EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED THEMATIC LEARNING IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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Abstract

Integrating the concept of integrated thematic learning into Islamic religious learning has great potential to improve the quality of students' educational process. This approach allows the cultivation of religious values that are connected to various other scientific aspects in a thematic series, thus facilitating multidimensional and contextual understanding for students. The results of the literature review conclude that the development of theme-based learning across studies has great potential to increase the effectiveness of student learning, where religious teachings can be channeled along with other subject matter so as to form a comprehensive and meaningful understanding for them. However, the implementation of the concept of integrated thematic learning in the fourth grade of Islamic religion is still faced with various obstacles, such as the lack of teacher understanding of this concept, the lack of training and mentoring, and the limited learning resources and supporting facilities. Educators often find it difficult to plan and implement cross-curricular learning properly. On the other hand, several key enablers of this development can enhance its success, including the support of the principal, the availability of appropriate teaching materials, parent and community participation, and collaboration among teachers. This study concludes that to improve the effectiveness of integrated thematic learning in Islamic religious education, there needs to be more focus from schools and the government on providing training and mentoring to educators. In addition, it is also necessary to increase the availability and quality of learning facilities. These steps are expected to implement theme-based learning more effectively to support students' character development and academic achievement.

Keywords: Evaluation, Implementation, Integrated Thematic Learning, Islamic Religious Education.

Introduction

The implementation of integrated thematic learning in the field of Islamic Religious Education requires an in-depth evaluation of its challenges and opportunities. Many studies have assessed its effectiveness in other fields, but specific studies related to its implementation in Islamic Religious Education are still limited. (Nurmaliyah et al., 2023); (Astuti et al., 2023). The preparation of material that is integrated with themes and delivery methods that are in accordance with the character of students is an important aspect that needs to be further analyzed. (Affandi et al., 2021).

One of the reasons for the importance of evaluation is to find out how far the objectives of Islamic Religious Education are achieved through this method. The goal is

not only to provide religious knowledge, but also to form attitudes and behaviors that reflect Islamic values. (Almajidah et al., 2021).. Therefore, the right teaching method in the learning process will greatly determine the success of achieving these goals. (Wahyudin, 2023). In addition to educational goals, supporting and inhibiting factors in its implementation also need to be considered. School facilities, availability of resources, and teacher readiness are some of the factors that greatly affect its implementation. (Lathif, 2023). Teachers as the main actors in learning must understand the concepts and techniques of integrated thematic learning in order to teach effectively. (Tubagus et al., 2023)..

Equally important are the mentors' and students' perspectives on integrated thematic education in Islamic Religion. These perspectives reflect the way the method is received and implemented in the classroom. (Aslan & Shiong, 2023). If teachers find it difficult or lack confidence in implementing it, then the effectiveness of learning will be disrupted. (Andri et al., 2024).. Likewise with students, if they feel uninspired or have difficulty understanding the material through this method, then learning objectives are difficult to achieve.

Research on evaluating the implementation of integrated thematic education in Islamic Religion has high relevance in the context of syllabus development and learning methods. The results of this research are expected to provide a clear picture of the current situation, as well as useful recommendations for future improvements. (Nurqozin et al., 2023).. Thus, this research will make a significant contribution to both theory and practice in the field of education. In addition, this evaluation is also important for developing more effective strategies in teacher training and competency improvement. Skilled and trained mentors will be able to package learning materials creatively and innovatively according to the theme, so that learning becomes more interesting and meaningful for students.

The evaluation of the implementation will also help in identifying the strengths and weaknesses. By knowing the weaknesses, the school and decision makers can take appropriate corrective measures. Conversely, by knowing the strengths, the approach can be further strengthened and optimized. (Heryati et al., 2023)..

Not only that, the results of this evaluation will also provide information on the extent to which integrated thematic education is able to increase student involvement and participation in learning. Students' active involvement is one of the indicators of successful learning, because by being actively involved, students will more easily understand the material taught and can relate it to their daily lives. (Wahyuningsih et al., 2023)..

The implementation of integrated thematic learning also needs to be seen in the context of technological developments and learning media. In today's digital era, the use of technology in learning is something that cannot be avoided. This evaluation will

also look at how technology can be applied in integrated thematic learning in Islamic Religious Education, as well as its effectiveness. (Mulyana & Maylawati, 2024).

Apart from the technical side of learning, the value and character aspects are also an important focus in this evaluation. Islamic Religious Education has a central role in shaping student character, and through an integrated thematic approach, values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility and tolerance are expected to be well integrated in each learning theme taught. (Fauzi, 2021).

