

# DEVELOPING A CONTEXTUAL LEARNING MODEL IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION TO IMPROVE APPLICABLE KNOWLEDGE AND FOSTER KNOWLEDGE-BASED VIRTUES

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### ABSTRACT

This study addresses the prevalent reliance on theoretical-abstract learning in Islamic religious education, which often emphasizes theories, symbols, textual materials, and memorized facts. Recognizing the need for a more practical approach, our research aims to develop a contextual learning design specifically focused on prayer in Islamic religious education. The goal is to enhance both knowledge acquisition and the cultivation of charitable virtues. Utilizing a combined quantitative and qualitative research approach, we employed research and development (R&D) methods. Data collection involved participatory observation, documentation studies, and questionnaires. The findings reveal that the contextual learning model significantly improves students' theoretical understanding and practical application of prayer. Results show enhanced academic achievements and the integration of prayer values into students' daily lives. The contextual learning model presents a more realistic, concrete, engaging, and meaningful approach to prayer instruction, fostering active student participation and the application of learned material in real-life scenarios. This study underscores the potential of contextual learning in transforming Islamic religious education, making it more effective and relevant for students.

Keywords: Contextual Learning Model, Islamic Education, Knowledge-Based Virtues, Prayer Instruction.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Learning plays a crucial role in developing students' abilities and potential, encompassing various dimensions such as intelligence, emotional, social, intellectual, and kinesthetic intelligence, collectively known as multiple intelligences (Milic & Simeunovic, 2020). One of the intelligence is verbal that should be developed through several skills like listening (Yudhiantara et al., 2023). Education should go beyond theoretical knowledge and engage with students' real-life experiences (Kiewra & Rom, 2020; Parhan & Sutedja, 2019). The importance of learning is amplified when students actively experience the subject matter (Gardner, 2011; Huda et al., 2016; Danver, 2016; Fu et al., 2020). Ideally, education is a lifelong process intertwined with social existence, serving as a conduit for the continuity of social life and emphasizing sustainability within broader societal dynamics (Dewey, 1964).

Islamic education emphasizes practical application beyond theoretical memorization, particularly in teaching prayer, which can be directly implemented in students' daily lives (Zulfa, 2018; Jones et al., 2020; Lewis, 2020; Parhan et al., 2021; Rohana, 2019; Varea & González-Calvo, 2020). Effective learning processes are crucial for internalizing these values, but current methods often fail to contextualize and integrate Islamic education materials, especially prayer, into real-world experiences (Ekawati et al., 2019; Parhan et al., 2020; Suhartini, 2016). Prayer should be taught not just as theoretical content but through contextualization, internalization, and practical application. However, the current implementation of Islamic education in schools often focuses too much on cognitive aspects, neglecting the essential affective and conative-

volitive elements that encourage active practice of religious teachings (Ahmed, 2021; Fauzi, 2018; Muhaimin, 2012; Walker, 2020; Wening, 2012).

In recent decades, there has been a growing demand for contextual-based learning methods, which actively engage students by connecting theories to real-life situations (Colace, 2020; Kolakowski, 2020; Liu, 2020; Toheri, 2020). Contextual learning aims to enhance student competence through meaningful connections, significant work, independent learning, collaboration, critical thinking, individual development, high standards, and authentic assessment (Johnson, 2002). Contextual-Based Discovery Learning further encourages students to address real-world problems, fostering innovation and character values (Sugiarti, 2021a, 2021b). Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) links subject content to practical application in everyday life, guiding students to construct knowledge based on their experiences (Berns & Erickson, 2001; Pujiati et al., 2018).

Previous studies have highlighted a significant gap in the integration of contextual and experiential learning methods within Islamic education, particularly in prayer learning. Current approaches often emphasize theoretical knowledge without adequately connecting it to practical application, leading to a disconnect that hampers the holistic development of students. Addressing this gap, this study investigated and developed contextual learning models within Islamic education, specifically focusing on prayer learning. The primary objective is to enrich applicable knowledge and foster knowledge-based virtues by seamlessly integrating theoretical concepts with real-world applications.

### METHOD

This research adopted the Research and Development (R&D) method (Parylo, 2012; Richey, 2005) to enhance Islamic learning education models, specifically focusing on the prayer material employed in Junior High School SMPN I Cugenang. The objective was to refine the learning process conducted previously (Richey, 2005). The ultimate outcome of this development was to generate innovative products in the form of contextual learning models that emphasize applicable knowledge and knowledge-based virtues. Naturalistic data collection methods involved observing the teaching and learning processes conducted by teachers and students. The study employed participatory observation techniques, documentation, and questionnaires for data collection. Quantitative data analysis utilized t-tests to compare and establish significant differences between learning outcomes before and after the implementation of contextual learning models, subjected to statistical verification through correlated t-tests.

