

Learning Strategies Based on Freedom of Thought in Improving Student Understanding at Muhammadiyah 01 Elementary School

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Abstract

In the current global situation, religious education is increasingly important, especially with regard to a sustainable knowledge of Islam. In exploring the importance of intellectual freedom as a fundamental component of a revolution in religious education, this paper will concentrate on the framework of a contemporary and sustainable understanding of Islam. Teachers often provide knowledge to students directly, without fully understanding whether the information can be remembered or not. This research utilizes descriptive-analytical methodology and Classroom Action Research (CAR) to examine issues and patterns in religious education and assess the impact of methods that support intellectual freedom in Islamic education.

The purpose of this study was to find out how well the Inquiry Learning model works in improving students' understanding of PAI subjects in the upper grade of SD Muhammadiyah 01. Using a spiral-shaped action research paradigm and moving from one experiment to the next, Classroom Action Research (PTK) was the research methodology used. The findings of this study show that the use of the Inquiry Learning approach can effectively help upper grade students of SD Muhammadiyah 01 understand PAI subjects better. 1. After the implementation of the freedom of thought-based learning approach, students' learning outcomes improved. Examination of the test results from Experiment I and Experiment II showed an improvement in students' learning outcomes, as evidenced by the fact that only 22 students, or 70%, passed from Experiment I and 28 students, or 93%, passed from Experiment II.

Keyword : Freedom of Thought, Learning Strategy, Islamic Education

A. Introduction

Religious education is an integral part in the formation of individual religious values and understanding. However, in a modern era filled with diverse understandings and challenges, religious education requires strategies to remain relevant and effective. In this context, freedom of thought becomes a key pillar in strengthening sustainable learning of Islamic understanding. By taking into account the background and challenges faced.

In recent decades, traditional approaches to religious teaching have often faced challenges in accommodating social changes, technological developments and the growing demand for freedom of thought. In this context, religious education strategies have become an urgent necessity to ensure that the prevailing understanding of Islam remains relevant and sustainable.

Religious education often faces challenges in maintaining its relevance to the context of the times. Static understandings and a lack of space for freedom of thought can hinder an individual's ability to adapt and understand Islamic teachings holistically. This becomes even more important in an era of globalization and technological advancement, where access to information is widespread. Therefore, there is a need for a new approach that emphasizes freedom of thought as the main pillar of religious learning.

The development of technology has greatly influenced how people access information and understand religion. The younger generation, in particular, is increasingly exposed to a variety of thoughts and views that challenge existing religious traditions. In this context, religious education needs to adapt to remain relevant and able to provide a comprehensive understanding of Islamic values in the lives of individual human beings.

In this research, strategies in religious education, especially in the context of understanding Islam, occur when freedom of thought becomes the main pillar in the learning process. By allowing students to critically analyze religious teachings, ask questions, and explore different points of view, religious education can become more dynamic and provide a deeper understanding of Islamic principles. Freedom of thought allows students to build a sustainable

understanding, which is based not only on passively received knowledge, but also on a continuous process of reflection and dialog. Thus, a religious education strategy that prioritizes freedom of thought has the potential to produce a generation that is more skilled in applying Islamic values in the context of modern life.

Religious Education strategies have taken center stage in efforts to promote quality and sustainable understanding of Islam. In this context, freedom of thought is considered to be a key pillar that supports sustained and deep learning. Various studies have been conducted to explore how freedom of thought can enrich the learning process of Islam, enabling learners to develop a deeper and more critical understanding of Islamic teachings.

These studies not only highlight the importance of making space for freedom of thought in the Islamic religious education curriculum, but also demonstrate its positive impact on character building, tolerance and respect for diversity in society. By understanding religious teachings critically and contextually, learners are able to develop strong analytical skills and inclusive attitudes that promote peace and justice.

Through these studies, there are opportunities to explore innovative learning strategies, curriculum development based on critical thinking, and efforts to facilitate intercultural dialog in the context of PAI. PAI strategies towards freedom of thought promise a more inclusive, harmonious and meaningful future for individuals and society as a whole.

B. Methods

This research uses quantitative research using field research methods that examine data related to research data. This research was located at SD MUHAMMADIYAH 01 Kuripan Kidul, Pekalongan City. The subjects of this study were upper grade class students. The methods used in this research include topic selection, theme development, and problem selection. The data collection technique used in this research is observation which aims to obtain general data about the freedom of thought-based learning strategies implemented at the school.

Furthermore, by using interviews or interviews with Religion subject teachers and upper grade class students to obtain data regarding freedom of thought-based learning strategies in increasing student involvement and understanding.

