

Level of Knowledge and Implementation of the Contextual Approach in Teaching and Learning Among Teachers in Besut, Terengganu, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

In 2014, there is the finding from the research shows that the teachers who teach Islamic Education subjects do not use the contextual approach in their teaching. They prefer using traditional that are teacher-centered and less interactive, (Ngasiman, 2014). After 10 years, the situation may be change. Therefore, this study aims to identify the level of knowledge and implementation of the contextual approach in teaching and learning by Islamic Education teachers (GPI) in Besut Terengganu Malaysia. This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method involving 127 respondents from 16 primary schools. Data were collected through questionnaires and analysed using JOMAVI 2.3.28 software. The finding show that the level of knowledge and implementation of the contextual approach is high, with a significant relationship between knowledge and implementation of the approach ($r = 0.923$, $p < 0.001$). The implications of the study suggest continuous training for teachers and support from schools and the ministry to empower this method in Islamic Education teaching.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of modern education, there is an urgent need for teachers to apply more dynamic and interactive teaching approaches. The issues past 10 years in education of course have been changed. The teachers use the updated methodology and strategies. One of the famous strategies is the contextual approach. The contextual approach is a method that connects lesson content with students' real-life situations, helping them to understand and apply knowledge more effectively. Islamic Education, often considered theoretical, can greatly benefit from this approach as it helps students relate learning to their daily practices. Therefore, this study focuses on the level of knowledge and implementation of the contextual approach by Religious Education Teachers (GPI) in district of Besut, Terengganu Malaysia.

2. METHOD, DATA, ANALYSIS

This study uses a quantitative design through a survey method. The sample consisted of 127 GPI selected using simple random sampling from 16 primary schools in Besut district. The research instrument was a structured questionnaire containing three parts: Part A (respondents' demographics), Part B (level of knowledge of the contextual approach), and Part C (level of implementation of the contextual approach). The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale to assess teachers' levels of knowledge and implementation.

Table 1. Parts of the Questionnaire

Part	Question Type
Part A	Respondents' demographic information
Part B	Level of knowledge of Islamic Education teachers on the contextual approach
Part C	Level of implementation of the contextual approach by Islamic Education teachers

Table 2. Likert Scale and Levels for Part B

Scale	Likert Scale
1	Strongly Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Neutral
4	Agree
5	Strongly Agree

Table 3. Likert Scale and Levels for Part C

Scale	Likert Scale
1	Strongly Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Neutral
4	Agree
5	Strongly Agree

Data collected were analysed using Jamovi version 2.3.28 software, with descriptive analysis and Pearson correlation conducted to answer the research questions.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The respondent profile shows that the majority of teachers are aged between 31 to 40 years old (46.5%) and have 6 to 10 years of teaching experience (48%). The mean score interpretation follows the interpretation by Nunnally & Bernstein, as shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4. Interpretation of Mean Scores

Mean Score	Interpretation
1.00–2.00	Low
2.01–3.00	Moderately Low
3.01–4.00	Moderately High
4.01–5.00	High

Descriptive analysis of the knowledge and implementation levels of Islamic Education teachers is presented in Table 5 below:

Table 5. Distribution of Mean, Standard Deviation, and Interpretation of Constructs in the Questionnaire

Construct	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Identifying Knowledge of the Contextual Approach in Islamic Education Subject	4.11	0.685	High
Identifying Implementation of the Contextual Approach in Islamic Education Subject	4.07	0.754	High

Descriptive analysis indicates that the knowledge level of Islamic Education teachers regarding the contextual approach in teaching is high, with an overall mean of 4.11 and a standard deviation of 0.685. This signifies that teachers possess an in-depth understanding of the contextual approach and are aware of its importance in enhancing the effectiveness of the learning process.

Additionally, the implementation of the contextual approach in Islamic Education teaching also shows a high level, with a mean of 4.07 and a standard deviation of 0.754. This indicates that teachers not

only understand the concept but also consistently apply it in their daily teaching. For example, this approach is often used in topics such as ethics, history, and practical worship, where contextual elements help students relate the knowledge learned to real-life situations. Teachers have been observed successfully linking lesson content to real-world contexts, thereby fostering deeper and more meaningful understanding among students.

Correlation values were measured based on the interpretation table by Alias Baba (1997). Pearson correlation analysis shows a very significant relationship between knowledge and implementation ($r = 0.923$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 6. Significant Relationship Between Knowledge and Implementation of the Contextual Approach by GPI

		Knowledge	Implementation
Knowledge	Pearson's r	—	—
	df	—	—
	p-value	—	—
Implementation	Pearson's r	0,923	—
	df	125	—
	p-value	<0.001	—
The correlation is significant at the level of $p < 0.001$.			

Pearson correlation analysis indicates a very significant relationship between the level of knowledge of Islamic Education teachers on the contextual approach and its implementation in teaching. With a correlation value of $r = 0.923$ and $p < 0.001$, this shows a very strong relationship. A correlation value close to 1.0 reflects that deeper knowledge of the contextual approach is directly related to its effective implementation in classrooms.