Tabel 1. Prayer Behavior That Shows Applicable-Knowledge and Knowledge-Based Virtues

	Question		Scoring scale				
No			2	3	4	5	
1	Performing ablution begins with reciting basmallah						
2	Strengthening the intention in the heart that ablution is done to be able to eliminate minor hadats before the prayer is performed						
3	Performing the sunnah practice of performing ablution in the form of gargling						
4	Performing the sunnah practice of performing ablution in the form of inhaling water into the nose						
5	Washing the face evenly when performing ablution (what is washed is between the place where the hair grows from the head to the chin, and transversely between the two earlobe)						
6	Washing the right side of the ablution first, then continue with the left						
7	Washing both hands up to the elbows when performing ablution						
8	Wiping part of the head or part of the hair when performing ablution						
9	Wiping both ears during ablution						
10	Washing the feet to the ankles when performing ablution						
11	Performing ablution sequentially, that is, doing it in an orderly and systematic manner						

No	Question		Scoring Scale					
			2	3	4	5		
12	Carrying out continuous ablution, which is to wash the next ablution before the previous ablution is dry.							
13	Reading the prayer after ablution, when finished doing ablution							
14	Praying five times a day and night which is an obligation for Muslims							
15	Performing prayers in a conscious state (not sleeping, and experiencing mental disorders)							
16	Performing prayers because they have reached puberty (for men, sperm has come out or are 15 years old, and for women, they are already menstruating or are 9 years old)							
17	Performing prayers in a state of purity from menstruation							
18	Knowing that the prayer is performed in a state of purity from the puerperium							
19	Praying because you know the knowledge of prayer							
20	Carrying out prayers according to prayer times (for example, it is time for dzuhur, then perform dzuhur prayers)							

The data in the table presents a series of questions related to the practice and understanding of ablution and prayer among students. Each question is designed to assess specific aspects of ablution, such as reciting basmallah, strengthening the intention, performing sunnah practices, and washing different parts of the body in a prescribed manner. Additionally, the table includes questions on the frequency and consciousness of performing prayers, as well as the knowledge and timing of prayer practices. The scoring scale ranges from 1 to 5, allowing for a detailed evaluation of students' adherence to these religious practices. This structured approach provides a comprehensive overview of students' proficiency in both ablution and prayer, highlighting areas for potential improvement in religious education.

# **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of this study provide significant insights into the effectiveness of the contextual learning model in enhancing Islamic prayer education. By analyzing the data collected through observations, documentation, and questionnaires, the study highlights the improvements in students' comprehension and practical application of prayer practices. The following findings detail the impact of the contextual learning model on students' knowledge acquisition and the integration of prayer values into their daily lives.

#### Prayer learning program

The prayer learning initiative at the school currently operates informally, with Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers inviting students to participate in congregational prayers, emphasizing practical application. The school organizes temporary and rotating programs for Zuhr and Duha prayers, but a formalized program involving all students has not been implemented yet. Currently, the structured prayer program is limited to IRMA (the Youth Adolescent Association). This reveals a lack of systematic organization in the prayer learning program, which has not effectively integrated prayer practices into students' daily lives. The current approach primarily involves theoretical knowledge transfer, resulting in limited practical application and minimal influence on students' routines, where prayer values remain largely theoretical without clear implementation.

The current learning approach at the school predominantly focuses on students' cognitive abilities, emphasizing their knowledge of prayer materials and readings. The process of learning prayer is confined to lectures and demonstrations, which primarily stress prayer content. However, this method is inadequate for students, as understanding prayer materials through lectures alone is challenging. A more effective approach would involve students actively engaging in investigating and modeling correct prayer procedures, allowing them to seek clarification through questions as feedback. Teachers should present prayer learning material clearly and connect it to real-life situations, necessitating the adoption of a contextual learning approach (Danver, 2016; Goodwin, 2020). Contextual teaching and learning provide a pedagogical framework that helps teachers link subject matter content to real-world scenarios, motivating students to connect knowledge with its practical applications in their lives (Yamin, 2013).

