

The Role of the Islamic Education Section in Enhancing Student Academic Performance in Yogyakarta

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Article Info	Abstract		
Article history: Received: 12/25/2023 Revised: 02/10/2024 Accepted: 06/22/2024 Keywords: Academic Performance, Holistic Development, Islamic Education Section, the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Yogyakarta City	Purpose – This study investigates the role of the Islamic Education Section of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Yogyakarta in improving student academic performance.		
	Design/methods – Employing a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation from key informants, main informants, and supporting informants involved with the Islamic Education Section.		
	Findings – The findings reveal that the Section significantly contributes to academic achievements through comprehensive services, guidance, and activities such as Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ) and the Islamic Education Skills and Arts Week (Pentas PAI). These programs enhance students' interest, talents, and understanding of Islamic principles, fostering balanced development.		
	Research implications/limitations – The study's scope is limited to Yogyakarta, and the primary reliance on qualitative data may limit the generalizability of the findings. Further research could include a broader range of regions and employ mixed-method approaches to validate and expand upon these results.		
	Practical implications – Educational policymakers should consider integrating religious education with mainstream academic curricula to foster holistic student development. The success of the MTQ and Pentas PAI programs underscores the potential of such integrated educational approaches in promoting academic and moral growth.		
	Originality/value – This study highlights the crucial role of religious education in nurturing well-rounded individuals and offers a model that can be adapted and implemented in various educational systems to enhance student outcomes holistically.		
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Introduction

Education is a crucial element in advancing a nation's development and prosperity, as emphasized by numerous educational policies and regulations worldwide. The Indonesian government, in particular, recognizes the pivotal role of education in nation-building, as articulated in the Constitution of Indonesia, which asserts the right of every citizen to education. A key institution in this endeavor is the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which is tasked with implementing religious education across various levels of the educational system (Millah & Maghfuri, 2019). This commitment underscores the government's dedication to improving educational quality and accessibility for all its citizens, thereby laying a strong foundation for the nation's overall development.

Previous research has extensively explored the various dimensions and impacts of educational policies and programs. For instance, collaborative efforts among families, communities, and educational institutions have been highlighted as essential for enhancing social justice and educational outcomes (Nyatuka, 2022). Furthermore, studies have shown that academic self-handicapping negatively correlates with self-regulated learning strategies and mastery goal orientation among adolescents, thereby influencing their academic performance (Azeem & Zubair, 2021). Additionally, the role of parental involvement in educational programs, such as online martial arts courses, has been identified as crucial for students' educational and career achievements (Santos, 2022).

In the context of Islamic religious education in Indonesia, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, particularly through its Islamic Education Section, plays a strategic role in developing and enhancing the quality of religious education. This section is responsible for implementing comprehensive programs aimed at improving the teaching and learning processes in Islamic education (Faizah et al., 2020). However, challenges such as low student interest in learning remain a significant concern, reflecting a potential misalignment between teaching methods and students' individual needs (Bastomi, 2020). Addressing these challenges requires a deep understanding of the underlying factors and a commitment to creating a stimulating and supportive learning environment.

Further studies have explored various pedagogical approaches to address learning difficulties and enhance student achievement. The genre-based approach (GBA), for example, has been found effective in overcoming students' writing difficulties and improving their writing achievements (Purba et al., 2020). Additionally, the integration of collaborative learning and transactional distance theory has proven beneficial in enhancing academic performance, autonomy, and satisfaction among students in online learning platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic (Abuhassna et al., 2023). These findings suggest the potential for applying innovative and student-centered teaching methods to improve learning outcomes.

Despite these advancements, there remain significant gaps and challenges in the implementation of educational programs, particularly in ensuring equitable access and addressing diverse learning needs. For instance, the effectiveness of private supplementary tutoring in China has been questioned, with studies showing inconclusive results regarding its impact on students' academic achievements (Zhang et al., 2021). Similarly, in the context of Indonesia, game-based learning has not shown a mediating effect in enhancing students' achievements during distance learning (Wardoyo et al., 2021). These discrepancies highlight the need for more comprehensive and context-specific strategies in educational program implementation.

