

CREATIVE TEACHING PRACTICES AMONG ISLAMIC EDUCATION LECTURERS IN POLYTECHNIC

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ABSTRACT

In the reforms of the country's education landscape, the aspect of creativity is the focus in the Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2013-2025 which aims to produce a creative and innovative workforce. It can be seen that education is the mainstay to nurture and enhance creativity among students which is the country's main source of human capital especially in the institutions of higher learning. It is also inevitably a priority for a responsible teacher to move in line with the development of education and to improve teaching to be more creative. Elements of creativity in teaching and learning have been explored by researchers, but creativity among lecturers specifically Islamic Education Lecturers have not been precisely discovered in previous study. Accordingly, this survey study was conducted to identify the level of creative teaching practices among polytechnic Islamic Education lecturers in Central and Southern Zone. The questionnaire was administered online and a total of 74 respondents were involved in this study and data collected were analysed using descriptive analysis of frequency, percentage and mean to report the findings. The findings of the study show that the level of creative teaching practice among polytechnic Islamic Education lecturers in Central and Southern is at a high level and it is hope that they can be more creative in order to achieve teaching and learning outcomes and at the same time develop students' creativity especially among the technical students in polytechnic.

Keywords: Creativity, Creative Teaching, Islamic Education, Strategy, Teaching and Learning

INTRODUCTION

Along with the 21st century education development in Malaysia's education ecosystem, there exists various spaces and opportunities for lecturers to empower teaching and provide diversity in the form of knowledge delivery. Polytechnic is one of the Public Institutions of Higher Learning (IPTA) in Malaysia that offers technical education to produce a knowledgeable and skilled workforce in various fields to meet the needs of the industry today. The technical education field is also actively growing along with the country's industrial sector. The transformation launched is based on the empowerment of polytechnics, the development of programs in certain thrust areas, the teaching instructors and staffs who are knowledgeable, highly skilled, and have an excellent image and culture (Department of Polytechnic Studies, 2009). This requires them to implement transformation in the teaching approach. The teaching process in higher education refers to any form of activity or assignment that occurs between lecturers and students. This process requires the lecturer to be focused and be clear about the

whole process, taking into account the strategies, methods, techniques and approaches used. Next, the lecturer should be equipped with the knowledge and skills so that they become more competent and make teaching more effective. The curriculum delivery process at the polytechnic provides various strategies for lecturers to impart knowledge using a systematic and effective approach to meet the set standards of ensuring quality delivery (Malaysian Polytechnic Standard, 2015).

Accordingly, this change demands that the element of creativity be applied in the teaching and learning process. Creativity and innovation are one of the key core values in the Strategic Plan of the Department of Polytechnic and Community College Education 2018-2025. The lessons implemented by the lecturers need to be more creative in order to produce more excellent, creative, and capable students. A new change in the form of creativity in the teaching process is needed in order to create an interesting teaching and learning environment and able to produce excellent and creative students (Starko, 2010). There are various elements that are emphasized that lead to creative teaching either from the aspect of curriculum, teaching methods or teaching aids used by the educators. Therefore, this paper is aimed to identify the level of creative teaching practice among Islamic Education lecturers in polytechnics in the central and southern zones.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The main focus of this study is creative teaching practice. Practice is defined as any teaching-related activities implemented by the teachers such as teaching strategies, how teaching strategies are carried out and teaching methods implemented in the teaching strategies practiced. Cohen et.al (2003) stated that the statistical evidence conducted shows that the teaching practice is the knowledge and actions that influence the learning of students. The teaching process is an art in learning activities that requires the creativity of teachers in the teaching process (Zarin Ismail & Ab Halim 2006).

