



## INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION TEACHERS IN TEACHING ISLAMIC CULTURAL HISTORY (SKI) AT MI MATHLAUL HUDA RANCAGONG

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### Abstract

Islamic Cultural History (Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam/SKI) is a fundamental subject within the Islamic Religious Education curriculum at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) level, yet it is frequently perceived by students as monotonous and difficult due to its heavy emphasis on memorization and limited pedagogical variety. This study aims to examine the instructional strategies employed by Islamic Education teachers at MI Mathla'ul Huda Rancagong, with a particular focus on the application of mind mapping and timeline techniques. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive methodology, data were collected through interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis involving purposively selected participants. The findings indicate that mind mapping facilitates visual organization of complex historical concepts, improves memory retention, and promotes critical thinking, creativity, and student engagement. Meanwhile, the use of timelines enhances students' chronological thinking and their ability to comprehend historical sequences and causal relationships. These strategies are consistent with both constructivist and humanistic learning theories, positioning students as active participants in the learning process. The integration of visual-based instructional tools not only improves students' academic outcomes but also fosters more meaningful and engaging learning experiences. This study contributes to pedagogical innovation in Islamic education by offering practical recommendations for educators, school administrators, and policymakers. It also suggests avenues for future research focusing on the integration of multiple visual learning strategies, application across different educational levels, and exploration in diverse sociocultural contexts.

**Kata Kunci:** *Instructional Strategies, Islamic Cultural History (SKI), Islamic Education Teachers*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic Cultural History (Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam—SKI) is a core component of the Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam—PAI) curriculum at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) level. This subject is designed to introduce students to the development of Islamic civilization, prominent historical figures in Islam, and the noble values transmitted across generations. Through SKI, students are expected to gain a comprehensive understanding of the historical trajectory of the Muslim ummah in building a great civilization and to draw lessons from the struggles and exemplary conduct of past Islamic leaders.



In practice, however, SKI is often perceived as a monotonous and uninspiring subject. This perception stems from its historical content, which tends to emphasize rote memorization of names, dates, and past events. When delivered solely in chronological order and detached from students' contemporary experiences, the subject often appears rigid and disengaging. Yet, from the perspective of context-based learning, educational material becomes more meaningful when connected to learners' lived realities. In this regard, Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development offers a crucial foundation for the design of more effective instructional strategies. Piaget posits that students at the MI level are generally in the formal operational stage, wherein they begin to exhibit abstract, logical, and systematic thinking (Wadsworth, 1996). Consequently, SKI instruction should transcend merely informative or narrative approaches and instead encourage students to construct understanding through historical analysis, value reflection, and contextual application.

Neglecting learners' cognitive development in instructional design may hinder student engagement and render the learning experience irrelevant. Therefore, it is essential for educators to adopt strategies that position students as active participants in the learning process—for instance, through historical discussions, case studies, or project-based assignments that promote critical historical interpretation.

Another significant factor contributing to students' low interest in SKI is the lack of methodological variety in instructional delivery. Many students perceive the subject as unengaging due to the teacher's limited use of diverse teaching methods, students' low intrinsic motivation, and infrastructural limitations—such as the absence of multimedia tools like projectors, which could facilitate the visualization of course content. These challenges have been corroborated by previous studies, including those by Rasyid, (2018), Hasmar, (2020) and Mauliddiyah, (2021), all of which highlight the multifaceted difficulties faced by SKI educators stemming from pedagogical and resource constraints.

SKI instruction is still frequently delivered through lecture-based methods, resulting in passive learning environments that hinder deep comprehension (Wirabumi, 2020). Such teacher-centered approaches conflict with the core tenets of constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of learners actively constructing knowledge through direct engagement and participation. Teacher-centered learning has been widely criticized for fostering passivity among students, discouraging emotional expression, limiting critical thinking, and reducing overall productivity (Mujahida, 2019). Accordingly, educators should serve as facilitators rather than sole transmitters of knowledge. In the context of Piaget's formal operational stage (Wadsworth, 1996), students possess the cognitive capacity to engage in hypothetico-deductive reasoning and to identify causal relationships in historical phenomena. If presented through engaging strategies, SKI has the potential to shape character, broaden Islamic worldview, and inspire students through the moral and cultural values embedded in historical narratives.

This study seeks to establish a novel framework for understanding SKI instructional strategies by emphasizing the urgent need for methodological innovation within Islamic religious education. It opens new avenues for implementing interactive pedagogical models, such as group discussions and educational technology integration—approaches that remain underutilized in smaller madrasah institutions.