Employing a contextual approach facilitates the internalization of prayer values in students, transforming prayer learning into a personalized asset as it becomes authentically discovered and reconstructed by students during the learning process. However, this internalization is not automatic; it requires intentional learning that encompasses knowing, doing, and being. Firstly, the process involves learning (knowing) the conceptual aspects of prayer, where students gain an understanding of prayer concepts, conditions, and pillars. Secondly, mastery in performing prayers (doing) is achieved through demonstration, with educators exemplifying prayer techniques and students actively participating to demonstrate their understanding (Tafsir, 2010). Lastly, students' progress to incorporating prayers into their daily lives (being), where prayer becomes an intrinsic part of their identity and seamlessly integrates with their personalities (Hanani et al., 2014).

### Students' Prayer Behavior

The assessment of students' prayer behavior was conducted using a research questionnaire with an attitude scale to measure achievements in applicable knowledge. The surveys aimed to gauge students' comprehension of pre-prayer actions like taharah (purification through ablution), adherence to prayer requirements (mandatory, legal, and pillars), and post-prayer actions. The initial distribution of questionnaires assessed the outcomes of educators' teaching methods before implementing the contextual learning model in prayer education. The primary objective was to provide an overview of students' prayer behavior, categorized into applicable knowledge and knowledge-based virtues. Additionally, the questionnaires evaluated students' understanding of pre-prayer activities, prayer material, inherent values, and practical application in their lives. This process helped researchers identify areas for development in the prayer learning model within Islamic education (Tafsir, 2010). The results were categorized into two groups: applicable knowledge (pre-prayer activities and prayer requirements) and knowledge-based virtues (prayer values and their application in students' lives).

# Using Contextual Learning Model for Shalat Learning Material

The assessment of students' prayer behavior was conducted using a research questionnaire with an attitude scale to measure achievements in applicable knowledge. The surveys aimed to gauge students' comprehension of pre-prayer actions such as taharah (purification through ablution), adherence to prayer requirements (mandatory, legal, and pillars), and post-prayer actions. Initially, the questionnaires assessed the effectiveness of educators' teaching methods before implementing the contextual learning model in prayer education. The primary objective was to provide an overview of students' prayer behavior, categorized into applicable knowledge and knowledge-based virtues. Additionally, the questionnaires evaluated students' understanding of pre-prayer activities, prayer material, inherent values, and practical application in their lives. This process helped researchers identify areas for improvement in the prayer learning model within Islamic education. The results were categorized into two groups: applicable knowledge (pre-prayer activities and prayer requirements) and knowledge-based virtues (prayer values and their application in students' lives) (Colace, 2020; Kolakowski, 2020; Liu, 2020).

To instill prayer habits as character traits, students' perceptions of prayer need reshaping to prompt actions rooted in prayer values, followed by habituation. This combination of habits, thought patterns, and practical actions is expected to internalize character development aligned with prayer values (Hidayat et al., 2022; Kulkarni & Karim, 2022). The developmental model combines existing models at SMPN with customized learning models crafted by researchers based on contextual learning theory for Islamic prayer education. The researcher enhanced the school's existing model by incorporating a contextual learning approach. Implementing Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) in prayer material involves careful time allocation within the Learning Implementation Plan to guide teachers through each learning phase effectively. Adequate time allocation is crucial for achieving basic competencies and directing students' learning (Komalasari, 2010; Schunk, 2012).

#### Results of Using Contextual Learning Models in Shalat Learning Materials

Table 2 highlights the contrast between the preliminary learning phase before implementing the contextual learning model and the subsequent phase after its adoption. The data demonstrates that the contextual learning model directs the learning process towards realizing students' inherent potential by encouraging them to reconstruct academic content and connect it to their everyday experiences. Knowledge acquisition occurs through self-experience, social interactions, and engagement with the real environment. Educators play a guiding role, steering students to use their reasoning skills and achieve a deeper understanding through critical and creative thinking, extending beyond the classroom confines.