For the aspect of creative teaching, according to Tan & Goh (2007), creative teaching refers to the use of techniques to increase the effectiveness of learning and this process will help students to learn better and cultivate their creativity. Creativity also involves teachers' competency in terms of classroom activity management. Next, creative teaching is the process of making something better and is closely related to effective teaching especially in the interaction between educators and students (de Sousa 2011). Creative teaching is a process of building unique and meaningful knowledge in a learning context (Rinkevich, 2011). Sale (2015) defines creative teaching as a process of a creative teacher who has the ability to create instructional strategies that make learning a meaningful experience. The same definition can also be seen through Jasni & Zainal (2020), who stated that the diversity of techniques and methods in teaching is a creative approach that has an impact in teaching. In addition, creative teaching is also produced through creative pedagogical elements in education, such as creative teaching elements, teaching for creativity and creative learning (Lin 2011). Creative teaching is also linked to several other components such as creative elements, creativity practices, curriculum, environment, teaching strategies and teaching aids (Al-karasneh & Jubran 2013; Ayob et al.

2013; Faizuddin 2017).

Creative teaching according to the Islamic perspective using Quranic methodology can provide a learning environment that is capable to increase students' creativity (Al-Karasneh & Saleh 2010). Thus, the concept of creative teaching can be seen through various creative elements that exist in teaching that can help teachers to provide a learning environment that suits the needs of students, improve classroom management and achieve teaching and learning objectives. When viewed in the context of Islamic Education, the concept of creative teaching is actually in line with the Quran and Sunnah.

The concept of creative teaching can be associated with the application of the concepts of *tafakkur*, *ta'akul*, *ta'abbur*, *tazakkur* and *tadabbur* as mentioned in the Qur'an which ultimately coincides with the main goal of the Philosophy of Islamic Education which is to produce individuals who is a believer and have noble morals and become the caliphs on earth. For example, the concept of *tafakkur* is mentioned in the Qur'an which means:

"Say: "I do not tell you that with me are the treasures of Allah nor I know the Unseen (Gayb), nor I tell you that I am an angel. I but follow what is revealed to me". Say: "Are the blind and the seeing (with the inner eye) equal"? Do you not then reflect?"

(Al-An'am: 50)

Through the concept of *tafakkur*, Allah commands us to reflect about something carefully with critical sight and Allah tells us to think deeper and broader and also not to jump into conclusion. Therefore, we can clearly see that the concept of thinking or contemplation is a command from Allah. The understanding of the above verse clearly shows that Allah wants people to think orderly in line with the guidelines from Allah's revelation. If man thinks without following the revelation of Allah, he will think without guidance, which will bring a man far from Allah. Wan Haslan (2014) explains that the Al-Quran uses the word *tafakkur* to encourage people to think. Wan Ali Akbar & Nursafra (2018) in their study also concluded the concept of *tafakkur* as one of the most comprehensive concepts of thinking to know about great Creator and leads to stronger faith to Allah. More clearly, the concept of creative teaching can be seen through Prophet Muhammad SAW who teaches the teachings of Islam creatively through *qudwah hasanah* which is highlighted in all his practice, behavior and words. Faizuddin (2017) supported this by mentioning that creative teaching from an Islamic perspective is seen through a combination of Islamic values in teaching to produce perfect human beings. Previous studies have also argued about the practice of creativity in the teaching and learning process of Islamic Education at all levels. For example, Mohd Nawi (2011) mentions that Islamic Education teachers have the ability to produce style reforms and diversify creativity practices in the process of teaching Islamic Education in schools. Coinciding with this view, a study by Jasmi (2010) explains that human capital formation is successful when knowledge of Islamic Education can be conveyed effectively in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, in order to be on board with the current development of Islamic Education, lecturers can diversify creative teaching practices in the teaching delivery as a whole.