This study aims to address the limitations and gaps identified in previous research by focusing on the role of the Islamic Education Section in the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Sleman Regency, in enhancing educational services. By evaluating the effectiveness of its programs and identifying areas for improvement, this study seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on educational quality and accessibility in Indonesia. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders in designing and implementing more effective educational strategies that cater to the diverse needs of students, thereby fostering a more inclusive and equitable educational environment.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative research methodology with a case study approach, as defined by Moleong (2001). The qualitative research aims to understand phenomena experienced by the research subjects, such as behaviors, perceptions, motivations, and actions, comprehensively and descriptively. The focus of this research is the Islamic Education Section of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Yogyakarta City, investigating its role in enhancing student academic performance. Purposive sampling was used to select subjects who could provide the most relevant data (Sugiyono, 2013). The sampling included three types of informants: key informants (Head of the Islamic Education Section), main informants (staff members responsible for the technical and procedural aspects of the section), and supporting informants (managers executing the section's activities). Data collection methods comprised observation, interviews, and documentation.

Data were collected through direct observations, structured and in-depth interviews, and documentation review. Observations allowed the researchers to gather real-time data on the interactions and activities within the Islamic Education Section. Interviews provided detailed insights from the informants, while documentation review offered additional context and background information. To ensure data accuracy and reliability, triangulation of sources and methods was employed. This included comparing information from different informants and using different data collection methods such as observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis followed the qualitative descriptive analysis technique, involving data collection, data presentation, data reduction, and conclusion drawing as described by Miles and Huberman (Sugiyono, 2013). Pre-testing of structured interview guides and observation checklists ensured clarity and effectiveness in capturing necessary data. This methodological framework ensures a robust and comprehensive understanding of the Islamic Education Section's impact on student academic performance in Yogyakarta City, providing valuable insights for educational policymakers and practitioners.

Results

1. The Role of the Islamic Education Section at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Yogyakarta City

Based on interviews and case studies conducted by researchers, it was found that one of the roles of the Islamic Education Section of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Yogyakarta City in improving students' academic performance is through providing services, guidance, and coaching in Islamic education at the elementary (SD), junior high (SMP), senior high

(SMA), and vocational high school (SMK) levels. The forms of services and coaching provided include the following:

a. Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ) for Students in Yogyakarta City

Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ) is a competition that tests participants' abilities in reading, understanding, and interpreting the Qur'an across various specified branches (Hasan, 2019). These branches include Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ), Musabaqah Hifdzil Qur'an (MHQ), Musabaqah Fahmil Qur'an (MFQ), Musabaqah Syarhil Qur'an (MSQ), Musabaqah Tartil Qur'an (MTQ), among others. This MTQ competition serves as a vital platform for enhancing participants' interest, talents, and potential, especially in reading the Qur'an with proper tajweed and tartil (Arfa & Lasaiba, 2023). Additionally, the competition encourages participants to delve deeper into the messages and meanings contained within the Qur'an. The MTQ for students in Yogyakarta City is organized in collaboration with the Youth and Sports Education Office (Dikpora) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) of Yogyakarta City.

The preparation by the Islamic Education Section (PAIS) of Kemenag Yogyakarta for the MTQ competition begins with the creation and dissemination of technical guidelines for the competition to all elementary and junior high schools, both public and private, in Yogyakarta City. Following this, the registration phase opens for all elementary and junior high schools in the region to send individual or team representatives for each competition branch. The registration process is conducted online within a specified timeframe.

Furthermore, the PAIS section of Kemenag Yogyakarta prepares the necessary personnel, judges, and competition materials for the MTQ. Financial planning and activity planning are managed by the Youth and Sports Education Office (Dikpora). Winners of the MTQ competition are selected based on the highest scores achieved.

In the 2023 MTQ Student Competition in Yogyakarta City, 722 students from public and private elementary and junior high schools participated. The 2023 competition, themed "With Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an, We Create Skilled, Intelligent, and Morally Upright Islamic Generations," was held at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Yogyakarta on Saturday, September 23, 2023. Among the 722 participants, 320 were elementary school students and 402 were junior high school students. The MTQ competition for elementary school students featured 14 branches, both individual and team events, including MTQ, Sari Tilawah, MTtQ, MHQ, adzan, speech, Islamic Religious Quiz (CCA), and Islamic Art Painting (SLI). For junior high school students, the competition included 14 branches, both individual and team events, such as MTQ, MSQ, MTtQ, MHQ, adzan, speech, sermon, CCA, and Islamic Calligraphy Art (SKG).