The significance of this research lies in its relevance to educators teaching SKI in madrasahs, particularly in enhancing instructional effectiveness and addressing prevailing challenges. Furthermore, it serves as a reference for educational policymakers, who may incorporate its recommendations into the design of a more dynamic and responsive Islamic education curriculum. This study also contributes to the broader discourse on educational policy, particularly in relation to pedagogical strategies in madrasahs and the development of learning models that address the unique challenges faced by religious educational institutions in resource-constrained settings.



By situating this research within a broader educational context, it becomes evident that pedagogical practices in Islamic religious education must continue to evolve in order to foster learning environments that are engaging, effective, and contextually relevant. This study aspires to make a meaningful contribution to the advancement of educational policy and pedagogical practice in madrasahs, thereby enhancing the overall quality of education at both local and national levels.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach, which is well-suited for exploring the underlying meanings behind the phenomenon of media use in the teaching of Islamic Cultural History (SKI) at MI Mathlul Huda. This method allows the researcher to provide an in-depth depiction of the participants' experiences and perceptions regarding the issues at hand, without focusing on generalization. Thus, the location was chosen based on the real problem faced by the school regarding the limited use of media in SKI teaching, which hinders the achievement of the desired learning outcomes.

Furthermore, the study utilizes purposive sampling, selecting participants who are directly relevant, such as SKI teachers and school officials who possess firsthand knowledge of the issue under investigation. In addition, the sample size is determined according to the principle of data saturation, where data is collected until no new information emerges, ensuring the depth and validity of the findings.

Moreover, the demographic characteristics of the participants, including teaching experience and access to teaching media, are crucial for understanding the factors that influence the integration of media in SKI teaching. To achieve this, data triangulation is employed, combining observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis to gain a more comprehensive perspective. The interview protocol is designed to be semi-structured, allowing for flexibility in exploring various themes that emerge from participant responses.

Finally, data analysis is conducted in an inductive manner, identifying emerging themes from the data without relying on pre-established categories. Thus, this technique enables the researcher to understand the context and meaning inherent in the phenomenon under study while ensuring credibility and validity through data triangulation.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Instructional Strategies for Teaching Islamic Cultural History

Effective teaching heavily depends on how the strategies employed by the teachers make the material easily understood and well-received by students. In the context of Islamic Cultural History, the right approach is crucial to ensure that the essential values of this civilization are effectively conveyed and have positive impacts on the students' understanding. Based on the interview, instructional strategies of Islamic Education teachers in teaching Islamic Cultural History (SKI), related to the themes below:

Themes	Quote
Mind Mapping	When I teach the SKI subject, due to time constraints and the extensive scope of the material, I primarily use the lecture method. Occasionally, I also incorporate mind mapping techniques for SKI topics, such as creating the



### Creative Timeline

family tree of the Prophet Muhammad and other related content.

The teacher assigned a group task in which students created a family tree of the Prophet Muhammad or worked on other SKI-related topics using cardboard as a visual learning medium to create mind mapping. After the activity, the teacher summarized the material and concluded the lesson

Since this subject is about Islamic history, I try to keep students from getting bored during the lesson by helping them sequence historical events in chronological order. After that, I ask them to work in groups to turn the sequence into a timeline, so it becomes easier for them to remember.

I ask my students to take notes using a timeline when the material involves chronological events, so it's easier for them to remember

The instructional strategy for teaching Islamic Cultural History (SKI) through the use of mind mapping offers a promising solution to enhance students' comprehension and memory retention of complex subject matter. Mind mapping is a technique that assists students in organizing information visually by graphically connecting key concepts and ideas. According to Keleş (2012) the use of mind maps in instructional settings facilitates learning and contributes to creating an enjoyable learning environment. This is particularly relevant for SKI, a subject often perceived as difficult due to the extensive amount of information students are required to recall. The application of mind mapping allows students to visualize the relationships between various concepts within the topics studied, such as the history of Islamic civilization or the development of Islam during the caliphate period. Through the process of constructing mind maps, students are expected to gain a deeper understanding of the material, as they are actively involved in organizing and linking information. Furthermore, mind mapping enhances memory retention by utilizing visual elements that aid in the recall of information. This activity also promotes critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative learning, as students work together to share their understanding of the content. Clearly, this strategy aligns with a student-centered learning approach, as opposed to traditional teacher-centered methods, such as lectures, which may suppress students' creativity and productivity Mujahida (2019). In line with this, a study by (Agustin et al., 2023) found that an increase in student learning interest can be observed through indicators such as feelings of enjoyment, focused attention, willingness to learn, active participation, and curiosity—all of which contribute to improved conceptual understanding.

