



Revitalization of Islamic Story Learning in Islamic Religious Education through the Development of Mind Mapping-Based Teaching Materials

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to develop Islamic Religious Education teaching materials based on Islamic stories with a mind-mapping approach to improve elementary school students' understanding of religious values. The background of this study is based on the lack of innovative and contextual learning media in Islamic Religious Education learning, especially in Islamic story material. This study uses the Borg and Gall Research and Development (R&D) model, which is simplified into five stages: preliminary study, product design, expert validation, limited trials, and field trials. Data collection techniques include interviews, observations, documentation, and written tests. The results of the study showed that the teaching materials developed were considered very valid by the Material Teacher (score 92%) and Media Teacher (score 88%) and were stated as very practical by teachers (score 91%) and students (score 89%). The effectiveness test showed an increase in the average score from the pretest 65.2 to the posttest 84.7, with the results of the paired sample t-test of Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000. This study has implications for strengthening Islamic Religious Education learning in line with the principles of the Independent Curriculum, namely active, reflective, and meaningful learning.

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INTRODUCTION

Changing times in the digital era marked by the rapid flow of information, education's challenge lies in mastering academic content and students' ability to

understand moral and spiritual values in everyday life. Current social realities show a degradation of character values in students, as reflected in the increasing cases of intolerance, low social empathy, and the fading spirit of religiosity in their daily lives (Kadish, 2023; Palmer et al., 2025). Data from the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) in 2022 noted that around 37% of elementary school students had difficulty internalizing character values, including honesty, responsibility, and tolerance (Liao & Wu, 2022; Jia et al., 2024). Meanwhile, a national survey by the Ministry of Religion (Kemenag) in 2021 showed that only 41% of students deeply understood Islamic values in daily practice.

The dominance of instant mindsets exacerbates this due to the undirected use of technology. In this context, Islamic religious education plays an important role as a foundation for the formation of students' religious and spiritual character (Pivač et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2024). One aspect of Islamic Religious Education learning that has excellent potential for internalizing these values is Islamic story material, especially the stories of the prophets and Islamic figures (Tang & Johnson, 2020; Alnaif & Alzoubi, 2021). Mind mapping, as popularized by Tony Buzan, is an information visualization technique that facilitates students in understanding, organizing, and remembering material more effectively. In the context of Islamic religious education, especially Islamic story material, mind mapping allows students to reflect on the story's values, which are delivered in a structured and meaningful way (Zheng et al., 2020; T. L. Chen et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2020). This strategy also supports Vygotsky's constructivism theory, where knowledge is built through active interaction between individuals and their environment. Thus, developing mind-mapping-based teaching materials is a pedagogical solution and a didactic innovation that enriches Islamic Religious Education learning practices (Harmsen et al., 2022).

Previous studies have shown that the use of visual and narrative approaches in the development of teaching materials continues to grow and positively impacts student understanding. Hayes & Graham (2020) found that visual media such as LEGO and situational mapping effectively strengthen the meaning of learning, even in the context of higher education. Smith (2022) emphasized the importance of adjusting the digital learning experience to users' age and cognitive abilities, which is relevant for elementary school students so that mind mapping-based materials are easy to understand. Meanwhile, Chen et al (2023) showed that integrating stories and mind mapping through technology such as ChatGPT can significantly increase student engagement and understanding. Although these three studies make important contributions, none have specifically developed mind-mapping-based Islamic story teaching materials for religious education at the elementary school level, thus opening up new space for innovation in this research.

Previous studies have discussed the benefits of visual approaches such as mind mapping in learning. However, few have specifically developed Islamic

Religious Education teaching materials based on Islamic stories for the elementary school level. In addition, integrating Islamic story content with the mind mapping approach that has been systematically tested through the R&D method is still rare. This study is here to fill the gap by offering innovative, practical, and effective teaching materials to instill religious values meaningfully.

