

THE CAMPUS TEACHING PROGRAM IN IMPROVING THE MORALS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SUBJECTS

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Submitted: 26/08/2024

Revised: 11/10/2024

Accepted: 03/11/2024

Published: 22/12/2024

Abstract

This research aims to improve the moral values of fifth-grade students in the Islamic Religious Education subject at State Elementary School 24 Seluma through the Kampus Mengajar program. The method used is Classroom Action Research (CAR) following the Kemmis and McTaggart model, which includes planning, action, observation, and reflection stages. The object of this research is student morale, with 27 fifth-grade students as the research subjects. The research data consists of moral attitudes, specifically in the aspects of expressing gratitude and requesting help, sourced from student activities during the learning process. Data collection techniques included direct observation using observation sheets to measure the development of individual student behavior. Data analysis in this study employs comparative descriptive techniques and critical analysis. Quantitative data from observation sheets are calculated using average scores and percentages to track improvement trends in student morale from pre-cycle through Cycle II. Meanwhile, qualitative data from field notes are processed through data reduction and display to illustrate specific behavioral changes in expressing gratitude and requesting assistance. The action is deemed successful when the students' average moral score reaches the predetermined performance indicator of at least 75. The results indicate that the implementation of the Kampus Mengajar program successfully improved student morale gradually in each cycle. In Cycle II, the lowest score was 75, the highest was 96, and the average was 86. These findings indicate that the success criteria have been met and the program is effective in shaping the character and morale of elementary school students.

Keywords

Teaching campus, Islamic religious education, and student morale.



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INTRODUCTION

As a vital pillar of life, education guarantees equal rights for every individual to thrive. This is precisely why education remains a timeless topic of discussion. At its core, education is a lifelong journey of nurturing one's potential, enabling humans to survive and evolve into well-rounded individuals—mentally, intellectually, and physically (Fenanlampir et al., 2021; Gabriel et al., 2019). In the current era of rapid technological disruption, education functions as a critical instrument for human resource development, ensuring that individuals possess the necessary competencies to remain competitive in a globalized landscape. The quality and accessibility of the educational sector are widely recognized as primary indicators of a nation's advancement and overall prosperity. Consequently, the Indonesian government has prioritized educational reform and infrastructure as a strategic imperative to foster a more resilient and skilled citizenry (Sobri et al., 2023).

The Indonesian education system has been historically characterized by dynamic pedagogical transformations, spanning from the early frameworks of 1947, 1964, and 1973 to the implementation of the School-Based Curriculum (KTSP) in 2006, all of which necessitated continuous adaptation at the institutional level. Following the transition from the 2013 Curriculum, the 'Kurikulum Merdeka' (Independent Curriculum) was introduced as a pioneering paradigm that revolutionizes educational vision by prioritizing flexibility and the psychological well-being of students. By employing an approach that mitigates academic pressure, this latest curriculum aims to foster a supportive learning ecosystem, thereby granting individuals the agency to explore and optimally actualize their inherent talents (Iskandar et al., 2023).

The Independent Learning Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) adopts a holistic framework that seamlessly integrates literacy skills, intellectual proficiency, and character development. By fostering an autonomous pedagogical approach, it empowers learners to engage in independent knowledge exploration and critical information gathering. Ultimately, this paradigm emphasizes the construction of insight through direct learning experiences, ensuring that knowledge acquisition is both deeply personal and experientially grounded (Sumarsono, 2021). This framework facilitates intellectual autonomy among students, enabling them to strategically leverage specific knowledge to meet their individual needs (Parwanti et al., 2023). The Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) is a pedagogical framework designed to foster a stress-free and supportive learning environment, allowing students to explore their education with a sense of enjoyment and psychological well-being while highlighting their innate talents. Central to this vision is the principle

of student autonomy, which serves as a foundational pillar in empowering learners to pursue knowledge through their own initiative. Consequently, every individual is granted the agency to navigate and access information across both formal and informal educational landscapes, ensuring a flexible and personalized learning trajectory (Fadhli, 2022).

The curriculum serves as a systematic framework designed to imbue the instructional process with significance, facilitate effective knowledge acquisition, and provide a transformative platform for students to actualize their maximum potential (Farah Nabilah Hanin & Mahardhani, 2022). Guided by the Ministerial Regulation No. 16 of 2022, the strategic framework of the Independent Curriculum redefines instructional procedures across early childhood, primary, and lower secondary education. This learning design represents a holistic synergy between several core components: process standards, which establish the mandatory baseline for academic achievement; learners, who pursue skill acquisition through diverse educational pathways; educators, who serve as the professional architects of classroom planning; and education units, which provide the institutional infrastructure necessary for both formal and informal knowledge delivery (Lidiawati et al., 2023).

