

The Perception of Islamic Education Teacher on Teaching Aids in Smart School: A Pilot Study

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Abstract

The teaching and learning (T&L) of Islamic Education which are comprised of theory and practical, often involves the use of teaching aids (TAs). In general, this article discusses the use of TAs among Smart School Islamic Education Teacher in T&L. This article aims to explore the types of TAs used by the Islamic Education Teacher (IET), the resources to obtain teaching aids, and IETs' strategies to enhance their knowledge of the TAs. This pilot study uses case study design with in-depth interview instrument to accumulate data from IET, IETs' colleague and IETs' supervisor. Interview data are analyzed using NVivo software version 7.0 to develop themes and to set up matrix tables. The result shows that frequently-used teaching aids are realia for non-computer-based teaching and CDs for computer-based teaching. IETs' main sources to obtain TAs are the school surau and the internet. IET increase their knowledge about TAs through the internet as well as attending courses. The implication of this study is that the applicability and accessibility aspects of the TAs should be emphasized among IET in order to optimize the application of the TAs.

Keyword: Teaching aids; resources of teaching aids; knowledge of teaching aids; Islamic Education Teacher & Smart Schools

Abstrak

Pelaksanaan Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran (P&P) Pendidikan Islam meliputi teori dan amali yang sering melibatkan penggunaan bahan bantu mengajar (BBM). Secara umumnya, artikel ini membincangkan penggunaan BBM dalam P&P guru Pendidikan Islam (GPI) di Sekolah Bestari. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk meneroka jenis BBM yang digunakan oleh GPI, sumber-sumber bagi memperolehi BBM, dan strategi GPI bagi meningkatkan pengetahuan terhadap penggunaan BBM. Kajian rintis ini menggunakan rekabentuk kajian kes dengan instrumen temu bual mendalam untuk mendapatkan data daripada seorang GPI, rakan GPI dan penyelia GPI. Data temu bual dianalisis menggunakan perisian NVivo versi 7.0 untuk membentuk tema dan membina jadual matrik. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa BBM yang sering digunakan oleh GPI ialah bahan realia bagi BBM bukan berasaskan komputer dan CD P&P bagi BBM berasaskan komputer. Sumber utama bagi GPI untuk mendapatkan BBM ialah surau sekolah dan internet. GPI meningkatkan pengetahuan mengenai BBM dengan cara melayari internet dan mengikuti kursus. Implikasi kajian ini ialah aspek kebolegunaan dan kebolehcapaian BBM harus diberi penekanan dalam kalangan GPI agar penggunaan BBM dapat dioptimumkan.

Kata kunci: Bahan bantu mengajar; sumber BBM; pengetahuan BBM; Guru Pendidikan Islam & Sekolah Bestari

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Teaching aids (TAs) is defined as any type of materials used in teaching to help teachers in facilitating learning (PRPMDBP, 2012). The use of TAs cannot be alienated from teaching and learning (T&L) in Islamic Education. There is at least one type of TAs is used by teachers during T&L (Maimun Aqsha, 2011). Among the types commonly used by most teachers are text

books and a chalkboard or whiteboard (Kamal Shukri, 2007). The diversity in T&L is also facilitated by the use of TAs as well as the ability of the teachers themselves to apply a variety of teaching methods (Abdul Ghani *et al.*, 2007).

There are many TAs divisions which are categorized according to the opinion of some scholars, such as Ismail Zain (2002) who explains that TAs are divided into two; (i) computer-based and (ii) non-computer-based. Computer-based

TAs are also divided into two; (i) the computer-assisted and (ii) non-computer-assisted. Pathak and Chaudhary (2012) have divided TAs into three; (i) audio, (ii) visual, and (iii) audio-visual. All three divisions of TAs are used by Singh *et al.* (2008) and Kochhar (2000), and they have suggested another division of TAs which is printed material. Vanaja and Rao (2004) also contribute another division of the types of TAs which is activity material, while Siddiqui (2008) suggests another division which is three-dimensional material. According to Ahmad (2009), there should be two additional divisions to the division of Pathak and Chaudhary (2012), which are (i) software, and (ii) human interaction. In addition to the division based on the mentioned three types of TAs, Kamarul Azmi and Ab. Halim (2007) have divided the types of TAs into two, which are; (i) natural resources, and (ii) electronic resources, where natural resources are divided into two; (i) primary resources and (ii) supplementary resources. The division used in the analysis of this study is the division used by Ismail Zain (2002).

