



Development Of Integrated Thematic Islamic Religious Education Model At The Level Of Ibtidaiyah Madrasah

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Abstract

The present study aimed to develop the curriculum model of Islamic Religious Education based on integrated thematic. The research model used was Research & Development referring to the development model of Borg & Gall. The instruments employed in this research included observation, literature study, and questionnaire. The result of the study revealed that the PAI teachers had not yet implemented the integrated thematic-based learning since the syllabus and handbook provided by the ministry of religion had not been based on the integrated-thematic basis. Therefore, they needed the PAI curriculum model that was based on the integrated thematic one. The validation result from the material expert of the product can be categorized as "very valid", the linguist was considered "fairly valid", and the education practitioner was "very valid". The product feasibility of the integrated thematic-based PAI curriculum model was reviewed after the learning activities by using the integrated thematic-based PAI learning. Based on the responses given by the students, it can be concluded as follows: 1). The students are more enthusiastic and actively involved in the learning process, and 2). The interaction between the teacher and students is deemed better and more alive, as well as. Based on the valuation, then, the integrated thematic-based PAI curriculum is considered feasible to use in order to improve the quality of PAI learning at ibtidaiyah level.

Keywords: curriculum, MADRASAH ibtidaiyah, integrated-thematic.

INTRODUCTION

Religious education in recent decades has drawn sharp criticism from several parties, due to its inability to overcome various problems in people's lives, such as the inability of MADRASAH (school) alumni to catch up in economic and social factors. Even in some cases, alumni of MADRASAHs or pesantren are accused of being involved in violence and promoting disharmony and conflict of ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-group relations (SARA). This cannot be separated from the concept implementation of religious education in the field, so its effectiveness is being doubted. In addition, religious education at MADRASAHs/schools is also seen as not being able to become a spirit that encourages the growth of harmony in daily life (Rojii, Istikomah and Hidayatulloh, 2020; Ahmad Zarkasyi, 2021; Ahmad, 2022).

From several studies, it was found that the process of religious learning in educational institutions does seem to still experience many weaknesses. The weakness is primarily in the weak learning process, namely that religious learning is not encouraged to develop thinking skills and is less oriented to problem-solving faced by people now and in the future, but it is more oriented to the

past. Religious learning does not lead to religious education, but rather leads to learning about religion (Indra, 2020). So far, the process of religious learning is too much about knowledge and merely memorization, without being required to understand the information so that it can be connected with real everyday life. So that it does not affect the daily behavior of students and does not bring meaning to life (Indra, 2019; Jadidah, 2021),

The emergence of a gap between the supposed success (*das sollen*) of Islamic education and the facts on the field (*das sein*) indicates that there are problems or issues in Islamic education. The current curriculum system does not accommodate suitable learning methods and is less oriented to children's growth and development. Renewal of religious learning patterns is needed, from traditional patterns to patterns of attracting students, namely an integrated thematic-based PAI curriculum (Abdullah, 2019). Since PAI subjects set by the government in the curriculum are taught separately and not related to each other, the knowledge obtained by students is deemed partial.

Learning will be meaningful if carried out in integrated thematic learning, children will understand the concepts they learn through direct observation and relate them to other concepts they understand. It will increase if students in the teaching and learning process participate actively and can immediately see and practice the competencies contained in the subjects. Integrated thematic is considered one of the most effective learning models to improve the quality of learning. This is because it allows a teacher to absorb and touch the emotional, physical, and academic aspects of the classroom or MADRASAH in an integrated manner. It is empirically proven successful in accelerating and increasing the memory capacity of learners for a long time (Salamah, 2014).

