CHALLENGES IN APPLYING A STUDENT-CENTRED APPROACH TO E-LEARNING FOR ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS DURING THE PANDEMIC COVID-19: PRELIMINARY DATA ANALYSIS

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Abstract

COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world significantly in various sectors and industries, including the educational sector. For example, traditional classroom learning, which is more teacher-centred, is being replaced by e-learning, which takes a student-centred approach. However, this approach is considered distinct from the teaching and learning practice of Islamic Education taught in the classroom before the pandemic. This sudden shift presents a significant challenge to Islamic Education teachers to apply more student-centred e-learning. According to the literature review, several issues arose when Islamic Education e-learning was implemented, such as low student engagement, few active students, little student feedback, and high student dropout rates. Thus, this preliminary study examined the challenges of implementing the student-centred approach to e-learning for Islamic Education in primary schools. This study adopted a qualitative design with an in-depth interview involving Islamic Education teachers in primary schools. The study's findings revealed that the

research informants continuously implemented the student-centred approach even when the country was struck by the COVID-19 pandemic, despite facing challenges, especially in student personality development. Moreover, the findings suggest that teachers must better comprehend and implement a more creative student-centred approach in e-learning to align with 21st-century education and fulfil their responsibility for students' future personality development.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic; Islamic education; student-centred approach; e-learning.

Khulasah

Pandemik Covid-19 telah membawa suatu perubahan besar kepada dunia kini dalam pelbagai sektor dan industri termasuklah sektor pendidikan. Sebagai contoh, pembelajaran secara tradisional di dalam kelas yang kebanyakannya lebih berpusatkan guru berubah kepada pelaksanaan e-pembelajaran yang mengaplikasikan pendekatan pemusatan murid. Pendekatan ini dilihat berbeza dengan pendekatan pengajaran dan pembelajaran Pendidikan Islam yang dipraktikkan sebelum pandemik melanda. Perubahan yang mendadak ini memberi cabaran hebat kepada guru Pendidikan Islam dalam mengaplikasikan e-pembelajaran yang lebih berpusatkan murid. Hasil tinjauan literatur mendapati beberapa isu telah timbul. Antara lain, isu-isu seperti kurang penglibatan, murid tidak aktif, murid kurang atau lambat memberikan maklum balas dan keciciran dalam kalangan murid apabila pelaksanaan e-pembelajaran Pendidikan Islam dipraktikkan. Justeru, kajian preliminari ini dijalankan bertujuan mengkaji cabaran-cabaran dalam mengaplikasikan pendekatan pemusatan murid dalam e-pembelajaran Pendidikan Islam peringkat sekolah

rendah. Kajian ini menggunakan reka bentuk kualitatif, dengan menggunakan kaedah temu bual secara mendalam melibatkan peserta terdiri daripada guru Pendidikan Islam sekolah rendah. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa informan kajian tetap mengaplikasikan e-pembelajaran yang berpusatkan murid semasa situasi pandemik Covid-19 melanda, walaupun mereka berhadapan dengan beberapa bentuk cabaran, terutamanya, cabaran dalam pembangunan sahsiah murid. Dapatan kajian ini mengesyorkan supaya guru perlu lebih memahami dan mengaplikasikan pendekatan pemusatan murid dengan lebih kreatif dalam e-pembelajaran, agar sejajar dengan pendidikan abad ke-21. Seterusnya, guru-guru dapat menunaikan tanggungjawab mereka demi mencapai pembentukan sahsiah murid.

Kata kunci: Pandemik Covid-19; Pendidikan Islam; pendekatan pemusatan murid; e-pembelajaran.

Introduction

COVID-19, caused by a new virus, has become a pandemic and has been spreading across the country since early 2020. The disease is vulnerable because of its rapid and severe spread, prompting the World Health Organization (WHO) to declare it a pandemic. Malaysia was not exempted from this pandemic. The Malaysian government took a proactive measure to prevent COVID-19 transmission by implementing the Movement Control Order (MCO) effective from 18 March 2020. Consequently, all government and private premises, including the Malaysian Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE), have been ordered to limit their operations.

As a result, schools and other educational institutions were prohibited from engaging in face-to-face physical activities. Teachers were advised to

conduct home-based teaching and learning through online platforms such as Google Classroom, WhatsApp, Telegram, Google Meet, and Zoom. Previously, face-to-face lessons were the most effective method, but in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, teachers had to adapt to changes in teaching and learning methods. This circumstance affected them, as they are now required to adopt new teaching techniques that were uncommon before the COVID-19 period. For example, the transition had psychological implications for teachers. Lack of proficiency in utilising exclusive platforms and modern technological equipment may result in anxiety, emotional exhaustion, sleep disorder, and depression, limiting their ability to deliver effective services [1] . Furthermore, these psychological effects lead to prolonged health issues such as fever, headache, muscle weakness, cold, and inflammation, which are psychosomatic symptoms of stress[2].

