



Research Article

Strategies for Enhancing the Quality of Islamic Education Learning

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify: (1) Strategies for Enhancing the Quality of Islamic Education at Qon Gresik Islamic Vocational School; and (2) Factors That May Help or Hinder the Improvement of Islamic Religious Education at Qon Gresik Islamic Vocational School. This study intended to assist the school in providing higher-quality Islamic religious instruction. This study applied a descriptive qualitative methodology, utilizing interviews, observations, and documentation for data collection. The researcher served as the primary instrument in this study. Data were analyzed using descriptive analysis techniques, which involve organizing data for processing, validation, and analysis that occurs simultaneously with data collection. The findings of this study indicated several strategies to improve the quality of Islamic Religious Education, including the use of effective methodologies, structured learning procedures, habitual practices, and extracurricular activities. Based on the fundamental principles of learning applied by educators, students at Qon Gresik Islamic Vocational School showed high enthusiasm for both general knowledge and Islamic studies. These strategies contribute significantly to the school's efforts in improving the learning experience in the field of Islamic studies. Numerous tactics were employed, including placing a strong emphasis on assignments, enhancing the caliber of human resources—teachers—through training and education, and building up the infrastructure that supports education.

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INTRODUCTION

Education can be defined as a purposeful, structured effort aimed at encouraging, assisting, and guiding individuals to develop their skills and potential, transforming themselves from their original quality to a higher one. Through education, humans can grow and develop, enabling them to fulfill their duties and realize their potential, ultimately achieving a well-rounded, complete human being (*insan kamil*) (Munardji, 2004:6).

Improving the quality of education is a key target in the development of national education and an integral part of the broader effort to enhance the quality of Indonesian human resources in a comprehensive manner. In the current global context, the national education system faces challenges related to the mismatch between education and the evolving job market. The pace of workforce development is not being matched by the pace of educational progress (Arifin, 2003: 34).

To improve the quality of Islamic education, it is necessary to have support from various stakeholders involved in the educational process. Among the essential components to achieve these goals is the teacher. Teachers play a fundamental role in shaping and producing students who are proficient in learning Islamic

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education, because there is always interaction between the teacher and students during the teaching and learning process.

Therefore, to realize a high-quality education that is relevant to societal needs and competitive in the global context, the education reforms need to be undertaken. The legal foundation for the organization and reform of education is governed by Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System. This law outlines the vision, mission, functions, and goals of national education, as well as strategies for the development of national education (UURI, 2009: 373).

The purpose of education is to bring about changes in students towards better outcomes. It is essential to understand that the objectives of education are fundamental to the execution of the educational process. The educational objectives serve as the foundation that determines the character and content of education, and they also guide the direction in which students are to be led (Maunah, 2009: 9).

Islamic education teachers play a crucial role in improving the quality of Islamic education. Furthermore, the success of quality learning is influenced by the strategies employed in teaching process. Achieving success is not something that can stand alone; it requires the support of various other elements. Therefore, the fundamental object of success in the learning process can be observed in the strategies implemented by an Islamic education teacher. These strategies include methods such as reading books and conducting lessons in classrooms or outdoor settings. In essence, these are systematic and planned activities aimed at encouraging students to engage in learning independently, with both will and ability. For the learning process to be of high quality, teachers must establish objectives that are focused on behavioral changes, adopting democratic, open, fair, and enjoyable approaches. The methods chosen should foster interest, talent, initiative, creativity, imagination, and the desired outcomes (Nata, 2009: 215).

One of the challenges in Islamic education today is the imbalance between the expectations of Islamic education and the reality that exists. This can be seen through numerous societal issues, including juvenile delinquency, criminality, and brawls. Additionally, several failures in the delivery of Islamic education in schools are highlighted by Husni Rahim, who points out a number of critical issues. First, many students, after 12 years of schooling, are still unable to read the Qur'an properly, perform prayers regularly, fast during Ramadan, or display good character. Second, incidents of school brawls continue to occur, often resulting in fatalities, and there are still numerous violations of morality, along with a high percentage of students using illicit drugs and alcohol. Third, the widespread prevalence of corruption, collusion, and nepotism in various sectors of society signals a weak moral control within individuals, leading to consumerist behaviors, extravagant lifestyles, and susceptibility to immoral conduct (Rahim, 2001: 37).

The ultimate goal of education is the development of faith, piety, and noble character. In line with the national educational objectives, the quality education system is aimed at developing students' potential to become individuals who are devout and pious, possess noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and responsible citizens in a democratic society (UURI, 2009: 160).

An additional reason for choosing this particular location for study is the researchers' intention to examine the extent to which the Islamic Education (PAI) programs implemented at this school contribute to making it a quality school in Gresik. Based on the researchers' observations, there had been significant improvements in teaching, including advancements in Islamic education and the establishment of a conducive religious culture. This motivated the researchers to select Qon Gresik Islamic Vocational School as the subject of the study.

