

# 21st Century Islamic Education Teachers' Strategy to Nurture Higher Order Thinking Skill (HOTS) Students

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## Article Info

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## Abstract

*Teachers are agents of change. Their role is so huge at school and in the society. Changes an attitudes of students, skill, personalities and life goal. It is a responsibility which needs a high attitude and commitment. However, Islamic education teachers (IET)s role is always questioned whenever any negative cases happened in this country. The contribution seems to have minimal impact towards the students. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education (MoE) had introduced High Order Thinking Skill (HOTS) to develop students that have the ability to apply the knowledge of skills and be able to create new things. Thus, this article's method is library research method to discuss the preaching strategy among IET in developing students with HOTS in accordance to the vision of MoE. The result shows that IET is more inclined to implement effective strategy technique in nurturing HOTS students which is either using praises, remembrance and motivation method, question and answer, discussion technique, also refering to the student's capability, role model approach, writing and innovation creating.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The 21st-century challenge is closely related to science and technology. Technological developments are now helping in strengthening education and learning (1); (2). But for this reason also, many have shifted the view and focus on the learning of science like computer science, biology, physics and so on. This change of tide has resulted in many Muslims starting to consider Islamic Education not an important thing to learn by children. Even young people are also less interested in learning and knowledge about Islam. This has resulted in various problems arising from social problems and the problem of practicing a Muslim about Islam itself as well as the teaching methods of Islamic education viewed

conventional (3); (4). Among those who play a role in transforming this are teachers especially.

Quality of education begins with the quality of a teacher. The enhancement of the quality of teacher education is a continuous effort to produce creative, skillful and noble teachers. The teacher education curriculum is dynamic and constantly modified so that teachers are equipped with new knowledge in teaching strategies and positive attitudes in line with progressive nation formation. 21st-century challenge curriculum modifications require teachers educators to alter their minds to produce technologically advanced amateur teachers and are confident of changing and facing current school environment challenges and dynamic teaching strategies. Teachers who directly educate morals and

moral teaching are the teachers of Islamic Education themselves. It is indicated significant the role of teacher influences their professional identity in the field of education and potential impact on teachers trend to become more successful and profesion (5).

Islamic education teachers who are expected to be mentors of the younger generation should have a super strategy that aspires to students. The strategies used should be appropriate to the students and achieve the syllabus of the educational goals to be taught in line with the National Education philosophy of producing a balanced student from Physical, Emotional, Spiritual and Intellectual (PESI). Indeed, the efforts to build a student in the 21st century need strategy and quality of service in the dynamic teaching profession as current development is pushing for quality improvement in all areas of service including education. Nowadays it is very important to teachers to develop critical thinking. Successful critical thinkers can be successful and contributing citizen in global age (6). Therefore, it is the hope of the country that Islamic education teachers can play a role in educating the nation as a useful and worthy citizen.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Teachers are often associated with the issue of educating students in the 21st century. However, are any of these Islamic education teachers clear about the challenge of the 21st century and have extensive knowledge in terms of strategies that encourage the development of HOTS among its students? This profession requires a high degree of mastering of skillful strategies for a teacher who is truly credible. The question is, what are the strategies that Islamic education teachers can use to facilitate them to build a HOTS student in the challenges of the 21st century?.

Teacher pedagogy skills need to be further enhanced. One of the ways is through a collaborative approach between Islamic education teachers and science stream teachers towards a subject to be taught in class. Islamic education teaching pedagogy is also seen as isolated and separate from other subjects. The subjects of Islamic education are viewed from a very narrow perspective and they have no interest in integrating them into other subjects. This is part of the pieces left by secular thinking which assumes that religion as a personal affair compared to the view of Islam as religion (7).

Some previous studies focusing on thinking skills such as higher order thinking skills (HOTS), critical and creative thinking and problem-solving among students in several states in Malaysia are still at moderate and low levels (8). Mission to produce students who are able to

use reason to think still cannot be implemented entirely (7). Therefore, an identified approach can provide a solution to the problem that arises is to implement learning through the "lesson study" approach between the Quranic teacher and the science stream teacher. This "lesson study" approach helps teachers master the two areas of knowledge (al-Quran and science) that can stimulate student's interest in thinking and applying the knowledge in everyday life. Besides giving a meaningful knowledge to the students and knowing the true purpose of students memorizing the Quran. Hopefully, this approach will enhance the appreciation, understanding of Islamic religion and morality in an integrated and comprehensive manner among the younger generation, especially the students of tahfiz. (7).