To alleviate the pressure felt by teachers during the pandemic, the MOE had devised a policy to ensure that learning would continue even when schools were closed. This policy has introduced a new dimension to the MOE's implementation of online e-learning. In line with the MOE's aspiration, as stated in the Malaysian Education Blueprint (MEB 2013-2025), the implementation of e-learning was seen as congruent with the student-centred learning strategy. This approach emphasises the importance of students taking

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[1] Jakubowski, T. D. & Sitko-Dominik, M. M., "Teachers' Mental Health during the First Two Waves of the Covid-19 Pandemic in Poland," *PLoS ONE* 16(9) (2021), 2-3.

[2] Lily, A. E. A., Ismail, A. F., Abunasser, F. M. & Alqahtani, R. H. A., "Distance Education as a Response to Pandemics: Coronavirus and Arab Culture," *Technology in Society* 63 (2020), 5.

responsibility for their learning process and being active in knowledge acquisition rather than relying solely on teachers to convey information.

Active learning methods can increase students' awareness of their action purpose, stimulate high-level thinking skills, activate existing knowledge and experience, develop self-learning skills, provide different learning content, and encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning. [3] They are encouraged to expand their knowledge by completing real-life, realistic, practical, and relevant assignments[4]. This learning environment allows students to interact actively with teachers and other students while being responsible for actively engaging in the learning process. Interaction between teacher and students includes not only communication but also social engagement, in which interaction happens when both parties are involved.[5]

E-learning, a learning platform that uses electronic technology, allows students to access learning courses and communicate with their teachers regardless of location and time. It also supports the student-centred learning principle. Moreover, students can use digital features to access teaching materials such as notes, assignments, and videos, as well as take

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[3] Aliusta, G. O. & Özer, B., "Student-Centred Learning (SCL): Roles Changed?" *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice* 23(4) (2017), 422–435.

[4] Struyven, K., Dochy, F. & Janssens, S., "'Teach As You Preach': The Effects of Student-Centred Versus Lecture-Based Teaching on Student Teachers' Approach to Teaching," *European Journal of Teacher Education* 33(1) (2010), 43–64.

[5] Khadijah Mohd et al., "Islamic Perspective on the Concept of Interaction," *AFKAR: Journal of Aqidah and Islamic Thought* 23(2) (2021): 249–274.

quizzes and tests.[6] Therefore, the e-learning platform is appropriate for 21st Century Learning (PAK21). [7] However, the implementation of e-learning during the pandemic was fraught with issues and challenges, as it involved individuals from primary school pupils to college students.

Before the pandemic outbreak, students in higher education institutions had already acquired the skills to access information or materials, so implementing online learning may not pose a significant challenge. Nonetheless, pupils in primary school faced a different situation because, as previously stated, e-learning was not comprehensively implemented. Even though primary school pupils have been exposed to information and communication technology (ICT) through the Information and Communication Technology subject since 2014, their only exposure has been face-to-face with direct guidance from teachers. That was a far cry from the self-application of technology at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, Islamic Education teachers must maximise the opportunity to improve and broaden their learning potential by practising the student-centred approach through the e-learning platform. Following the objective of Islamic Education, the goal of producing students with excellent and admirable personalities could be achieved.

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[6] Bashah, M. A., & Zulkifli, H., "Isu dan Cabaran Guru Pendidikan Islam dalam Penerapan Pendidikan Digital," *International Journal of Advanced Research in Islamic Studies and Education* 2(1) (2022), 43–55.

[7] Nur Adibah Liyana Alwi & Hafizhah Zulkifli, "Amalan Kreativiti Guru Pendidikan Islam dalam Pembelajaran Abad Ke-21," *ASEAN Comparative Education Research Journal on Islam and Civilization (ACER-J)* 4(1) (2021), 40-54.

Research Methodology

This study used the qualitative approach by employing interview and content analysis methods. The researcher chose the qualitative research design to explore the experience of Islamic Education teachers in applying the student-centred approach while conducting e-learning. The study also aimed to identify their challenges and difficulties when implementing the approach. Besides, document analysis was conducted to analyse previous studies on the student-centred method, e-learning implementation, and the related challenges. The analysed documents consisted of published journals and proceedings.

The participants were selected using purposeful sampling to ensure that the study's objectives could be achieved. For the purposes of this article, only two Islamic Education teachers were interviewed by the researchers. This study's findings were preliminary discoveries regarding applying the student-centred approach to e-learning in Islamic Education. The study's informants were coded IET 1 and IET 2, respectively. The selected study locations were two primary schools in rural areas: IET 1 was from a school in the Hulu Selangor district, and IET 2 was from a school in Mukim Pengerang, Daerah Kota Tinggi, Johor.