Teachers benefit and get advantage through the use of TAs. Although TAs are only considered as material assistance, the absence of TAs certainly makes T&L becomes stiff and one-directional. It also leads to a few problems in T&L such as the dullness of the T&L and the difficulty of the students to focus on T&L. In addition, the use of TAs in the form of audio and visual indirectly affect the senses and minds of students. This statement coincides with the finding of a study done by Maimun Aqsa (2011) that teachers who do not use TAs create passive students. His finding represents the effect of the minimal use of TAs among teachers. In fact, teachers play an important role in helping students to understand what is delivered in the classroom (Saemah Rahman and Siti Fatimah, 2008). A teacher should be able to transform the functions of T&L that were previously teacher-centered to student-centered T&L in line with the study of Siti Fatimah and Ab. Halim (2010) who discover 63.7 percent, a total of 172 out of 270 teachers agree that TAs is capable of changing their T&L styles into student-centered T&L. There are many more advantages and benefits that a teacher will obtain when they use TAs. However, the advantages and benefits will only present when teachers use TAs properly and in accordance to the right procedures. Therefore, teachers need to identify the types of TAs to be used before they explore how to use them.

The selection of materials before using TAs is also important to suit teachers' proficiency and students' suitability. Teachers' proficiency covers the knowledge to obtain and use these materials. The knowledge as a teacher includes how to obtain materials, how to prepare, how to use, and how to respond to the material used. According to a study conducted by Gulbahar, Y. and Guven, I. (2008), one of the main barriers to technology implementation is insufficiency of teachers' technical knowledge to prepare materials. The reality of what is happening today is TAs is not performed according to proper procedures for the reason of the lack of skills (Saemah Rahman and Siti Fatimah, 2008). Therefore, teachers need to increase their skills regarding the application of TAs. This matter has become important to teachers for them to ensure that they are able to use TAs. This statement is in accordance with what is stated in the study of Siti Fatimah and Ab. Halim (2010). Among the suggestions mentioned are the teachers need to equip themselves with knowledge as well as to always make sure that their knowledge is up-to-date.

In addition, the lack of resources is also a barrier in using TAs. The source of teaching materials is an important factor in contributing to the success of teachers' effective T&L. Usually, there is a room for subject coordinators of every field of study in every school; persons who administer a variety of TAs for

particular subject. However, the scarcity of TAs is insufficient for every teacher-entity in the school. This factor has become the reason why teachers do not use TAs in the classroom (Abdul Wahab *et al.*, 2006). Therefore, the source of material for TAs also is an important factor for the success of teachers' effective T&L (Maimun Aqsha, 2011).

As referred to the previous studies that have been done on the use of TAs, there is less number of researches pertaining to the application of TAs in Islamic Education. Among the studies, there is one, which is done by Mohd Izham and Noraini Attan (2007) on the readiness of science teachers using TAs. The finding shows that the level of readiness in the use of TAs among science teachers in district of Hulu Langat is moderate. The same survey was also conducted by Shahril Sabudin *et al.* (2008) among science teachers in Negeri Sembilan. This study only focuses on the attitudes of teachers in the use of TAs particularly in computer technology. The finding shows that teachers have a positive attitude towards the use of technology in the science lab at school.

A study in Biology is also carried out by Tang and Abdul Ghani (2006) related to the availability and efficiency in the use of TAs in teaching technology particularly multimedia. This study involves form four students in one secondary school. The finding shows that the students are prepared if only the teachers use computers in biology T&L, however students' experience and participation towards the use of computer is still low. There is a research which has been done by Siti Fatimah Ahmad and Ab. Halim Tamuri (2010) in the field of Islamic Education on the perception of teachers in the use of j-Qaf TAs. The perception of j-Qaf teachers on the use of TAs is high with average mean equivalent to 4.00. This quantitative study involves 270 primary school teachers in Sarawak.

Based on the literature of previous studies, most of the researchers focus on the integration of TAs technology in T&L, and upholding quantitative approach by distributing questionnaire as the main instrument. There are no specific studies conducted to investigate the use of TAs among Islamic Education Teacher (IET) in smart schools qualitatively. Therefore, this study is carried out to meet the objective.

■2.0 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This is an initial study to discover the application of teaching aids (TAs) among Islamic Education Teacher (IET) in Smart Schools. In specific, this study aims to (i) identify the types of TAs which are used by IET, (ii) identify the sources for IET to acquire TAs, and (iii) identify IETs' strategies to improve knowledge on TAs. In the meantime, the research questions that arise from this study are, (i) What are the types of TAs used by IET, (ii) What are the sources for IET to obtain TAs, and (iii) what are IETs' strategies in improving the knowledge on TAs.

