



Islamic Religious Education Teachers' Strategies in Overcoming Students' Learning Difficulties in Kotabaru Regency

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ABSTRACT

School education is a vital medium for achieving national educational goals. However, educational success does not depend solely on teachers and curriculum; it is also influenced by environmental factors. This study addresses an important gap in previous research, where previous studies only focused on single aspects, either social environment, teacher strategies, or learning media, without integrating them into a comprehensive framework. This study aims to analyze the relationship and interaction among three main components involved in addressing learning difficulties in Islamic Religious Education (PAI): teacher strategies, social environment, and learning media utilization. This study uses a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative findings from previous empirical studies involving 116 students across three schools in Kotabaru, Indonesia. Data were obtained through questionnaires, observations, interviews, and documentation from the selected studies. Quantitative data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis, while qualitative findings were analyzed descriptively. Quantitative data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis, and qualitative data were analyzed descriptively. The findings indicate that students' social environment was categorized as high (71.74%), while learning behavior was also categorized as high (76.75%), showing a strong relationship between both variables ($r_{xy} = 0.673$). However, students' learning interest was still at a moderate level (59.3%) with a strong correlation ($r_{xy} = 0.681$). Teacher strategies include planning, implementation, evaluation, modeling exemplary behavior, assigning tasks, and habituation. These findings highlight that overcoming learning difficulties in PAI requires an integrated approach that combines teacher pedagogical competence, supportive learning environments, and effective use of learning media.

Keywords: Teacher Strategies, Social Environment, Learning Interest, Learning Behavior, Islamic Religious Education

1. INTRODUCTION

Education plays a fundamental role in achieving national educational goals because it develops students' knowledge, competencies, values, and character. However, educational achievement is not determined solely by curriculum quality and teacher competence; it is also influenced by contextual factors, including students' learning environments, social interactions, and the availability of learning resources. From a social cognitive perspective, learning occurs through reciprocal interactions among personal factors, behavior, and environmental influences, indicating that students' learning processes cannot be separated from the context in which learning takes place (Bandura, 1986).

In Islamic Religious Education (PAI), Al-Qur'an Hadith, and Akidah Akhlak subjects, learning success is influenced not only by students' cognitive abilities but also by learning interest, learning behavior, teacher pedagogical strategies, and supportive learning environments. Islamic education emphasizes that the learning process aims not only to transfer knowledge but also to develop students' moral values, religious understanding, and character formation (Halstead, 2004). Therefore, understanding the factors that influence students' learning experiences in Islamic Religious Education is essential for improving the quality of learning outcomes.

This phenomenon becomes the urgency of this research because several challenges remain in Islamic Religious Education learning in Kotabaru. First, some students still show low interest in learning Al-



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Qur'an Hadith and Akidah Akhlak. Second, schools still use available learning facilities, such as LCD projectors, speakers, and internet access, only to a limited extent. Third, students' learning difficulties in Islamic Religious Education require appropriate pedagogical strategies from teachers. Fourth, the role of social environment, including peer interaction, teacher-student relationships, and school climate, requires deeper investigation to understand how these factors interact with students' learning behavior and learning interest.

Previous studies have shown that teacher strategies play an important role in improving students' learning experiences. Teachers are not only responsible for delivering instructional materials but also for designing learning activities, creating supportive classroom environments, motivating students, and conducting appropriate evaluations. Rozi and Nabilah (2023) explain that Islamic Religious Education teachers improve learning quality through effective classroom management, motivational strategies, and engaging learning environments. Other studies indicate that teacher strategies, including exemplary behavior, assignment provision, and habituation activities, can support students' learning processes, particularly in Islamic Religious Education contexts.

In addition to teacher factors, learning media utilization has been identified as an important component in supporting students' understanding and engagement. Appropriate learning media can help students process information, increase attention, and create more meaningful learning experiences. According to multimedia learning theory, students' understanding improves when information is presented through appropriately designed combinations of verbal and visual representations (Mayer, 2021). In Islamic Religious Education, Mahmudah and Prastowo (2023) show that PowerPoint-based learning media can increase students' enthusiasm and support more interactive learning processes.

Furthermore, the social environment represents another important factor influencing students' learning behavior. Social interactions with peers, teachers, and the school community contribute to students' motivation, engagement, and behavioral development. According to Bandura (1986), environmental factors influence human behavior through continuous reciprocal interactions between individuals and their social contexts. Previous studies have also shown that positive peer relationships, teacher support, and school climate are associated with improved student engagement and learning behavior (Fredricks et al., 2004).