Introduced as a government-led innovation in higher education, Kampus Merdeka aims to prepare a skilled workforce. A key component of this MBKM framework is the Teaching Campus program (Santi Nur Anisa & Laela Hidayati Putri, 2024). Through various learning activities both inside and outside their major, this initiative enables students to manifest their creative potential. One available pathway for students to achieve this is by participating in student exchange programs (Br Sibarani et al., 2022). Students are given the opportunity to engage in academic endeavors outside their home institution for one semester, following their second and third years of study. This Independent Campus framework encompasses diverse experiential learning tracks, such as professional internships, rural community service, teaching placements, student exchanges, and independent research. Furthermore, it supports entrepreneurial ventures and specialized projects. The primary objective of MBKM is to bridge the gap between academic learning and contemporary industry demands by honing both soft and hard skills, ultimately molding graduates into future leaders capable of navigating global challenges (Alawi et al., 2022).

Operated under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud), Teaching Campus (KM) stands as a core pillar of the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy. This initiative is specifically designed to mobilize students to support the

educational process within elementary schools, targeting institutions in both rural and urban areas near their residences (Br Sibarani et al., 2022). Beyond the involvement of students, the Teaching Campus initiative incorporates Field Supervisors to oversee and guide participants throughout their assignments at the elementary school level. This collaborative approach ensures that students receive the necessary mentorship and monitoring during their placement (Anugrah, 2021). The Teaching Campus program significantly contributes to the development of student competencies, particularly by strengthening their pedagogical, personal, and social capabilities. This initiative serves as a vital platform for students to refine the essential skills required in a professional educational environment (Azisah, 2022).

Driven by the necessity for collaborative support within the classroom, this initiative empowers students to assist both educators and learners. Its primary objective is to elevate educational standards while simultaneously cultivating essential soft skills, ensuring participants are well-equipped for their future professional careers (Farah Nabilah Han & Mahardhani, 2022). The Teaching Campus initiative provides a platform for students to refine their pedagogical abilities and make meaningful contributions to the educational sector. By participating, students play a pivotal role in strengthening the foundational literacy and numeracy levels of elementary school pupils (Afandi et al., 2022). Under the auspices of the Teaching Campus, students are tasked with formulating strategic initiatives aimed at bolstering literacy and numeracy benchmarks within primary education settings (Nuryana et al., 2020; Walton et al., 2019), such as morning literacy programs (Campano, 2019). The Teaching Campus initiative also facilitates the implementation of specialized interventions, such as supplementary tutoring, the establishment of reading hubs, and broader literacy-focused school campaigns (Yilmaz Ince & Koc, 2021). The initiative yields reciprocal advantages, fostering significant personal growth for university students while simultaneously empowering teachers and pupils to elevate the standard of education provided (Sudianto et al., 2023).

Education serves as the primary vehicle for molding the ethical and moral foundation of the youth. Within this framework, educators are pivotal in shaping student character through a strategic blend of preventive, remedial, and corrective measures (Sapdi, 2023). Primary education extends beyond mere cognitive development, placing significant weight on the cultivation of ethical character and core values. Within this framework, Islamic Religious Education serves as a cornerstone for instilling moral integrity in young learners (Kusumawati, 2019). Educators

specializing in Islamic Religious Education are instrumental in cultivating a strong religious foundation and fostering a pious disposition among students (Suherni, 2019). Islamic Religious Education serves as a vital foundation for daily life, fostering enhanced faith and character. It encourages students to cultivate logical reasoning and a systematic approach to life, while ultimately deepening their devotion to Allah SWT (Wijaya et al., 2020). Through the study of Islamic Religious Education, students are immersed in core tenets spanning faith (Aqidah), worship (Ibadah), and ethics (Akhlak) which provide the essential framework for their daily conduct and decision-making (Hal et al., 2022).

However, the reality in the field at State Elementary School (SDN) 24 Seluma reveals a significant gap between the expected moral standards and students' actual behaviour. Based on initial observations and interviews conducted during the pre-research phase, two primary issues emerged as the core academic concern of this study: First, the methodology of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SDN 24 Seluma has remained conventional and teacher-centered. Learning is predominantly delivered through lectures and rote memorization of texts, with little to no integration of creative programs like Kampus Mengajar. This monotonous approach fails to internalize moral values (*akhlaq*) into students' daily habits, as the focus remains strictly on cognitive scores. The lack of innovative media and the absence of collaborative teaching models lead students to perceive PAI merely as a subject to be passed rather than a moral compass to be followed.