The 2013 curriculum has actually implemented thematic learning, but the integration has not been comprehensive, because it is only limited to a few subjects (Sanusi, 2017). The Decree of the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia Number 183 of 2019 concerning the Islamic Education Curriculum and Arabic has directed that the teaching and learning process should be carried out with an integrated thematic system (Abdullah, 2019), but the curriculum itself (standardized PAI curriculum content) is not thematically based such as general subjects which are already based on the thematic as a whole, whether in the form of standard content in the form of basic competencies (KD), syllabus, and in the textbook. So, non-religious subject teachers are greatly assisted in the implementation of thematic-based teaching. This is different from teachers of religious subjects, their basic competencies and syllabus are not thematically based, so they must first communicate with other religious subjects. This is certainly very hindering the implementation of thematic-based rooting.

Based on the description above and the results of the preliminary study, it was found that the conditions of the curriculum (plan documents) and practice (learning) of Islamic religious education in MADRASAHs tend to be mechanistic, in the form of knowledge transfer at a low level (hearing and memorizing). According to that condition, the researcher sees the importance of conducting research and development to develop a thematic curriculum model, which is a concept of Islamic religious education curriculum model designed with the principle of integration, accommodating all conditions of students, holistic, and fun.

The formulation of the problem is how the thematic-based Islamic religious education learning conditions at the Ibtidaiyah level, the thematic-based Islamic religious education curriculum design at the Ibtidaiyah level, and how effective the integrated thematic-based Islamic religious education curriculum at the Ibtidaiyah level? The present study aimed to formulate an integrated thematic-based PAI curriculum design at the Ibtidaiyah level, while the purpose of its development was to develop an alternative prototype of an integrated thematic-based Islamic religious education curriculum design.

There have been many studies on integrated thematic learning at the SD and MI levels. Some researchers focus on the Implementation of the Integrative Thematic Curriculum 2013 in Elementary Schools (Demonika et al., 2020). Or the perception of elementary school teachers on the thematic integrative approach in the 2013 curriculum (Puspita et al., 2020). Some of the

research focuses on the development of products related to integrated thematic learning (Fatchurrohman, 2015) and on the development of teaching materials in the implementation of integrated thematic learning (Octaviani, 2017), Traditional game-based thematic learning model and scientific approach to creative thinking ability (Kawuryan, Hastuti and Supartinah, 2018), the effectiveness of the integrated curriculum in improving a student learning an achievement in an elementary school (Nuraini *et al.*, 2022). Although there have been many researchers who have conducted a study on integrated thematic learning at the SD or MI level, the integrated thematic-based learning of Islamic religious education (PAI) has not been yet studied. This is because the scope of previous studies is only on general subjects or the integration between general material and religion in SD/MI only, while the integration of PAI subjects at the Ibtidaiyah level has not been conducted yet.

METHOD

The method used in this research was Research and Development (R&D) and trials with quasi-experimental methods. This study used a qualitative approach to pre-development and a quantitative approach to product testing. This study used the development procedure of Borg & Gall because this method has been tested and is widely used by researchers to develop a learning model and curriculum. This development procedure has ten stages of the process that must be passed (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2007), of which 10 steps are modified by combining related stages so that they can be simplified into 3 (three) basic stages, namely a). preliminary studies. b). development stage, and c). Testing the effectiveness of the products made. Data analysis was carried out through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

Data collection techniques used are observations, interviews, questionnaires, document analysis, as well as appreciation instruments and learning outcomes tests. There are two types of data generated in this study, namely qualitative data and quantitative data. Qualitative data were generated during the preliminary study and model development. While quantitative data is generated at the stage of model development and validation. Qualitative data analysis was carried out through direct interpretation, while quantitative data were analyzed by statistical t-test procedures which were processed by computer-assisted SPSS program.

RESULTS

The Result of Study and Development

The stages of research and development of an integrated thematic-based PAI curriculum model consist of 3 (three) basic stages, namely a). a preliminary study consisting of field observations and document analysis. b). The development stage consists of product drafting, and c). Testing the effectiveness of the model consists of field implementation test activities.

