

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHING AND COUNSELING ROLE FOR ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHER

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explore a novel approach for enhancing teachers' soft skills and providing counseling guidance to students at *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Darud Da'wah wal Iryad* (MI DDI). The research utilized a qualitative case study employing a bibliographic design with systematic and explicit mapping methods. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews to investigate the learning method. The findings indicate that the role of an Islamic religious education teacher encompasses counseling activities for students. Successful implementation of this approach relies on collaborative engagement between the religious teacher and counselor roles. This research contributes to the advancement of a new learning method for developing soft skills and providing counseling guidance to elementary school students. It showcases an effective and efficient strategy for teaching and enhancing teachers' soft skills by integrating soft skill training into courses focused on hard skills.

Keywords: Education, Teachers, Teaching, Learning

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji pendekatan baru pengembangan soft skill guru dan pembimbingan konseling bagi peserta didik di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Darud Da'wah wal Iryad (MI DDI). Penelitian ini menggunakan studi kasus kualitatif dengan desain bibliografi melalui metode pemetaan sistematis dan eksplisit. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara semi terstruktur untuk mengkaji metode pembelajaran. Hasil temuan menunjukkan bahwa inovasi peran guru pendidikan agama Islam meliputi kegiatan penyuluhan bagi peserta didik. Implementasi kolaboratif dalam hal peran antara guru agama dan peran konselor sangat penting untuk keberhasilan pengembangan pendekatan ini. Penelitian berkontribusi bagi pengembangan metode pembelajaran baru untuk soft skill dan bimbingan konseling bagi peserta didik madrasah ibtidaiyyah. Ini menunjukkan strategi yang efektif dan efisien untuk mengajar dan meningkatkan soft skill guru dengan mengintegrasikan pelatihan soft skill ke dalam kursus yang berfokus pada hard skill.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan, Guru, Pengajaran, Pembelajaran

INTRODUCTION

In the era of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the shift from traditional teaching to online learning has become a necessity in universities worldwide. Given the challenges posed by the pandemic, the implementation of creative teaching processes, conceptual analysis, interactive dialogue, and reflection are crucial in facilitating effective online learning (Kadiyono et al., 2020). Consequently, the quality of online teaching becomes paramount for students' academic success, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 era, necessitating a high level of student motivation (Supriadi et al., 2020). Moreover, the presence of a conducive learning environment

is directly or indirectly influenced by skilled educators. Employing objective learning methods and visual class models is instrumental in attaining outstanding results and achieving the desired learning outcomes (Agarwal & Roth, 2002; Agarwal & Roth, 2002; Rowley et al., 1998; Fergus et al., 2003; Lowe, 1999; Vaillant et al., 1994; Viola & Jones, 2001; Osuna et al., 1997; Weber et al., 2000).

Value education holds significant importance in Islamic teachings as it strives to foster the development of a complete human being, known as *insan kamil* (Abdullah, 2006; Fadlan & Saputra, 2017). The challenge faced by Islamic education, particularly in Indonesia, lies in effectively instilling Islamic values in students in a comprehensive and holistic manner. The goal is not merely to impart knowledge but to cultivate faith and noble character within individuals (al-Attas, 1991; Alkhan & Hassan, 2021). Islamic education aims to shape individuals with harmonious and balanced personalities, encompassing not only religious and scientific knowledge but also skills and moral values (Alkoutli, 2018; Asari et al., 2021; Alidrus, 2012). Hence, the quality of education can be gauged by the presence of clear learning objectives, which serve as a vital component in the learning process. The ultimate aim is to nurture devout servants of Allah SWT who fear Him and lead a fulfilling life in this world and the hereafter (Anzehaie & Bai, 2013; Raihani, 2015; Thohir et al., 2021).