Second, the pre-research data on student morale at SDN 24 Seluma showed concerning results, particularly among fifth-grade students. Empirical data from pre-intervention observations indicated that only 35% of students consistently practiced *mahmudah* (praiseworthy) behaviours. Specific issues identified included: Lack of Gratitude: Many students neglected to say "thank you" after receiving help or during positive interactions. Poor Communication Etiquette: Students often demanded assistance without using polite requests or "help" (*tolong*), reflecting a decline in social manners. Environmental Influence: The rapid exposure to unfiltered technology and gadgets has shifted students' focus away from traditional Islamic manners (*adab*).

This low baseline of moral values is the antithesis of the goals of the national curriculum. Consequently, this study introduces the Kampus Mengajar program as a strategic intervention. By positioning university students as fresh role models and creative facilitators, this research aims to transform the rigid PAI methodology into a more interactive, habit-based learning experience, specifically targeting improvements in students' gratitude and request-for-help manners. Several

previous studies have examined the effectiveness of the Kampus Mengajar program and its character-building impact in religious settings, highlighting the importance of storytelling techniques in reducing negative behaviour among elementary school students. At the same time (Wijaya et al., 2022) emphasized the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in enhancing students' cognitive aspects and religiosity. Furthermore, (Afandi et al., 2022) and (Panjaitan et al., 2022) confirmed that student involvement in the Kampus Mengajar program can improve teaching readiness and students' basic literacy. Another study by (Sapdi, 2023) also demonstrated the significance of the teacher's preventive role in building student character in the digital era. While these studies have discussed the role of Kampus Mengajar in general or moral education broadly, the fundamental difference of this study lies in its specific focus on integrating the Kampus Mengajar program to intervene in improving morale (*akhlaq*) through the habituation of *mahmudah* (praiseworthy) behavior in PAI subjects for fifth-grade elementary school students.

The practical application of moral development in primary schools encounters significant hurdles. The persistence of conventional, non-innovative pedagogical methods in Islamic studies, coupled with a shortage of educators capable of deeply internalizing ethical values, remains a critical concern. Furthermore, the constraints of school hours limit the depth of moral engagement. Consequently, these factors hinder optimal character building, as evidenced by a gap between Islamic principles and the actual daily conduct of some students.

Under the Merdeka Belajar initiative, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology introduced the Teaching Campus program to involve university students in primary education, particularly within frontier, outermost, and disadvantaged (3T) regions. This initiative aims to elevate educational standards and foster character development. Empirical data suggests that this program significantly bolsters teaching efforts, with a reported 80-90% increase in student motivation and engagement. Consequently, participants are tasked with streamlining the entire pedagogical cycle—from planning to evaluation—into more innovative and efficient frameworks (Muh. Khaedar et al., 2023).

The Teaching Campus initiative serves as a platform for university students to actively participate in the instructional delivery of Islamic Religious Education, allowing them to share their expertise and support the curriculum (Chanifah et al., 2021; Demirel Ucan & Wright, 2019; Djazilan & Hariani, 2022). University students are anticipated to introduce innovative, contextual methodologies while serving as exemplary figures for the adoption of Islamic ethics. Consequently,

evaluating the impact of the Teaching Campus Program on the moral development of pupils via Islamic Religious Education at Seluma State Elementary School is of paramount importance.

Informed by these considerations, the current study aims to delineate the actual execution of the Teaching Campus Program in enhancing the moral conduct of elementary school pupils. It further seeks to identify the specific pedagogical strategies employed by university students within the realm of Islamic studies. The investigation focuses specifically on the fifth-grade cohort, where a notable decline in moral standards has been observed—a trend largely attributed to the pervasive influence of rapid technological advancement.

METHOD

This investigation adopts a Classroom Action Research (CAR) framework, utilizing the Kemmis and McTaggart model as its primary methodological reference. This model involves a cyclical process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The choice of this specific model was driven by its streamlined and accessible procedural stages. The study addresses the gap in leveraging the Teaching Campus program to elevate student morals within Islamic Religious Education. To evaluate moral outcomes, assessments were conducted with 27 fifth-grade students at State Elementary School 24 Seluma.

