has. The learning process and learning achievement are interrelated. Because learning achievement is actually the result of the learning process. According to experts, learning achievement is an achievement or final result that is observed after the learning process. Each expert has a unique opinion on how to achieve this. A person's ability

in a particular field to reach an immediate level of maturity can be measured by a test known as learning achievement [4]. It is possible that evaluations are given in the form of letters or numbers. Several factors affect a student's learning success. These include a good level of intelligence, lessons that match students' talents, high interest and attention to the lessons, strong motivation to learn, effective learning approaches, and learning strategies designed by teachers [5]. A learning achievement test is a tool to measure a person's learning level [6]. Learning achievement is the change experienced by students as a result of the learning process carried out through deeds [7].

In creating outstanding students, accelerated students certainly receive learning that is different from regular class students. Because the acceleration program is a special educational service that allows students with above-average intellectual abilities to complete the level of education in a shorter time [8]. Thus, the accelerated program is the right choice for students who want to learn faster than other students. Accelerated programs are essential to provide the right educational opportunities for smart students [9].

KBBI refers to acceleration as accelerating the process, increasing speed, acceleration and the rate of speed change. Acceleration is an accelerated learning process with the aim of shortening. This is characterized by a shift in the school's program from three years to two years or six years to five years [10]. Accelerated programs are intended to help students with above-average talent or intelligence take regular lessons in a shorter time, or longer [11]. A learning model that offers a faster learning method, also known as accelerated learning, is an accelerated learning model. It is hoped that this learning method will help learners to learn much faster than regular learning [12].

In response to the diverse intellectual capacities of students, Indonesia has implemented various learning models regular, inclusive, and acceleration programs to accommodate individual learning needs [13]. The acceleration program, in particular, serves as a special educational service for students with above-average intellectual abilities, allowing them to complete their education in a shorter period [14]. This approach aims to maximize potential and provide an effective learning experience for gifted students.

Both the service and the curriculum are referred to as acceleration. The definition of acceleration as a type of service means skipping a class and following a certain student on it. Meanwhile, acceleration, as a curriculum, means accelerating the teaching materials from what students should be able to master [15]. The acceleration objectives consist of general and specific objectives, according to the management guidelines for accelerated learning programs. Not only can accelerated students complete lessons faster, but they can also demonstrate proud achievements in both academic and non-academic fields with proper focus. Student achievement is a tangible form of the school supporting student potential. Thus, students' achievements in accelerated classes in academic and non-academic fields show the success of the program and their level of intelligence.

This research addresses that gap by exploring how an acceleration program is planned, implemented, and continuously refined to produce outstanding students. It also examines how academic and non-academic achievements reflect the success of the program. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the iterative process of program evaluation and adaptation within a madrasah context an aspect rarely explored in prior studies. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to analyze the strategies, processes, and outcomes of the acceleration program in shaping excellent students, thereby contributing both theoretically and practically to the field of educational management and gifted education.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a case study with a qualitative approach. The data used was obtained from interviews, observations, and supporting documents. Qualitative research is a way of gathering information to understand and explain social phenomena in depth. This approach focuses on explaining phenomena through the interpretation of the context, experiences, and views of the people involved in the phenomenon [16]. Case studies or "Study Case" refers to a case that is the subject of study or the event being analyzed. "Case" means a situation or event that is noticed, while "Study" means the process of learning, learning, researching, and analyzing [17]. Case study research is one of the qualitative research methods that focuses on a specific event or situation. This method is used to understand and analyze human behavior based on human opinions or perspectives [18].

According to Yin, case studies are the right research strategy because they use the subject matter of the research question how or why, it takes a little time to control the events being studied, and the focus of the research is on contemporary phenomena to keep up with contemporary events. The case study method focuses the researcher on the design and implementation of the research [19]. The researcher concludes that the case study method is the study of an object, situation, or condition, individual or group of people, with a series of observations made by the researcher. The resource persons in this study are the deputy head of the madrasah for curriculum, the program implementation team, and the acceleration students who were selected based on their direct involvement with the acceleration program.

These participants were selected based on their involvement and knowledge of the program's planning, implementation, and evaluation stages.

In this study, the researcher carried out the following stages:

- a. Finding a research location that suits the needs of the research;
- b. Apply for research permits to the school;
- c. Carry out student observation of acceleration classes;
- d. Conducting interviews with resource persons;
- e. Analyze the data and supporting documents obtained;
- f. Compile the data obtained as needed;
- g. Conclude the results of the analysis carried out.