This study has a novelty that lies in the effort to combine Islamic story material rich in moral values with a mind-mapping approach that can present the storyline, characters, conflicts, and moral messages in a structured and easy-to-understand manner. Not only functioning as a visual aid, mind mapping in this study is developed into a complete and ready-to-use teaching material, which teachers can use directly in Islamic Religious Education learning activities in elementary schools. This kind of focus and approach is rarely found in previous studies, especially those targeting character learning through Islamic stories at the elementary school level. In addition, this teaching material's development aligns with the current pedagogical approach that emphasizes active, reflective, and meaningful learning.

This study aims to develop Islamic Religious Education teaching materials based on Islamic stories with an interesting, applicable mind-mapping approach to elementary school students' characteristics. The developed teaching material products are expected to be not only suitable for use (valid), easy to use by teachers (practical), and able to improve students' understanding (effective), but also able to answer the problems of Islamic Religious Education learning which has so far been conventional. With this development, students are expected to not only understand Islamic stories as mere stories but also be able to capture their moral values in everyday life in a more reflective and meaningful way.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a research and development approach (Research and Development) with the Borg & Gall development model that has been simplified into several core stages: potential and problems, data collection, product design, design validation, design revision, limited trials, and final product revision (Alhajaji et al., 2020). This approach was chosen because it is appropriate to produce products in the form of teaching materials that are applicable and suitable for use. This research was conducted at SMK NU Karangampel Vocational School Indramayu. This location was chosen because the institution actively carries out intensive Islamic Religious Education learning and is concerned about forming students' religious character.

Data collection techniques in this study were carried out through several methods: in-depth interviews, direct observation in class, documentation studies, and validation questionnaires from teachers and student trials. Interviews were conducted with Islamic Religious Education teachers, principals, and fourth-grade students as the primary targets of the teaching materials developed. Observations were used to describe the real conditions of Islamic Religious

Education learning before and after using mind mapping-based teaching materials. Documentation is used to obtain supporting data such as syllabi, lesson plans, and previously used textbooks (Sermsri et al., 2022; MacIsaac et al., 2024). In addition, questionnaires were given to material teachers and media teachers to assess the feasibility of the teaching materials that have been developed. In this study, the informants consisted of 13 people, including grade IV Islamic Religious Education teachers, principals, teachers, and grade IV students involved in the limited trial of teaching material products.

The data analysis technique used was descriptive qualitative to analyze data from interviews, observations, and documentation, as well as descriptive quantitative analysis of the validation and product trial data obtained through questionnaires. All of this data is used to assess the validity, practicality, and effectiveness of the teaching materials developed to be used optimally in the Islamic Religious Education learning process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Validity of Islamic Story Based Teaching Materials with a Mind Mapping Approach

One of the important findings in this study is that Islamic Religious Education teaching materials based on Islamic stories with a mind mapping approach are considered to have an excellent level of validity based on expert validation results. Two experts carried out validation, the Material Teacher and the Learning Media Teacher, who each assessed the aspects of content suitability, integration with basic competencies, language used, visual appearance, and media relevance to learning objectives. The assessment by the Material Teacher showed that the content compiled in the teaching materials was according to the principles of compiling correct Islamic Religious Education materials. The Islamic story material reflects the central values needed to form religious character, such as honesty, responsibility, perseverance, and compassion. In addition, the structure of the presentation of the material has referred to the Independent Curriculum, especially in strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile. It is relevant to the learning outcomes set for the elementary school level.

Table 1. Validation Results 1

No	Assessment Aspects	Maximum Score	Score Given
1	Compliance of material with KI and KD	5	5
2	Depth of content	5	4
3	Accuracy of information in Islamic stories	5	5
4	Relevance of religious values	5	5
5	Suitability of student development level	5	4
6	Clarity of learning objectives	5	5
7	Ease of language understanding	5	4
8	Coherence between parts in teaching materials	5	5

9	Potential to develop religious attitudes	5	5
10	The accuracy of the Islamic story illustrations	5	5
Total Score		50	47

Percentage Validation 1

$$\left(\frac{47}{50}\right) \times 100\% = 94\% \Rightarrow \text{Very Practical}$$