Preliminary Study

In the preliminary study, the focus studied were:

1. PAI learning conditions in MADRASAH ibtidaiyah

The PAI teachers in South Jakarta, out of the 73 South Jakarta teachers who filled out the questionnaire, on average had 67 PAI undergraduate (S1) education qualifications, there were even 4 PAI teachers who had master's education qualifications (S2). However. While the educational background is Tarbiyah or Islamic religious education, only 6 people have non-*tarbiya* backgrounds.

There are no madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers who have implemented integrated thematic-based PAI learning, for various reasons and considerations. 86% of them gave the reason that the syllabus set by the directorate of Islamic education was still partial and 65% stated that it was because there was no handbook on integrated thematic-based PAI learning.

Meanwhile, the condition of students' motivation was still low in participating in PAI learning. It was found that: 1). At the time of learning there were still some students who did not focus to the material presented by the teacher; 2). Students felt that the material given was often repeated in PAI subjects, so it was a bit boring because the teaching method was the same, namely more in the form of lecturing; 3). Students felt that PAI lessons provided more assignments in the form of memorization compared to tasks in the form of projects or fun tasks.

2. Planning and Implementation of PAI in MADRASAH Ibtidaiyah

Based on the results of observations about the implementation of PAI learning, it can be stated that PAI teachers had tried to improve the quality of learning, namely, they used to improve the quality of lesson planning, mastery of materials, learning management, teaching methods, and use of learning media. PAI teachers mastered the learning material well in the implementation of learning. However, the material mastered by the teacher was not balanced with the mastery of innovative learning methods and models by the teacher, so the learning process becomes less interesting and the activeness of students was deemed low. Teachers in teaching and learning activities still rarely used interesting learning media. Evaluation of learning carried out by teachers still emphasized aspects of knowledge, while aspects of attitudes and skills were rarely carried out.

Teachers in the learning process had tried to motivate students, but the motivation given was way too general. The motivation given had not led to the motivation that raised the full attention that students must have, had not led to the suitability of students' needs, had not led to the formation of student self-confidence, and had not led to the realization of preparing students to socialize with teachers, friends, and family.

Stage of Development

The stage of compiling the prototype product model for the thematic integrated Islamic education-based curriculum development, the researcher determined some of the characteristics of the resulting model as follows: 1). The main material used as the theme is taken from the subject matter contained in the previous Islamic Religious Education subject curriculum. 2). The integrated model does not fundamentally change the curriculum development design format that is usually applied in madrasas. The consideration is that this model is easier and faster to be accepted by teachers. 3). The stages of integration between PAI materials are as follows: a). inventory and map basic competencies in each PAI subject. b). Determine the central theme with reference to the results of the basic competency inventory. c). Networking through a central theme. d). Determine the allocation of time in learning. e). Formulate learning objectives. f). Make scenarios of learning activities, g). Determine learning tools and media, and h). Planning an evaluation. 4). The integration arrangement model for class I and II refers to the Spider Webbed model. While grades III to VI refer to the Integrated model.

This difference is because for grades I and II it is recommended based on the class teacher, namely only 1 teacher who teaches the four PAI subjects. The consideration is that grades I and II students still think holistically, meaning that in general elementary school students still think as one unit and cannot be broken down, and are still transitioning from the learning system in Kindergarten (RA/TK) which only uses classrooms. teacher system, and a more optimal system.

Expert Validation Results

The validation of the integrated thematic-based PAI curriculum products was carried out by three expert validators, namely education experts, linguists, and education practitioners. The results of the assessment scores from the three validators were as follows, (1) education experts reached 89 with very valid criteria, (2) linguists reached 83 with quite valid criteria, (3) education practitioners reached 86 with very valid criteria. The expert assessment scores obtained were then averaged so that they reached 86.3 a very valid level.

Although the level of product validity was very valid, it still needed to be revised. Product revisions were made based on criticism, suggestions, and comments from the expert validators. The results of the discussion with the validator were also used as material for revision of the product improvement of the integrated thematic-based PAI curriculum model.