C. Results

The researcher made observations and obtained information on how the PAI learning process at SD Muhammadiyah 01. In other words, the PAI learning process at the school mostly still uses traditional methods where students learn directly from the teacher. As a result, students find it difficult to develop critical thinking skills that help them understand the relationship between the topics discussed in class. There are various learning strategies that allow them to communicate effectively in the face of difficulties. In reality, students are less active in class so that it does not attract students' attention and does not run effectively. Based on a sample of 30 students in the class above, only 14 students are above the KKM, while the other 16 students are below the KKM.

Nearly 47% of learning outcomes are low due, in part, to the teacher's tendency to lack a variety of teaching styles in the classroom and the teacher as the center of everything (teacher center). The current way of education needs to change. Students can no longer be treated as passive objects of learning, but need to be given active feedback and included. Meanwhile, the teacher acts as a creative facilitator and mediator. The most popular teaching method used by teachers is summarizing or showing what is contained in the textbook. In today's classrooms, teaching is no longer teacher-centered, which results in students becoming passive learners. A strong influence on students' learning experience in the classroom will come from the use of interesting and stimulating teaching methods. One of the main goals is for teachers to more easily explain PAI materials to students and educate them about health concepts.

Based on the above problems, the author as a researcher was encouraged to conduct research in order to increase the level of understanding of fifth grade students of SD Muhammadiyah 01 by using a learning model based on freedom of thought. The freedom of thought model is a series of learning activities that

emphasize the critical and analytical thinking process to seek and find their own answers to a questionable problem. By using this methodology, it is expected that learning in the classroom will be more effective and student learning outcomes will improve.

D. Discussion

One of the factors that influence the success of learning is the learning strategy. If a student has a desire to learn and a deep understanding then he will achieve improved learning outcomes. Learning strategies serve as a guide to achieving successful results. In other words, a teacher will carry out a certain activity because of a strong desire to obtain the desired results.

The purpose of this research is to investigate learning strategies that can help primary school students studying Islamic Religious Education (PAI) to have a thorough understanding and critical thinking skills. Conducting a thorough literature analysis on Islamic Education learning, learning methodologies that support intellectual freedom, and variables that influence student engagement and understanding was the first stage in this research project. A strong theoretical basis for creating learning techniques that suit the Islamic education environment will be provided by this literature examination.

After the literature review, the next step is to design a learning strategy that integrates the concept of freedom of thought with Islamic learning materials. This strategy should include various activities and methods that can activate students cognitively and affectively, as well as stimulate their critical thinking in understanding Islamic religious concepts. In addition, the learning strategy also needs to be designed in such a way that it considers the diversity of students and allows active participation of all students without differentiating their abilities or backgrounds.

The next step is to apply the learning strategies that have been designed in a real context, namely in the classroom. This implementation requires collaboration between the researcher and the PAI teacher to ensure that the learning strategy can

be implemented well and in accordance with the needs of students and the applicable curriculum. During the implementation process, the researcher needs to collect data on students' engagement, their understanding of the learning materials, as well as their responses to the learning strategies used. The steps are as follows:

1. The teacher selects some materials to be used. After that, convey the material that will be delivered for student learning and guide students in the learning process.
2. The teacher designs small groups that are used as a forum for students to express their opinions. This process is carried out according to the readiness of students in the learning process and adjusts the classroom used for teaching. It is expected that by using this, students can understand the material better.
3. Experimentation. At this stage, the Treatment Class is a group that uses small groups to apply the concept of freedom of thought in learning. This experiment aims to find out whether using learning strategies and forming small groups of students can increase student activeness which in turn can have an impact on grades.
4. Application. Tests can be used to determine whether the development of this learning system will improve student learning outcomes or not. The purpose of the test is to evaluate students' understanding of the material provided. Therefore, it is possible to determine whether teaching using this learning technique can increase student knowledge and engagement by talking about the test topics.

After conducting the steps above, the next step is to analyze the data that has been collected to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy in improving student engagement and understanding. This data analysis can be done using various research methods, such as quantitative analysis to measure the level of student engagement and qualitative analysis to understand students' understanding of the learning materials and their experiences during the learning process.

Research conducted at SD Muhammadiyah 01, teachers usually teach the material by using narration techniques, but students' performance is not greatly improved by this approach. In addition, the research highlighted that if the subject matter is

presented using a variety of learning techniques, students will be more engaged in the learning process, which will naturally attract their attention. To complement the findings of the previous research, this study also conducted interviews with teachers and students. From the interviews with students, it is known that the learning paradigm used is still shallow and less adaptable. Whenever they teach a concept, they illustrate it by using real-world examples from the student handbook before giving task instructions. The teaching method is constant and never changes.

Students' engagement in the classroom was compared with each other before any modifications to the lesson plan. The teacher's training approach aroused children's curiosity. On the other hand, some students lacked the initiative to complete the tasks given by the teacher and lacked the confidence to ask questions when they felt stuck.