In-depth interviews were conducted with both informants to collect data. A semi-structured interview protocol was designed to obtain saturated information from the informants. The interview question protocol was verified by an expert before the researcher started the study. The interviews were conducted and recorded via the Zoom application and lasted between 45 and 60 minutes per informant to achieve data sufficiency. The information gleaned from the interviews was then transcribed for data analysis. The transcripts were

reviewed and reread several times to ensure data comprehension. Each time the transcript was read, the researcher recorded the relevant codes or the questions that arose to be asked in the subsequent interview. Then, the entire data was coded and analysed thematically to identify distinct and recurring ideas.

The thematic analysis method is one of the qualitative research analyses used to examine data-related themes. According to Taylor and Bogdan, thematic analysis can provide a detailed picture of the data obtained according to the researcher's interpretation.[8] This article discusses the results of the data regarding the challenges of Islamic Education teachers when implementing the student-centred approach to e-learning for Islamic Education.

Applying Student-Centred Approach to Teaching and Learning

PAK21, or 21st Century Learning, is a paradigm shift in Malaysian education. In addition to introducing new educational methods, the teaching process is student-centred, with teachers acting as facilitators rather than chalk and talk.[9] With effect from 2014, the MOE has directed all Malaysian schools to implement PAK21 to improve school and student performance to be globally competitive.[10] In this context, PAK21 does not exempt Islamic Education from the student-centred approach. Religious learning in the Islamic Education subject will be more interesting when the learning process incorporates more innovative strategies, such as the

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[8] Taylor, S. J., Bogdan, R. & DeVault, M., *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: A Guidebook and Resource* (Wiley, 2015), 187.

[9] Nur Adibah Liyana Alwi & Hafizhah Zulkifli, "Amalan Kreativiti Guru Pendidikan Islam," 40-54.

[10] *Ibid*.

student-centred approach via e-learning. The student-centred approach must emphasise the five PAK21 elements of communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and noble values and ethics.

The first element of PAK21 is communication. The teacher should monitor students' communication in a student-centred classroom to ensure they do not use improper language. The importance of developing communication skills between teachers and students, among students, and between students and learning materials, either verbally or non-verbally, was emphasised when conveying and sharing knowledge.[11]

The second element is collaboration, which is closely related to students' relationships and interaction skills during the learning process, such as parents, friends, and teachers.[12] Collaboration in the student-centred learning environment refers to active cooperation between the teacher and students or among students that involves the exchange of ideas, opinions, or knowledge. The third element is creativity, which necessitates teachers guiding students to think more creatively and actively and being willing to present new ideas without fear of criticism during the learning process. According to Nur Adibah and Hafizhah, Islamic Education teachers utilised I-think maps, cutting-edge technology, pedagogic skills, and

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[11] Wan Mariana Wan Mohamad, Kamarul Shukri Mat Teh & Wan Ali Akbar Wan Abdullah, "Elemen Interaksi Dalam Diri dan Sesama Manusia Berasaskan Al-Quran Dalam Pembelajaran Abad Ke-21 Pendidikan Islam," *Sains Humanika* 13(2) (2021), 7-14.

[12] Ismail et al., "Aplikasi 4K1N dalam Pembelajaran dan Pemudahcaraan Abad 21: Satu Kajian Terhadap Pengajaran Guru Tingkatan Enam di Daerah Kubang Pasu," *Journal of Advanced Research in Social and Behavioural Sciences* 19(1) (2020), 64-79.

curriculum transformation in their PAK21 teaching to diversify their creativity.[13]

The fourth element is critical thinking which enhances students' problem-solving and decision-making through logical and mature judgments.[14] The final element is noble values and ethics. Teachers can inculcate noble values and ethics during learning sessions by, for instance, guiding students to identify noble values pertinent to the learning topic, assisting students in expressing their views on noble values, and acknowledging students who practise noble values. This element is crucial in shaping students' identities and personalities.

When the five elements discussed earlier are correctly practised, they can benefit students. Students will be trained to acquire skills that they can apply in the future, such as communication skills and the ability to collaborate and solve real-life problems based on critical thinking and ethics. However, some issues with the five elements arise during the implementation of e-learning which causes difficulties in adopting the student-centred approach. A literature review on the challenges in implementing Islamic Education e-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic identified several issues concerning Islamic Education teachers' interaction and communication during teaching and learning sessions via the e-learning platform.

These issues would make it difficult for teachers to practise the student-centred approach via the e-learning platform because communication is one of the critical elements of PAK21, which emphasises the student-centred approach in the learning process.