To realize the ideal goals of education as described above, educational institutions, whether schools or madrasahs, must make significant efforts in formulating specific policies. These policies should aim at optimizing the roles of all components within the institution, especially concerning the quality of teaching. Quality learning is an essential element of the educational process, and the success of any educational objective depends on the quality of preparation and development carried out optimally.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Quality of Learning

Quality can be defined as the level or degree of something, which refers to how good or bad a particular attribute or degree (such as intelligence, skill, etc.) is (Ali, 1996: 467).

In the context of education, the concept of quality refers to both the process and the outcome of

education. A high-quality educational process involves various inputs, such as teaching materials (cognitive, affective, or psychomotor), methodology (adapted to the teacher's capabilities), facilities, administrative support, infrastructure, and other resources, as well as the creation of a conducive learning environment. Therefore, quality is equivalent to excellence, meaning the goodness or badness of an object (Pius, 1994: 384).

Learning Strategies / Methods

The learning strategy to be used in the educational process must be oriented towards the learning objectives to be achieved. Furthermore, it should be adapted to the type of material, the characteristics of the students, and the situation or conditions in which the learning process takes place (Majid, 2012 :129).

Several learning strategies can be applied. According to Rowntree, in Wina Sanjaya's book, these strategies are categorized into exposition-discovery learning strategies, group learning strategies, and individual learning strategies (0 Suprihatiningrum, 2013 :149).

In the exposition strategy, the learning material is presented to students in a ready-made form, and students are required to master the material. Roy Killen, in Sanjaya's book, refers to this as direct instruction. This is called direct instruction because the material is simply presented to the students without requiring them to process it. Students are expected to master the material in its entirety. Thus, in the expository strategy, the teacher functions as an information deliverer. In contrast, the discovery strategy allows students to find and explore the learning material independently through various activities, making the teacher's role more as a facilitator and guide. Due to this, the discovery strategy is often referred to as indirect learning (Sanjaya, 2008 :299).

The individual learning strategy is carried out by students independently. The pace, delay, and success of the learning process are largely determined by the individual student's ability. The learning material and the method of learning are designed for self-study. An example of this strategy is learning through modules or language learning using audio tapes.

Unlike the individual learning strategy, group learning is done in teams. A group of students is taught by one or a group of teachers, or through large-group or classroom teaching, or students can also learn in smaller groups. The group strategy does not account for individual learning speeds. Each individual is treated the same. As a result, in group learning, students with high abilities may be hindered by those with average skills, while students with lower abilities may feel overwhelmed by those with higher abilities.

METHOD

Based on the study background, a qualitative approach was utilized by the researchers with a descriptive study type (Moeloeng, 2016: 4). The data were obtained from interviews with key informants, direct observation, and documentation. The results of the data inventory were then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman analytical model, which consists of the stages: data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. Through specific phenomena, the collected data were generalized after analysis to produce findings that can be presented through research propositions (Arikunto, 2007 :234).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of the Strategies to Improve the Quality of Islamic Religious Education Learning at Qon Gresik Islamic Vocational School

Qon Gresik Islamic Vocational School is a vocational school focused on students' skills in their respective fields and emphasizes character education. The school, based on Islamic principles, prioritizes religious education while fostering the development of students' faith. Character building in religiosity, discipline, and honesty is carried out effectively through activities that nurture these values.

The improvement of the quality of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is inseparable from the planning of the learning process, as shown in the study findings. Learning planning includes the creation of annual programs, semester programs, syllabi, and lesson plans, all tailored to the needs of the students. Therefore, careful planning before the implementation of learning is essential. As explained by Wina Sanjaya in his book on learning system design and planning, learning planning involves a series of activities that must be carried out to achieve objectives. Thus, learning planning can serve as a guide for designing the learning process according to the students' needs (Sanjaya, 2015: 29).

At Qon Gresik Islamic Vocational School, in addition to using four primary methods (assignments, discussions, presentations, and lectures), the school also utilized other methods such as memorization techniques, assignments involving papers and PowerPoint presentations, storytelling with moral lessons, video screenings, and the "Make a Match" video comment method. Active learning techniques were adjusted to the material and the needs of the students. The integration of technology also contributed to improving the quality of Islamic Religious Education learning, making it easier to achieve the educational goal of shaping the students' character (Junaedi, 2017: 117).