To ensure a comprehensive methodological framework, the study explicitly defines its operational procedures. The data utilized consist of qualitative descriptions of student behavior and quantitative scores derived from moral assessment indicators. The primary source of data is direct interactions and behavioral responses to in-class lessons. Data collection was conducted through systematic observation using a validated observer list. This technique allowed the researchers to document specific moral indicators, such as the frequency and sincerity of students expressing their requests, which were then analyzed to determine the assessment cycles across

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Initial needs analysis conducted with fourth-grade students in Islamic Religious Education revealed an average score of 45.5, signaling a significant deficiency in student morale. These findings necessitate a shift toward a more engaging and substantive learning environment. By leveraging diverse instructional strategies and educational media, educators can simplify complex concepts of

commendable behavior. Specifically, for the fifth-grade cohort at State Elementary School 24 Seluma, technology-integrated media—such as educational videos detailing the lives of the Prophets and Apostles is identified as an ideal pedagogical tool.

Cycle I was executed to address the moral deficiencies identified during the initial needs analysis. The intervention was shaped by specific design improvements tailored to resolve earlier problem findings. Educators emphasized the significance of commendable behavior as structured within the instructional modules. Notably, students who previously underperformed showed increased engagement; their proactive questioning not only clarified their own doubts but also benefited their peers. During teacher-led instruction, the entire class demonstrated focused attention and active listening.

Instructional activities were conducted within the classroom, where educators provided both verbal and written clarifications regarding the concept of commendable behavior. Despite these efforts, a portion of the student body struggled to grasp the core material. Following the lesson and the presentation of illustrative examples, a post-test was administered to evaluate comprehension. Among the 27 participants, scores ranged from a minimum of 45 to a maximum of 74. Notably, the average score for the lowest-performing group in Cycle I remained at the 45 mark.

The instructional interventions in the first stage yielded positive shifts in student comprehension; specifically, those who previously struggled with the core concepts of commendable behavior began to demonstrate a clearer grasp of the material. This newfound understanding was not merely theoretical, as students started to manifest these ethical principles through tangible actions within their daily social environments. To further build on this momentum and solidify the moral foundation of the fifth-grade cohort at State Elementary School 24 Seluma, educators are now meticulously refining their pedagogical tools. A strategic set of resources and instructional materials is being curated to facilitate the execution of Cycle II, with the primary objective of ensuring a more profound and lasting improvement in student conduct.

The moral development of students in Cycle II successfully surpassed the established benchmarks of success. This achievement was verified by monitoring student interactions, specifically their consistent and appropriate responses to 'thank you' and 'request for help' prompts throughout the two cycles. Quantitatively, the scores in Cycle II showed significant improvement, ranging from a minimum of 75 to a peak of 96, resulting in a robust mean score of 86. These results confirm a substantial upward trend in academic performance, marking Cycle II as a definitive

success. Overall, the evidence demonstrates that the moral standing of fifth-grade students at State Elementary School 24 Seluma improved progressively with each successive cycle.

At State Elementary School 43 Seluma, university students are actively engaged in instructional support for the fifth-grade cohort. This involvement includes a collaborative arrangement where a student assistant works alongside the classroom teacher three times per week, with a schedule designed to accommodate both academic commitments and student well-being. A cornerstone of this assistance is the implementation of personalized instruction; rather than solely supporting general lectures, students frequently provide direct, desk-side guidance. This localized approach allows for individual material clarification, complementing the daily teaching activities conducted by the lead educator.

Within the framework of the Teaching Campus (Merdeka Belajar) initiative, university participants assumed the dual responsibilities of both instructors and researchers. This study, centered on enhancing the moral development of fifth-grade students in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at State Elementary School 43 Seluma, was conducted over a two-week period. The investigation comprised six intensive sessions, aligning the pedagogical interventions with the strategic objectives of the national Merdeka Campus program.

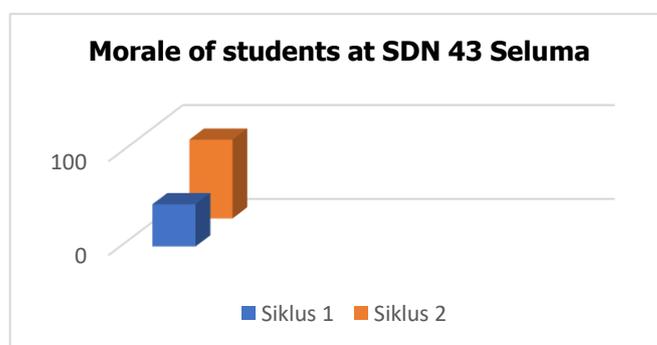


Figure 1. Percentage of Morale of Grade V Students

According to the provided chart, this study was structured into two distinct cycles, each comprising three instructional meetings. A rigorous process of evaluation and reflection was performed at the conclusion of every cycle to assess progress. Preliminary observations conducted prior to the intervention revealed that a majority of students struggled to master the curriculum regarding praiseworthy (mahmudah) behavior. These difficulties were primarily rooted in a significant deficiency in moral standards among a segment of the student body. Furthermore, a lack of awareness regarding the fundamental importance of ethical conduct resulted in notably low

assessment scores during the initial observation phase.