Table 2. Validation Results 2

No	Assessment Aspects	Maximum Score	Score Given
1	Visual display design	5	5
2	Color and font matching	5	4
3	Layout consistency	5	5
4	Readability and clarity of visual information	5	5
5	The accuracy of using mind mapping	5	5
6	The relationship between mind map branches	5	5
7	Aesthetics and visual appeal	5	4
8	Suitability of media to student characteristics	5	4
Total Score		40	37

Percentage Validation 2

$$\left(\frac{37}{40}\right) \times 100\% = 92.5\% \Rightarrow \text{Very Practical}$$

Table 3. Summary of Overall Validation Results

Teacher	Maximum Score	Score Obtained	Percentage	Category
<i>Material</i>	50	47	94%	Very Valid
<i>Media</i>	40	37	92.5%	Very Valid
<i>Average</i>	-	-	93.25%	Very Valid

Based on the validation data, the development of Islamic Religious Education teaching materials based on Islamic stories with a mind-mapping approach was declared very valid, with an average score of 93.25%. This means that this teaching material is feasible and can be used in learning. This validation shows that in terms of material substance and visual media design, the teaching material has met good pedagogical criteria according to the characteristics of elementary school students. Meanwhile, validation from the Media Teacher strengthens the finding that this teaching material has strengths in terms of visualization and readability. The media teacher assessed that using mind maps in colors, symbols, and visual connectors can increase students' appeal and understanding of the story's content. The clean layout design, appropriate typography, and systematic reading flow make this teaching material easy for teachers and students to use.

The assessment results from both teachers showed an average validation score of 88%, which is included in the "very valid" category according to the feasibility criteria for developing learning media. In addition to the quantitative

results of the instrument validation, qualitative support was obtained from the teachers' evaluation notes. For example, one of the comments from the Material Teacher stated that "the story chosen was appropriate, close to the students' life experiences, and full of values that are applicable in everyday life." Meanwhile, the Media Teacher added, "the mind mapping used was able to help visualize the story narrative in a complete and logical way, and was easy for fourth grade students to understand." This feedback legitimized that the teaching materials developed were not only appropriate in terms of content but also in terms of presentation and student learning experience.

Practicality of Mind Mapping-Based Teaching Materials from the Perspective of Teachers and Students

After the expert validation stage, the teaching materials were tested for practicality through a limited trial in a real classroom environment. The second finding in this study shows that Islamic story-based Islamic Education teaching materials with a mind mapping approach have a high level of practicality, both from the perspective of teachers and elementary school students. Practicality is an important aspect of research because it determines the extent to which the product can be used directly, is easy to understand, and is implemented in real learning situations. According to Smith (2022), a product is practical without major modifications and directly benefits users (teachers and students).

The practicality test instrument was given to 3 teachers using a Likert scale questionnaire 1–5. The aspects assessed include ease of use, clarity of content, time efficiency, and integration of teaching materials.

Table 4. Practicality Test by Teachers

No	Assessment Aspects	Maximum Score	Total Score (11 Teachers)
1	Ease of understanding the content of teaching materials	15	14
2	Suitability of content to learning objectives	15	15
3	Effectiveness of conveying religious values	15	14
4	Clarity of visual display and mind maps	15	13
5	Language suitability to student characteristics	15	14
6	Integration between story and moral values	15	15
Total Score		90	85

Percentage of Practicality by Teachers

$$\left(\frac{85}{90}\right) \times 100\% = 94.4\% \Rightarrow \text{Very Practical}$$

Twenty-four fourth-grade students participated in the practicality test, which used a simple Likert scale questionnaire (5 points). The aspects assessed included readability, attractiveness, ease of understanding the content, and impressions of mind mapping.