Studies on the subjects of Islamic Education and Islamic Education teachers at the national secondary school in Peninsular Malaysia (9) found that among the problems faced by them were the teaching methods of non-creative teachers, less teaching and more using the chalk approach and talk as well as textbooks centered and very few using the latest teaching approaches. This is because they are quite difficult to attract students to the lessons of the Quran, the Akidah, the Islamic Civilization, and the Sirah. Additionally, they also need things that can advance themselves like getting the latest teaching innovation information. This study also shows that Islamic education teachers are still static with old methods and less exposure with new teaching strategies (9). Even a study by (10) on 35 teachers found that the level of strategy towards implementing HOTS is still moderate.

Furthermore, a quantitative and qualitative study of 42 trained teachers by (11), found that the practice of PAK21 in PdPc teachers in schools needed improvement because some teachers were still unsure whether to know or understand PAK21. Also, there are teachers who are still unable to master the technology of today. The study also found that there are major problems faced by teachers in the implementation of PAK21, namely that the PAK21 stabilization strategy should be followed up to the HOTS. Therefore, the strategy skills of Islamic Education teachers need to be more skilled in dealing with students in the 21st Century.

Education strategies need to dynamically change as some of the latest developments in which the 21st-century challenges arise with various challenges for students who are more active in using media gadgets and moral depravity. So, in 2013, the Ministry of Education Malaysia (KPM) has introduced a skill called higher order thinking skills (HOTS) to help students practices learning skills that are able to solve their daily problems

and relate it to life. This is because this skill is vital and are needed in order to aid students in becoming more adaptable, flexible and better to lives in this rapidly globalization era (12).

HOTs was developed based on the need to optimize the student's cognitive development, the need to improve the knowledge of teaching strategy and the need to cultivate positive values and professional practices among Islamic education teachers. These requirements show by teaching strategies that define how a teacher should design effective teaching strategies, create a great classroom atmosphere, create a sense of excitement to gain knowledge and foster the characteristics of highly respected professional teachers and students. Among the objectives of HOTs is to create students capable of critically thinking in each lesson and able to meet the challenges of the 21st century with a noble teaching guide by Islamic education teachers.

### III. METHODS AND STRATEGY ISLAMIC EDUCATION TEACHERS IN APPLIED HOTs

#### 3.1 Compliment Approaches

Based on the results of this study by (13), it can be concluded that the approach of praise and calling the name of the praised student is used to encourage students to successfully change the negative attitude to the more positive and encourage students to challenge themselves (14). This proves that rewards such as praise are one of the techniques that can give the impression of cognitive stimulants and motivate the students if they are implemented according to the problems to be resolved. This is in line with the opinion of (15) stating that the use of an effective method of praise is to improve the positive behavior of the student. Therefore, if a teacher knows what a student is interested in, it is easy to give an idea as a positive reinforcement to improve his or her weakness and to give the student a prize for rewarding them such as gifts and praise as a positive conductor. Praising pupils is one of the characteristics of love (16).

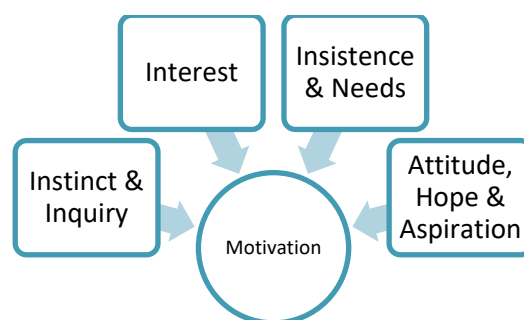
Therefore, it is not a fault for a teacher to use that way as a solution to a negative attitude. According to Abikoff and Hecttman (13) it has been stated that to change the behavior must be in accordance with the principles of the Operational Modeling Operator. In principle, these behaviors show short-term results to improve social and academic behaviors. Allah S.W.T has said in Surah Ali Imran: 145, 148, and An-Nisa: 134 means in Islamic education, the good rewarding of the good behavior of a child is a good thing.

Otherwise, from the perspective of Islam, the Qur'an and al-Sunnah are the basis of Islamic education.