Discussion

Among the flagship initiatives of the Merdeka Belajar (Independent Learning) framework is the Teaching Campus program. This initiative represents a strategic governmental effort to refine and advance the Indonesian educational landscape. It is designed for students nationwide who successfully navigate a rigorous selection process, empowering them to support classroom instruction. The program's primary focus is to bolster foundational skills, specifically targeting the enhancement of literacy and numeracy standards across various schools (Panjaitan et al., 2022). As a core component of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) initiative, the Teaching Campus Program serves as a strategic platform to empower university students, enabling them to actively support and enhance the instructional process within schools (Zebua et al., 2023). The Merdeka Belajar initiative is designed to refine the competencies of graduates by balancing technical expertise (hard skills) with interpersonal abilities (soft skills), ultimately ensuring that students emerge with a distinguished and resilient personality (Yasmansyah & Sesmiarni, 2022).

At State Elementary School (SDN) 24 Seluma, the implementation of the Kampus Mengajar program serves as a critical bridge between these national objectives and the local educational challenges. Observations at this specific location revealed that, although it strives to follow the national curriculum, the integration of technology and innovative character-building methods remained limited. The arrival of Kampus remains students at SDN 24 Seluma shifted the instructional paradigm from a rigid, teacher-centered approach to a more collaborative and interactive environment. This local context demonstrates that the program not only supports administrative literacy but also serves as a catalyst for innovation. By interacting directly with fifth-grade students, the program participants at SDN 24 Seluma were able to identify and address the students' needs, transforming the classroom into a laboratory for character development that aligns with both Islamic values and the spirit of learning.

The Teaching Campus initiative, a vital component of the Independent Campus (Merdeka Belajar) framework, mobilizes a diverse cohort of university students from various academic disciplines to bolster instructional activities within schools. With a primary focus on the elementary level, the program provides a unique platform for these participants to cultivate professional competencies and personal growth through immersive, real-world experiences that transcend the traditional classroom setting (Moore, 1973; Yusuf, 2021; Zeichner, 2010). The objective is to motivate students to achieve proficiency in diverse academic disciplines alongside the technical and

interpersonal competencies required in the professional sphere (Kardiyem et al., 2023). The inherent flexibility of Independent Learning frameworks allows for a highly personalized educational experience, empowering students to cultivate their potential in alignment with their unique passions and individual talents (Tuti Marjan Fuad, 2021). The operational scope of the Teaching Campus initiative encompasses a wide array of educational support, with a strategic emphasis on literacy and numeracy, technological integration, and administrative management. This multifaceted approach is designed to provide university students with a robust platform for developing leadership and character while gaining practical pedagogical experience. By working collaboratively with elementary school faculty, participants are actively involved in the systemic organization and delivery of classroom instruction (Chang et al., 2020) (Yusuf, 2021).

In line with research (Rinah, 2023), it was stated that motivating students to cooperate and help each other is another important aspect that students must apply, because it creates a moral and peaceful school environment without any significant commotion. Research conducted by Hamidah (Rahim & Suryani, 2022), the achievement of increasing student literacy has an effective impact (Didion et al., 2020; Miller et al., 2021), overall, it can be interpreted that the teaching campus program has a good level of effectiveness (Herman et al., 2022; Swain et al., 2019; Wahyu et al., 2020). It is essential to foster a sense of mutual affection and empathy among students, as these interpersonal virtues are fundamental to character development. By encouraging this conduct, a harmonious and peaceful classroom environment is established, effectively minimizing social friction and conflict. Additionally, educators emphasize the importance of gratitude (shukr) toward Allah by teaching its profound wisdom: grateful individuals experience greater happiness and inner tranquility. This practice enables students to regulate their desires and maintain a sense of contentment (qana'ah) with divine provisions, leading to a more stable and fulfilled emotional state.

CONCLUSION

The Teaching Campus a flagship of the Merdeka Belajar initiative successfully integrated students from diverse academic disciplines to support primary education through experiential learning. The intervention aimed at moral development achieved its benchmarks, as evidenced by the students' improved social responses to 'thank you' and 'help' prompts across two instructional cycles. Quantitatively, Cycle II demonstrated significant progress with scores ranging from 75 to 96 and a robust average of 86. These metrics confirm the efficacy of the second cycle and illustrate a consistent upward trajectory in the moral standards of fifth-grade students at State Elementary

School 43 Seluma throughout the research period.

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