Although previous studies have provided valuable insights regarding teacher strategies, social environment, and learning media, most studies have examined these factors separately. Some studies have focused on the relationship between social environment and students' learning behavior. In contrast, others have examined Islamic Religious Education teacher strategies in overcoming learning difficulties or the utilization of audiovisual learning media. However, few studies have integrated these factors into a comprehensive analytical framework that explains how teacher strategies, social environment, and learning media interact to support students' learning processes in Islamic Religious Education.

Therefore, this article aims to analyze the relationship and interaction among three main components influencing Islamic Religious Education learning: (1) teacher strategies, (2) social environment, and (3) learning media utilization. This study proposes that students' learning behavior and learning interest are shaped through the interaction among pedagogical practices, environmental support, and appropriate learning resources. The theoretical framework of this study consists of three interconnected perspectives: (a) Islamic Education and the role of teachers in instructional strategies, (b) social environment and its influence on student learning behavior, and (c) learning media and its contribution to students' learning interest in Islamic Religious Education.

2. METHOD

This study employed an integrative mixed-method approach by analyzing and synthesizing findings from several previous empirical studies conducted in Kotabaru, Indonesia. This approach was selected because the study aimed to integrate quantitative and qualitative findings on Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning difficulties, particularly teacher strategies, social environment, and learning media

utilization. Rather than collecting new primary data, this study analyzed existing empirical findings to develop a comprehensive understanding of how these factors interact.

This study drew on several empirical studies conducted in Islamic Religious Education contexts in Kotabaru. These studies involved different research participants, including 73 students from grades VII, VIII, and IX at SMP Negeri 6 Kotabaru, Al-Qur'an Hadith teachers at MTs Darul Ulum Kotabaru, 43 students from grade VIII at MTsN 2 Kotabaru, and one Islamic Religious Education teacher at SMP Negeri 6 Kotabaru. The integrated data represented a total population of 326 students, with 116 student participants included in the quantitative analysis.

The research procedure consisted of three stages: identifying and selecting relevant empirical studies, extracting data, and synthesizing findings. The first stage involved identifying studies related to teacher strategies, social environment, learning interest, and learning behavior in Islamic Religious Education. The second stage involved extracting important information from each study, including research design, participants, data collection techniques, analytical methods, findings, and conclusions. The final stage involved synthesizing and integrating findings from different studies into an analytical framework explaining the relationship among teacher strategies, social environment, and learning media utilization.

Data collection involved secondary data analysis through a review of information from the selected empirical studies. The data included findings from questionnaires, observations, interviews, and documentation reported in the original studies. Quantitative findings were analyzed based on Pearson Product Moment correlation results. In contrast, qualitative findings were analyzed descriptively through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing following Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's (2014) framework.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Research Results

1. Social Environment and Learning Behavior

- a) The social environment at SMP Negeri 6 Kotabaru fell in the high category, with a score of 1676 (71.74%).
- b) Students' learning behavior at SMP Negeri 6 Kotabaru fell in the high category, with a score of 1793 (76.75%).
- c) There was a significant correlation between the social environment and students' learning behavior ($r_{xy} = 0.673$), as the r_{xy} value exceeded the r -table value at the 5% (0.230) and 1% (0.299) significance levels.
- d) The Alternative Hypothesis (H_a), which states that the social environment influences students' learning behavior, was accepted.

2. Teacher Strategies as Pedagogical Responses to Students' Learning Difficulties

The findings indicate that teacher strategies represent a fundamental component in addressing students' learning difficulties in Islamic Religious Education. The strategies implemented by Al-Qur'an Hadith teachers consist of three interconnected stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation. These stages show that teachers not only transmit knowledge but also facilitate learning by designing experiences based on students' needs.

In the planning stage, teachers prepared lesson plans, learning materials, and appropriate instructional methods. During implementation, teachers applied lectures, question-and-answer activities, and Qur'an reading practices. Meanwhile, teachers evaluated students through oral tests, written assessments, and assignments.

This finding supports Mulyasa's (2015) view that teachers perform multiple roles as educators, instructors, mentors, and evaluators. In Islamic Religious Education, teacher competence is not limited to delivering religious knowledge but also includes motivating students, providing exemplary behavior, and creating meaningful learning experiences.

The Use of Audiovisual Media and Learning Interest

The research results showed that:

- a) The use of audiovisual learning media among eighth-grade students at MTsN 2 Kotabaru was categorized as high, with an average percentage of 60.98%.
- b) Students' learning interest among eighth-grade students at MTsN 2 Kotabaru was categorized as sufficient, with an average percentage of 59.3%.
- c) The use of audiovisual learning media significantly influenced students' learning interest, with an r_{xy} value of 0.681, which falls in the strong correlation category.

Islamic Religious Education Teacher Strategies in Overcoming Learning Difficulties

The research results showed that:

- a) Islamic Religious Education teachers' strategies for overcoming students' learning difficulties at SMP Negeri 6 Kotabaru can be considered good.
- b) The strategies implemented include exemplary behavior, assignment strategies, and habituation.
- c) The factors causing students' learning difficulties include students, teachers, and the environment.