The advancements in science and technology have had significant impacts on human attitudes and behaviors, affecting individuals both in their religious and personal capacities as well as in their roles within society (Ali & Bagley, 2015; al-Attas, 1991; Putra & Abdullah, 2019; Dahlan et al., 2021). Islamic religious education aims to cultivate individuals who constantly strive to enhance their faith, piety, and noble character. Noble character encompasses ethics, virtues, and moral values, serving as a tangible outcome of education (Kesuma, 2020; Anzehaie & Bai, 2013). Such individuals are expected to possess resilience in confronting challenges, obstacles, and societal changes that arise at local, national, regional, and global levels (Ali & Bagley, 2015; Ghlamallah et al., 2021; Arvisais et al., 2021). Hence, value education assumes great importance in instilling in students an understanding of the values embedded within their religious teachings and enabling them to apply these values in their daily lives. This preparation equips students to better anticipate and mitigate any negative effects arising from the evolving times.

Elementary school students, typically between the ages of 6 and 12, are in the stage of childhood development, transitioning into early adolescence (Brookover et al., 1978). Extensive research has explored various factors, approaches, theories, and models to understand the school climate, resulting in a complex body of knowledge. The elementary school years represent a crucial period for children as they prepare for their future development (Anderson, 1982). During this stage, they often face challenges and obstacles and heavily rely on significant figures, particularly parents and teachers, for support (Mashuri & Suyatno, 2018; Dogra et al., 2021). Consequently, elementary school-age children require special attention from both parents and teachers. Children, or students, are individuals who undergo growth and development on their path towards maturity (Tumiran et al., 2020). In their journey of learning and comprehension, the presence of a nurturing teacher becomes vital to accompany and guide them (Syamsuri et al., 2020).

The significance of skills, how to impart them, and how to assess them remains a topic of ongoing debate, despite the growing interest in integrating soft skills into educational curricula. In practice, different nations and educational institutions adopt various approaches to teach and evaluate soft skills. Similarly, there is a wide range of pedagogical methods employed for teaching soft skills. It is widely recognized that passive learning of mere facts does not suffice for acquiring soft skills. Students must actively engage in the learning process to explore their capabilities, strengths, and areas for improvement in soft skills. Consequently, the literature

discusses and explores various strategies in this regard. Additionally, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support teaching, learning, and counseling in Islamic education is an intriguing aspect from a technological perspective. Islamic education on the one hand is expected to implement curriculum that is sharia compliant (Sulaiman, 2023) The development of soft skills, innovative teaching approaches, and student counseling and mentoring for primary school students at *madrasah ibtidaiyah* are subjects that warrant consideration.

Critical thinking and structured thinking are two essential soft skills often found lacking in higher education. These skills are closely linked to problem-solving abilities, which are particularly crucial in today's information-driven society. The ability to critically evaluate the constant influx of information, analyze it, and make well-informed decisions based on it is highly valued. Analytical skills serve as the foundation for generating solutions to various problems, and their utility extends beyond professional settings to personal lives as well (Ansharuddin, 2018). In accordance with the teachings of Islam as outlined in the Al-Quran and As-Sunnah, individuals are guided to cultivate a morally upright character that is pleasing to God (Baiquni, 1995; Muchsin et al., 2018). The Prophet was sent as a guide and counselor, capable of resolving various issues pertaining to the human soul, thereby promoting the avoidance of negative traits (Lukens-Bull, 2001). Consequently, humans are encouraged to provide guidance and counseling to one another, exhibiting patience and trust as they navigate life's challenges. Lastly, creativity is a vital soft skill that deserves emphasis. Often misconstrued as relevant only to artists, creativity is, in fact, an essential attribute in scientific and business contexts, where structured logical thinking is indispensable.

This study focuses on exploring the soft skills considered in Islamic education learning and the teaching methods being contemplated to impart these skills. It aims to address three primary questions within the context of developing innovative learning methods for soft skills and providing counseling guidance to elementary school students in *madrasah ibtidaiyah*. Additionally, the study aims to investigate a new teaching approach that could be employed to enhance the instruction and cultivation of soft skills in the realm of Islamic education.