Result of Field Test

The results of field observation data are summarized as follows: 1). Students are more enthusiastic and actively involved in the learning process, and 2). The interaction between teachers and students is considered better and livelier, and 3), students become more responsive to their surroundings. This statement is reinforced by questionnaire data obtained and analyzed based on the percentage of student questionnaire answers with a total of 54 students.

The result of the answer was as follows: 1). 57.6% of the students felt impressed and happy with the combination of several subjects in one theme, 22% sometimes felt impressed, 8.5% were not impressed, and 11.9% remained unimpressed with the combination of several subjects. 2). 44.1% of students found it easy to relate the correlation of one subject matter to another, 39% of students found it easy sometimes, and 16.9% did not find the correlation. 3). 59.3% of students felt that there was no difference between one subject and another, and 40.7% of students stated that there was still no difference. 5). 39% of students really felt they were learning while playing, 30.5% of students often felt they were learning while playing, 11.9% sometimes, and 18.6% never felt that way. 6). 47.5% of students stated that learning was quite in line with the interests and needs of students, 18.6% sometimes it was appropriate, 25.4% of students felt it was not in line, and 8.5% felt that it did not in line with the interests and needs of students.

Results of data analysis as follows: 1). Student activity is more visible than before. 2). Integrated learning is very feasible to be implemented broadly and comprehensively in all classes, because the majority of students feel: a) Impressed and happy with the combination of several subjects in one theme. b) Easy to understand and connect between one subject and other subjects. c) There is no difference between one subject and another subject. d) Playing while learning.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the research above, it can be stated that PAI supporting teachers have met the teacher standards set by the government. Quality education is strongly influenced by the educational qualifications of the educators (Thoyib, 2016; Chostholani, Usman and Zamroni, 2021), as well as adult guidance and assistance to make a positive contribution in stimulating appropriately so that children's abilities develop optimally (Kysilka, 1998; Ahmad, 2020). Therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that teacher education qualifications are an important factor that must be considered to improve the quality of education in Islamic boarding schools and schools.

PAI learning based on integrated thematic shows a significant influence in improving the quality of PAI learning. This is because substantially, the concept of integrated thematic learning in PAI learning in elementary schools is designed based on the principle that elementary school student education is the foundation for children in shaping their bright future, their educational success helps in the following periods. In this golden age, children begin to find out what makes them curious, they are enthusiastic about learning to read and find interesting new things (Sunarti, Rahmawati and Wardani, 2016). Because in general, students will be stimulated to learn if they see that the learning situation tends to be in accordance with their interests. This means that learning motivation is the drive that exists within the individual to carry out learning activities. This learning motivation can be increased by external stimuli, namely by creating interesting learning situations, one of which is by using interesting learning media. They have the development of thinking at the concrete operational level, so they require physical experience in understanding a concept, such as manipulating concrete objects to form their logical thinking experience. At this stage students are able to think logically but still need concrete objects that can be tampered with according to their wishes, thus helping their intellectual development. Therefore, manipulative activities (hand on activities) and opportunities to explore are very important for students today in helping their thinking process.

One of the objectives of developing an integrated thematic-based PAI learning model is to strengthen its implementation in the 2013 curriculum and the 2022 Independent Curriculum. In essence, integrated thematic learning is the implementation of an integrated curriculum (Krissandi and Rusmawan, 2015). Integrated thematic learning involves teachers and students actively and facilitates them to learn in a pleasant atmosphere, namely teaching and learning activities are linked to the context of real-life situations that allow creative exploration (Okoro, C.O. & Okoro, 2016). Thematic learning can increase student interest, help students understand connections, save teacher time because it combines all lessons and utilizes connections from the real world and life experiences (John, 2015). In addition, thematic learning can create interesting connections for students who need a relevant learning environment (Cook, 2009). The relevance of learning has a positive influence on students (Nunn, 1995). The integrated thematic learning