Many of the approaches used in the Qur'an explain the concept of praise, earnestness, hope, and consolidation of various aspects of human life. The targhib and tarhib methodology are used as the formation of human nature and desires based on what has been outlined in Islam. Allah S.W.T. has described many events in the Qur'an by means of rewards and punishments, persuasions and reminders, as well as encouragement and threats (14); (17). This is because this method of praise has encouraged students to challenge themselves further and make them think to maintain good performance, this indicates that HOTs will build upon students to think of various ways to maintain goodness consistently.

#### 3.2 Tazkirah and Encouragement

Incentives can be cultivated in various ways. In definition, 'encouragement' means console, stimulating us to move forward or stimulating in morale and spirit (18). Incentives can also be defined as the spirit of encouragement given to advance and others, moral support. In other words, encouragement can also be stimulated by motivation (19). There are four things that affect one's self-motivation.



**Figure 1.1** Things that affect the motivation of a person.  
Source: Mok Soon Sang, 2011

All four of these are interests, desires, and needs, instincts and inquiries and attitudes, hopes and aspirations are among the key factors in encouraging individuals or groups to do something. Encouraging someone to something he loves is a very effective technique. Activities that are done because of interest will bring satisfaction to an individual, and they will be tempted to perform repeated activities (19).

In this matter, in order to encourage children to learn Islamic Education, it is important that we nurture his interest in the subject. This task is challenging for teachers to increase children's interest in Islamic Education. For example, repeating the story of the prophet, *waliullah* and scholars every day can help to emphasize children to something. This is practiced by Luqman as mentioned in surah al-Luqman. An example

of a return to God is confirmed twice in Surah Luqman verses 14 and 15, the words of Allah:

*"So give thanks to Me and to your parents, and to Me is the return."*

(al-Quran)

Then repeating in verse 15:

*"... And yet treat them well in this world, and follow the way of him who turns to Me in devotion. Eventually it is to Me that all of you shall return, and I shall then tell you all that you did."*

(al-Quran)

Repeating this advice is very important to make sure they know that the matter is very important. Rasulullah also used this repetition in his conversations. The Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) sometimes repeats (according to necessity) his words three times so that the companions can follow him in the sense. For example, as in the hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah radhiyallaahu 'anhu, he said,

*"Someone came to Rasulullah shalallahu 'alaihi wasallam and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, to whom should I worship first?' The Prophet replied, 'Your mother!' And the man again asked, 'Then who else?' The Prophet replied, 'Your mother!' 'Then who else?' He replied, 'Your mother.' The man asked again, 'Then who else,' the Prophet said, 'Then your father.'"*

(HR. Bukhari no. 5971 and Muslim no. 2548)

This hadith shows that when the Prophet wanted to explain something important and complicated, he would repeat it three times. The three repetitions are a reflection of the advice, tazkirah that needs repeatedly in the sense of clarity and understanding. It will often make the listener think more and from here will build a student who is HOTS and begin to ask what is being said.

### 3.3 Questioning Method

One of the methods in generating this HOTS idea is through questioning techniques that require deep understanding among teachers and students (20). The diversity in questioning techniques is a necessity in producing effective teaching and facilitating (PdPc) processes (21). For that, the application of effective questioning techniques is capable of encouraging and stimulating students' thinking. Teachers with questioning skills not only can motivate and stimulate student thinking but also enhance their self-esteem and students from being passive or silent to more active learning (22). Mastery of the questionnaire process is one of the

approaches that are recently debated as a teaching technique based on higher order thinking skills (HOTS). The implementation of this questioning method in PdPc is capable of stimulating the student's thinking through various approaches such as direct questioning, group inquiry, process inquiry and assessment (21); (23); (24).

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Hence, the strategy to use questionnaire techniques in the 21st-century learning is very important in building a HOTS student. From the question to the question, it will build self-esteem and find answers, not limited to just one answer. In this strategy also allows students to dialogue, debate and argue offered them to develop of skills like critical thinking. In fact, the student enjoyed to be involved in this strategy learning method to enhance their skill in adaptable in the new strategy learning (25).

### 3.4 Role Model Approaches

The teachings of Islam performed are not enough just by the conversation alone, but it requires a practical example of a teacher, such as the Prophet s.a.w. alone. Rasulullah s.a.w. teaching a lot of Quranic verses to the Companions, they try to understand and take the verdict from it. The difference in reading according to the individual level provides the opportunity for those who read the Qur'an and the contents of the Qur'an so that they can become tazkirah and tazkiyyah for the soul and soul (10). This is very important because the companions need an example in front of them to strengthen their heart to practice it (26).