The strategies for improving the quality of PAI learning at Qon Gresik Islamic Vocational School include habituation, motivation, and exemplary conduct, as outlined below:

a. Memorization

The practice of memorization is a key habit, covering memorization of lesson material, daily prayers, short surahs, and Juz 30. This guidance and habituation of memorization sharpens the students' memory. By regularly memorizing, students gain better mastery over the material.

b. Habituation and Guidance of Quranic Reading and Writing (BTQ)

Qon Gresik Islamic Vocational School continues to prioritize religious education, including Quranic studies. Teachers work to ensure that students can read the Quran well, as a measure of success in religiosity or worship is influenced by Quranic knowledge, particularly since prayers are conducted using Quranic verses.

c. Congregational Prayers

Congregational prayers are practiced at Qon Gresik Islamic Vocational School, including Dhuha prayer and Dhuhur prayer in congregation. By habituating students to perform these prayers, they gradually understand and embrace their religious obligations. These practices become a part of their lives, allowing them to continue performing congregational prayers outside of school.

d. The 3S Culture

The 3S culture—smile, greet, and regard—is an effort by the teachers and the school to instill good character in students. When interacting with teachers or peers, students are expected to shake hands and show courtesy. Through this culture, students are expected to develop a positive personality, starting with themselves. This attitude also enhances their participation in PAI lessons, as they learn to appreciate and respect both teachers and classmates, fostering a harmonious learning environment.

Teachers are one of the primary components in education, playing a crucial role in achieving national education goals. Therefore, teachers are expected to carry out their duties effectively. A teacher's responsibilities are not limited to imparting knowledge to students but also extend to all administrative activities within the school (Mustajab, 2015).

In administrative activities, teachers are required to carry out tasks that include planning, implementing, and assessing the learning process as well as reporting student learning outcomes. According to Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005, the standards for the learning process include planning the learning process, implementing the learning process, assessing learning outcomes, and supervising the learning process to ensure an effective and efficient learning process (Kemendiknas, 2011).

Relating to this, before carrying out the learning process, a teacher must ideally prepare or plan all aspects related to the implementation of the learning process. This includes preparing lesson plans, assessment plans, and other supporting administrative documents for the learning process.

Several books or administrative documents that teachers of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) must prepare to facilitate or support the learning process include academic calendars, guidance books, student attendance registers, inventory books, grade books, student transfer records, report card issuance and receipt books, counseling and guidance books, absentee records, analysis of student learning outcomes, lesson plans, test question outlines, test result analysis, guest books, and enrichment and improvement programs. Essentially, the administration of PAI teachers is an essential component that supports the success of the learning process, making it easier for PAI teachers to monitor data on the progress of the learning process in the classroom. Therefore, teachers, as administrators, must complete the necessary administrative documents. Proper documentation of the PAI teacher's administration, including learning, assessment, and other

supporting documents, indicates that the teacher has performed their administrative duties in accordance with government standards for the learning process (Bakhrudin, 2019).

The results of the study showed that the completion of the PAI teacher's administration reached 87.5%, or about 28 administrative documents. This is an improvement compared to the previous 61.25%, indicating that the PAI teacher's administration was previously incomplete. With this improved administrative completeness, ideally, the quality of learning at Qon Gresik Islamic Vocational School should show a noticeable improvement.

Analysis of Supporting and Hindering Factors in Improving the Quality of Islamic Religious Education Learning at Qon Gresik Islamic Vocational School

Based on the study findings on the supporting and hindering factors that the Islamic Religious Education teachers apply to improve the quality of PAI learning at Qon Gresik Islamic Vocational School, the following factors were identified:

1. Limited Time for Classroom Learning. Due to time constraints, afternoon and evening sessions are held to ensure students receive the necessary instruction.
2. Need for Improved Teaching Models.
3. Supporting Facilities for Islamic Religious Studies.
4. Lack of Student Awareness and Motivation.
5. Parental Support.
6. Lack of Interest in Learning Islamic Religious Education.
7. Limited Availability of Textbooks or Literature.

CONCLUSION

The strategy for improving the quality of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at Qon Gresik Islamic Vocational School involved providing guidance, advice, motivation, and role modeling through both words and concrete actions by the PAI teacher. The strategy also emphasized habitual practices that encourage students to regularly perform religious duties. Over time, these habits would continue naturally without commands, as students would develop a sense of responsibility, recognizing religious practices as an essential part of their lives. These activities included congregational prayers, *istighosah*, BTQ (Quranic Reading and Writing), reciting *shalawat*, and other similar activities.

However, the completeness of administrative documents held by PAI teachers at Qon Gresik Islamic Vocational School was inadequate. The administrative completion for the PAI teacher's teaching documents was only at 61.25%, indicating that the administrative documents for PAI education were still incomplete.

The process of improving the quality of PAI education at Qon Gresik Islamic Vocational School included: First, completing the teaching administration documents for the PAI teacher, which reached 87.5%. Second, implementing a strategy to improve the quality of PAI learning. This improvement process adheres to educational process standards, including planning, implementing, and evaluating the learning process. The quality improvement process was applied to two classes: an experimental class that received treatment with the quality improvement strategy and a control class that was given the exposition strategy, where the learning focused primarily on the teacher's explanations.

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