can improve learning outcomes such as research conducted by (Kawuryan, Hastuti and Supartinah, 2018; Wali, Mbabho and Pali, 2020). In addition, the research conducted by (Kneen *et al.*, 2020) describes that contextual learning can increase the meaning of learning. There are several reasons underlying the importance of thematic learning, including 1). The world of children is the real world. In their daily life, they see an event/event containing a number of concepts/subject material. 2). Time savings occur because overlapping materials can be reduced or even avoided. 3). Students will be able to see a meaningful relationship between aspects/subject matter. 4). Learning becomes whole and not fragmented. 5). Mastery of concepts is getting better and more mature (Khoeriyah and Mawardi, 2018; Elizar, 2019).

Therefore, learning needs to be developed that allows students, both individually and in groups, to actively explore and discover scientific concepts and principles in a holistic, meaningful, and authentic way. Learning to increase students' appreciation of culture emphasizes meaningful learning. Fink (2005) suggests that meaningful learning is what is learned has a high potential to be used in life, both personal life and participation in social life.

Meaningful learning is learning that is packaged according to the characteristics of students. Characteristics of elementary school students who still think concretely and realistically require a concrete and integrated learning package. This is relevant to the overall goal of PAI subjects and is oriented to the mastery of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes so that students are able to participate in various environments (Barr, R. D., Barth, J. L., and Shermis, 1978; Schuncke, 1988; Tracey, D. H., & Morrow, 2017). emphasizes the importance of packaging integrated learning that provides opportunities for students to learn to act through solving problems that arise in everyday life.

The integrated thematic learning model is oriented to learning practices that are in accordance with the needs and development of students in early childhood education and basic education. The integrated thematic approach is an approach based on the idea that in its use, Islamic religious education is never separated from its aspects. The aspects of PAI (al-qur'an hadith, moral creed, fiqh, and SKI) in religious practice are always used together and integrated. Even with other fields, the value of PAI is always integrated in usage.

This thematic approach is considered urgent because students' thought at the age of MI/SD has not been able to sort out science as in the subject approach. Integration into learning should lead to a comprehensive understanding of the learner and the surrounding environment. Since they are also part of a wider world students are able to understand the knowledge gained through the curriculum and its application and development in everyday life (Nuraini *et al.*, 2022). The reason for this integration is that the learning experience is interdisciplinary, requires multi-skill and collaborative interaction, and is efficient in the learning process.

The implication of the thematic PAI learning model is that PAI teachers must be creative in preparing learning activities/experiences for students, choosing competencies from various aspects/subjects, and arranging them so that learning becomes more meaningful, interesting, fun, and whole.

The integration of PAI subjects into thematic learning must of course be accompanied by educational efforts that function as a process of transfer and development of knowledge, so that students receive holistic knowledge. This is important because in reality the scientific material presented to students is currently not based on the holistic paradigm. Therefore, there must be an effort to integrate Islamic religious education and character as a curriculum that is applied in national education.

The view of the integrated thematic approach above shows that the integrated approach prioritizes complete, holistic and concrete learning. The form of learning is not separated and always sees an object in its wholeness and wholeness so that it allows students to learn meaningfully, authentically and actively. Because learning is not only a process of transferring knowledge or knowledge, but also paying attention to the behavior patterns and skills of a person who has certain characteristics from other humans. This assumption will create a more meaningful impression on a person's capacity.

Integrated learning is carried out by starting from a topic or theme that is selected and developed by the teacher with the child, by studying and exploring the concepts of that theme. Integrated learning is a learning approach that links two or more relevant concepts from a subject family, or several relevant concepts from a number of subjects. In this case, the linking of several concepts must be relevant and cannot be forced or simply linked. This means that the link must consider various things such as student needs, attracting student interest. Learning activities are directed to be relevant to the level of child development and according to the talents and interests of students. The learning outcomes that will be obtained are more durable because the activities chosen according to the talents of students, the potential that already exists in the child will be further developed. Collins (1991) say that integrated learning will take place when an event or topic exploration becomes the driving force. According to him, participating in authentic events or topics children learn while getting broader content from the curriculum that has been prepared.

