Optimization of Islamic Religious Education to form The Islamic Character of The Guidance Studio Students in Lorong Sungai Mulia 5 Gombak Kuala Lumpur Malaysia

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The purpose of this service is to optimize Islamic religious education at the guidance studio of Lorong Sungai Mulia 5 Gombak Kuala Lumpur through creative and contextual learning strategies to form Islamic character and prepare the future of students with noble and competitive character. The ABCD method is used with the Discovery stage to identify individual, institutional, social, and cultural assets through interviews, observations, and FGDs. In the Dream stage, teachers, students, and the community formulated a common dream for the studio to become a center for Islamic character development with interesting and technology-based PAI learning. The Design and Define stages produce concrete programs such as teacher training, curriculum development, religious activities, parenting classes, and interactive learning implementations that are evaluated periodically to measure program success and impact. The results of the service showed a significant increase in students' religious knowledge and practices through the PAI strengthening program and the habit of daily worship. Students become more disciplined in congregational prayers, regularly read the Qur'an before studying, and show a polite and responsible attitude independently. This change reflects the success of the program in forming an Islamic character based on faith awareness, not just obedience due to coercion.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of Islamic Religious Education in forming Islamic character is a conscious and directed process to instill faith, moral, and spiritual values that are the basis for the formation of a Muslim's personality (Anwar, 2016). This education not only emphasizes the aspect of knowledge about Islamic teachings, but also accustomed students to practice these values in daily life. This process includes efforts to cultivate religious awareness, develop sensitivity of conscience, and train students to behave and think in line with Islamic teachings, so that they are on the right path.

Through religious education, students are directed to seek knowledge as well as to get closer to Allah and become human beings who are useful to others. The goal is to form a person who is balanced between intellectual, moral, and spiritual intelligence so that he is able to make a positive contribution to the family, society, and humanity. Thus, religious education plays a role as a driver that instills good habits, fosters a sense of responsibility, and forms a character based on faith and piety.

On the other hand, Islamic Religious Education also emphasizes the formation of a complete personality according to the goals of national education, namely making students as human beings who have faith, piety, noble character, intelligent, healthy, independent, and responsible (Rufaedah, 2020). Educational institutions are expected to be able to create a conducive environment to instill religious values so that students not only understand religious teachings cognitively, but also internalize them in the form of real behavior. With a consistent approach, Islamic values will become a deeply rooted habit in daily life, thus forming an authentic and sustainable Islamic character.

In the midst of the flow of globalization and advances in digital technology, Islamic religious education among students of guidance studios faces serious challenges. Many students experience a decrease in motivation in studying religion due to the influence of popular culture, social media, and modern lifestyles that attract more attention to them (Zulyatina et al., 2024). As a result, the understanding of Islamic values tends to be superficial, only limited to memorization without being accompanied by real appreciation and practice in daily life. The limitation of teaching staff who have pedagogical competence and the ability to convey material with creative methods is the main problem. Some teachers still use conventional approaches that emphasize memorization and lectures too much, so that learning feels monotonous and less relevant to students' lives. This leads to low active participation of students, weak moral formation, and their lack of ability to relate religious teachings to social problems in their environment.

The heterogeneous social environment and the influence of outside cultures that are so strong have the potential to make students susceptible to negative behaviors, such as individualism, lack of social responsibility, and even permissive attitudes towards values that are contrary to Islamic teachings (Mulyana et al., 2025). If it is not anticipated with a structured, contextual, and interesting religious education program, then the future of the Islamic character of the younger generation will be threatened. Another problem that arises is the lack of collaboration between parents, teachers, and the surrounding community in supporting the religious education process. Many parents are busy at work so they do not provide an example or religious guidance at home. In fact, Islamic character education requires synergy between formal, non-formal, and family education to form the personality of students who have faith, morals, and are ready to face future challenges.

The concept of Islamic Education as a grand theory views that the main goal of education is to form Kamil people, namely complete human beings who are balanced between spiritual, intellectual, moral, and social dimensions (Lumbard, 1994; Yeşil, 2020). The educational process is centered on the orientation of monotheism which is the foundation for all aspects of life. Based on the Qur'an and Hadith, Islamic education not only teaches science, but also instills the values of faith, morals, and worship so that students are able to make Islamic teachings as a guide in every behavior and decision in their lives. Islamic religious education, in this framework, functions as a means of building a complete character, combining elements of knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are in harmony with the values of monotheism.