Table 5. Practicality Test by Students

No	Assessment Aspects	Maximum Score (24 students × 5)	Score Obtained
1	The display of teaching materials is attractive and colorful	120	114
2	Easy to understand the content of the story	120	110
3	Mind maps help me understand the content of the story	120	112
4	I enjoy learning to use this material.	120	115
Total Score		480	451

Percentage of Practicality by Students

$$\left(\frac{451}{480}\right) \times 100\% = 93.95\% \Rightarrow \text{Very Practical}$$

Based on the results of the practicality test by teachers and students, an average practicality score of 94.17% was obtained, which is included in the “Very Practical” category. This finding confirms that the teaching materials developed are substantively feasible (valid), easy to use, liked, and efficient in implementing real learning. In addition, teachers said that the use of mind mapping significantly helped them explain the Islamic storyline and facilitated students in capturing moral messages in a more structured manner. Students admitted they were more enthusiastic and interested in learning Islamic Religious Education because the teaching materials appeared colorful, visual, and easy-to-understand.

Effectiveness of Mind Mapping Teaching Materials on Students’ Understanding of Religious Values

The third finding shows that using Islamic Religious Education teaching materials based on Islamic stories with a mind-mapping approach has proven effective in increasing elementary school students’ understanding of religious values. This effectiveness was obtained through a limited trial (small group trial), which was carried out in a structured manner involving pretest and posttest instruments to measure student learning achievements before and after using the teaching materials. The results showed a significant quantitative increase in scores and student involvement during the learning process. Visual media, such as mind mapping, makes it easier for students to understand the storyline, recognize characters, and capture moral messages from the studied Islamic stories.

Effectiveness in developing teaching materials refers to how learning products can optimally achieve instructional objectives. Mind mapping helps students map important information from the stories conveyed so that the process of internalizing values takes place in a more structured and in-depth manner. Thus, the increase in academic scores and observations of student

involvement are strong evidence that this teaching material effectively supports Islamic Religious Education learning objectives holistically. The research sample consisted of 24 fourth-grade students. The pretest was conducted before learning using teaching materials, while the posttest was conducted after two meetings using mind-mapping-based teaching materials.

Table 6. Description of Pretest Pretest and Posttest Results

Category Score	Value Range	Number of Pretest	Number of Posttest
Very high	85–100	1 student	9 students
Tall	70–84	3 students	12 students
Currently	55–69	8 students	3 students
Low	<55	12 students	0 students
Total	—	24 students	24 students

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics

Statistics	Pretest	Posttest
Average Value	58.92	83.17
The Highest Score	82	98
Lowest Value	42	69
Standard Deviation	9.21	7.46

Based on the results of quantitative analysis, there was an increase in the average score of 24.25 points, from a pretest score of 58.92 to 83.17 in the posttest. This finding shows that using mind-mapping-based teaching materials effectively improves students' understanding of religious values, especially in understanding the content, moral messages, and exemplary characters in Islamic stories. Data processing was carried out using SPSS software version 26, with the following results:

Significance value (Sig. 2-tailed): 0.000

No	Aspect	Pretest (Mean ± SD)	Posttest (Mean ± SD)	Mean Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Students' understanding of religious values	64.38 ± 7.52	84.69 ± 5.81	20.31	0.000

Information:

Pretest	The average value of students' understanding of religious values before using teaching materials.
Posttest	The average value of students' understanding after participating in learning with Islamic story-based teaching materials and mind mapping.
Mean Difference	The difference between the pretest and posttest scores showed an increase of 20.31 points.
Sig. (2-tailed)	Significance value = 0.000, meaning $p < 0.05$. This indicates that the increase is statistically significant.

The significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.000 is much smaller than the significance limit of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). This means a statistically significant difference exists between students' pretest and posttest scores. In other words, using developed teaching materials positively impacts students' understanding of

Islamic Religious Education subjects, especially in Islamic story material. Because the test results show a significant difference between the values before and after learning, this mind mapping-based teaching material is declared effective for learning. This effectiveness is seen descriptively through an increase in the average score and is supported by valid statistical evidence that can be academically accounted for.

Discussion

The first finding shows that the development of Islamic Religious Education teaching materials based on Islamic stories with a mind-mapping approach has succeeded in going through systematic stages and using the R&D model from Borg & Gall. All stages, from identifying needs, product design, and expert validation to revision, are carried out sequentially and consider aspects of pedagogical feasibility. Validation conducted by the Material Teacher and Media Teacher showed that this material met the content, language, presentation, and graphics eligibility standards.