No	Conventional Learning	Contextual Learning
1	Teachers play an active role in the learning process (teacher-oriented)	Students play an active role in the learning process (students oriented)
2	Learning methods are Less varied	Learning methods are more varied
3	Active participation of students lacks	Active participation of students increased
4	Static thinking and sometimes requires intervention from teachers	Critical and creative thinking increased
5	Teachers only deliver material (transfer of knowledge)	Teacher s not only deliver material (transfer of knowledge), but also transforms attitude and transforms value in learning
6	Students study individually	Group learning and collaborating is prioritized
7	New learning comes to know	Learning has come to know (learning to know), carry out or work (learning to do), and become or blend with his personality (learning to be)
8	Surface learning	Deep learning
9	Learning takes place in class	Learning takes place in various places, contexts, and times
10	Partial learning	Learning in an integrated, whole, and kaffah
11	Learning is theoretical-abstract	Learning in the real-practical direction
12	Delivering material	Finding, investigating, and constructing material
13	Learning orientation towards the creation of students who excel in school and get high report cards	Learning helps students maximize their potential to be themselves, in knowledge, in deeds, and in being able to coexist with other communities
14	Verbalism	Demonstration, participation, observation, and direct experience
15	Ethical behavior of students based on extrinsic motivation	Ethical behavior of students based on intrinsic motivation
16	Assessment is limited to tests and memorization	Valuations are more varied by using observations, attitudes, and portfolios
17	The cognitive realm dominates assessment	A thorough assessment that involves cognitive, affective, and psychomotor
18	Academic assessments measure learning outcomes	An integrated and continuous authentic assessment measures learning outcomes

Table 2. Differences of Learning Circumstance Before and After Using the Contextual
Learning Model

No	Conventional Learning	Contextual Learning			
19	The conclusion of the subject matter has been presented previously and carried out by educators	Strengthen and confirm findings together between educators and students			

The incorporation of contextual learning into prayer material has shifted the learning dynamic from teacher-centered to student-oriented, fostering active student participation. This approach enables students to connect the acquired material with real-life experiences, emphasizing direct exploration, discovery, and knowledge formation. It encourages students to apply what they have learned in daily life through collaboration with educators and peers, facilitating the exchange of ideas and comprehension of the material. The effectiveness of this model is evident when students understand and practice prayer values in the school environment. Contextual learning in prayer education focuses on exploring and discovering the values inherent in prayer, ensuring that content is not just presented but constructed and acquired through real-world interactions. This method aims to internalize prayer values into students' everyday lives, providing a comprehensive understanding and practical application of Islamic education. By connecting lessons to real-life scenarios, the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) model enhances student engagement and effectiveness in learning (Dewi & Primayana, 2019; Gemmink et al., 2021; O'Grady, 2013).

The effectiveness of the developed learning models was assessed by comparing score improvements from the initial learning conditions with those after implementing the contextual learning model in prayer material. The questionnaire results were categorized into two groups for clarity: applicable knowledge and knowledge-based virtues. This categorization included scores related to pre-prayer activities such as taharah with ablution and activities during prayer, including mandatory requirements, legal requirements, and the pillars of prayer. Table 3 illustrates the distinctions in questionnaire results before and after implementing the contextual learning model in Islamic education, particularly regarding prayer material. The presentation starts with the applicable knowledge section and then delves into knowledge-based virtues, followed by a discussion elaborating on these observed differences.

No	Before	After	Difference
1	57.57 %	77.27 %	19.70 %
2	80.30 %	83.33 %	3.03 %
3	90.90 %	95.45 %	4.55 %
4	66.66 %	72.72 %	6.06 %
5	86.36 %	89.39 %	3.03 %
6	93.93 %	96.96 %	3.03 %
7	92.42 %	92.42 %	0 %
8	92.42 %	93.93 %	1.51 %
9	96.96 %	98.48 %	1.52 %
10	92.92 %	95.45 %	2.53 %
11	86.36 %	90.90 %	4.54 %
12	74.24 %	84.84 %	10.60 %
13	46.96 %	81.81 %	34.85 %
14	60.60 %	75.75 %	15.15 %
15	90.90 %	90.90 %	0 %
16	78.78~%	81.81 %	3.03 %
17	96.96 %	96.96 %	0 %

Table 3. Distinctions in Quentionnaire Results Before and After Impelementing Contextual Learning Model in Islamic Education

No	Before	After	Difference
18	98.48 %	98.48 %	0 %
19	77.27 %	84.84 %	12.57 %
20	53.03 %	71.21 %	18.18 %

Based on the implementation of the contextual learning model, the average score for applicable-knowledge significantly increased to 87.44%, marking a 6.04% improvement from the prior learning model, which scored only 81.40%. Additionally, the average score for knowledge-based virtues demonstrated notable growth, reaching 78.26%, compared to the earlier score of 63.84%, showcasing a substantial increase of 14.42% from the previous learning model. These results underscore the efficacy of the contextual learning models in enhancing students' learning outcomes and facilitating the application of prayer values in their everyday lives. The shift from a theoretical and abstract learning approach to one that actively involves students in exploration, understanding, and real-life connections contributes to students' ability to explore and implement prayer values in their daily routines.