In addition, Lawrence Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development provides a framework for understanding how religious values can be gradually internalized in learners (Kohlberg & Gilligan, 2014; Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). According to this theory, human moral development moves from a stage dominated by obedience due to fear of punishment, to a moral consciousness that is universal and principled. In the context of religious education, the application of this theory means designing learning that encourages students to not only obey the teachings of Islam formally, but also to understand the spiritual meaning behind the rules, thus forming a deep awareness of faith. The end result is a student who is able to behave in Islam consistently, not because of external coercion, but because of internal drive and self-awareness as a servant of Allah.

Some of the previous works, namely the optimization of Islamic education at STIT Togo Ambarsari Bondowoso, have effectively shaped the Islamic character of generation Z through the integration of Islamic values, the use of technology, active learning, social collaboration, and the application of values in daily life (Muhalli, 2023). The success of PAI optimization is influenced by teacher competence, curriculum suitability, and the active role of parents, so it is necessary to develop teacher professionals, update the curriculum, and close collaboration between schools, teachers, and parents (Yanti et al., 2024).

The results of initial observations at the guidance studio located at Lorong Sungai Mulia 5, Gombak, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia showed that most of the students came from working family backgrounds with varying levels of parental education. Religious learning activities in this studio are still traditional, focusing on teaching Qur'an reading and prayer memorization, but do not fully emphasize the formation of Islamic character comprehensively. Infrastructure facilities are limited, so the learning process still relies on lecture methods and memorization repetition. In addition, students face the challenge of the influence of technology and global culture that makes motivation to study religion decrease and discipline less consistent. This condition emphasizes the need for a strategy for optimizing Islamic religious education that is more creative, contextual, and relevant to the needs of the younger generation to form a strong Islamic character and better prepare for their future.

The purpose of this service is to optimize Islamic religious education at the guidance studio of Lorong Sungai Mulia 5 Gombak Kuala Lumpur through creative and contextual learning strategies to form Islamic character and prepare the future of students with noble and competitive character.

2. METHOD

The ABCD (Asset-Based Community Development) method is used as the main approach in optimizing Islamic Religious Education at the guidance studio Lorong Sungai Mulia 5, Gombak, Kuala Lumpur. At the discovery stage, all the potential owned by the studio and its environment is identified. The assets found include individual assets such as teachers and volunteers who have PAI teaching competencies as well as students who are passionate about learning; institutional assets in the form of studio facilities, prayer rooms, and community support; social assets such as the involvement of parents, religious leaders, and the local Muslim community; as well as cultural assets in the form of recitation traditions, tadarus, and congregational prayers that are still preserved. The identification of these assets was obtained through interviews with studio administrators, direct observations, and FGDs with students and parents. The next stage is Dream (dream formulation), which facilitates teachers, students, and the community to formulate an ideal future picture of the studio. The dream that emerged was the realization of a guidance studio as a center for Islamic character development, the birth of a generation with noble character, diligent in worship, discipline, and ready to face global challenges, as well as the implementation of interesting, innovative, and technology-based PAI learning. The formulation of this dream is carried out through participatory discussions that foster a sense of shared ownership.

The Design stage (program design) is carried out by compiling a real program to realize the dream. The program designed includes teacher and volunteer training through workshops on creative PAI learning methods, the development of a studio curriculum that integrates Islamic character values such as trust, discipline, and responsibility, the implementation of religious activities such as tadarus, moral mentoring, and Islamic competitions, as well as parental involvement through parenting classes so that parenting at home is in harmony with coaching in the studio. The last stage is Define (action and implementation), where all programs are implemented systematically. Teachers and volunteers are trained, interactive PAI learning is applied with active methods such as role play, discussion, and social projects, and periodic evaluations of student character development are carried out through observation and teacher reports. The results of this implementation are then compiled in a final report that measures the impact and success of the program, so that it can be used as a reference for the development of the studio in the future.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Discovery

The Discovery stage of this community service activity focuses on efforts to find and identify the potential that is already available in the Lorong Sungai Mulia environment as the main capital for the implementation of the program. The process of finding assets is carried out through comprehensive mapping, including individual, institutional, social, and cultural assets.

In mapping individual assets, the service team tries to recognize the human resources in the environment. Teachers, ustadz, volunteers, and students who have the ability to teach Islamic Religious Education and accompany students are mapped as important assets that can support the sustainability of activities. In addition, the potential of students is also explored, especially those who show high motivation to study or have an interest in the fields of art, memorization of the Qur'an, and leadership. Mapping of institutional assets is carried out by utilizing existing facilities, such as guidance studios that provide learning rooms, prayer rooms, and worship facilities for the surrounding community. This is an important support in supporting learning activities and worship habits among students.