The need to evaluate the implementation of integrated thematic learning in Islamic Religious Education is also supported by national policies that encourage the use of this approach. The government through the Ministry of Education and Culture continues to develop and improve the curriculum to be more adaptive to the needs of the times. Therefore, this evaluation also aims to see the alignment between existing policies and practices in the field. (Mertasari & Yudana, 2022).

The role of parents and community participation in supporting the implementation of integrated thematic learning also needs to be considered. Education is not only the responsibility of schools but also requires support from the family and community environment. This evaluation will identify the extent of parents' participation and how they can better support their children's learning process. (Irmayanti, 2021).

Finally, this research will examine the development of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum in accordance with the times. By understanding the existing strengths and weaknesses, the curriculum can be adjusted to be more relevant and effective in achieving educational goals.

Based on the background that has been explained, it is clear that evaluating the implementation of integrated thematic learning in Islamic Religious Education is very important to do. Through a comprehensive evaluation, it is hoped that effective solutions and strategies can be found in improving the quality of learning, so that educational goals can be achieved more optimally.

Research Methods

The study conducted in this study uses the literature research method, which is a technique used in academic and scientific research to collect, analyze, and present relevant information on a particular topic from secondary text sources. (JUNAIDI, 2021); (Abdussamad, 2022); (Wekke, 2020).

Results and Discussion
Concept of Integrated Thematic Learning

Integrated Thematic Learning (PTT) is an educational method that integrates various subjects into one central theme to create a more thorough and integrated learning experience. Through this approach, students will not learn each subject

separately, but rather through one comprehensive theme that is relevant and interesting to them. (Zaenuri & Rokhimawan, 2022).. For example, the theme "Protect the Earth" could cover geography, biology and social science in one coherent unit. Thus, students can see links between subject areas and apply their knowledge in a broader context (Bayufirman et al., 2022). (Bayufirman et al., 2023)..

One of the main features of PTT is flexibility in teaching, an emphasis on cross-disciplinary relationships, and empowering students to be more active and take part in the learning process. Flexibility allows teachers to customize the approach according to student needs and classroom dynamics, while cross-disciplinarity helps students see the world in a holistic and related way, connecting theory and practice. In addition, this method often involves students in collaborative projects and activities that motivate active participation and the development of social skills and cooperation. (Hazyimara et al., 2024)..

One of the key benefits of PTT is its ability to enhance learners' understanding of subject matter through relevant and meaningful context. This not only helps students remember information better but also relates it to real-life experiences. (Bustami et al., 2022).. By presenting lessons in thematic form, students also tend to be more engaged and motivated to learn because they can see the application of the knowledge gained. In addition, this model encourages the development of critical and creative thinking skills, which are essential for success in the real world (Nurdiana et al., 2022). (Nurdiana et al., 2023)..

The basic principles of PTT include theme unity, cross-discipline, relevance and active student involvement. Unity of theme means that the entire learning process is focused on one central theme as a common thread that connects various subjects. (Muharrom et al., 2023).. This allows students to see the connections and practical applications of knowledge gained in different subject areas. Cross-disciplinarity directs learning so that it is not limited to the boundaries of certain sciences, but rather involves various disciplines simultaneously to provide a broader and deeper perspective on the themes studied. (Ernawita & Rakimahwati, 2020).

The principle of relevance in PTT emphasizes the importance of learning related to real life and students' experiences, so that the material taught becomes more meaningful. This strengthens students' motivation and participation in the learning process. (Muslim, 2022). In addition, active student involvement is a basic principle that requires students to be active participants in the teaching and learning process. Through various activities such as discussions, group projects, and independent exploration, students are expected to develop critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills. These principles all work together to create a conducive and dynamic learning environment. (Apriliana et al., 2022)..

Thus, PTT is based on the principles of theme unity, cross-discipline, relevance, and active student involvement. Unity of theme and cross-discipline allow students to

understand the relationship between subject areas, while relevance helps them see their application in real life. Students' active engagement ensures that they become dynamic participants in the learning process, developing critical thinking, communication and collaboration skills. These principles work together to create a more meaningful and well-rounded learning experience.

Islamic Religious Education

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is an educational discipline and practice that aims to teach and systematize Islamic teachings and values to students. PAI covers various aspects, including akidah (faith), ibadah (religious rituals), akhlak (morality), and the history of Muslim civilization. This educational process is carried out through the teaching of the Quran, Prophetic Hadiths, and other religious scriptures as sources that guide the lives of Muslims. (PR et al., 2023).