The result of the findings is that instructors choose the *qudwah hasanah* approach or a good example for students (27). This is because students will evaluate the theoretical religious theory taught by their teacher's actions. Hence, the qudwah technique or role model of a teacher is very important, because today's students will be HOTS by judging each word of the teacher with the practice that his own teacher does, either along or otherwise.

### 3.5 Writing

The writing of something can stay long and spread. Zayd bin Thabit's writings are recognized as the first book on the issue of faraidh until Jaafar bin Burqan mentions (as stated by al-Zuhri): "If Zayd bin Thabit does not write about faraid knowledge then the knowledge has long gone" (28). Especially, in the 21st century, writing can be translated into various ways, not only on books but also in all aspects of communication media.

The ability of today's communication technology to bring a phenomenon when it is possible to use social media applications in various aspects of life including



da'wah activities. Hence, the use of social media such as facebook, WhatsApp, instagram, and twitter, is seen as a widespread opportunity for the spread of da'wah messages because of its fast and more global nature. Social media app statistics show that there are over 2 billion Facebook users and over 328 million Twitter users worldwide. In our country, more than 22 million people in the country have facebook accounts, the majority between 16 and 35 (29).

The existence of information technology makes da'wah be delivered in various forms, more widely, and faster in delivering advice or knowledge to the whole world (30). Social media apps such as facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter, are seen as potentially providing a widespread opportunity for the spread of da'wah messages because of its fast-paced, targeted, widespread use and globalization (31).

Current da'wah activities consider the use of media owned and used by the public to ensure the acceptance of da'wah messages and subsequently to the development of correct Islamic teachings. The new media as tools of sharing information nowadays seems so different from the religious learning medium as it did before (31). Hence, Islamic education teachers need to explore existing media tools and utilize them. Teenagers, clearly pointing out that they spend much time on gadgets, teachers need to take this opportunity and this strategy is seen to be more effective in approaching students in the 21st century today.

#### **IV. HOTS NEEDS DISCUSSION AND CREATING INNOVATION**

Thus, all of the strategies used above, to associate with the skills that can build the students' HOTS, require critical and creative discussions to produce students with innovation and good manners

##### **4.1 Creativity in HOTS**

In the 21st century, many said teachers teach to produce a unique product, a product other than an existing product or called creative. Creativity is well suited to the characteristics of the 21st-century class, as well as student-centered learning to build wider thinking. However, students still need guidance from a teacher. Teachers should evaluate whether the product produced by the student is a new or existing product, while also examining the uniqueness and authenticity of the product itself. Practical comments should be given so that students can make improvements to their product.

Additionally, teachers need to ask students to explain about the product they produce. From the

creativity of the student, the teacher can evaluate whether the student is capable of giving strong arguments or not in defending the specialty of his product. Here teachers can apply the next element of critical thinking by asking other students to give their views and ideas for the purpose of improving the product. Therefore, every student can generate a variety of ideas from their own friends. Teachers only need to guide their students to think about something from different angles. As a result, the results of the teaching and facilitating a session (PdPc) conducted by teachers will produce bold, risk-taking students to express ideas without worrying about acceptable criticisms, as well as being able to take a further or advanced view of something.

Critical thinking, however, can be effective in several ways, such as the widespread use of resources. Widespread resources refer to information obtained by students. Therefore, the teacher needs to monitor whether the information the student is looking for is relevant to the topic of learning or not. Teachers also need to make sure their students relevant information and evaluating whether the information obtained is enough or not to carry out the assignment given.

Then, effective critical thinking can be observed if the teacher does not limit the ideas and opinions of his students. In the 21st century class, teachers should encourage students to give an idea of a topic being discussed. An invisible view of the topic of discussion should be accepted by the teacher so that students feel comfortable and happy to express their ideas. From there, teachers can assess the level of their students' thinking about something. Do they see things from different angles? If so, this means that the student has been thinking critically.

Furthermore, teachers can also apply debate elements during teaching and facilitating the process (PdPc). To start the PdPc session, the teacher should ask the student to give an idea or a view of the subject's title on that day. The ideas given do not need to be discussed, but teachers need to ask students why the idea is given. Teachers should also encourage other students to discuss the idea so that they can generate various views and knowledge. Therefore, elements of critical thinking are successfully applied to students through the PdPc session performed by teachers. It happens only with the application of some important things, such as having the right information based on the title, having the curiosity and being ready to explore a topic through reading, questioning with teachers and friends as well as conducting hands-on activities for information, in addition to being able make a decision based on the

information obtained and endeavour to defend the decision using strong evidence.