Competition Category	Number of Participants	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place
MTQ Male	20	Adib Zainal Muttaqin	Muhammad Fauzan Algifari	Muhammad Fahri Abdurrahman
MTQ Female	20	Khoirunnisa Alqorni	Raissa Aulia Ayundita	Arina Qurroh Ayuniyya
Sari Tilawah Male	20	Khalfani Sakhiy Abdurrahman	Ahmad Syihabuddin	Muhammad Fathin Netaro
Sari Tilawah Female	20	Dhiyana Malaeka Q	Khansa Ganes Kinantan	Thalita Aurelia Zahra
MTtQ Male	20	Putra Setia Bakti Nusantara	M. Mirza Raid Kurniawan	Aiko Caesar Firmansyah
MTtQ Female	20	Thalita Adila Mumtamzah	Revina Citra Arifa	Ashagynta Quinza A
MHQ Male	20	Alvaro Rafif Pratama	Daffa Muhammad Sulthan	M. Nazhif R
MHQ Female	20	Sahfa Nur Laila	Atiya Nida Hasanah	Nabila Rafa Putri Ferdian

Table 1. MTQ Competition for Elementary Schools in Yogyakarta City, 2023

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Adzan	20	Farhan Daffif H	M. Nabil L Kamal	Khenzie Hamizan N
Auzan	20			Riferizie Harrizan N
Pidato Male	20	M. Rayyan Akhdan	Herjuna Kuncora A	Haznan Ibad J
	20	W	Pt	hazhan ibaa o
Pidato Female	20	Shafa Annaura	Raifah Tsabirah	Anindhita
	20	Hidayasari	Syadza	Permatasari
CCA	60	SD Muhammadiyah Suronatan	SD Muhammadiyah Pakel	SD Muhammadiyah Sapen 1
SLI Male	20	Khalif Arziqi	Farzan Ahza Pratama	Nahl Hizbul Achyuta
SLI Female	20	Mif Aulia Audita Dp	Atika Nada Safa Tino	Danesha Saffana Bf
Total	320 participants			

Table 2. MTQ Competition for Junior High Schools in Yogyakarta City, 2023

Competition Category	Number of Participants	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place
MTQ Male	11	Muhammad Azka Faeyza Raulillah	Nur Amri Yahya	Teuku Bilal Fikrul Kiram
MTQ Female	15	Chamila Syaqib Nurkirana	Nasywa Alivia Azzura	Syahira Afihan Qysya
MHQ Male	25	Muhammad Nadav Abia	Muhammad Ridho Al Dzulfikar	Raffa Ahmad Muzakki Arifin
MHQ Female	27	Villia Cantika Shinta Fadela	Dahayu Hayya Masyaila	Ananda Awfa Zafira Aqilah
MTtQ Male	25	Faiq Syauqy Mubarok	Muhammad Ramadhan Prasetyo	Dika Prasetia
MTtQ Female	29	Nisrina Shafa Nabilah	Riana Rahmalita Putri	Zalfa Maritza Putri
Adzan	32	Amirul Azzam	Omar Mochtar	Dzulfadli Rasyiid As Shidiq
Pidato Male	22	Tomzy Arzuleo	Muhammad Gian Alana Akmal	Raihan Ramadhan Saputra
Pidato Female	28	Unaisah	Silvia Imra'ati Zakiya	Allyyah Nurfatihah
CCA	93	Azid Ashfa Amali, Safaraz Rauf Henawan dan Muhammad Afif Bachtiar	Zia Latisha Adiyadhika, Hajar Rahmaniy Syariifah dan Lanika Sharliz Raima Wisaksono	Raizza Affan Wibowo, Aydin Akhsan dan Wan Ashaqifa
SKG Male	16	Nizam Dwi Putra	Muhammad Rifat Ashwat	Athalla Fathan Mumtaz
SKQ Female	17	Nasywa Fitri Alia	Nabila Talita Ramadhani	Festesha Agrifena Ferlita
Khutbah	20	Taqiyuddin Muhammad Akmal	Galen Labib Alisandro	Ahnaf Muhammad Meurah
MSQ	42	Ayla Syahruni, Aisya Farras Parahita dan Naswa Hanifah Abror	Nadya Athaya Salman, Nada Fauzul Mumtaza dan Hanifa Dania Evelyna Faustine	Jacinda Aqeela Ziv, Aitztsilla Kirana Islam dan Annisa Afifah Achsan
Total		402	2 participants	