From the social aspect, the support of parents, religious leaders, the local Muslim community, and mosque administrators is a significant social capital. Their involvement not only strengthens the legitimacy of the program, but also builds sustainable synergy between the community and the implementation team. Cultural asset mapping is carried out by exploring religious traditions that are already inherent in people's lives, such as recitation, tadarus, and congregational prayers. This tradition is an important foundation that can be developed to strengthen students' worship habits while maintaining the continuity of the program. To support this discovery process, several methods were used, including participatory observation at the studio location, interviews with administrators, teachers, and students, focus group discussions with parents and community leaders, and visual mapping (asset mapping) to map the relationship between existing assets. Through the combination of these methods, a comprehensive picture of the potential that can be used as a basis for planning and implementing service programs is obtained.

Dream (Dream Formulation)

The Dream Stage is an important momentum in this service process, because it focuses on efforts to explore common hopes regarding an ideal future for the studio and its students. This stage not only gathers aspirations, but also builds a collective understanding between students, teachers, parents, and the community regarding the direction of the development of the guidance studio in the future. Dream formulation activities are carried out through workshops and participatory discussions involving all stakeholders. In the forum, students were given a space to express their expectations for more interesting and fun learning activities. Teachers expressed the need for systematic character building programs, while parents emphasized the importance of moral and spiritual support for children to grow up with strong Islamic personalities.

From this dialogue process, a common vision was formulated, namely the formation of a guidance studio that excels in fostering Islamic character. This vision is realized through the image of students who are expected to become individuals with noble character, diligent in worship, have discipline, responsibility, and be able to face the challenges of the digital era. In addition, the idea of developing an interactive and fun technology-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) program has also emerged so that it can increase students' motivation to learn.

The dream stage also emphasizes the importance of synergy between various parties. Therefore, one of the dreams agreed upon is the realization of strong collaboration between teachers, parents, and the local Muslim community in supporting the activities of the studio. As a follow-up, several important outputs were produced, including a joint vision-mission document, a list of priority programs that residents want such as tahfiz classes, parenting classes, and Islamic competitions, as well as initial commitments from parents and teachers to support the implementation of the program.

Design (Perancangan Program)

The Design stage is an important step after the dream formulation process is carried out. At this stage, all ideas and aspirations that have emerged previously are compiled into a program that is more concrete, measurable, and can be implemented according to the needs of the guidance studio. This design emphasizes the preparation of activities that are not only conceptual, but also applicable so that they can have a real impact on students and the surrounding environment. One of the main focuses in the design is the strengthening of the basic material of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). For this reason, a teaching module is prepared that is structured based on age, including aspects of aqidah, practical fiqh, morals, and sirah nabawiyah. This module is equipped with a simple evaluation method in the form of light tests and portfolios so that student development can be monitored systematically.

A daily worship habituation program was also designed as an effort to instill spiritual discipline. The proposed activities include reciting the Qur'an before studying, the implementation of congregational prayers, joint prayers, and the use of habit tracker cards that function to record students' worship routines. Thus, worship is not only carried out formally, but also becomes an inherent habit in daily life. In terms of learning methods, contextual and interactive learning approaches are designed to provide a more meaningful learning experience. The project-based learning model is applied through creative activities such as making da'wah posters, Islamic vlogs, and managing mini gardens as a means of practicing responsibility. In addition, learning is also strengthened by group discussions, role plays, and simulations of worship practices, so that students are actively involved in each learning process.

Another important aspect that is also considered is the strengthening of Islamic character education. The weekly moral mentoring program is designed to provide personalized mentoring, plus a reward-punishment system based on Islamic values so that students have a positive incentive to behave according to religious teachings. Teachers are also expected to be the main role models by showing Islamic attitudes and behaviors in daily life. The program design also includes extracurricular activities with Islamic nuances. Some of the activities formulated include adhan competitions, recitations, nasyid, and writing Islamic stories. In addition, social activities such as cleaning mosques, sharing with the poor, and celebrating Islamic holidays that are packaged in an educational manner are also part of the design. This program is expected to be a forum for developing student potential while strengthening the spirit of togetherness.

From the technical side, planning is carried out by compiling a semester schedule, making a mini lesson plan for each meeting, and determining the roles of teachers and volunteers according to their respective competencies. Supporting facilities such as learning modules, books, stationery, and digital media are also prepared to support the sustainability of the activity. With careful design, the guidance studio is expected to develop into a center for Islamic character development that not only emphasizes the spiritual aspect, but also equips students with social and intellectual skills that are relevant to the demands of the times.