METHOD

The participants of this study consisted of teachers and fourth-grade students from *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Darud Da'wah wal Iryad* (MI DDI) Amparita, located in the Amparita Sidenreng Rappang Regency in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Data was collected through various methods, including documentation, interviews, and observation. The data collected involved the fourth-grade class teacher and a total of 32 students from *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Darud Da'wah wal Iryad* (MI DDI) Amparita. To conduct in-depth interviews, researchers utilized a questionnaire to record qualitative research data. The study employed observational data, interview guidelines, and documentation as tools in accordance with the research design, which followed a bibliographic approach using systematic and explicit mapping methods. This qualitative case study aimed to investigate how teachers and students explore emotions, particularly in memos, and utilized a semi-structured interview as the instrument to gather data on the learning method (Arbaugh et al., 2010).

The researchers followed a specific procedure to obtain a selection of articles that were strongly linked and relevant to their study. Firstly, they entered the keywords "learning method" in the search column with a time restriction from 2012 to 2022 to identify relevant articles. Through this search process, they obtained a total of 999 articles that showed indications of being related to the topic. In the second stage, the researchers verified the articles to ensure they were aligned with their study's focus on the learning method and had a close correlation to the topic. After the verification process, they narrowed down the selection and obtained 242 articles

or journals that were considered relevant and highly connected to the theme of the learning method. This specific article being referred to is one of the sources chosen by the researchers as a reference for studying learning methods. It was selected based on its relevance and alignment with the research topic (Akyol & Garrison, 2008).

In this study, a qualitative research method was employed by the researcher. Information was gathered through semi-structured interviews. The participants were brought together in a WhatsApp group and provided with specific guidelines (Akyol et al., 2009a). It was crucial for them to comprehend the material thoroughly, ensuring familiarity with the interview's depth and breadth. The original audio recordings were continuously reviewed to maintain authenticity, as transcription would have been time-consuming, tedious, and bothersome. This practical approach allowed for an initial acquaintance with the data. To identify patterns, the researcher analyzed and clustered the data into themes (Akyol & Garrison, 2008). This step involved reducing ineffective data and focusing on information that was relevant to the identified themes (Akyol et al., 2009b). Throughout the process of translating and analyzing the data, the researcher paid attention to clusters or groupings of items used together. This helped in shifting the focus to a higher level of themes during the investigation (Arbaugh & Benbunan-Finch, 2006). Instead of solely concentrating on codes, the researcher organized the various codes into prospective themes, ensuring that all relevant data extracts were incorporated within the scope of the discovered themes (Diaz et al., 2010).

The tools utilized in this research align with established standards for conducting interviews, observations, and documentation. These instruments have been adapted to reflect the specific indicators of the problem being investigated. During the process of data reduction, the collected data is organized and prepared for analysis. This facilitates efficient and comprehensive data collection, which contributes to the generation of meaningful results. The subsequent step involves presenting the reduced data in a systematic and comprehensible manner, enabling the researcher to draw conclusions. By examining relationships, similarities, or contrasts within the data, solutions to existing problems can be identified.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Developing Soft Skills by Applying New Learning Method

To collect information for this study, the researchers conducted observations, documentation, and interviews with school principals, grade 4 teachers, and students at *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Darud Da'wah wal Iryad* (MI DDI) Amparita. During conversations with the principal, it was revealed that *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Darud Da'wah wal Iryad* (MI DDI) Amparita follows a curriculum-based approach. Currently, both the 2013 curriculum and the independent curriculum are being implemented. The 2013 curriculum is followed by students in grades 2, 3, 5, and 6 (Merdeka Belajar), while the independent curriculum is exclusively used for grades 1 and 4. At *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Darud Da'wah wal Iryad* (MI DDI) Amparita, learning has been established and integrated through various new methods employed in different subjects.