According to Laksmiwati, as cited by Ghozali (2022), the MTQ competition serves two missions: first, to disseminate Islamic teachings through sincere intentions of reading, writing, understanding, and venerating the Qur'an; and second, to bring together participants from various regions, fostering positive impacts for the nation and society.

b. Islamic Education Skills and Arts Week (Pentas PAI) in Yogyakarta City

The Islamic Education Skills and Arts Week (Pentas PAI) is a service program organized by the Islamic Education Section of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, aimed at enhancing students' interest, talents, and potential. The primary objectives of Pentas PAI are to increase students' understanding and enthusiasm for Islamic studies, strengthen Islamic brotherhood among students, hone students' skills and talents, and deepen their devotion to God Almighty (Misbah, 2021). While similar to the Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ) in implementation, Pentas PAI differs in regulation. As noted by Mr. Ali Shofa, Head of the Islamic Education Section, "The essence of both is the same, which is competition, but Pentas PAI is under the nomenclature of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, whereas MTQ is under the nomenclature of the Education, Youth, and Sports Office." Ms. Aini Maslihatin, a staff member of the Islamic Education Section, also emphasized that "The regulations of MTQ are from the Education Office, whereas PAI regulations come from the Directorate General of Islamic Education, Ministry of Religious Affairs."

The 2023 Pentas PAI in Yogyakarta City was held at SMK Negeri 4 Yogyakarta on Saturday, September 30, 2023. This event was attended by a total of 158 participants from 95 high schools in Yogyakarta. The competition included six categories, both individual and team events, consisting of MTQ, Speech, Islamic Debate, and Nasheed. The following table illustrates the competition categories and participants:

Competition Category	Number of Participants	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place
MTQ Male	15	Kalam Bagoes	Annas Bijaksana	Azka Haby Al- Aqila
MTQ Female	16	Najwa Dhia Karim	Hasna 'Ariqoh Hanum	Renaissa Fikria
Pidato Male	16	M. Paco Tyrone Khajizi	Andhika Berlan Pratama	Chaisa Rafi Andhika
Pidato Female	21	Brilyana Respati	Fibria Rahma Quirunissa	Sitiamina Tussa'diah
Debat PAI	54	Aisya Najma Nadira, Khalid Wirawan, dan Ahmad Ali Rabbani	Fuad Yadzkur Ghifari, Razwa Awanda, dan Narenda Sabtya Negara	Arvisca Dioja Bela Andriani, Najmi Raiyani, dan Ammara Erlita Shahrin
Nasyid	36	Muhammad Zaidaan Ar Rasyiid, Abdurrozaq Caesar, Aric Harya Tutuko, dan Abie Fazlurahman Al- Qhifary	Keisha Althafunnisa, Aisyah Syafira, Dania Ghulbono, dan Keisha Kayana Aqilabudi	Septianingsih Anggun Varella, Dhandang Gendhis Tirto Segoro, Aliya Fauzatuna Zahra, dan Azahra Mentari Putri
Total Participants	158 participants			

Table 3. Pentas PAI Competition Categories for High Schools in Yogyakarta City, 2023

c. Spiritual and Kafilah Guidance Programs

The Ministry of Religious Affairs in Yogyakarta also conducts guidance programs, as conveyed by Mr. Fariq Nur Rokhim, Head of the Islamic Education Section. These programs include spiritual guidance (Rohani Islam) and kafilah guidance programs. The spiritual guidance program aims to identify and shape the identity of Muslim youth, and is expected to achieve maximum learning outcomes across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.

The kafilah guidance program is conducted after the Pentas PAI competition at the high school level in Yogyakarta City. Intensive training is provided to participants who win first place at the city level, preparing them to achieve optimal results at the provincial level. Ms. Nuzuliyati Shoimah, a manager of the Islamic Education Section, stated, "The trainers prepared are highly skilled and can focus more on their respective fields." Mr. Fariq Nur Rokhim added, "The timing of the kafilah guidance is determined by the trainers, as they understand the participants' conditions and know how many training sessions are needed." This pre-provincial competition guidance is crucial to ensure that the kafilah are well-prepared and perform at their best in the provincial competition.

The integration of Islamic education in children's upbringing is a conscious and planned effort to help them know, believe, internalize, and practice Islamic teachings. This education helps children become better individuals, devout in their faith, morally strong, and capable of building a harmonious life in society (Mulyawan Arif & Santosa Sedya, 2023). The various services, guidance, and coaching provided by the Islamic Education Section of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Yogyakarta aim to optimize children's talents and skills through intellectual, moral, and spiritual processes (Somad, 2021). The teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah serve as the foundation of Islamic values imparted to achieve happiness in this world and the hereafter.

Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to examine the role of the Islamic Education Section of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Yogyakarta in enhancing student academic performance. Previous research highlights the importance of educational strategies in developing a student's intellectual, moral, and spiritual capacities (Millah & Maghfuri, 2019). The decline in student motivation is often attributed to a mismatch between teaching methods and individual student needs, underscoring the necessity of tailored educational approaches (Bastomi, 2020). This study focuses on specific initiatives such as the Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ) and the Islamic Education Skills and Arts Week (Pentas PAI) to evaluate their impact on student learning outcomes.

The findings reveal that the Islamic Education Section plays a significant role in organizing and executing activities that boost student engagement and academic performance. The MTQ competition, involving over 700 students, demonstrated the effectiveness of structured religious activities in fostering students' interest and proficiency in Quranic studies (Hasan, 2019). Similarly, the Pentas PAI program, which included diverse competitions, was instrumental in enhancing students' Islamic knowledge and skills. These activities not only provide a platform for students to showcase their talents but also reinforce their understanding and practice of Islamic principles (Arfa & Lasaiba, 2023).

Comparing these results with previous studies, it is evident that structured religious and extracurricular activities positively influence student engagement and academic performance. Nyatuka (2022) emphasized the importance of collaboration between family, community, and educational institutions in promoting social equity. This study's findings align with Azeem & Zubair (2021), who reported that self-regulated learning strategies are crucial for academic success. Moreover, Santos (2022) highlighted the role of parental involvement in educational and career achievements, which resonates with the collaborative efforts seen in the MTQ and Pentas PAI programs.

The significance of these findings lies in the comprehensive approach adopted by the Islamic Education Section, integrating religious education with character building and academic excellence. These programs address both cognitive and affective domains, contributing to holistic student development. However, it is essential to interpret these results cautiously, considering the specific cultural and contextual factors unique to Yogyakarta. Further research could explore similar interventions in different regions to validate these findings.

Implications of this study suggest that educational policymakers should consider integrating religious and moral education with mainstream academic curricula to foster balanced student development. The success of the MTQ and Pentas PAI programs demonstrates the potential of religious education in enhancing not only academic performance but also moral and ethical standards among students. This integrated approach could serve as a model for other regions aiming to improve educational outcomes through holistic development strategies.

In conclusion, the Islamic Education Section of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Yogyakarta plays a pivotal role in enhancing student academic performance through wellstructured religious and extracurricular activities. The findings underscore the importance of such programs in fostering student engagement, motivation, and holistic development. Future research should aim to expand on these findings by exploring similar educational interventions across different cultural and regional contexts to establish broader applicability and impact.

Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the role of the Islamic Education Section of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Yogyakarta in enhancing student academic performance. The findings indicate that the Islamic Education Section significantly contributes to improving students' academic achievements through comprehensive services, guidance, and coaching in Islamic education at various school levels. Notably, activities such as the Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ) and the Islamic Education Skills and Arts Week (Pentas PAI) have been instrumental in increasing students' interest, talents, and understanding of Islamic principles. These programs, which involve a wide range of competitive events, have effectively engaged students and fostered a deeper appreciation of the Qur'an and Islamic teachings.

The implications of these findings suggest that integrating religious education with mainstream academic curricula can significantly enhance student development, both academically and morally. The success of the MTQ and Pentas PAI programs underscores the potential of such integrated educational approaches in promoting holistic student growth. Educational policymakers should consider adopting similar strategies to achieve balanced educational outcomes, thereby fostering a generation that is not only academically proficient but also ethically and morally grounded. This integrated approach could serve as a model for other regions aiming to improve educational outcomes through holistic development strategies.

However, the study has certain limitations. The research focused solely on the Islamic Education Section in Yogyakarta, which may not fully represent the diverse educational contexts across Indonesia. Additionally, the study primarily relied on qualitative data, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Further research could include a broader range of regions and employ mixed-method approaches to validate and expand upon these results. Investigating the long-term effects of these programs on students' overall development and their potential scalability to other educational settings would provide valuable insights. This study highlights the crucial role of religious education in nurturing well-rounded individuals and offers a model that can be adapted and implemented in various educational systems to enhance student outcomes holistically.

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