Conventional teaching methods, namely lecture delivery by lecturers are widely implemented in the educational institutions. This scenario seems to be less relevant nowadays as

the process emphasize more on one way communication without paying attention to the abilities and interest of students. Therefore, the demand for creative teaching methods is seen as relevant to overcome this problem. A capable teacher who is creative and innovative in using appropriate teaching methods and content pedagogies not only able to produce a positive impact on students, but also can generate critical and creative thinking, create a cheerful learning environment and encourage students to master the knowledge towards a perfect appreciation. The implementation of teaching is not effective if teachers do not understand the objectives, lack of exposure to the relevant courses and lack of teaching aids. It is therefore necessary for the relevant parties to provide more exposure to the teachers on the effective methods in teaching and learning in the lecture hall. There are also studies showing problems that arise from the implementation aspects of creative teaching practices such as the use of teaching materials, teaching methods and strategies as well as the selection of activities. For the teaching technique issues, it was found that the one-way, rote teaching that focused on memorization alone is less relevant nowadays. The tendency of teachers to present facts without paying attention to the abilities and interests of students makes the learning environment sluggish and boring. This scenario only makes teaching and learning less interesting and less effective. Therefore, efforts to facilitate the learning process through creative teaching strategies need to be enhanced with activities that can stimulate the minds of students (Ahmad Shafiq et al. 2017; Ahmad Faizuddin et al. 2016). Creativity in teaching and learning can be associated with material development and approaches that encourage students' interest and motivation. Therefore, the selection of good teaching techniques and activities can ensure that learning goes smoothly and make it easier for students to understand the content of the lessons presented (Irma Martiny et al. 2017 & Azani et al. 2012).

Similarly, the issue of Islamic Education is associated with the problem of technology use in education. According to Wan Khairuddin & Ab. Halim (2008), the perception of Islamic education teachers on information and communication technology in teaching and learning is at a moderate level. Other studies have also found that there are Islamic education teachers who have not yet been able to master the use of technology-based teaching aids and lack of creativity in diversifying teaching methods (Najmuddin et.al 2008, Azhar et.al 2008, Siti Fatimah Ahmad & Ab. Halim 2010). In the context of education today, changes towards more creative teaching process is necessary (Buntat & Ahamad, 2011; Marzuki, 2005). In stating the same polemic, Samsudin et al. (2013) is of the view that an effort should be made so that a more creative teaching practice environment can be created in the teaching and learning process that takes place in the classroom in schools. Based on the literature review, researcher has seen the lack of research conducted on creative teaching in polytechnics. Thus, this study will identify the level of creative teaching practices among Islamic Education lecturers in polytechnics in the central and southern zones.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study utilised a quantitative approach using survey methods. Five-point Likert scale questionnaires were administered online to obtain respondents' feedback. This online method of distribution is in line with Creswell (2014), who stated that online survey can collect extensive

data in a short period of time and also promote a high rate of respondents. Random sampling was used to represent an entire group as a whole and each person had an equal opportunity to be studied. Fricker (2008) argued that simple random sampling is best suited for online surveys involving large homogeneous groups. The study population were 120 polytechnic Islamic Education lecturers which was selected from the stated study locations in the Central and Southern Zones. The sample size was determined based on the researcher's views in the previous studies. As this phase used the online survey method, the number of samples required is 63 respondents, which is based on Baruch & Holtom (2008) who stated that the average response rate is 52.7 percent. This also corresponds to Cooper (1982), who argued that a study can be done through purposive sampling if the sample has the same criteria and characteristics, and it is uniform (homogeneous).