The main objective of PAI is to form a person who is devoted, faithful, and has noble character according to Islamic teachings. PAI aims to instill a deep understanding of faith, strengthen theological commitment, and develop morals and ethics in line with Islamic principles. In addition, PAI also aims to foster love and responsibility for religion, as well as to form an attitude of tolerance and appreciation for religious and cultural diversity. (Suroso et al., 2021).

The Islamic Religious Education curriculum is designed to cover a comprehensive range of educational aspects, from cognitive knowledge to affective and psychomotor aspects. This curriculum usually consists of several main components such as lessons on the Quran and Hadith, Fiqh (Islamic law), Akidah (theology), Akhlak (morality), and Islamic History and Culture. These materials are organized in stages and adapted to the development of students from elementary to high school level. (Haddar et al., 2023); (Erwan et al., 2023).

The implementation of PAI curriculum requires a holistic and integrative approach. Teachers must be able to develop learning strategies that not only focus on cognitive aspects, but also facilitate students' moral and spiritual development. The learning approaches used may include lecture, discussion, case study, role play, and project methods. (Masruri & Waliah, 2023). In addition, it is also important to integrate various non-academic activities such as commemoration of Islamic holidays, religious competitions, and social activities to apply Islamic teachings in daily life. Through a comprehensive curriculum and effective implementation, PAI can achieve its goal of producing a generation with faith, noble character, and strong Islamic personality. (Zulfi & Khairat, 2023).

Implementation of Islamic Religious Education Learning

The implementation of Islamic education requires careful planning from the start. Teachers must prepare a clear and structured lesson plan, including objectives,

materials, methods, tools and media. Initial diagnosis is important to understand students' level of prior understanding so that learning is tailored to their potential. Planning also takes into account the implementation of moral values in all learning activities. (Khaeroni & Sabri, 2022)..

In the implementation stage, teachers teach as planned. It is important for teachers to ensure the chosen methods create an active and interactive learning situation. In addition to lectures, teachers can incorporate group discussions, case studies, role plays to increase students' participation. (Demina et al., 2022).. Technology and media such as videos, presentations, apps can help visualize the material and make learning more fun. Teachers should provide opportunities for students to ask questions and express opinions, creating effective two-way communication. (Suradika et al., 2023)..

After implementation, evaluation is important to measure the achievement of objectives. Evaluation can be through various means such as written tests, quizzes, project assignments, or discussion participation assessment. Teachers need to give constructive feedback to students, pointing out strengths and weaknesses in understanding the material. Reflection is also important from the implementation to reflect on the process, evaluate the effectiveness of the method, and plan for future improvements. (Amanah & Asrofi, 2023).

The implementation of Islamic religious education is not only limited to the classroom, but needs to be strengthened through various activities outside of school. Schools can organize extracurricular activities such as religious activities, commemoration of Islamic holidays, routine studies, and social activities. These activities can help students apply Islamic teachings in their daily lives, strengthen their sense of religion, and shape their moral character. (Baharshah, 2022). Religious education can also be strengthened by the involvement of parents and communities in school activities, creating synergies between education in schools, homes and neighborhoods (Hilmi et al., 2022). (Hilmi et al., 2023)..

Thus, the implementation of Islamic religious education requires careful planning, interactive implementation, comprehensive evaluation, and strengthening of religious values through out-of-school activities. Planning includes the preparation of structured lesson plans and initial diagnosis. Implementation involves active and interactive methods, utilizing technology and media. Evaluation and reflection aim to measure the achievement of goals and improve methods. In addition to classroom learning, strengthening religious values is done through extracurricular activities and the involvement of parents and communities. With this approach, students are expected to understand and apply Islamic teachings in life, developing noble character.

Integrated thematic learning in the classroom

Integrated thematic learning is an approach that combines various subject areas in one big theme to create a more contextual and interesting learning experience. In grade four, this approach is very effective because it helps students understand the concepts taught more thoroughly. (Suyudi & Putra, 2022).. For example, a theme on "Environment" can include science lessons on ecosystems, Civics on the importance of preserving the environment, Bahasa Indonesia through essays or short stories, and Mathematics by calculating the area of a certain region (Rajak et al., 2022). (Rajak et al., 2023)..

The implementation of integrated thematic learning in grade four requires careful planning from the teacher. The Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) must be prepared by identifying relevant themes and connecting each basic competency indicator from various subjects. (Khoir et al., 2023).. Teachers also need to be creative in choosing appropriate learning methods, such as group discussions, light experiments, or collaborative projects. The use of varied learning media such as images, videos, or three-dimensional models will make the learning process more interesting and facilitate students' understanding (Sulaeman et al., 2023). (Sulaeman et al., 2023)..