#### **Data Collection Techniques**

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and document analysis. Interviews provided detailed information on the actors' perceptions and experiences, while observations captured actual practices during learning activities. Documentation, such as school policies, schedules, and reports, served as secondary data supporting triangulation [20]. All data collection was conducted over a three-month period to ensure comprehensive coverage.

#### **Data Validation Procedures**

To strengthen data credibility, the study applied methodological triangulation, which compared information obtained from different techniques and sources. Member checking was also employed by returning interview summaries to participants for verification and accuracy. Furthermore, peer debriefing was used by consulting with fellow researchers to minimize bias and enhance analytical rigor [21].

### **3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS**

The results of this study indicate that the acceleration program at the madrasah was implemented through three main stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation. In the planning stage, the school formulated curriculum adjustments, teacher selection, and learning time modifications to suit the needs of gifted students. The implementation stage emphasized differentiated instruction and the use of enrichment strategies, while the evaluation stage involved continuous monitoring and feedback from teachers, students, and parents. Empirical data show that accelerated students achieved significantly higher academic performance compared to their peers in the regular program. This improvement was visible in report card grades, national exam results, and completion rates. However, students' non-academic achievements such as leadership, social participation, and artistic creativity remained relatively low due to limited extracurricular integration.

Furthermore, qualitative interviews revealed that teachers perceived the program as beneficial for academically advanced learners but also challenging due to curriculum density and psychological pressure among students. Continuous evaluation and adaptation were thus necessary to maintain program sustainability.

#### **Implementation of the acceleration program**

The findings demonstrate that effective program planning and adaptive implementation play a critical role in improving academic outcomes for gifted students in Islamic educational institutions. This supports previous research emphasizing that structured curriculum mapping and qualified teacher involvement contribute to learning success in acceleration programs [22].

Based on the documentation study and the results of interviews with the resource persons, the following data were obtained:

The acceleration program at this school is known as the credit service program but still has the same goal as the acceleration program, which is to shorten the time and learning process of students. Teaching and learning activities or the learning process at the school take place from Monday to Saturday with an average learning time of 8-10 hours of lessons which in 1 hour of learning has 40 minutes. So that within a week, the learning time followed by accelerated students amounted to 52 hours of academic lessons. Non-academic learning in the form of extracurricular is scheduled on 1 day per week and lasts for 2 hours of learning. As for the learning provided, it consists of mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, informatics, geography, Indonesian, English, health sciences, pancasila, cultural arts, Islamic cultural history, the Quran and hadith, fiqh, moral beliefs, Arabic, and history, as well as special subjects such as advanced mathematics, mental development, and scientific research.

Advanced math subjects discuss math in depth and are a differentiator from regular classes. Scientific research subjects are also added so that students are used to thinking broadly by conducting research. It can also

be a provision for students if they later continue their higher education which must be used to conducting scientific research. Not only that, mental coaching learning subjects are included in teaching and learning activities that last for 30 minutes each week. This shows that the school understands mental is the main thing that needs to be formed so that students are able to participate in the program and prepare themselves as students who are able to participate in society. The implementation is in line with the opinion of Norazmi, et al stating that students who participate in accelerated programs require more than academic ability; They also need to have a strong mental drive to keep up. How the acceleration program is run depends on its management strategy [23].

The implementation period of the credit service program or acceleration class lasts for 2-3 months and can be described as follows:

Semester 1	: Regular Classroom Teaching and Learning Activities
Semester Exams and Accelerated Student Selection	: March
Semester 2	: April - May
Semester Exams	: May
Semester 3	: May - June
Semester Exams	: July
Semester 4	: July - September
Semester Exams	: September
Semester 5	: September - November
Semester Exams	: November
Semester 6	: November - January
Semester Exams	: February

The description of the implementation schedule above may change according to circumstances and needs in the field. The curriculum used by schools in the implementation of the program is an independent curriculum, with changes in time allocation and learning process that require students to complete the program in 2 years. As well as adjustments to the subject matter needed to support students' potential.

Thus, the researcher concluded that accelerated students have a hectic study schedule and not everyone can follow the program. Without full support from the family, the school and the environment around the students may not be able to adjust to the schedule that has been set. However, this can be overcome by maximizing the role involved with students.