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[13] Nur Adibah Liyana Alwi & Hafizhah Zulkifli, "Amalan Kreativiti Guru Pendidikan Islam," 40-54.
[14] Ismail et al., "Aplikasi 4K1N dalam Pembelajaran," 64-79.

Despite their lack of technology and communication skills, and their unwillingness to accept changes in the current educational system, some teachers continue to apply teacher-centred. [15] If these issues and communication elements are not addressed seriously, Islamic Education teachers will remain behind and be unproductive, especially in navigating PAK21 and the student-centred learning approach. Therefore, proper planning is crucial in creative teaching to instil all PAK21 elements. In this regard, Islamic Education teachers must ensure that the curriculum, strategies, and techniques of PAK21 adequately prepare their students to confront the current educational trend of global competitions.

Student-Centred Method and E-Learning
Online learning is an alternative that ensures the continuity of teaching worldwide. It has transformed the educational realm. Online teaching and learning, also known as distance learning, does not necessitate a physical presence but does require an internet connection. One of the platforms that can be used during the pandemic is e-learning. E-learning gives students the freedom and flexibility to learn at their own pace and places. [16] An online-based e-learning platform helped teachers and students when schools were closed during the MCO period.

E-learning can be implemented in two ways, namely synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous means that learning occurs in real time, much like a

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[15] Muhali, M., "Pembelajaran Inovatif Abad Ke-21," *Jurnal Penelitian dan Pengkajian Ilmu Pendidikan: E-Saintika* 3(2) (2019), 25-50.

[16] Worrall, Lisa & Bell, F., "Metacognition and Lifelong E-Learning: A Contextual and Cyclical Process," *E-Learning and Digital Media* 4(2) (2007), 161-171.

physical classroom. The difference is that online learning is conducted simultaneously through Google Meet, Zoom, Skype, and video calls. In contrast, asynchronous refers to non-simultaneous or non-synchronised learning. This type of learning is flexible, with the teacher providing the learning materials and students receiving them to complete within the allotted time. Asynchronous and offline methods include teaching and learning via recorded videos and assigning students assignments without requiring them to attend classes. This pedagogy directly helped the government in controlling the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic within communities.

The synchronous and asynchronous approaches to e-learning require teachers to be meticulously prepared in terms of creativity in delivering the materials, monitoring two-way communication, designing appropriate assessments and analysing learning effectiveness.[17] These activities need to be performed online. Hence, teachers should be proficient in using the conference platforms and their respective application systems. When there is insufficient training for this type of teaching and learning, or when the training is rushed, it can confuse and undermine teachers' confidence.

According to Priess-Buchheit, teachers were dissatisfied with the form of e-learning implementation and training provided.[18] Among the reported

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[17] Mukhtar, K., Javed, K., Arooj, M., & Sethi, A., "Advantages, Limitations and Recommendations for Online Learning during Covid-19 Pandemic Era," *Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences* 36 (2020), 28-29.

[18] Priess-Buchheit, J., "Synchronous Hybrid Learning in Times of Social Distancing: A Report and Case Study on Benefits, Trainer's Challenges, and Guidelines," *International Journal for Innovation Education and Research* 8(10) (2020), 359-361.

dissatisfactions were the burden of implementing pedagogical activities in the new norm, a lack of proficiency in handling the time-consuming and complex e-learning approach, frequent technical errors that occurred in the presence of students, and a decline in teaching satisfaction. These situations had a significant psychological impact on teachers, indirectly undermining their performance and well-being. Despite being under much pressure due to the situation, teachers continued their teaching and learning activities as usual from home by utilising various online systems such as Digital Educational Learning Initiative Malaysia (DELIMa), Cikgootube, and other applications, as mentioned before. On the other hand, the classroom WhatsApp group, Telegram, YouTube, and Facebook played critical roles in facilitating teacher-student interaction and learning sessions.

During the pandemic, the student-centred teaching method was chosen by teachers due to its ability to attract students to participate in e-learning classes. This method replaced conventional methods in various ways, especially in computer-equipped classrooms.[19] Besides, teachers believe that computers could be used as instructional aids to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning.[20]

However, according to the Nafisah's study on the obstacles students faced during online learning sessions, an excessively slow internet connection,

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[19] Nadzrah Abu Bakar, "English Language Activities in Computer-Based Learning Environment: A Case Study In ESL Malaysian Classroom," *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies* 7(1) (2007), 33–49.

[20] Zainudin Hassan & Muhamad Azam Jaafar, "Penggunaan Komputer dan Internet dalam Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran di Kalangan Guru Sekolah Menengah di Daerah Pasir Mas, Kelantan," *Jurnal Pendidikan* (2010), 1-9.

interference from other duties, domestic issues, and not owning a device diverted students' attention away from their studies. She proposed three solutions to address these issues. Firstly, play-based learning should be expanded. Secondly, synchronous and asynchronous online learning sessions should be alternated in classes. Thirdly, there should be collaboration with the school's Guidance and Counselling Unit to identify students who are having difficulty attending the online home-based teaching and learning.[21]

Based on the e-learning implementation in Islamic Education during the pandemic, teachers must prioritise the student-centred approach in their classroom to entice students to participate in online learning. Traditional and teacher-centred approaches should be minimised as they cause students to become bored and lose interest quickly.