In addition, the application of humanistic learning theory also supports the use of approaches such as mind mapping. This theory posits that enjoyable learning experiences that address students' emotional and psychological needs can significantly enhance their motivation and enthusiasm for learning. It emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive learning environment in which students feel valued and are given the autonomy to explore and construct knowledge independently. Enjoyable learning activities, such as those facilitated through mind mapping, have the potential to increase student



interest and motivation, particularly in subjects often perceived as challenging, such as Islamic Cultural History (SKI). The implementation of humanistic learning theory in Islamic Education, as highlighted by Utami, (2020), underscores the need for creative, active, and engaging learning strategies to ensure that students not only cognitively comprehend the material but also experience comfort and enjoyment throughout the learning process. This aligns with the principles of mind mapping, which simultaneously stimulate both emotional and intellectual engagement. Consequently, SKI is no longer viewed as a burdensome subject but rather as an engaging and meaningful learning experience. This demonstrates that when humanistic principles are effectively integrated into classroom practices through appropriate methods such as mind mapping, learning becomes more effective in fostering students' enthusiasm, self-confidence, and sense of responsibility toward their own learning.

The study conducted by Oktarina, (2021) demonstrates that the implementation of instructional strategies utilizing mind mapping offers a range of significant benefits for learners. This approach encourages students to actively construct conceptual understanding and independently formulate ideas through group discussions and problem-solving activities embedded in the process of creating concept maps. Such activities have been shown to foster visual thinking skills, stimulate creativity, and enhance communication and critical thinking abilities through dynamic social interactions among students, teachers, and the learning environment. These findings are in alignment with the constructivist theory proposed by Piaget, which posits that learning is most effective when students are actively engaged in meaningful, experience-based activities. According to Piaget, experiential learning enables learners to optimally develop their cognitive potential and attain a deeper understanding of the subject matter. In this context, constructivist theory carries important implications for contemporary pedagogy, particularly in redefining the learner's role from a passive recipient of information to an active producer of ideas, as emphasized by Suryana et al., (2022). This reflects a paradigm shift in education that prioritizes active participation, exploration, and the construction of knowledge by the learners themselves.

A study conducted by Bukhori et al., (2021) demonstrated that the application of the mind mapping instructional model significantly enhanced students' learning outcomes. This was evidenced by a marked increase in the average student score, from 41.3% to 79.3%. Additionally, the number of students who met the minimum mastery criteria (KKM) rose substantially, from 12 students in the first assessment cycle to 23 students in the subsequent cycle. The recapitulated results indicated that both the percentage of students achieving the KKM and the level of classical completeness fell within the "good" category. These findings not only confirm the pedagogical value of mind mapping in fostering cognitive gains, but also point to its broader impact on creating a more enjoyable and engaging learning atmosphere. The implementation of mind mapping in classroom instruction fosters a positive and interactive climate, which contributes to bridging the relational gap between students and teachers. A more emotionally supportive environment allows students to feel more connected to their instructors, thereby increasing their receptivity to the content being taught. As a result, learning materials are not only more easily understood and internalized, but also more likely to be applied in practice. This dynamic becomes a critical factor in achieving comprehensive student learning outcomes, particularly in both cognitive and psychomotor domains Lestari et al., (2024). Consequently, mind mapping serves not only as a cognitive tool, but also as a relational and motivational strategy that supports holistic educational development.

Nevertheless, the implementation of this strategy requires additional time and guidance to enable students to construct effective mind maps. Some learners may also need time to become familiar with the technique. Despite these challenges, the benefits gained in terms of comprehension, creativity, and memory retention position mind mapping as a promising instructional strategy in Islamic Cultural





History (SKI) education, with the potential to enhance both the quality and the overall learning experience of students.

Furthermore, another instructional strategy employed by SKI teachers at MTs Mathla'ul Huda Rancagong involves the use of timelines, which has proven to significantly contribute to the development of students' chronological thinking skills. This medium facilitates a systematic understanding of the sequence of historical events and reinforces the interconnections among events that collectively form a coherent historical narrative. Within the context of Islamic Cultural History (Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam, or SKI) instruction, this approach is particularly relevant given the complexity of the subject matter, which encompasses various figures, locations, and a series of events spanning extended periods of time.