From the observation data and test results at the end of the first semester it can be concluded that the learning process improved in the second semester when the freedom of thought learning model was used. This is shown by the increased participation of students in the learning process, although some students still remain passive and pay less attention to the teacher's explanation. In addition, there are still many students who are still embarrassed to ask the teacher when experiencing difficulties.

Many students did not fully realize the teacher's suggestions during the learning improvement process. 8 students still did not reach the KKM, according to the analysis of the final modification of the experiment I learning plan. This shows that only 73% of students in the planned session have met the KKM. Nonetheless, the data clearly showed that before the adjustment, students' performance in experiment I had improved.

In the second trial, the instructors guided the students more patiently and vigorously, helping them to understand each idea in the free thinking learning model so that they could finally understand and appreciate it. In addition, students' engagement in the learning process increased. Corrective actions were implemented to overcome the mistakes that occurred in the previous study.

In the classroom, the students became more focused. Each student completed the tasks given by the teacher. When students are more confident, they will be more motivated to try harder to understand the topic. At this stage, the teacher only offers help if needed; students can work independently by utilizing the freedom of thought learning method.

Students' learning outcomes in the second semester showed improvement compared to the first semester. As a result of the analysis of the second semester teaching, there has been a marked improvement in student performance compared to the first semester improvement. The class average is 93%, meaning that only 2 students have not met the KKM and that the class average has reached a higher level as the average has reached more than 80%.

Based on the study findings from the observations, tests and discussions mentioned above, experiments I and II showed that the learning process of the freedom of thought learning model produced superior learning outcomes. Students were able to gain better learning outcomes and a deeper understanding of the subject matter by using the freedom of thought based learning style. It became clear during the implementation that using the Freedom of Thought Learning strategy in the teaching process has changed the way students learn and how they improve their performance. This suggests that improving student performance during the learning process can be done by using a freedom of thought-based teaching paradigm.

- 1) Based on the evidence, various conditions and activities related to this research project, several points can be identified, namely
- 2) The least effective PAI teaching strategy implemented at SD Muhammadiyah 01 Kuripan Kidul is the teaching of PAI through the use of lesson plans and the teaching strategy is only lectures. Students are periodically asked to participate in activities that involve teaching other students or even students who only need to help in other students' classes.
- 3) PAI learning methods can improve student learning outcomes by using the freedom of thought learning paradigm. Before using the Freedom of Thought learning paradigm, student learning outcomes did not meet the minimum

completeness criteria (KKM). However, student learning outcomes improved after the Freedom of Thought learning approach was implemented. Every experiment conducted using the learning model created shows this. Student learning outcomes in cycle I improved compared to the previous test, especially in the implementation of experiment II. This indicates that the freedom of thought learning paradigm was very successful in promoting learning that improved student understanding.

E. Conclusion

The researcher can draw the following findings from the description, different circumstances, and actions related to the implementation of this class action research. Based on this classroom action research, the researcher can draw the following conclusions:

1. Before adopting the freedom of thought learning model, the teacher's PAI learning strategy only consisted of lecture and question and answer. As a result, students learn to passively listen to the teacher's explanation and only respond when asked. In addition, the learning outcomes of upper grade students at SD Muhammadiyah 01 Kuripan Kidul in PAI subjects were still low, with only 14 students or 47% of the total number of students getting a complete score of 30.
2. The use of the freedom of thought learning model in PAI classes in the upper grades of SD Muhammadiyah 01 Kuripan Kidul encourages students to be more involved in their learning, especially when they talk with friends. They also become more courageous in voicing their opinions or asking questions to the teacher, and they become more analytical in working on the problems given.
3. The findings of this study have shown how well the freedom of thought learning model can be used to improve students' understanding of PAI subjects in the high school class of SD Muhammadiyah 01 Kuripan Kidul. The test data from experiments I and II were analyzed, and it was found that there was an increase in student learning outcomes. Students in experiment I had a complete score of only 22, or 70%, while students in experiment II completed 28 or 93%.

The findings of this study support a number of recommendations for educators and educational institutions who want to improve the standard of classroom teaching, such as:

- 1) It is beneficial to adopt the freedom of thought learning model when teaching PAI subjects as it can spark students' interest and excitement for learning, leading to an increase in their understanding.
- 2) Increase students' participation in learning activities to ensure that they are always actively involved in the learning process.
- 3) Since students at lower levels are more intellectually and psychologically capable, using the freedom of thought learning paradigm.
- 4) The freedom of thought learning paradigm can be applied to other disciplines and also PAI courses. The researchers expect colleagues to continue more in-depth research to improve the quality of students' educational improvement because there are still many areas that still need to be researched, including aspects of motivation, student cooperation, and active learning.

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