Discussion on Research Findings

In this study, the informants were two Islamic Education teachers who were interviewed to identify the challenges they faced when implementing e-learning. The informants reported challenges while using this platform for home-based teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, as evidenced by the research findings. The followings are the preliminary feedback on the implementation of this approach:

> "Most of the time, I use methods that involve students because they will respond quickly, especially during game-based activities. I teach students in year 2 and

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[21] Nafisah Hamidon, "Kajian Kes: Cabaran dan Solusi Pembelajaran dalam Talian Semasa Pandemik Covid 19 Bagi Pelajar Menengah Rendah," International Conference of Research on Language Education, 23-24 March 2021.

year 3... so, when I ask to play, they will pay attention. Students nowadays are fond of internet… video games. So, if we only ask them to write… they will be slow to comply (during the home-based teaching and learning). That's why I created Quizziz, Wordwall, and (as a result) students became interested, which is what I've learnt (about the approach). When students participate in activities together, they are quick to respond." (IET 1)

"These students, when they learn online, they need to do a lot of activities which can engage them (with the topic). If we teach them using the same approach as in the classroom, they will only listen… they will get bored quickly." (IET 2)

Based on the above data, both informants conducted e-learning as recommended in PAK21. Within this learning, it strongly recommends the game activities mentioned by IET 1 that require students' active participation. Various game activities can be carried out for teaching and learning since students are in the classroom with teachers. However, when the schools were closed, it became more challenging for teachers to plan such activities online.

The preliminary data revealed that these informants faced several challenges when implementing student-centred activities. In this study, five themes were formed in relation to these challenges: communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and the inculcation of noble values.

Challenges in Planning (Creativity Element)

Among the problems encountered by teachers in diversifying teaching methods in their lessons were curriculum loads and dense syllabi. The curriculum is a critical component of the educational system since it serves as a tool for achieving educational objectives. The Islamic Education curriculum is critical in shaping students' personalities and attitudes. However, many Islamic Education teachers implemented the curriculum without fully comprehending its significance. By understanding the curriculum, teachers can accurately choose and identify the learning objectives, methods, techniques, and appropriate teaching approaches while preparing their daily lesson plan.[22]

The Islamic Education subject consists of seven main categories: al-Qur'ān, Ḥadīth, `Aqīdah, Ibādah, Sīrah, Adab and Jawi. Each category has a different discipline that must be learned comprehensively. Before the pandemic, most teachers preferred conventional classroom teaching methods, restricting their ability to plan and carry out more creative instructional methods in their teaching and learning processes. According to Zetty et al., the idea of producing critical thinkers was not thoroughly considered as teachers could not instil creative elements into students through PAK21.[23] Furthermore, Nur Adibah Liyana and Hafizhah asserted that teachers' heavy workloads and lack of creativity in their teaching strategies contributed to shortcomings of

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[22] Nurmadiah, N., "Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam," *Al-Afkar: Jurnal Keislaman & Peradaban* 2(2) (2014), 41-54.

[23] Zetty Nurzuliana et al., "Strategi Pengajaran Guru Pendidikan Islam Mengintegrasikan Ilmu Naqli dan Aqli Menggunakan Pendekatan '*Lesson Study*,'" *Jurnal Sultan Alauddin Sulaiman Shah* (2017), 1-8.

the PAK21 implementation.[24] Moreover, the student-centred learning process was hindered by insufficient time to plan lesson activities and internet access issues.

Concerning this matter, the informants provided the following perspectives:

> "There is a time constraint, and there are not enough gadgets… as my students stay in the rural area… getting an internet (connection) is quite difficult. Some of them who join the online classes would ask me when the e-learning would begin… when the class would end because they were concerned that their mobile data would be insufficient. So, I informed them that the class would begin shortly." (IET 1)

> "During al-Qur'ān and *tasmik* sessions, I had to make video calls to each of my students in order to hear them recite. But (the process) couldn't be lengthy as it used so much mobile data. I occasionally asked them (students) to send a video of their recitation, but some of them remained silent and did not send (the video)." (IET 2)

The findings from the interviews showed that time constraints during e-learning sessions hindered the implementation of the student-centred approach for the Islamic Education subject, specifically for al-Qur'ān and *tasmik* sessions. These sessions, in particular, require teachers to convey *talaqqī mushāfahah*[25] to

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[24] Nur Adibah Liyana Alwi & Hafizhah Zulkifli, "Amalan Kreativiti Guru Pendidikan Islam," 40-54.