Critical-minded students are open-minded students, where, they are easy to accept the views or ideas said by other peers as well as not to condemn the unaccepted ideas. With this, teachers need to know each student so that these elements are easier to implement when PdPc takes place.

#### **4.2 The Manner and Moral Values**

During the PdPc session, the teacher can ask the student to express a pure value that corresponds to the topic of learning on that day. Then, the teacher needs to evaluate whether the student understands the moral value stated or not. If they understand moral values, teachers need to look in terms of their behavior. Do they know the ways to apply those values in their behavior? Here, teachers play a very important role in educating students to always behave politely. HOTs needs to be incorporated into the students' morals and lives.

There are some students who love to lower their friends who practice pure values. However, if a teacher attempts to change their perceptions of moral values, then, they become ethical and well-behaved students. Teachers need to ask them to give insights on the noble values and ethics that must be applied to them, in terms of the impression of those values of self, society, religion, and country.

Teachers can also appreciate students who always practice values learned during PdPc sessions. This can be an encouragement to other students to come together to practice moral values in their daily lives. Therefore, teachers need to be creative and critical in educating students to make them useful and quality people after graduating soon.

This 21st-century class is best suited as it has a lot of positive impacts on the student. With the existence of this 21st-century class, students will be trained to possess skills that can be used in the future, such as good communication skills, able to collaborate and solve problems based on the reality of life. Additionally, students are also prepared to take the exam, where the exam is now applied to the elements of Higher Order Thinking skills (HOTs).

It does not matter to the students themselves because their thinking is always challenged during the PdPc session in the classroom. The 21st-century class also helps students to get ready to work. Employers are particularly concerned about some aspects, such as communication skills, capable of solving problems and

critical thinking and creatives to enable individuals interviewed to work in their company. These impacts are seen to have a positive impact on the students themselves, schools and countries, in line with the desire to make education in Malaysia a world-class education.

#### **V. CONCLUSION**

The development of the world on economic, social, political and technological aspects should be a basic indicator of the education and school system to meet the needs of manpower based on quality knowledge, values and morals based on the belief in God as the main axis. Educators are vectors that determine human patterns that are capable of dealing with the new millennium, the 21st century.

Teachers are agents of change playing an important role in implementing the curriculum to students in school. Teachers can potentially change student attitudes and status towards a curriculum (subject). Teachers act as a link between theory and practice in education. Teachers educate based on curriculum added with trust, values, and attitudes. The beliefs, values, and attitudes that teachers hold will explain the educational environment and 'how' the teachers give meaning and adapt the curriculum in school to students in school. The teacher's level of thinking will determine and play a constructive role in future teacher and student education. After the understanding of the teacher, the essential thing a teacher needs to have is the method of sharing, which is the strategy that every teacher needs.

Hence, in fact, teachers nowadays need to have sufficient strategies. This is to ensure that the inputs available to the teacher can be quickly and efficiently transferred to the students and constraints can be minimized and opportunities can be used to maximize teaching, expanding human potential and improving the level of professionalism of the teacher at once. Teachers should be aware of the changing situation of the centuries, circumstances that require the fresh and ethical strategies of the community in contemporary 21st-century societies. Teachers of Islamic education that can bring themselves to the level of professionalism with the mastery of a harmonious teaching strategy, are likely to enjoy a better level of success and the profession will be more organized.

In line with this, teachers should constantly update their self-development with extensive reading and inquiry, especially their respective areas of expertise. Teachers are also encouraged to practice the ever-expanding profession strategy. Research leads to innovation in a professional self-education. Teachers

need to shift and change the paradigm through strong research practices. Teachers are open-minded and do not have bad perceptions of the causes and the causal relationships to carry out this task.

In conclusion, it is clear that current and future Islamic Education teachers need a new paradigm shift to meet the demands of self-excellence as required in Islam. They also need to master a variety of skills that are not only related to Islamic knowledge but they need higher knowledge and self-control to deal with the discipline of school students. At the same time, improvements in teaching and learning, especially the use of ICT skills and the good personality for Islamic Education teachers should be addressed to further enhance the effectiveness of their teaching and learning. The improvement of teachers' environment is certainly able to equip the ability of Islamic Education teachers in schools.

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