■3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative approach study with case study design and in-depth interview instrument is used to obtain the data (Blatter, 2008). The respondents are comprised of IET (Islamic Education Teacher) as key respondent while IETs' colleague and IETs' supervisor as informants. The location of the study is a smart school in the district and the selection of study location is based on the Smart School Qualification Standards (SQSS) carried out by the Educational Technology Division of Johor State (ETDJS). Moreover, the choice of location also refers to

PMR achievement of 100% in the subject of Islamic education issued by the Education Department of Johor (EDJ). Then the interview data was analyzed using NVivo software 7.0. Encoding was made to produce certain themes in turn to set up a matrix tables (Bazeley, 2007).

4.0 RESEARCH ANALYSIS

The findings were obtained from the interviews with Islamic Education Teacher (IET), IETs' colleague and IETs' supervisor. The results were analyzed according to several divisions based on the research that have been specified. The first question is related to the use of teaching aids (TAs) by IET in teaching and learning (T&L). The second question refers to the sources of IET to obtain TAs and the last question focuses on IETs' strategies to improve knowledge on the use of TAs.

4.1 The Use of Teaching Aids

Teaching aids (TAs) which are used by the Islamic Education Teacher(IET) can be divided into two major categories; of non-computer-based TAs and computer-based TAs.

Table 1.0 Non-computer-based teaching aids

| Non-Computer-Based Teaching Aids | IE T | IETS | IETC |
|----------------------------------|---------|------|------|
| Realia | X | X | X |
| Module | X | X | X |
| Textbook | X | X | X |
| Exercise book | X | X | X |
| Picture | X | - | X |
| Blackboard | X | X | - |
| Reference Book | X | X | - |
| Mahjong paper | X | X | - |
| Notebook | X | - | - |
| Chart | X | - | - |
| Handouts | X | - | - |

Key field: IET = Islamic Education Teacher; IETS = IETs' Supervisor; IETC = IETs' Colleague.

Non-computer-based materials (Table 1.0) that are often used by IET is realia such as soil dust, wheat flour, dates, barley, maize, rice, gold, alum, figs, black seed oil (*habbatus sauda*'), oak galls fruit (*manjakani*), and others, for example:

Erm...like habbatussauda'...we show it to the students...this is it. (IET,2012:785)

Then ... for chapter in zakat... sometimes we use dates.... (IET,2012:143)

However, IET still use regular TAs such as blackboards, textbooks, exercise books, modules, pictures and mahjong paper. The examples of the use of such materials are:

In learning manners, we show them pictures and when the students see they will "ooo ... like this" ... they seem like to see the pictures. I mean the pictures that are related to the topic. (IET,2012:705)

A'ah...such topics about important figure...Saidina Ali, Saidina Umar, they do it on mahjong paper and present it in front of the class.. friends listen and ask question. (IET,2012:1121)

Table 1.1 Computer-based teaching aids

| Computer-Based Teaching Aids | IE T | IETS | IETC |
|------------------------------|---------|------|------|
| CD P&P | X | X | X |
| Power Point | X | - | X |
| Video | X | - | X |
| Audio | X | X | - |
| TV | X | - | - |

Key field: IET = Islamic Education Teacher; IET S= IETs' Supervisor; IETC = IETs' Colleague.

Meanwhile as referred to computer-based TAs (Table 1.1), IET tend to use T&L CD as well as power point, video and audio presented through LCD projector. T&L CD showed are mostly associated to '*ibadah* such as pilgrimage and prayers. For example:

...we demonstrate something to the students...the real thing...like performing hajj...we show them CD on pilgrimage. (IET,2012:918)

4.2 The Sources of Teaching Aids

The sources for IET to obtain TAs are also identified in this research.

Table 2.0 The sources of teaching aids

| Sources of teaching aids | IE T | IETS | IETC |
|---------------------------------------|---------|------|------|
| School <i>Surau</i> | X | X | X |
| Internet | X | X | X |
| School Library | X | - | - |
| IET from other schools | X | - | - |
| Educational Technology Division (ETD) | - | - | X |

Key field: IET =Islamic Education Teacher; IET = IETs' Supervisor; IETC = IETs' Colleague.