The study findings from the research on developing skills in a new learning approach serve as the basis for the implementation of each component of the 4C (Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity) of 21st century skills. To enhance student engagement and develop their soft skills, students participate in activities that align with the competencies required in the 21st century. Learning within the 4C framework involves the process of acquiring and retaining information and knowledge in memory, enabling successful application in specific tasks or a comprehensive understanding of concepts. Learning is considered valuable when it contributes to the improvement of one's awareness and intelligence (Duggan, 1996). For effective and efficient learning, it should be purposeful, practical,

intentional, progressive, and accomplished at appropriate stages (Viola & Jones, 2001; Holmes et al., 2020).

To gain insights into student perspectives on the selected 4 soft skills and their teaching methods, a survey was conducted using a questionnaire. The survey aimed to assess student understanding and perception of these skills and how they are being taught. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: the first section focused on the skills themselves, while the second section addressed the instructional strategies employed to teach these skills. The process of developing the soft skills within the 4C framework in *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Darud Da'wah wal Iryad* (MI DDI) Amparita is visually presented in Figure 1.

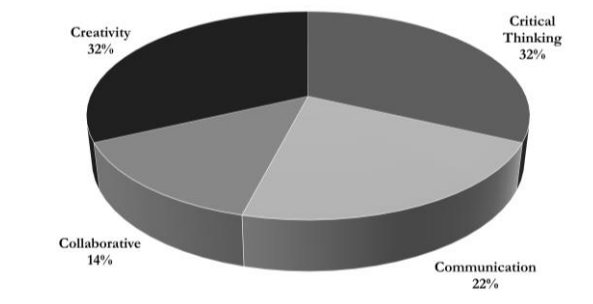


Figure 1. Activities to Develop Soft Skills of New Learning Method Using 4C

During interviews conducted on January 23, 2022, the principal of *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Darud Da'wah wal Iryad* (MI DDI) Amparita expressed that critical thinking competence refers to students' ability to engage in critical reasoning within their learning process. An example of an activity that encompasses critical thinking competencies was provided. The observation findings indicated that students approached multiplication problems on their worksheets with a critical thinking mindset. This observation aligns with the insights gathered from interviews with the grade 3 teacher. The teacher mentioned that the students actively volunteered to write their responses on the board. When students are capable of addressing questions that require higher-order thinking skills (HOTS), it demonstrates their proficiency in critical thinking.

Several students demonstrate enthusiasm in documenting their answers. Hence, the teacher's main role is to facilitate learning for the students, as it revolves around a student-centered approach. Critical thinking comes into play when a child is engaged in problem-solving. For example, during the learning process, when questions arise, the teacher provides an overview or stimulus to prompt students to think independently in order to solve these problems. This is particularly evident in subjects like mathematics, where students are presented with questions and are subsequently expected to provide individual responses.

Due to their strong communication skills, students often collaborate and freely express their individual viewpoints during group tasks. They possess the ability to understand and confidently articulate their thoughts to their peers. Effective communication enables students to interact more effortlessly with others. In the learning environment, students can exhibit comprehensive communication competence by (a) clearly and confidently comprehending and expressing their ideas, and (b) actively engaging with their classmates in a positive manner.

The study examines the global learning outcomes by analyzing the average results of internationally and regionally recognized standardized assessments of student achievement. These assessments encompass various subjects such as math, reading, and science, and are conducted at both primary and secondary education levels. Through observations, it is evident that cooperation skills are predominantly utilized in group settings. Students actively participate, collaborate, and express their thoughts within these groups. Interviews with teachers reveal that group formation is carried out randomly, following a predetermined schedule, or based on specific dates.

Based on interviews with teachers of grade 4, the new learning approach for developing soft skills in methodology focuses on fostering creativity competencies. Teachers typically encourage students to bring their own supplies and tools, and learning is often facilitated through project-based activities. This allows children to effectively express their creative thoughts through the completion of projects. With guidance from teachers, students are able to generate ideas, evaluate them, and put them into practice. Research findings suggest that integrating 21st-century skills into thematic learning enhances student engagement in the classroom. By incorporating these skills into their studies, students can further strengthen their soft skills. Examples of such soft skills include the ability to engage in conversations, collaborate with peers, and effectively communicate their viewpoints.