The questionnaire that contained 24 items were used in this study, which was fully adapted from Azhari (2016) and used Likert scale with the level of agreement that were 1 = never (NV), 2= seldom (SL), 3= sometimes (ST), 4= often (OF) and 5 = almost always (AA). The reliability of the items was indicated by the Cronbach's alpha value which was $\alpha = 0.941$. This value indicated that the instrument had good reliability. According to Zaidatun & Mohd Salleh (2003), alpha values from 0.60 to 0.80 were acceptable while the alpha values greater than 0.80 were considered good. This means that the constructs had an acceptable reliability. Next, the obtained data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 26.0 using descriptive analysis of frequency, mean and percentage to report the findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the level of creative teaching practice of lecturers was measured by 24 items. Table 1 below showed that three items had very high scores, while another twenty-one items had high scores. Based on the findings of this study, item B11 which was "Linking problems with everyday life" recorded the highest mean of 4.41 and standard deviation of 0.701. Meanwhile item B15 which was "Explain the concepts from concrete to abstract" recorded the lowest mean of 3.62 and standard deviation of 0.887. Based on the findings in the table below, as a whole, the level of creative teaching practice (mean = 3.99, SD = 0.471) among the Polytechnic Islamic Education lecturers was at a high level.

Table 1: Creative Teaching Practices

No	Statement	NV N (%)	SL N (%)	ST N (%)	OF N (%)	AA N (%)	Mean	SD
B1	Trigger new ideas for students to think about.	1 (1.4)	0 (0.0)	18 (24.3)	39 (52.7)	16 (21.6)	3.93	.764
B2	Present various forms of solutions to the same problem.	1 (1.4)	2 (2.7)	20 (27.0)	38 (51.4)	13 (17.6)	3.81	.805
B3	Use illustrations to explain problem solving in teaching.	1 (1.4)	6 (8.1)	24 (32.4)	30 (40.5)	13 (17.6)	3.65	.913

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B4	Guide students to master the content of teaching until it gives them meaning.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	8 (10.8)	40 (54.1)	26 (35.1)	4.24	.637
B5	Introduce new solutions to a topic.	0 (0.0)	5 (6.8)	18 (24.3)	41 (55.4)	10 (13.5)	3.76	.773
B6	Integrate technology in teaching according to the suitability of the topic.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.4)	27 (36.5)	28 (37.8)	18 (24.3)	3.85	.806
B7	Explain content in stages from easy to difficult.	0 (0.0)	2 (2.7)	15 (20.3)	33 (44.6)	24 (32.4)	4.07	.800
B8	Present other ideas that is different than the usual.	0 (0.0)	2 (2.7)	22 (29.7)	41 (55.4)	9 (12.2)	3.77	.693
B9	Apply my own style in teaching.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	11 (14.9)	40 (54.1)	23 (31.1)	4.16	.663
B10	Improve the quality of teaching by combining the latest methods.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	17 (23.0)	40 (54.1)	17 (23.0)	4.00	.682
B11	Linking problems with everyday life.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.4)	6 (8.1)	29 (39.2)	38 (51.4)	4.41	.701
B12	Give ideas to trigger students to think about.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.4)	8 (10.8)	38 (51.4)	27 (36.5)	4.23	.693
B13	Introduce new activities in teaching.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.4)	20 (27.0)	39 (52.7)	14 (18.9)	3.89	.713
B14	Adjust teaching methods based on students' interests.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	17 (23.0)	41 (55.4)	16 (21.6)	3.99	.672
B15	Explain the concepts from concrete to abstract.	1 (1.4)	5 (6.8)	27 (36.5)	29 (39.2)	12 (16.2)	3.62	.887
B16	Practice discussion sessions in a conducive environment.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.4)	15 (20.3)	40 (54.1)	18 (24.3)	4.01	.712
B17	Implement 'hands-on' student activities.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	23 (31.1)	44 (59.5)	7 (9.5)	3.78	.603
B18	Avoid 'talk and chalk' teaching methods.	1 (1.4)	3 (4.1)	21 (28.4)	42 (56.8)	7 (9.5)	3.69	.757
B19	Changing the teaching approach when it turns out to be less effective.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	14 (18.9)	44 (59.5)	16 (21.6)	4.03	.640
B20	Provide examples of solutions that suitable with the teaching topic.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (8.1)	48 (64.9)	20 (27.0)	4.19	.566
B21	Use of Teaching Aids that are appropriate to the topic of instruction.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.4)	7 (9.5)	47 (63.5)	19 (25.7)	4.14	.626
B22	Modify teaching based on student feedback.	1 (1.4)	1 (1.4)	9 (12.2)	51 (68.9)	12 (16.2)	3.97	.682
B23	Encourage students to access the internet to explore topics they do not master.	1 (1.4)	0 (0.0)	7 (9.5)	33 (44.6)	33 (44.6)	4.31	.757
B24	Give a simple definition of the terms used in teaching.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.4)	8 (10.8)	30 (40.5)	35 (47.3)	4.34	.727
Total							3.99	.471

