

## MIND MAPPING AS AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO TEACHING ISLAMIC HISTORY DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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### ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed some educational practices, including face-to-face to online learning, which faces complaints, obstacles, and difficulties. A more creative teaching design is needed to help students learn better in online learning. Mind mapping is an innovative and effective method for supporting students' learning. However, teaching Islamic History rarely uses mind mapping. This study aims to create a model of the mind mapping application in Islamic History teaching based on library studies. Mind mapping is an effort to make learning more creative and innovative, which impacts the ease of delivery of the whole material, increases student motivation and learning outcomes, and reduces complaints against teachers. Using mind mapping needs to adhere to the guidelines, such as the clarity of material coverage, various lines and symbols with different colors, the right keywords, and images representing ideas. The mind map model of teaching Islamic History is easily understood and is a practical example for teachers.

**KEYWORDS:** Islamic History, mind mapping, teaching material, student's learning.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The spread of Covid-19 throughout the world has disrupted all aspects of life, including economic, political, socio-cultural, and educational. The Covid-19 pandemic has also impacted education practices in Indonesia, where online learning has replaced face-to-face learning using the available information and communication technology [1]. Thus, designing learning materials suitable for pandemic situations is critical for the effectiveness of teaching.

The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture outlines six essential interrelated components to improve learning quality, namely (1) teaching skills; (2) educational environment and facilities and infrastructure; (3) school management; (4) monitoring and assessment; (5) tools for learning assessment; and (6) the school's relationship with the community [2, p. 233]. Learning is the core of all education management processes. The quality of an educational institution lies in the learning

process and good graduates or output [3], [4]. A good learning process is carried out by teachers who are competent in (1) simplifying the curriculum for the subject they handle, (2) carrying out the educative learning process, (3) developing available learning materials to be more creative and innovative, and (4) applying technology in the teaching and learning process [5].

Teaching Islamic History is marked by the full achievement of intended learning objectives and students understanding the lesson well. However, the facts indicate that not all religious learning, including Islamic History, yields a compelling result. A study found that some history teachers tend to evaluate past information less critically and cannot use existing knowledge to study the past [6]. Learning Islamic History often makes students feel bored when the teaching uses conventional methods, such as lecturing. Previous research found that learning Islamic History at an Islamic Junior Secondary School (IJSS) experienced several problems, including students who quickly felt bored with the material. They sequentially memorize many years, prominent figures, historical places, unfamiliar names, and incidents [7]. Other studies found that students perceive learning Islamic History as only a subject containing past stories, and therefore it is less attractive to students. They even view Islamic History as a complementary subject that focuses on enriching knowledge while setting aside attitude formation as one of the cores of learning Islamic History [8]. Another study indicates that Islamic History teaching is less effective, and most students could only reach the minimum limit of achievement standards [9].

Supposedly, studying History is crucial for understanding fundamental values of the past to be well prepared for confronting ever-evolving political, social, and cultural challenges [10, p. 213]. Other history values include a possibility of discovering one's identity, developing critical skills of the past for productive life in the present day, building a strong sense of community, a basis for economic development, and offer to a better solution to the current problem, offering lessons learned to make better current leadership and providing a legacy for future citizen [11, pp. 692–94]. Learning History could build creativity in students [12].

However, the commonly performed lecturing approach of historical materials has made the information less meaningful and quickly lost in students' memories. The continuous use of this method will negatively impact the essence of History and for students who study it [13]. Schools, teachers, families, and the community should collaboratively overcome this problem so that Islamic History teaching is effective and their objectives achieved. In particular, teachers must be more creative in delivering Islamic history learning to achieve the specified targets perfectly [14], including using drama, role-play, storytelling, music, and dance [15, p. 111]. Fundamental steps taken in solving the learning problems of Islamic History include (1) implementing the curriculum correctly, (2) developing procedures, promissory notes, and lesson plans that adjusted to the student situation, (3) selecting appropriate teaching methods, learning media, and learning resources, (4) conducting remedial and enrichment activities, (5) holding extracurricular activities, (6) conducting counseling, and (7) applying local content [16].

In practice, there have been many efforts that teachers and educational institutions have made to fix problems that arise in learning Islamic History. The strategy includes (1) making more creative and innovative teaching materials [17], (2) improving learning resources using the internet as a compliment, strategies and methods, media and facilities, learning actors (teachers and students), and evaluation [18], and (3) using a variety of methods when teaching tailored to the expected competencies, as well as motivation to students to achieve maximum results [19], [20].

An alternative approach to making Islamic History teaching materials more innovative and creative is to develop mind mapping-based teaching materials. The use of concept maps makes learning more manageable and significantly improves student learning achievement [21]. In addition, the mind mapping technique in the form of patterns makes it easier for students to digest the material being taught and helps them narrate the story contained [22]. Mind mapping also effectively improves student learning outcomes at a better level and helps students remember the information conveyed [23].

Even though teaching various subjects has employed a mind mapping approach and the results have been positive, Islamic History learning rarely implements it, leaving teachers lacking a practical model. Therefore, it is crucial to create a teaching material model using mind mapping for Islamic History. This article aims at (1) discussing the concept of teaching materials and mind mapping in the Islamic History material and (2) developing a mind mapping-based model of Islamic History teaching materials. This article would provide practical contributions for Islamic teachers in maximizing learning outcomes.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The authors constructed the conceptual model of mind mapping use in Islamic History learning to achieve the study objectives. To create the model, we utilized extant literature providing theoretical concepts that deal with specific problems [24, p. 169], e.g., articles, books, online news, and the internet. Researchers critically examined the collected sources based on their depth, delineated their relationship and relevance to this research theme [25, p. 34], [26, p. 111], analyzed them using an inductive approach [27, p. 42], and interpreted them logically [28, p. 185] by comparing emerging themes [29, p. 7].