According to a comprehensive global data set covering the period from 1965 to 2015, there has been an improvement in national average learning outcomes (Domínguez, et al., 2018). While discussions among academics and policymakers have often focused on increasing the quantity of education, measured by indicators like mean years of schooling, the primary goal of education is to provide students with knowledge and skills in the classroom. This entry specifically addresses the topic of educational quality, with a focus on learning outcomes. While we have substantial empirical evidence on educational access, our understanding of educational quality is comparatively limited. Information on students' abilities and knowledge is scarce and lacks comprehensive temporal and spatial coverage. Consequently, the selection of students for assessments varies. Some exams are based on age, while others consider the grade level in which students are currently enrolled. These studies aim to examine a random sample that is intended to be representative of the target population.

Studying offers numerous advantages, as highlighted Annand (2011). However, learning requires dedication. To expand your understanding of both yourself and the world, it is essential to commit to learning and maintain a continuous quest for knowledge (Alavi & Taghizadeh, 2013). The process of learning fuels further learning, just as knowledge fosters more knowledge and skills enable the development of additional skills (Kumar et al., 2011). Learning encompasses your present self and shapes who you will become in the future. It enhances your thoughts, ideas, problem-solving abilities, understanding, skills, and overall awareness, among many other benefits (Garrison et al., 2003). The information provided on this page serves as a solid foundation upon which you can build, opening up a world of possibilities (Arbaugh & Rau, 2007).

The papers related to the learning method discuss a program that comprises two key components: a pedagogy prototype with clearly defined principles to guide classroom and study skills, and a set of materials designed to encourage instructors to engage in reflective thinking and discussion as they enhance their teaching and study abilities. The complete details of these program components are provided below. It is important to note that ongoing research is being conducted alongside the implementation of this program to assess its effectiveness. Initial evaluations suggest that it has the potential to improve both pedagogy and student outcomes. The quality of the learning environment significantly impacts learning outcomes and perceptions/evaluations of the learning environment. Furthermore, there is a strong connection between study approaches and the quality of learning outcomes. Deep approaches to learning, which involve thorough engagement and critical thinking, are more likely to result in higher quality learning compared to approaches that lack depth and engagement.

The integration of Islamic principles into the primary school curriculum, along with the collaboration of public schools, is an important aspect of external education that encompasses religious and ethical ideals (Syakir, 2020). One notable outcome of the innovative role of teachers in student counseling guidance within elementary schools is the transformation of character values. Researchers implemented several steps in innovating the role of religious

teachers in elementary schools, including: (1) creating a list of worship activities for students (Elihami, 2020b), (2) making a rote schedule (Syarif et al., 2021), (3) motivating students through stories and shows inspiring stories and good stories, and (4) make a notebook about the activities that have been done every day which consists of commendable and uncommendable actions (Elihami, 2020a). The design aims to assess students' character in terms of honesty, responsibility, discipline, independence, and obedient worship (Assidiq et al., 2020). Research findings support the effectiveness of these innovative practices in fostering fundamental values of Islamic education. As a result, students develop positive behaviors such as proper waste disposal, orderly queueing, congregational prayer, recitation of the Quran, memorization of daily prayers and short passages, and improvements in moral conduct (Syaparuddin & Elihami, 2020).

Developing New Learning Method and Counselling Guidance

The objective of this bibliometric analysis is to provide a comprehensive overview and examination of the various stages involved in the systematic process of new learning methods in scientific research output. This analysis focuses on assessing country-specific contributions and the volume and thematic focus of publications, revealing a significant growth in the overall number of documents throughout the study period. Furthermore, the analysis highlights a robust network of collaboration and knowledge sharing, both within individual prolific writers and across different institutions.