(Levels: Very low = 1.00 – 1.89, Low = 1.90 – 2.69, Moderate = 2.70 – 3.49, High = 3.50 – 4.29, Very High = 4.30 - 5.00)

Based on the table above, the item that recorded the highest mean is B11 which is "Linking problems with everyday life " with a mean value of 4.41 and standard deviation of 0.701 showed that almost all Islamic Education lecturers that is 90.6% often linked problems

with daily life situations. This clearly showed that Islamic Education lecturers in the polytechnics tried to impart good values to students in an effort to produce students with good morals. Islamic Education teachers need to internalize their role as *murabbi* in order to form students who are spiritually, intellectually, physically and emotionally balanced (Nornajihan & Zetty, 2015). The act of inculcating good values in students when delivering lessons in the teaching and learning process is one of the elements of the quality of Islamic Education teachers as *murabbi*.

In addition, the actions of Islamic Education lecturers that linked problems to daily life can help students improve their thinking ability because indirectly students can realize the relationship between problems and their daily lives. This is also in line with the concept of *tafakkur* as explained by the researcher in the literature in the previous section. The teaching of Islamic Education should emphasize efforts to enhance the intellectual capacity to understand, observe, study and solve problems (Umar, 2000). Looking at item B15 which is "Explaining concepts from concrete to abstract", on the other hands, recorded the lowest mean of 3.62 and standard deviation of 0.887, which showed that more than half of the Islamic Education lecturers, which was equal to 55.4% practiced simplifying the elaboration of difficult concept. The findings of the study as a whole showed that the level of creative teaching practices of Islamic Education lecturers in polytechnics was at a high level. This clearly showed that Islamic Education lecturers practice creative teaching in the teaching and learning process in polytechnics.

In addition, it was found that they also focused on the element of creativity in delivering lessons because there is a variety of application of these elements in terms of techniques, methods and strategies for their teaching. This is in line with a study by Mohd Nawi (2011), who found that Islamic Education teachers have the ability to produce style reforms and diversify creativity practices in the process of teaching Islamic Education in schools. However, lecturers must continue to strive to improve creative teaching and do not give up to make the teaching and learning process a success. The effective teaching and learning of Islamic Education also depends on the teaching style of Islamic Education teachers (Kamarul Azmi et.al, 2012). Conforming this, Ahmad Firdaus et.al (2014) stated that Islamic Education lecturers should pay attention to their teaching and learning so that appropriate skills can be applied in order to produce a high understanding by students, thus make them appreciate and practice the knowledge they acquire.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, the findings of the study show that the level of creative teaching practice among Islamic Education lecturers in polytechnics in the central and southern zones is at a high level. It can be concluded that the creative teaching provides a form of positive change in the teaching pattern of lecturers. Islamic Education lecturers are not at all bound by traditional teaching patterns. Lecturers can be more creative in order to achieve teaching and learning outcomes and at the same time develop students' creativity. A lecturer not only plays a role in delivering the content of the lesson, but also has a greater role and responsibility to achieve the student outcome as a perfect human being with noble morals. Thus, with the advent of teaching

innovation today, each individual student gets a choice in the pattern of knowledge acquisition. This seemed to remind us that when creative teaching were used effectively by lecturers in teaching and learning, they will have the opportunity to attract students, increase creativity and apply good values in the teaching and learning process.

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