Define (Action & Implementation)

The Define (Action & Implementation) stage is the final stage of the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) series, where all pre-prepared designs are realized in the form of concrete actions. At this stage, the program is no longer limited to concepts, but has been systematically implemented through various activities involving teachers, volunteers, students, and support from parents and the community. The first step taken is training for teachers and volunteers. This training is the main foundation to equalize perceptions of the objectives, methods, and strategies for program implementation. After that, the PAI learning program began to be implemented according to the schedule that had been prepared. In addition to learning activities in the classroom, students are also involved in daily worship habits, such as tadarus before study, congregational prayers, and joint prayers. This activity is combined with extracurriculars with Islamic nuances which are held regularly with monthly themes, such as recitation competitions, social activities, and commemorations of Islamic holidays.

To ensure that the program runs as expected, periodic evaluation and monitoring are carried out. The monthly assessment is focused on the development of students' worship and morals, while a more in-depth evaluation is carried out every three months through a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with parents. The results of the evaluation are outlined in the student development report which is a reflection as well as a basis for improving the program in the next period. The success indicators of the program are clearly defined so that achievements can be measured objectively. Some of the targets set include an increase in PAI knowledge of at least 30% based on the comparison of pre-test and post-test scores, as well as the involvement of 70% of students in carrying out the programmed daily worship routine. In addition, success indicators are also characterized by positive changes in aspects of discipline, manners, and student responsibilities in daily life. No less important, parental and community participation is targeted to reach more than 60%, which shows the collective support for the sustainability of the program.

The sustainability aspect of the programme is also a major concern at this stage. To ensure continuity after the service period is over, a local management team consisting of teachers and parent representatives is formed. This team is responsible for continuing the program independently by utilizing the teaching modules that have been prepared as a long-term handle. With this sustainability strategy, it is hoped that the guidance studio will not only be a temporary program, but will continue to develop as a center for Islamic character development that is able to answer the needs of the younger generation in the digital era.
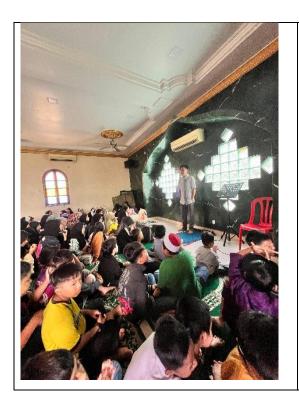
The analysis of the compatibility between figures and theories with field data in the Optimization of Islamic Religious Education to Form Islamic Character and the Future of Students of the Guidance Studio at Lorong Sungai Mulia 5, Gombak, Kuala Lumpur shows that the approach applied is in line with the concept of Islamic Education as a grand theory and Lawrence Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development. Based on the results of observation and asset mapping, students in the guidance studio have a religious background, but face challenges such as limited manpower

Creative educators, popular cultural influences, and lack of parental involvement. The program is designed to focus on strengthening the basic materials of PAI, habituating daily worship, contextual learning, and strengthening Islamic character, which is in line with the concept of Islamic education which views the purpose of education as an effort to form a complete human kamil who is spiritually, intellectually, morally, and socially balanced.

Islamic education based on the Qur'an and Hadith with a monotheistic orientation finds its relevance in the field because this service program not only teaches the cognitive aspect (religious knowledge), but also encourages students to internalize the values of faith through direct practices such as congregational prayer, tadarus, moral mentoring, and social action. This strengthens the habituation process that can foster religious awareness and Islamic behavior consistently. Meanwhile, Kohlberg's theory of moral development is also relevant because the program is implemented to bring students from the stage of morality that is only based on obedience because of fear of punishment (preconventional stage) to a higher stage of moral awareness (postconventional stage). Through contextual learning methods, group discussions, and extracurricular activities, students are invited to understand the reasons behind each religious rule and relate it to real life, so that they are motivated to worship and behave well because of the encouragement of faith, not just a formal obligation.

4. CONCLUSION

The results show that the implementation of the optimization program of Islamic Religious Education at the Lorong Sungai Mulia 5 Gombak Guidance Studio has been in line with the concept of Islamic Education which is oriented towards the formation of kāmil people and Kohlberg's theory of moral development, where students not only experience an increase in PAI knowledge but also show more Islamic behavioral changes, such as increasing the discipline of congregational prayer. The habit of reading prayers before studying, as well as the awareness to behave politely and responsibly without having to be constantly reminded, which reflects the shift from obedience due to coercion to a deeper awareness of faith and the inculcation of noble ahklaq values, students are able to internalize Islamic teachings in daily life

Islamic religious education that can be optimized not only equips students with religious knowledge, but forms Islamic attitudes, behaviors and personalities that are provisions in facing the challenges of the masses in the future. Thus, the guidance studio in Gombak Sungai mulia 5 can be a strategic forum in producing a young generation who are knowledgeable, ahlaq, and empowered to follow Islamic values

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