The results have affirmed the progress and significance of learning methods, as previously presented in the earlier section. This section provides a detailed description of these results along with relevant previous research and literature. The focus of this study is to investigate the implementation of a new teaching strategy in Islamic religious education, particularly highlighting the increasing utilization of digital learning methods. By effectively harnessing online learning, it becomes possible to cultivate a generation with strong character that aligns with the principles of national education. However, the presence of competent instructors is crucial in realizing these ambitious goals. To foster national character development, there needs to be a collaborative effort involving educators, parents, and students (Agarwal & Roth, 2002).

The concept of Islamic education, as evidenced by the most frequently referenced papers on teaching and teacher education from 2012 to 2022, has embraced the utilization of internet technology. This digital landscape offers a wealth of information, learning resources, and tools that can enhance the learning experience. Examples include discussion forums, video tutorials, tests, and other interactive features that facilitate content discussions, exchange of questions and answers among learners, as well as downloading and uploading teaching materials. The term "online training" is frequently mentioned, particularly observed within a specific cluster (Kadiyono et al., 2020). Many of these papers explore learning systems, training processes, surveys, training programs, and challenges encountered in e-learning (Akir et al., 2012). The emergence of new learning techniques also becomes apparent, acknowledging that the utilization of e-learning methods is not a straightforward task and requires expertise in creating effective e-learning environments.

To accomplish the primary objectives of teaching and learning, a study conducted on counselling guidance from 2021 to 2022 revealed the prevalence of the term "counselling guidance" in journal publications and the Google Scholar database, organized into four categorized appendices. However, the implementation of this concept faces several challenges, primarily due to limitations regarding the context, location, and timing. In the realm of knowledge exchange and learning, particularly in Islamic counselling and guidance, the exchange of perspectives within the educational system has shown promising outcomes (Banks & Banks, 1989). The existing learning methods often prioritize teaching, adopting a one-way, abstract approach that caters to a limited number of students capable of comprehending the teacher's instructions (resulting in a predominantly passive learning experience).

E-learning in the field of Islamic education is frequently employed as a medium for training purposes. The application of VOS viewer in conducting a search yielded a total of 975 bibliographic references, which were further narrowed down to a selection of 150 relevant bibliographies. Among the remaining 270 articles, they did not meet the researcher's criteria and were not included in the final selection. The use of e-learning is particularly valuable as it allows for the dissemination of training to even remote locations. With internet access, individuals worldwide can benefit from these instructional resources (Bardach et al., 2019). Moreover, the deliberate utilization of e-learning in certain training programs aims to enhance the technological literacy of both instructors and education recipients.

The primary limitation of this paper is its inherent bias. The study relied solely on the Scopus and Google Scholar databases, and we acknowledge that utilizing additional databases or expanding the search criteria could impact the findings. However, to the best of our knowledge, no recent comprehensive bibliometric analysis on articles pertaining to new learning methods has been conducted. We believed it was essential to aggregate this information to maximize its benefits for the global population (Anzehaie & Bai, 2013). Through our bibliometric analysis, we provide evidence that networks can be implemented and expanded, along with a descriptive quantitative analysis (Gall et al., 1965). In summary, conducting a similar analysis could be beneficial in helping nations develop innovative teaching strategies, particularly in the context of Islamic education, by fostering a stronger network of collaboration (Boyle, 2006). It is crucial to actively share all essential elements of novel teaching methods, thereby encouraging researchers to collaborate with local and international groups of professionals.

CONCLUSION

The school plays a vital role in fostering students' soft skills, including religious character, discipline, and independence. These skills are nurtured through the implementation of the 4C components, specifically the learning method for soft skills and student counseling guidance, which are rooted in Islamic education. The principal and Islamic religious education teachers serve as exemplary figures in this regard. At *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Darud Da'mah wal Iryad* (MI DDI) Amparita, there is a strong emphasis on developing soft skills and providing counseling guidance to students in alignment with the principles of the 4C approach. In today's society, the significance of soft skills has significantly grown. Thus, it is essential for individuals to cultivate students' abilities beyond academic or technical knowledge. As a result, it is crucial for students at *madrasah ibtidaiyah* to acquire soft skills and embrace innovative learning methods.

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