The development of this model departs that an integrated thematic approach is in accordance with the characteristics of PAI lessons that integrate various disciplines, oriented to a webbed model which is commonly called the thematic approach. According to Fogarty (1991), the integrated learning model as a form of an integrative approach is continuum starting from the traditional curriculum form where all subjects are fields of study that are taught separately to a subject-oriented model that is very integrated.

In addition to the above, an integrated thematic-based PAI learning model was developed based on the principle that it does not add to the burden of teacher administration. The design of integrating one Islamic religious education with other PAI subjects by not using a new curriculum model format but using a format commonly used in MI was chosen so that this model is more easily and quickly accepted by teachers. Because sooner or later the acceptance (adoption) of an innovation, including: complexity. The more complex (difficult to understand) an innovation, the slower the spread process. The level of difficulty of innovation, including both the concept (understanding) and how to use it (implementation). In addition, this kind of development model is also in line with the current curriculum development model, namely Islamic religious education as a whole which essentially requires schools and teachers to develop their curriculum according to the conditions and capacities of their respective institutions.

The success rate of implementing the model really depends on the commitment of teachers and all education stakeholders in implementing it. The integrated thematic-based PAI learning model requires teachers who are broad-minded, have high creativity, reliable methodological skills, high self-confidence, and dare to package and develop materials. In addition, academically, teachers are required to continue to explore scientific information related to the material to be taught and read a lot of books so that mastery of teaching materials is not focused on a particular field of study. If it is not owned by the teacher, integrated learning will not be optimal. If viewed from the aspect of students, integrated learning requires students' learning abilities that are relatively "good", both in academic abilities and creativity. This happens because the integrated learning model emphasizes analytic skills (decoding), associative abilities (connecting), exploratory and elaborative abilities (digging and finding). If this condition is not owned, then the application of this integrated learning model is very difficult to implement, integrated learning requires reading materials or sources of information that are quite numerous and varied, perhaps also internet facilities.

The discussion above shows that integrated thematic learning is a developmental learning model that is different from other learning models. The goal is to increase students' appreciation of the pleasant surrounding environment as an effort to improve the mastery of PAI material. This goal is clearly different from the goal of PAI learning so far which prioritizes mastery of PAI material as much as possible. Conventional goals like this do not accommodate the psychological factors of students at the ibtidaiyah level.

Therefore, integrated thematic learning is developed in accordance with the needs and factual problems in the field by emphasizing the goal that is not only increasing the mastery of PAI

material, but more than that as a learning model that is able to increase students' appreciation of the practice of religion in everyday life.

CONCLUSION

First, the Integrated thematic-based PAI Model which was developed to strengthen the quality of PAI learning, are: (1) the design departs from the use of existing basic materials in the PAI subject curriculum as the main theme in curriculum development that combines all PAI subject matter. so as not to require teachers to burden themselves with the additional task of identifying and formulating themes or titles; (2) The integration model among PAI does not fundamentally change the curriculum development format model that is usually applied in Islamic boarding schools; and (3) the Integrated thematic-based PAI model is beneficial in the development of PAI, where religious learning in Madrasahs has plenty of time to practice and habituation to develop affective and psychomotor aspects

Second, the Integrated thematic-based PAI model is proven to be significantly more effective in increasing the strengthening of simultaneous PAI learning with mastery of subject matter when compared to the learning model that has been used by teachers.

The conclusion above has a number of implications, namely (1) changing the role of the teacher in the learning process from the presenter to the guide; (2) teachers need initial debriefing; (3) optimal use of tools, media and resources available in schools; (4) school administrators and committees need orientation in order to understand and always actively provide continuous resources and support for the integrated thematic-based PAI learning process carried out by teachers; and (5) communication and socialization to parents and the community.

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