[25] *Talaqqī Mushāfahah* is a face-to-face method of learning the Qur'ān in which the delivery and teaching method is directly from a teacher to a student. Rasulullah (PBUH) inherited this

each student. The method was practised even though teachers and students could not meet face to face. Virtual interaction enabled students to recite the Qur'ān correctly in front of their teachers, just as they did in their regular classroom meetings. Even though it was done through e-learning, teachers could still listen and correct mistakes. However, this activity could not be conducted for an extended period due to the problems stated.

Challenges to Knowledge and Skills (Skills Element)

The ability of teachers and students to utilise digital and technological platforms posed an additional challenge for the informants in the teaching and learning process during the pandemic period. In this context, Islamic Education teachers must master not only subject-specific knowledge but also technological skills and current teaching pedagogies, as these aspects are necessary for creating a PAK-friendly environment. [26] However, research conducted by the National Union of the Teaching Profession (NUTP) involving approximately 100 educational experts discovered that 93 per cent of Malaysian teachers preferred face-to-face instruction in the classroom over other teaching methods. [27] The main reason for this

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Qur'ān learning method from Gabriel AS and then passed it on to the companions.

[26] You Eng, Chieng & Keong, Tan Choon, "Pengetahuan Teknologi Pedagogi Kandungan di Malaysia: Satu Kajian Meta Analisis," *Journal of ICT in Education* 6 (2019), 86-95.

[27] Nik Md. Saiful Azizi bin Nik Abdullah et al., "Cabaran Pengajaran Digital Secara Maya dan Kesediaan Murid Pasca Covid 19," *Jurnal Sains Insani* 6(2) (2021), 206-213.

Tengku Sarina, Nur Eliza, Yusmini, "Challenges in Applying a Student-
Centred Approach to E-Learning," *Afkār* Special Issue on COVID-19
(2022): 29-60

preference is the lack of online teaching skills among
teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic.[28]

The following interview excerpts from the
informants describe their skills and knowledge in e-
learning:

"In detail, I don't really know, but in
general what I do know is that with e-
learning, you teach using the internet
application. That is, we teach online…
rather than face to face. Before the
pandemic… there was no exposure given to
us. But when the pandemic struck, the
school was immediately informed that there
would be a Movement Control Order
(MCO) and teachers had to teach online…
since then, I've been learning about Word
Wall, Google Meet, Zoom and other tools.
No courses are provided…I simply
searched the internet on my own." (IET 1)

"Before the pandemic, there was little
exposure about e-learning. After the
pandemic more exposure was given.
Previously, the most sophisticated tool I
used in the classroom was the LCD … to
show videos to my students. When the
pandemic hit, I do lots of research by
myself about the implementation of e-
learning on YouTube." (IET 2)

Based on the above data, both informants stated
that they did not use e-learning in the classroom before
the pandemic. They also highlighted that they had little

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[28] Andarwulan, Trisna, Taufiq Akbar Al Fajri & Galieh Damayanti,
"Elementary Teachers' Readiness toward the Online Learning
Policy in the New Normal Era during Covid-19," *International
Journal of Instruction* 14(3) (2021), 771–786.

experience with e-learning and only had basic technological knowledge. On this, Nur Adibah Liyana and Hafizhah stated that Islamic Education teachers had difficulty mastering technological knowledge and skills.[29] This situation made it difficult for them to plan and implement the student-centred method into their practice.

Challenges of Student Involvement (Collaboration Element)

Student involvement was another struggle in implementing e-learning, as students' learning responses were discouraging. Students were discovered to be passive within the process, causing them to fall behind when teaching activities were conducted. The student-centred approach was designed to promote active student involvement in learning activities, allowing them to explore the subject matter being taught independently. However, their lack of participation had the opposite outcomes. In this situation, it was challenging for Islamic Education teachers to clearly explain the subject's practical aspects, such as *ṣalāt* (prayers), *wudū'* (ablution), and *tayammum* through the electronic medium. This difficulty indirectly impeded the effectiveness of Islamic Education teaching and learning delivery. Consequently, establishing a two-way interaction between teachers and students was hard to accomplish. [30] Therefore, the collaboration element

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[29] Nur Adibah Liyana Alwi & Hafizhah Zulkifli, "Amalan Kreativiti Guru Pendidikan Islam," 40-54.