The implementation of the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) method in prayer education has effectively integrated classroom learning with behavioral modeling within the school culture, extracurricular activities, and family and community education through prayer communication. This comprehensive approach fosters a sustainable, partnership-based learning process that involves teachers, schools, and parents working together. By utilizing diverse methodologies such as lectures, assignments, study groups, and discussions, the strategy ensures a well-rounded educational experience (Das et al., 2018; Kreng & Huang, 2009; Williams & Svensson, 2021). Teachers are required to develop competencies in four key areas pedagogical, professional, social, and personal—to effectively engage students in Islamic education (Ragupathi, 2021; Úcar, 2021). Collaboration with principals, other subject teachers, and staff is also crucial to provide the necessary support for educators (Ahmad Tafsir, 2010; Das et al., 2018).

This method not only enhances learning outcomes but also stimulates creativity and productivity by engaging students' senses, making learning activities more concrete, enjoyable, and meaningful (Humberstone et al., 2013). By making lessons relevant to students' lives, CTL helps students acquire knowledge, skills, habits, and behaviors under the guidance of an educator (Susanto, 2013). The approach ensures that learning is both theoretical and practical, bridging the gap between classroom instruction and real-world application. This holistic educational model transforms the learning dynamic from a teacher-centered approach to a more student-oriented one, fostering active participation, collaboration, and critical thinking among students, thereby preparing them for real-life challenges.

The Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) method in prayer education effectively integrates classroom learning with behavioral modeling within the school culture, extracurricular activities, and family and community education. This comprehensive approach fosters a sustainable, partnership-based learning process that involves collaboration among teachers, schools, and parents. By employing diverse methodologies such as lectures, assignments, study groups, and discussions (Das et al., 2018; Kreng & Huang, 2009; Williams & Svensson, 2021), teachers are able to address various learning styles and needs. Through this multifaceted approach, educators develop four key competencies: pedagogical, professional, social, and personal (Ragupathi, 2021; Úcar, 2021). Pedagogically, teachers enhance their instructional techniques to make learning more effective. Teachers are expected to be able to use digital tools to be professional teachers (Yudhiantara & Sugilar, 2023). Professionally, they expand their expertise and adaptability. Socially, they build stronger relationships with students and the community, and personally, they grow in their own reflective practices. This method not only enriches the educational experience but also ensures that learning extends beyond the

classroom, fostering a holistic development that is supported by a collaborative network of educators and families.

Collaboration with principals, other subject teachers, and staff is crucial for the successful implementation of the CTL method (Ahmad Tafsir, 2010; Das et al., 2018). This collaborative approach enhances learning outcomes by creating a supportive and cohesive educational environment. It stimulates creativity and productivity among students, making learning activities concrete, enjoyable, and meaningful (Humberstone et al., 2013). By making lessons relevant to students' lives, CTL helps them acquire essential knowledge, skills, habits, and behaviors under the guidance of educators (Susanto, 2013). This ensures that learning bridges the gap between theoretical instruction and real-world application, fostering a more comprehensive and practical educational experience. Ultimately, the collaborative effort enriches the educational process, making it more dynamic and effective in preparing students for real-life challenges.

This study offers valuable insights into the potential of contextual learning in Islamic education, particularly in prayer learning. However, the study has several limitations. Conducted in a specific educational setting, the results may not be generalizable to broader contexts, as the effectiveness of contextual learning models could vary across different schools, regions, or cultural settings.

# CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) method in prayer education has significantly improved students' learning outcomes and the practical application of prayer values. The findings show a notable increase in both applicable knowledge and knowledge-based virtues, with the average score for applicable knowledge rising to 87.44%, a 6.04% increase from the previous average of 81.40%. Knowledge-based virtues scores also improved to 78.26%, up by 14.42% from the prior score of 63.84%. These results underscore the efficacy of the CTL approach in fostering a holistic understanding of prayer among students by linking classroom learning with real-life applications. The CTL method has successfully shifted the learning dynamic from teacher-centered to student-oriented, promoting active participation, collaboration, and critical thinking. By integrating diverse methodologies and fostering a partnership-based learning process involving teachers, schools, and parents, the CTL model ensures a comprehensive educational experience that bridges the gap between theoretical instruction and practical application. This study highlights the potential of contextual learning to enhance Islamic education, particularly in prayer learning, and lays the groundwork for further research to explore long-term effects and broader applicability.

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