During the learning process, the teacher acts as a facilitator that encourages active participation of students. Interactive and project-based learning can improve critical and collaborative thinking skills (Febriani et al., 2023). (Febriani et al., 2023).. For example, in a project on recycling, learners can be invited to make works from used goods, then present the results and explain the benefits of recycling for the environment. In this way, learners not only gain academic knowledge, but also develop environmental awareness and social skills (Yuliharti, 2022). (Yuliharti, 2022).

Evaluation in integrated thematic learning also needs to be considered. Evaluation should not only focus on the final result, but also on the learning process of students. Teachers can use various types of assessment such as daily assessment, project assessment, and attitude assessment. (Sartika et al., 2020).. The results of this evaluation will provide a more comprehensive picture of students' understanding of the themes studied, as well as assist teachers in designing more effective teaching strategies in the future. With an integrated thematic approach, it is expected that fourth grade students can connect the concepts they learn with the real context in everyday life, so that the learning process becomes more meaningful and enjoyable. (Abidin et al., 2022)..

Supporting and inhibiting factors for integrated thematic learning in the classroom

The integrated thematic learning model at the fourth grade level has several key supporters that can maximize its effectiveness. First, it is supported by a curriculum that is specifically designed to facilitate the integration of various subjects through major themes. (Aslan, 2023). The flexible curriculum allows teachers to connect concepts across disciplines to real-life situations, thus helping students to understand the

material in depth. In addition, continuous professional development for teachers in thematic teaching methods is also a significant supporting factor. Teachers who are skilled and familiar with thematic teaching strategies can create a more attractive and meaningful learning experience for students. (Febriani et al., 2023)..

The availability of varied learning resources and media also supports the implementation of this integrated thematic learning. The utilization of tools, comprehensive handbooks, and technology such as digital videos and interactive educational applications can help students understand concepts better. (Azza & Fauji, 2024). In addition, a supportive classroom environment such as a comfortable classroom, conducive learning atmosphere, and adequate facilities also play an important role in the success of this learning. The active involvement of parents and communities in school activities can also be a supporting factor, by contributing both material and moral support in various thematic projects. (Maknunah & Muis, 2023)..

However, there are also some inhibiting factors in the implementation of integrated thematic learning in grade four. One of them is the lack of understanding and skills of teachers in designing and realizing thematic learning. (Naima et al., 2024).. Not all teachers have adequate skills or knowledge on how to integrate various subjects in one big theme. In addition, limited resources such as thematic books, demonstration tools and technology can also be a barrier. Schools with limited budgets may have difficulty providing all these necessities, thus impacting on the quality of thematic learning that can be provided. (Munjiat, 2020).

Time constraints can also be an obstacle in the implementation of integrated thematic learning. Integrating various subject areas in one big theme requires more careful planning and preparation, so it can be limited by a busy school schedule. (Mulyana & Maylawati, 2024).. In addition, if the curriculum does not allocate sufficient time for theme implementation, the learning process may be rushed and lack depth. Lack of support from parents who may not understand the importance of the thematic approach could also be another challenge. Therefore, to overcome these inhibiting factors, solid cooperation between teachers, schools, parents and the government is needed to support the implementation of integrated thematic learning in grade four. (Cahyono & Astutik, 2021).

Thus, the integrated thematic learning model at grade four level has various supporting and inhibiting factors that influence its effectiveness. The main supporting factors include a flexible curriculum, adequate teacher professional development, availability of diverse learning resources and media, and support from parents and the community. On the other hand, the challenges faced include the limited understanding and skills of teachers in realizing thematic learning, limited resources, inadequate time, and lack of support from parents. To optimize the implementation of integrated thematic learning, solid cross-sectoral cooperation is needed to overcome obstacles and take advantage of available supporting factors.

Conclusion

Research on evaluating the implementation of integrated thematic learning in Islamic religious education reveals that this approach has great potential to improve the quality of learning in primary schools. The integrated thematic approach is considered capable of combining religious values with other subjects, so that students can understand the concept of Islam more fully and contextually. This makes learning more meaningful and relevant for students, enabling them to apply these values in their daily lives.

The results also reveal that the implementation of integrated thematic learning in Islamic religious education in grade 4 still faces various obstacles. Some of these include teachers' limited understanding of the concept of integrated thematic learning, lack of training and technical support, and limited resources and learning media. Teachers often find it difficult to design and implement integrated learning in accordance with the existing curriculum.

However, this study found supporting factors that can improve the success of integrated thematic learning. Support from the school principal, availability of relevant teaching materials, and active participation from parents and the community play an important role in supporting the implementation of this learning. In addition, the collaboration between teachers in designing integrated thematic learning also proved to be a significant factor in improving the effectiveness of learning.

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