Muhadharah Activities and Students' Learning Achievement

The research results showed that muhadharah activities at MTsS Raudhatul Jannah Kotabaru were included in the sufficient category with an average score of 45.95%. Students' learning achievement was also included in the sufficient category with an average score of 49.85%. The correlation test results showed an r value of 0.523 with a significance value of 0.003. This value indicates that there is a positive and significant relationship between muhadharah activities and students' learning achievement.

The research results regarding muhadharah activities and students' learning achievement can be described as follows:

- a) Muhadharah activities were included in the sufficient category with an average score of 45.95%.
 - b) Students' learning achievement was included in the sufficient category with an average score of 49.85%.
 - c) The correlation value between muhadharah activities and students' learning achievement was $r = 0.523$.
 - d) The significance value of 0.003 indicates a significant relationship.
- Muhadharah activities have a positive relationship with students' learning achievement

3.2 Discussion

1. The Relationship Between Teacher Strategies, Social Environment, and Learning Interest

The results of this study indicate that teacher strategies are the main element in overcoming students' learning difficulties. Teacher strategies are not only related to the way teachers deliver learning materials but also related to teachers' ability to guide students, provide examples, build habits, use learning media, manage classrooms, and evaluate students' development.

In Islamic Religious Education learning, teachers are not only required to explain materials verbally but must also help students understand, appreciate, and apply religious values in their daily behavior. This is in accordance with Majid (2014), who stated that Islamic Religious Education learning must be directed toward understanding and practicing Islamic teachings.

The results of this study are also in accordance with Mulyasa (2015), who explained that teachers have roles as educators, mentors, instructors, and evaluators. The exemplary strategy shows that teachers become behavioral models for students. Assignment strategies help teachers determine the extent of students' understanding. Habituation strategies help shape students' discipline and religious character. Thus, teacher strategies in Islamic Religious Education are not only instructional but also involve moral development and character formation.

The results of this study are also consistent with Rozi and Nabilah (2023), who emphasized that Islamic Religious Education teachers play an important role in improving students' learning quality through effective learning management, the ability to increase learning interest, and the creation of an interesting and enjoyable learning atmosphere.

Therefore, teacher strategies in overcoming learning difficulties cannot only be carried out through material delivery but also through the ability to build learning interactions, provide motivation, manage classrooms, and adjust methods according to students' needs.

The findings demonstrate that the social environment represents an important contextual factor in shaping students' learning behavior. The high category of social environment (71.74%) and learning behavior (76.75%) indicates that supportive interactions within the school environment contribute to students' learning engagement. The correlation coefficient ($r_{xy} = 0.673$) further suggests that students' learning behavior is closely associated with the quality of their social environment.

This finding supports Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which explains that human behavior develops through reciprocal interactions between individuals, behavior, and environmental conditions (Bandura, 1986). In the context of Islamic Religious Education, teacher-student relationships, peer interaction, and school climate become important elements that influence students' learning attitudes.

These results strengthen Bandura's Social Learning Theory (2015), which explains that behavior can be formed through observation and imitation of the social environment.

2. The Use of Audiovisual Media and Students' Learning Interest

Students at MTsN 2 Kotabaru used audiovisual media at a high level (60.98%), while their learning interest was sufficient (59.3%). Furthermore, the correlation value ($r_{xy} = 0.681$) indicates a strong relationship between audiovisual media utilization and students' learning interest.

However, these findings also demonstrate that the availability and use of audiovisual media alone do not automatically guarantee optimal student interest. Although media provides opportunities to present learning materials more attractively and understandably, its educational effectiveness depends on how teachers design and manage learning activities—learning media functions as a supporting tool that requires pedagogical integration, including explanation, discussion, questioning, reflection, and evaluation.

This finding supports Mayer's (2021) multimedia learning theory, which explains that students' understanding improves when verbal and visual information are organized appropriately within a meaningful learning process. Therefore, audiovisual media should not merely function as a presentation tool but should facilitate students' cognitive engagement with learning materials.

In Islamic Religious Education, teachers play an important role as mediators between technology and students' learning experiences. If teachers only display videos or PowerPoint presentations without providing interaction and reflection, students may become passive recipients of information. Conversely, when teachers combine media with active learning strategies, it can encourage students' attention, understanding, and participation.

The results of this study indicate that teacher strategies become a connecting factor between learning media utilization and students' learning interest. Effective use of audiovisual media requires supporting pedagogical practices, such as providing stimulating questions, facilitating discussions, assigning reflective activities, and providing feedback. Therefore, learning media not only serve as a visual aid but also become an instructional instrument that supports students' understanding and engagement in Islamic Religious Education learning.