In its implementation, students who are members of the program must go through a selection consisting of:

- a. Diagnostics
- b. Feasibility Testing
- c. Making a Statement of Willingness to Participate in the Acceleration Class

In more detail, the feasibility test referred to above is a selection carried out by the school by looking at the academic achievements of students in semester 1, with the criteria of 1-5 people with the highest report card scores in each class. The results of the diagnostic assessment and report card scores will be added up and then divided in half to get the final score, and based on the results obtained, students must also make a statement signed by the student's parents to support the running of the program.

Due to the evaluation from year to year, the school tightened the selection of accelerated students, which in the previous year the selection was only in the form of a diagnostic test. As a result, it was found that there were students who were unable to undergo the learning process in the acceleration class. So that in 2025 the selection of accelerated students will be carried out by taking into account the results of diagnostic tests and student report card scores to ensure that the students who join are really students with above-average intelligence. With the hope that students who are members of the program have the same way of learning and are able to follow the learning process in the accelerated class.

This shows that the school wants the program to develop according to conditions in the field in order to get a better implementation design in the future. Because school assignments are not only carrying out existing ones but also assessing the programs that are being run. According to the SKS service program team, this has a good impact because students who are members of the acceleration class are really selected students, after going through a strict selection so that they can follow the program well until the end.

The implementation of the program runs for 3 years, from 2023 to 2025. In the 2023/2024 school year, the school began the implementation of the acceleration program, and this year the school expanded all things that can be developed and adjusted for the implementation of the program in the following year. In the 2024/2025 school year, there are 22 graduates who are all students who are members of the program in that school year. This is quite satisfying because it shows one of the program's successes. In the 2025/2026 school year, there are 19 students consisting of 17 women and 2 men after carrying out the selection that was passed in semester 1. Students are expected to be able to show the same success as the previous year.

The school's approach aligns with the student-centered learning (SCL) paradigm, where instructional design prioritizes learners' active engagement and higher-order thinking development [24]. Moreover, the combination

of individualized learning and formative evaluation reflects a growing trend in madrasah-based educational management, which aims to balance cognitive achievement with character education [25].

The school has several policies implemented in the acceleration program, including:

- a. Diagnostics; b. Quick Class Selection; c. Tutoring; d. Enrichment Program.

Tutoring and enrichment programs are a form of support from the school so that students can consult related to difficult learning, related to student grades, and the level of education they want to achieve. In the implementation of the program, the SKS service team stated that in addition to the planning carried out by the school to support students, the willingness of students' parents to support the program is needed, by providing full support there are students who are members. The implementation of accelerated classes will definitely be different in each school that implements it. In addition, to support the development of students, the school has partnered with several tutors outside the school, so that accelerated students can join tutoring to increase the scope of student understanding.

The researchers concluded that schools do a lot to support students from various aspects. This support is implied in every activity carried out by the school. And the impact of this support will be seen from the results obtained by students through academic and non-academic achievements as well as student graduation.

The tools used by schools to measure student ability development include the following:

- a. The use of UKBM as a means of assignment, an example of UKBM is a LKS book consisting of student assignments that must be done after learning is carried out in the classroom;
- b. Implementation of Summative Assessment or can be called daily repetition;
- c. The implementation of the End of Semester Assessment or semester exams which are also carried out for regular class students which are carried out before the change of semester;
- d. Madrasah Assessment / Madrasah Exam, which is one of the final assessments for all students which is also used as one of the graduation criteria for students.

The use of UKBM is one of the daily learning burdens faced by students. The implementation of assessments is a means for educators to assess students' capacity and level of understanding, as well as evaluation material. If students cannot complete the existing learning load, it can be concluded that there is something that needs to be improved, both from the learning process and other things.

From the above results, the researcher concluded The implementation of the acceleration program carried out by the school to create outstanding students is still in the process of development. The school evaluates and changes every year in the implementation of the program to adapt it to the needs of students and solve problems that arise. Continuous evaluation must still be carried out to obtain a good design for the implementation of the broader program.

### Accelerated student achievement

Based on the results of interviews and observations conducted by the acceleration team, it was found that the acceleration students showed more interest in the academic field. So that students' focus is more likely to be on academic activities and achievements in the academic field.