More specifically, the results show that teachers with a high level of knowledge regarding the contextual approach are more likely to implement this teaching technique effectively. This is because a deep understanding gives teachers confidence to apply strategies that suit the students' learning context. Data analysed with degrees of freedom ($df = 125$) also support the strength of this relationship, as the p -value < 0.001 confirms the reliability of these findings at a very high level of significance.

It can be concluded that investing in enhancing teachers' knowledge of the contextual teaching approach is an important step to maximise its positive impact on teaching implementation. This highlights the importance of training and professional development for teachers to improve their pedagogical skills in line with current educational demands. These conclusions also prove that solid knowledge is crucial not only theoretically but also practically in improving the quality of teaching in schools

Discussion

This study finds that the level of knowledge among Islamic Education teachers (GPI) in the Besut district regarding the contextual approach is high. This indicates that teachers in this district generally understand the concepts, principles, and applications of the contextual approach in the teaching and learning process (TLP). These findings align with previous research by Zamri (2014), which stated that the contextual approach helps teachers link lesson content with students' daily experiences, making learning more relevant and meaningful. This is particularly important in Islamic Education, often regarded as an abstract and theoretical subject.

Although the findings reveal a high level of knowledge, the implementation of the contextual approach by GPI was also found to be satisfactory (Mean = 4.07). Teachers are observed to consistently use this approach in various topics such as ethics, history, and practical worship. However, there is slight variation in the level of implementation, indicating that not all teachers can fully implement this approach. This may be due to factors such as high teacher workload, time constraints in completing the syllabus, and the lack of appropriate teaching resources. For instance, research by Rothman et. al. (2018) found that teachers tend to focus on delivering information for examination purposes, which often leads to the neglect of creative approaches like the contextual method.

Correlation analysis reveals a very significant relationship between the level of knowledge of teachers about the contextual approach and its level of implementation ($r = 0.923$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that the greater the knowledge a teacher has about the contextual approach, the more likely they are to implement it effectively in the classroom. These findings support the theory that knowledge is the foundation of practice.

When teachers have a deep understanding of a specific teaching approach, they feel more confident and capable of adapting it to their daily teaching routines.

However, despite high levels of knowledge, some teachers may still lack confidence in implementing this approach due to a lack of practical training. This aligns with findings by Seliaman and Dollah (2018), who noted that teachers who are less exposed to pedagogical training related to the contextual approach are more likely to revert to traditional teaching methods.

The contextual approach holds great potential for enhancing student interest and motivation in Islamic Education subjects. By linking lesson content to real-life contexts, students can better understand and appreciate the relevance of the knowledge they are learning. For example, lessons on ethics and moral conduct can be connected to students' daily situations, making learning more practical and meaningful. This is supported by findings from Ngosman and Zamri (2016), who showed that the use of the contextual approach in language subjects successfully increased student engagement in the classroom.

Furthermore, the findings also show that the contextual approach not only improves understanding but also promotes higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) among students. This aligns with the objectives of the Malaysian Education Blueprint (PPPM) 2013–2025, which emphasises the need to develop students who are not only knowledgeable but also possess critical and creative thinking skills. Therefore, this approach can be considered a suitable method to prepare students for future challenges.

4. CONCLUSION

This study finds that the level of knowledge and implementation of the contextual approach among Islamic Education teachers (GPI) in the Besut district is high. This indicates that teachers possess a strong understanding of the principles of the contextual approach, which translates into effective implementation in classrooms. The contextual approach, which emphasises teaching based on real-life situations and realities close to students, allows them to relate what they learn to their daily lives, thereby enhancing their understanding and engagement in learning.

In terms of practical implications, this study suggests several steps that schools and the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) can take to further strengthen this approach in teaching. Firstly, there is a need to provide continuous training programmes such as workshops, seminars, and professional development courses focused on contextual teaching strategies. These training programmes not only give teachers the opportunity to enhance their knowledge but also create platforms for sharing best practices and addressing challenges faced in classrooms. With such platforms, teachers can exchange ideas and gain inspiration to apply the contextual approach more creatively.

In addition to formal training, schools also need to provide support in the form of teaching materials that are relevant and appropriate for the contextual approach. This includes the provision of modules, guides, and teaching resources tailored to the cultural, social, and environmental context of the locality. For instance, in Islamic Education, teachers can be given access to materials that link religious concepts with current issues or everyday situations commonly experienced by students, such as discussions on ethics, manners, and social responsibilities in real-life contexts.

Overall, the findings of this study recommend that stakeholders in education, particularly the MOE, continue to prioritise the development of teacher competencies in student-centred teaching approaches. By ensuring that teachers are equipped with sufficient knowledge, skills, and resources, this not only enhances the effectiveness of teaching but also fosters students' interest and motivation to learn. A well-implemented contextual approach has the potential to create more meaningful and relevant learning experiences, thus contributing to improved academic achievement among students

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