These findings are consistent with Mahmudah and Prastowo (2023), who found that PowerPoint-based learning media can increase students' enthusiasm and support more engaging

Islamic Religious Education learning. However, this study adds that media effectiveness should be understood within a broader learning system, where technological resources interact with teacher competence and instructional strategies.

3. Muhadharah Activities and Students' Learning Achievement

The findings on muhadharah activities show that religious extracurricular activities can serve as complementary learning strategies in Islamic Religious Education. The implementation of muhadharah activities at MTsS Raudhatul Jannah Kotabaru was categorized as sufficient (45.95%), while students' learning achievement was also categorized as sufficient (49.85%). The correlation analysis showed a positive and significant relationship between muhadharah activities and students' learning achievement ($r = 0.523$; $p = 0.003$).

These findings indicate that muhadharah activities provide learning experiences beyond classroom instruction. Through preparing and delivering religious speeches, students develop communication skills, confidence, responsibility, and a deeper understanding of Islamic concepts. Therefore, muhadharah not only functions as a religious routine but also as a learning medium that connects theoretical religious knowledge with practical application.

From the perspective of Islamic Education, learning is not limited to cognitive achievement but also involves developing attitudes, skills, and religious character. Muhadharah is a habituation activity that allows students to practice conveying Islamic messages while strengthening their self-confidence and social competence.

This finding is consistent with Aziz (2016), who explains that Islamic preaching and communication aim to guide individuals toward goodness through effective message delivery. In the school context, muhadharah gives students opportunities to internalize religious values through direct practice.

However, the moderate category of muhadharah implementation indicates that this activity still requires further improvement. Without systematic planning, guidance, and evaluation, muhadharah may become merely a routine activity without producing optimal educational outcomes. Therefore, schools need to strengthen muhadharah management through structured schedules, teacher mentoring, speech preparation guidance, assessment rubrics, performance evaluation, and constructive feedback.

Thus, muhadharah can become an effective supporting strategy in Islamic Religious Education because it integrates religious understanding, communication skills, and character development.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that Islamic Religious Education learning processes can be understood through the interaction of three interconnected dimensions: pedagogical, environmental, and technological factors. Findings from various empirical studies show that teacher strategies, the social environment, and learning media use collectively support students' learning behavior and interest.

Teacher strategies represent an important pedagogical dimension, including learning planning, implementation, evaluation, exemplary behavior, assignment provision, and habituation activities. Meanwhile, the social environment provides contextual support, as indicated by its high category (71.74%) and its strong relationship with students' learning behavior ($r_{xy} = 0.673$). Learning media utilization also represents an important technological dimension, with audiovisual media categorized as high (60.98%) and showing a strong relationship with students' learning interest ($r_{xy} = 0.681$). However, the finding that students' learning interest remained at a sufficient level (59.3%) despite relatively high environmental support and media utilization indicates that technological and contextual factors require appropriate pedagogical strategies to produce meaningful learning experiences.

This study contributes by proposing an integrated perspective that overcoming learning difficulties in Islamic Religious Education cannot rely on a single factor but requires the interaction of teacher competence, supportive learning environments, and appropriate learning media utilization. The findings emphasize the importance of viewing PAI learning as a complex educational process involving instructional, social, and technological dimensions.

This study has several limitations. First, the analysis relied on a secondary synthesis of previous empirical studies rather than primary data collected through an integrated mixed-method design. Second, the data sources were limited to three schools in Kotabaru, which may restrict the broader applicability of the findings. Third, this study did not examine differences based on demographic characteristics such as gender, age, or students' educational backgrounds.

Future research should employ integrated mixed-method designs with larger samples and diverse educational contexts. Further studies may also conduct intervention-based research to examine how integrated programs combining teacher strategies, social environment support, and learning media utilization influence students' learning behavior and learning interest in Islamic Religious Education.

DECLARATIONS

Author Contributions

Conceptualization: Sarifah St Fatimah; research design and methodology: Sarifah St Fatimah and Putri Regina; data identification and extraction: Sarifah St Fatimah, Ardiansyah, and Tri Novita Ramadina; data analysis and synthesis: Sarifah St Fatimah and Putri Regina; writing original draft preparation: Sarifah St Fatimah; writing review and editing: Sarifah St Fatimah, Putri Regina, Ardiansyah, Tri Novita Ramadina, and Sapitri Olifiya. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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Ethics Approval

This study followed ethical principles for educational research. Because this research analyzed and synthesized findings from previously conducted empirical studies, it involved no direct interaction with new research participants. The authors maintained academic integrity by appropriately acknowledging the original data sources and responsibly interpreting previous research findings.

Data Availability

The data analyzed in this study were obtained from previously published empirical studies and research reports. The extracted data supporting this study's findings are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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