Based on the documentation study, the following results were obtained:

Students' academic achievement can be seen from the average grade grade, where for the 2025 period the average grade of the accelerated class is 97. If associated with the qualification of the student's report card, acceleration means:

The qualification of report card scores is as follows:

10	= Special	5	= Almost Enough
9	= Very Good	4	= Less
8	= Good	3	= Less
7	= More Than Enough	2	= Bad
6	= Enough	1	= Very Bad

The average score of 97 students is the same as the score of 90 on the report card, so it is concluded that this is included in the category of "Very Good" and even close to the "Perfect" score.

For non-academic achievements, the school provides various types of extracurriculars that students can participate in. Among them are basketball, badminton, futsal, in the field of sports. Osim (intra-madrasah student organization), Scouts, Paskibra in the field of leadership. Adolescent Red Cross and adolescent doctors in the health sector. English Club, Japanese Club, Youth Scientific Work in the field of language and research. Dance, Band, Marching Band in the field of art and so on. Students can join the extracurricular provided to channel their respective interests and talents. In addition, the school also supports by conveying information on activities outside the school.

However, this is not required by schools for accelerated students considering the dense learning schedule received by the students of the acceleration class itself. Likewise, to support the academic achievement of students outside of school, the school conveys information about the tryout/olympiad carried out by tutors who have partnered with the school. And it does not limit students who want to participate in tryout/national olympiad activities apart from the information provided by the school. In addition to disseminating information, schools also facilitate the needs of students who want to excel outside of school.

Based on an interview with one of the students, the school facilitated the student when participating in the videography competition by allowing him to use the school camera. This shows that the school's contribution in supporting the achievement of real students is seen in accordance with the needs of the students themselves. The acceleration program team also emphasized that he emphasized to acceleration students that if they want to participate in activities outside of school, they will try to participate in activities at the national level. Because indirectly the certificate will help students later when eligible who need a certificate of achievement.

Strategically, these findings suggest that madrasah institutions implementing acceleration programs should adopt adaptive planning models, combining curriculum flexibility, teacher professional development, and psychosocial support systems. Strengthening collaboration between administrators, teachers, and parents is also essential to optimize both academic and non-academic outcomes.

From a conceptual perspective, the results reinforce the theoretical framework of gifted education management, particularly the importance of integrating academic acceleration with socio-emotional support [26]. The challenges encountered such as time pressure and limited teacher readiness mirror findings from similar contexts in Southeast Asia, where school culture and family support significantly influence program effectiveness [27].

In addition to academic and non-academic achievements, the school also argues that student graduation is also part of achievement. Students who graduated through the acceleration program in the 2023-2024 period totaled 22 people, which is the entire number of students who joined. Three (3) of them graduated from the medical department. Student graduation is a very important achievement because it marks the success of students in completing the learning process undertaken during the education period. Graduation is not just a formality, but also a reflection of academic achievements obtained through consistent effort and mastery of competencies. Thus, the success of graduating students is a tangible indicator that the program run by the school is effective in guiding students to achieve the expected educational goals. In line with Zuana, the success of educational innovation depends on systematic management and policy consistency. Thus, continuous improvement and evidence-based decision-making are vital for sustaining the quality of acceleration programs in Indonesia's madrasah education system [28]. From the results of the analysis carried out, the researcher concluded that the academic achievement of students looks quite good judging from the results of the report card and the number of student graduations. In the last 1 year, accelerated student graduation is the entire student enrolled in the program. Which shows the success of the program in achieving educational goals. However, non-academic achievements are still not prominent for students in the accelerated class because the school does not focus on them too much. Accelerated students are free to choose where to develop their interests and talents based on the extracurricular programs provided by the school. But it was hampered by the tight study schedule they had in each semester

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the acceleration program implemented in the madrasah has effectively supported the development of students' academic achievement through structured curriculum design, individualized learning, and continuous program evaluation. The program's success is reflected in the consistently high academic performance and full graduation rate among accelerated students. From a planning perspective, the school has adopted a dynamic and adaptive approach, beginning with needs analysis, curriculum mapping, and the selection of qualified teachers capable of handling high-ability learners. Regular evaluation and stakeholder collaboration between teachers, administrators, and parents have ensured that the program remains relevant to students' academic and developmental needs. Theoretically, the study contributes to the literature on educational management and gifted education by demonstrating how a structured acceleration model can be effectively adapted in a madrasah context, emphasizing flexibility and iterative evaluation. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of sustainable program design, ongoing teacher development, and the integration of non-academic support systems to optimize students' holistic growth. Future research could further examine the socio-emotional aspects of accelerated learners and explore comparative analyses across different school types to enhance the generalizability of the findings.

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