[30] Siti Nurbaizura Che Azizan & Nur Faradilla Mohamad Nasri, "Pandangan Guru Terhadap Pembelajaran Dalam Talian Melalui Pendekatan Home Based Learning (HBL) Semasa Tempoh Pandemik Covid-19," *PENDETA: Journal of Malay Language, Education and Literature* 11 (2020), 46-57.

could not be adequately inculcated due to the lack of teacher-student communication.[31]

The findings revealed that both informants agreed that students' engagement in e-learning activities was discouraging:

> "Students' participation was rather disappointing. The problems occurred perhaps from the students' attitudes and parental support issues. In my experience, parents do not adequately support their children's successful participation in the e-learning process. Most parents are busy working." (IET 1)

> "I teach in a small school located in a rural area. Therefore, I did not conduct online learning due to a weak internet connection. So, I chose Telegram as a medium to teach and give assignments. But few (students) were involved since most of the parents did not help their child to complete and submit assignments. There is no participation from the students as well." (IET 2)

Based on the above interview data, parents lack cooperation, making it difficult for teachers to carry out student-centred activities. Parents' involvement in their children's learning activities, whether online or not, is crucial. Teachers require parental cooperation to ensure active and effective student engagement, specifically when the learning is online. Without significant cooperation from the parents, it would be difficult for teachers to teach their students, especially when the e-learning is taken place at home.

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[31] Hartanto Wiwin, "Penggunaan E-Learning Sebagai Media Pembelajaran," *Jurnal Pendidikan Ekonomi* 10(1) (2016), 1-15.

Challenges to E-Learning Implementation (Communication Element)

Despite teachers' eagerness to learn about online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, they encountered obstacles in fulfilling the government's aspiration of virtualizing the country's educational sector. The main challenges were related to internet access and technology-related facilities, which in some ways hindered the implementation's effectiveness. [32] Concerning e-learning issues, various facility and infrastructure problems that require attention, as well as the government's efforts for improvement.[33] This is because internet access is the most significant barrier to the implementation of online learning, as internet speed is vital for smooth communication between teachers and students. [34]

Communication should be prioritised in the student-centred approach. Teachers must instruct their students on how to use technology and how to convey information using such technology throughout the process.[35] However, the cost of internet usage burdens some students since it is expensive.[36] Therefore, most

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[32] Bashah, M. A., & Zulkifli, H., "Isu dan Cabaran Guru Pendidikan Islam," 43–55.

[33] Nik Md. Saiful Azizi bin Nik Abdullah et al., "Cabaran Pengajaran Digital Secara Maya dan Kesediaan Murid Pasca Covid 19."

[34] Maimun Aqsha Lubis et al., "Isu Terkini Pendidikan Islam di Era Pandemik Covid 19 di Malaysia,"*ASEAN Comparative Education Research Journal on Islam and Civilization (ACER-J)* 4(1) (2021), 75-91.

[35] Wan Mariana Wan Mohamad, Kamarul Shukri Mat Teh & Wan Ali Akbar Wan Abdullah, "Elemen Interaksi Dalam Diri dan Sesama Manusia Berasaskan Al-Quran Dalam Pembelajaran Abad Ke-21 Pendidikan Islam," 7-14.

[36] Nor Musfirah Mohamad, "Cabaran Pedagogi Norma Baharu di Kolej Universiti Islam Perlis (KUIPs) Ketika Pandemik Wabak

school children prefer to use the WhatsApp application due to the cost and difficulty of Internet access. WhatsApp is one of most popular asynchronously executable e-learning applications. For example, teachers can assign assignments, and students can quickly return them once completed. The WhatsApp application is preferred because it requires less data usage than Google Meet and Zoom. Schools in rural areas are more likely to prefer WhatsApp since they do not have access to a faster internet connection.

In this regard, the following responses were provided by the informants regarding the communication-related challenges in implementing e-learning:

> "Some parents at my school couldn't read, they can only make phone calls. For example, when I tried to contact the mother, she told me that was illiterate. So, we have to help her. Because when the mother lacks the necessary education, she will be unable to assist her child in accessing e-learning. Basically, the students who needed parental assistance were students from level one." (IET 1)

> "Most students at my school did not have good internet access at home. So, I chose to use the Telegram channel to communicate and interact with them. Live communication could not be conducted because the students were unable to use Google Meet or Zoom due to the slow internet connection." (IET 2)

Koronavirus Covid-19," *Jurnal Pengajian Islam* (Special Edition) (1) (2021), 243-254.

The above responses indicated that the informants engaged in e-learning asynchronously in Islamic Education. This type of learning focuses on self-learning, with students having access to the subject materials provided by the teacher at times that was appropriate for their students.[37] However, students who shared devices or did not have their own devices appeared to delay responding to their teacher's instructions or tasks during asynchronous e-learning. They frequently relied on their parents to access e-learning and communicate with their teachers. Students had to wait for their parents to notify them of their assignments or print out learning materials given through WhatsApp, Telegram, or Google Classroom. Therefore, this circumstance posed challenges for teachers in implementing e-learning efficiently.