These findings are consistent with previous research conducted by Dara & Setiawati (2017) which indicated that the use of timeline techniques can enhance students' chronological thinking skills in history education. This is further supported by the study of Rizqi & Gunansyah, (2017) which demonstrated that timeline media had a significant impact on students' mastery of temporal concepts and chronological order. Similarly, Sundari & Rofiah, (2018) found that the timeline method had a positive effect on improving students' comprehension of historical concepts. Collectively, these three studies reveal a consistent pattern, suggesting that temporal visualizations such as timelines are highly effective in supporting history learning, particularly in clarifying the temporal dimension and sequence of historical events.

In relation to the objective of this study, which is to identify teachers' instructional strategies in teaching Islamic History (SKI), the use of a timeline demonstrates a strong pedagogical relevance. This strategy not only clarifies the structure of the material presented but also enhances students' conceptual understanding of the dynamics of Islamic history. Thus, the use of timelines is not merely technical in nature, but also strategic in shaping students' historical thinking framework.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of timeline use can also be analyzed from the perspective of students' cognitive development at the MTs (Islamic Junior High School) level, who are generally in the early formal operational stage according to Piaget's theory (Wadsworth, 1996). At this stage, students begin to develop the ability to think logically about abstract ideas, including temporal concepts and cause-and-effect relationships in history. The use of timelines serves as an appropriate medium, as it bridges the abstraction process through visual representation, thereby facilitating the internalization of historical content. Consequently, students are not merely memorizing historical facts, but are also able to comprehend the structure and context of each event.

Based on the findings obtained, it can be concluded that the strategy of using timelines in SKI (Islamic History) instruction at MI Mathla'ul Huda Rancagong is effective in enhancing students' holistic understanding of historical concepts. This effectiveness is evident not only in students' mastery of the material but also in their ability to think sequentially and analytically when explaining the interrelation of historical events. Such a strategy supports 21st-century learning outcomes, which emphasize critical, analytical, and historical thinking skills, while also affirming the importance of innovative instructional strategies that are adaptive to the characteristics of learners at the Primary level.

Upon further analysis, both of the aforementioned strategies share a common approach—namely, the use of visual elements—and can potentially be integrated within instructional practices. The combination of these strategies in SKI learning not only enriches the presentation of historical content but also supports students' long-term memory retention. This aligns with findings from experimental studies conducted by Kusuma et al., (2024), which reveal that drawing is more effective than verbatim writing in enhancing memory, particularly in recalling definitions. These results suggest that visual methods, such as drawing or the use of timelines or mind mapping, can serve as powerful tools for internalizing information, thereby offering practical implications for educators seeking to improve students' retention and conceptual understanding in history education, including Islamic History.



Therefore, the integration of multiple visual strategies should be further explored and developed as an innovative approach to foster meaningful and lasting learning experiences, particularly in subjects that require a strong grasp of sequential and conceptual knowledge such as Islamic History.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

This study revealed that the instructional strategies employed by Islamic Education teachers in teaching Islamic Cultural History (SKI) at MI Mathla'ul Huda Rancagong—namely mind mapping and timeline utilization—are demonstrably effective in enhancing students' conceptual understanding, memory retention, and chronological thinking skills. Mind mapping fosters visual organization of information, strengthens recall, and encourages creativity, critical thinking, and active student participation. Meanwhile, the use of timelines significantly supports students' ability to comprehend historical sequences and interrelated events in a structured and coherent manner.

These findings make a valuable contribution to the body of knowledge in Islamic education pedagogy, particularly in promoting the integration of visual learning strategies aligned with constructivist and humanistic learning theories. Practically, the study offers actionable insights for educators in designing engaging and student-centered learning experiences. It also highlights the need for institutional and policy support in providing professional development opportunities for teachers, particularly in the use of innovative and visually oriented instructional tools.

In terms of educational policy implications, the findings suggest that visual strategies such as mind mapping and timelines can serve as effective models for curriculum design and teacher training programs. These strategies align with the competencies required in 21st-century learning, which emphasize critical, analytical, and collaborative thinking skills.

Future research should consider exploring the integration of multiple visual-based strategies, applying these approaches in different educational levels, and employing quantitative or mixed-methods designs to assess their impact on student learning outcomes. Studies that focus on diverse learner populations and sociocultural contexts would also enrich the generalizability and applicability of the findings, offering deeper insights into effective instructional practices in Islamic history education.

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