Based on the data in Table 2.0, the main source for the IET to obtain TAs is the school *surau*. The storage of TAs in *surau* allows all IET to use TAs during T&L. As for example:

The teaching aids usually reach subject coordinator first...just like last time the senior teachers of the field receive 5 T&L CDs from ETD. So, she gives them to the head of course coordinators, we inform it in the meeting...who wants to use them they can get it from the surau. That's the reason why we replace it in surau...that's it... (IETC,2012:41)

IET also surf the Internet and download the materials to improve students' understanding of a topic. This is explained by IETC:

He uses the internet...That's the downloaded material from the internet to explain new TAs.. (IETC,2012:56)

Moreover, some TAs are borrowed from the School Library, obtained from IET from other schools in addition to the TAs supplied by the Educational Technology Division (ETD), Ministry of Education Malaysia.

4.3 The Strategies to Increase Knowledge on TAs

An excellent IET will always initiate to increase knowledge, including knowledge on TAs. The knowledge on TAs should be emphasized in order to select and use appropriate TAs in T&E.

Table 3.0 The strategies to increase knowledge on TAs

| Strategies on TAs | IE T | IETS | IETC |
|--------------------------------|---------|------|------|
| Surfing the Internet | X | X | X |
| Courses | X | - | X |
| Discussions | X | - | X |
| Referring to Books / Magazines | X | - | - |
| Trial and Error | X | - | - |

Key field: IET = Islamic Education Teacher; IETS = IETs' Supervisor; IETC = IETs' Colleague.

The pattern of findings in Table 3.0 shows that IET refer to the internet to increase knowledge on TAs. The access to information online is easy and time-savvy for IET to explore the richness of information on TAs on websites.

IET also participate in courses organized by the Educational Technology Division (ETD), Ministry of Education Malaysia as well as the District Course Coordinators to improve their skills and gain new information. This is explained by IETC:

So far...teachers are certainly already informed about the technology, the way to use it. After all he has attended courses...make TAs, teaching aids...in ETD also, under the district course coordinators. (IETC,2012:49)

IET also discuss with colleagues and refer to academic materials such as books or magazines. The trial and error method implemented by IET is also an effort to generate creativity and new knowledge.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This case study has explored the use of teaching aids in the teaching and learning of Islamic Education, the sources for teaching aids and the strategies used by the Islamic Education Teacher to increase knowledge of the teaching aids.

The use of realia and teaching and learning CDs is a potential to create a meaningful learning environment. This situation is driven by centralized storage-based of the teaching aids in the school. The collection of teachings aids should be kept neat and recorded as inventory to increase the accessibility of the teaching aids. The assignment for the students to bring materials related to the topic of Islamic education can also be implemented by the teachers. This measure will indirectly able to increase students' understanding of a particular topic as well as an additional to the existing teaching aids.

The function of the internet as a medium to obtain teaching aids is significant when the teachers download teaching aids from the website to suit the topic of Islamic Education. Internet is also a source of information to enhance their knowledge about the teaching aids in Islamic Education. Therefore, the development of Islamic Education website should be reinforced so that the quality of the teaching aids such as power point, video, others can be shared widely among the teachers of Islamic Education. However, the content of the teaching aids in such sites should always be updated from time to time so that it is in line with the current needs of teaching and learning in Islamic Education.

Furthermore, recognition or awards should be continued as a form of encouragement to the Islamic Education Teacher to encourage the innovation of teaching aids. The teachers need to change the paradigm of thinking and strive to be the creator, not just users of the teaching aids. The innovation produced must integrate the elements of traditional materials and modern teaching aids considering the aspect of practicability. The production of teaching aids in Islamic education is not only capable of providing a positive impact on the effectiveness of Islamic education, also to establish the enculturation of innovation among teachers of Islamic Education.

The institutions of teacher education such as universities and the Institute of Teacher Education should play an important role to produce knowledgeable teachers, and competent in the use of teaching aids. Islamic Education teachers must be exposed to the current teaching aids in Islamic Education in addition to practical or specialized training. A specific subject related to teaching aids should also be considered in order to improve the existing curriculum at the university or the Institute of Teachers Education. In addition, Islamic Education Teacher should be provided with allocation of disbursement and encouragement to participate in courses and workshops pertaining to teaching aids so that their knowledge and skills can be improved from time to time.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Based on this study, it can be concluded that the IET should take into account several important aspects to optimize the use of TAs, which are the suitability of the types of TAs, the sources to obtain TAs and the strategies to enhance the knowledge pertaining to TAs. Deep understanding of the usability and accessibility of TAs should be emphasized during teacher training using specific modules in line with current needs. The enculturation in the innovation of TAs among IET should be nourished by initiating integration between the traditional and modern TAs. The effort to improve the existing TAs in Islamic Education is an enduring need and it requires a commitment from IET to ensure that the use of TAs really contributes significantly to students' mastery and the internalization of Islam.

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