Challenges in Inculcating Noble Values (Element of Noble Values and Ethics)

While applying the student-centred approach, inculcating noble values into teaching and learning is one of the critical elements that must be achieved in PAK21. On the challenges of e-learning implementation, society's perception of how technology could impair students' interpersonal intelligence should be carefully considered. It is a concern that the technology would affect students' social interaction since they immersed themselves wholly on the internet.[38]

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[37] Norhannan Ramli & Hafizhah Zulkifli, "Tahap Kesediaan dan Motivasi Guru Pendidikan Islam Terhadap Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Atas Talian," *International Journal of Advance Research in Islamic Studies and Education* 2(2) (2022), 16–30.

[38] Bashah, M. A., & Zulkifli, H., "Isu dan Cabaran Guru Pendidikan Islam," 43-55.

Today, the public's perception of excessive technology use is a reality, with specific personality effects on students. For instance, when the students are overly preoccupied with gadgets from an early age, their interaction with other people around them suffers, causing them to become self-centred and sometimes disrespectful toward others. This example is a significant obstacle for Islamic Education teachers responsible for developing students' attitudes and personalities. Failure on the part of Islamic Education teachers to inculcate noble values in their students would engross students with the latest gadgets and mobile applications. Students may overlook the true purpose of the gadgets for e-learning. If this issue is not addressed correctly, teachers may find it difficult to shape their students' attitudes. This matter has elicited the following responses from informants' data:

> "I believe that using gadgets and the internet to access e-learning surely will have an effect on students' personalities. I think that if parents are good at managing this issue, it will benefit their children, but if it is not controlled properly, the gadgets will harm them. Because there was one case at my school, a Year 6 student… at level 1, he used to be very good and smart in his studies. But when he reached Year 6, he refused to go to school because (he had been) too obsessed playing with the gadget that he had lost interest in learning. The gadget can be used for educational purposes, but if there is no control from parents and it's misused, then there's no benefit to the gadget itself. Students… when we expose (them) to the gadget too frequently, they are prone to misusing it.

> Consequently, it's hard for us to shape their attitudes and ask them to focus (in learning). So, teaching face-to-face-the *talaqqī mushāfahah* way will be difficult. We must now develop guidelines for parents on how to monitor their children's use of technology. Many problems are linked to gadgets. (Students) Can play games for hours, but learning for a short while is difficult for them." (IET 1)

The previous data shows that issues arise regarding inculcating noble values while implementing the student-centred approach through e-learning. The constructivism-based teaching and learning strategies that encourage students to explore the meaning of specific knowledge based on their local knowledge are beneficial to active learning.[39] However, when students are allowed to explore the learning topics without parental supervision at home, they are prone to use the gadgets for inappropriate purposes, such as playing games. In some instances, it may lead them to search for inappropriate information.

Thus, teachers must choose activities suitable for implementing the student-centred approach and always be concerned with students' development, regardless of whether they are more interested in learning or reliant on gadgets. Therefore, a teacher must not only serve as a *Mu`allim* who imparts knowledge but also as a *Mu'addib*, a *Murshid*, and a *Murabbī* who aids in students' intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical development. Furthermore, teachers must pay special attention to their students' development and

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[39] Suparlan, "Teori Konstruktivisme dalam Pembelajaran," *ISLAMIKA: Jurnal Keislaman dan Ilmu Pendidikan* 1(2) (2019), 79-88.

achievement to produce knowledgeable, responsible, and virtuous young generations. The training areas that require planning are the new strategies and learning approaches of PAK21.

Conclusion

Islamic Education teachers are keeping up with the current educational transformation by incorporating student-centred approaches into their Islamic Education teaching and learning. However, their challenges when implementing this approach should be addressed to enhance their teaching quality and produce high-quality students with excellent personalities. The findings of this study have several implications for the relevant parties involved in the educational system.

Firstly, teachers should continue to expand their knowledge and skills, especially concerning the use of information technology in e-learning. Their lack of knowledge and skills will undermine students' performance. Teachers must understand how to properly implement the student-centred approach, as this knowledge can help them plan student activities. As one of the most current learning methods, online teaching and learning requires teachers with exceptional knowledge and skills in planning and implementing teaching activities.

Secondly, the Malaysian Ministry of Education, State Departments of Education, District Education Offices, and schools need to provide teachers with workshops and courses on e-learning to enhance their knowledge and skills. These workshops and courses are designed to boost their creativity in planning student-centred learning activities via e-learning. Finally, internet service providers may be able to assist students in rural areas by providing the best solution.

Even though rural areas are frequently underserved due to the high cost of constructing network infrastructure, internet service providers can help them locate the best high-speed broadband option, especially for schools in rural areas, because e-learning is irrelevant without internet access.

Acknowledgment

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