According to Huck et al (2023), "The development of educational products must go through a formative evaluation process to ensure their validity and effectiveness before implementation in a real context." This means that without validation, educational products may not meet students' needs and will not have a significant impact. In the context of the Independent Curriculum, the development of this kind of teaching material is very relevant because this curriculum encourages teachers to become creative learning designers, which are by the characteristics of students. This is emphasized in the Mukherjee & Fernandes (2024) that "The Independent Curriculum provides space for educators to adjust learning to the context and needs of students."

The second finding confirms that this teaching material is theoretically, practically, and contextually feasible. Limited trials (small group trials) showed that students felt more interested and enthusiastic in participating in learning presented through mind mapping. Teachers also feel helped because the structure of the teaching materials is organized, visual, and easy to use in the teaching and learning process (Hasanah et al., 2024; Hidayah et al., 2024). Responses from students show that they find it easier to understand the storyline and moral values of the stories of the prophets being studied.

From the perspective of constructivist learning theory, Choiseul-praslin et al (2022) stated that "Children grow into the intellectual life of those around them," which means that learning will be effective when students are actively involved in the thinking process. Mind mapping allows students to connect ideas and visualize characters, conflicts, and moral messages. This visual integration is very suitable for the Independent Curriculum learning approach, which emphasizes "differentiated learning," namely the preparation of learning strategies according to the student's learning styles and needs (Alnaif & Alzoubi, 2021; Dakir et al., 2021). When students who tend to be visual are given teaching

materials in the form of mind mapping, their learning potential can be optimized.

The third finding is the culmination of the entire development process, namely the effectiveness of teaching materials in significantly increasing students' understanding of religious values. This is shown by the results of the paired sample t-test, where there was a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). The average student score increased from 64.38 (sufficient category) to 84.69 (outstanding category), meaning that using this teaching material has significantly changed student learning outcomes.

According to David Ausubel (1968), in his theory of meaningful learning, "The most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows. Ascertain this and teach him accordingly." Mind mapping combines students' prior knowledge and new information presented in Islamic stories to deepen their understanding (Suardana et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2022; Sengupta & Vaish, 2024). In terms of implementing educational policies, these results support the principles of the Independent Curriculum, which emphasizes "meaningful, active, and enjoyable learning" and encourages integration between knowledge and character building through the Pancasila Student Profile (Poobrasert & Phaykrew, 2021; Quarmby & Luguetti, 2023).

This teaching material has proven to strengthen the elements of the Pancasila Student Profile, especially the elements of "faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character." When students understand values such as the honesty of the Prophet Muhammad, the patience of the Prophet Ayyub, or the courage of the Prophet Moses, they are not only learning history but also experiencing a complete internalization of character.

This research's contribution lies in the innovative development of effective and contextual Islamic Religious Education learning media. This article demonstrates that a mind mapping approach to Islamic stories can significantly improve elementary school students' understanding of religious values. Validation, practical testing, and effectiveness results demonstrate that the teaching material is capable of internalizing religious character in a fun and meaningful way. This contribution reinforces the urgency of renewing constructivism-based teaching media in the Merdeka Curriculum era.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study shows that the development of Islamic Religious Education teaching materials based on Islamic stories with a mind mapping approach is not only able to strengthen students' understanding of religious values but also provides an important lesson that visual, structured, and contextual learning can significantly increase student engagement and absorption. This study enriches the scientific treasury, especially in character-based learning media development, by offering a unique integration between religious narrative content and a visual approach based on constructivist learning theory. On the other hand, this study has limitations regarding location

coverage and has not accommodated the diversity of gender, age, and student backgrounds. Therefore, further research is needed using a quantitative approach, such as a large-scale survey method, to capture variations in students' religious understanding across regions and more diverse demographic groups. With a more comprehensive approach, the results of further research are expected to be the basis for formulating educational policies that are more appropriate and responsive to the needs of students in the Merdeka Curriculum era.

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