Furthermore, the model development was based on the authors' extensive experiences teaching Islamic History in the IJSS. Using this method, the researchers could present conceptual ideas for explaining the form and design of Islamic History teaching materials utilizing the mind mapping method as innovative and creative teaching material.

### 3. Creative Teaching Materials

One of the teacher's successes is innovating teaching materials to attract students' attention and improve student learning [30, p. 65]. Teaching materials are all forms that function as an assistant to teachers/instructors to deliver subject matter, both in writing and unwritten. Teaching material should be designed as attractive as possible to avoid students' complaints on the difficulty in understanding a subject matter. The concept of competency-based learning is the basis for developing teaching materials [31, p. 2].

According to the Ministry of National Education, teachers should understand the following principles in developing teaching materials starting from the easy ones leading to the understanding of the difficult ones; the repeated material and positive feedback make performance stronger and sharper; simultaneously achieving success; reaching the goal with gradual steps; knowing the results of achievement affect students' enthusiasm [32, p. 10]. Generally, teaching materials function as (1) guiding teachers to direct all learning activities and a reference for competencies given to students, (2) guidelines for learners that provide a reference for learning mastery, and (3) evaluation of the achievement of the specified learning objectives [22, p. 839]. For teachers, teaching materials function as a teaching guide, time-saving, facilitator, innovation and attractiveness of the learning process, and a measure of student achievement and mastery. While for students, they serve as independent study by students anywhere and anytime and developing their talents [33, p. 24].

Teaching materials can be in the form of printed materials, e.g., modules, handouts, brochures, student worksheets, and books; audio such as cassette, radio, and digital media; and visuals, e.g., photos, graphics, and pictures; and audiovisuals such as digital videos. Usually, teaching materials contain title, subject, basic competence, indicators, place, learning instructions, objectives to be achieved, supporting information, worksheets, exercises, work instructions, and assessment [34, p. 16]. Creative and innovative teaching material has the following characteristics: learning objectives must be compatible with student competencies, a balance between the breath and the depth of material within the allocated time, the material taught is conceptual and systematic, can maximally accommodate students' involvement in learning, using advanced Science and technology, and learning media [17]. While the ideal criteria for teaching materials include the material's content that suits student education levels, being attractive, easy to understand, systematic, and diction and writing style are straightforward for students to understand [35, p. 285].

Teaching materials are an essential guide for teachers in carrying out learning. Therefore, the teacher needs to design it creatively and innovatively to make it more exciting and make students succeed in learning. The conceptual guides for developing teaching materials discussed above provide practical grounds for teachers designing effective teaching materials.

## 4. Islamic History

Islamic History conveys not only about data and facts, but it is also a battle of values [36, p. 1]. History is an event in the past that provides information and interpretation of past events by considering causality. Islamic culture is the past events experienced by Muslims useful for human guides today to benefit from life and happiness in the world and the hereafter. The classification and scope of learning Islamic History for Junior High Schools (JSS) are:

1. Da'wah of the Prophet Muhammad SAW started from his preaching in the period of Mecca and Medina. From his struggle before becoming a prophet, after becoming a prophet by preaching secretly and openly, continuing during the Prophet Muhammad's migration to Medina, until he died in his residence next to the Quba mosque.
2. The leadership of Muslims after the Prophet's death began with the appointment of Abu Bakr as-Siddiq caliph, followed by Umar bin Khattab, Uthman bin Affan, and finally by Ali bin Abi Talib. The leadership of the four disciples of the Prophet is known today as Khulafaur Rosyidin.
3. The evolution of Islam until its heyday (650 AD-1250 AD). The heyday began with the Umayyad dynasty in Damascus and the Abbasid dynasty in Baghdad, which overthrew it. The emergence of the second Umayyad dynasty centered on the city of Andalusia and ended with the fourth Abbasid known as the disintegration period.
4. Medieval or decline century (1250 AD-1800 AD). The decline of Islam is divided into two phases, namely: (1) the period of decline (1250-1500 AD), which began with the destruction of the Islamic empire due to attacks from the Mongolians, and (2) the period of three major empires (1500-1800 AD) namely the Mughal Empire in India, the Ottoman Empire, and Safavid Empires in Persia.
5. The evolution of Islam covers its awakening or the modern century from 1800 AD to the present. It started with the emergence of Islamic pioneer figures with all their ideas and contributions to the progress of the Islamic world [37].

Studying Islamic History has five objectives to which teachers and students should refer and achieve: (1) developing student awareness of the importance of knowing and learning the foundations of religion, the norms established by the Prophet Muhammad, (2) developing student awareness of the importance of knowing the time and the place where the process of Islamic civilization emerged, (3) training students' critical thinking in the correct historical facts of Islamic civilization based on a scientific approach, (4) building a sense of pride and respect for the legacy of past Islamic History, and (5) increasing their expertise in learning Islamic History, imitating figures who contribute and linking them to the phenomena of social, artistic, political and economic culture for the development of Islamic civilization and culture in the present and the future [38, p. 47], [39, p. 12].

The material of Islamic History contains many explanations about the life journey of Muslims from the initial phase of the Prophet's preaching in 650 AD to the Islamic awakening in 1800 AD to strive for religious law and spread Islamic theology and morality [40]. Despite being a critical lesson, the Islamic History subject contains long and past events that might be considered unimportant to the

present students. Thus, a more creative and innovative approach to teaching is necessary for students' learning success.

## 5. Mind Mapping

The term mind mapping originates from the word mind, which means thinking and mapping, making maps. Tony Buzan [41]– [43] introduced mind mapping more than two decades ago and has been widely discussed and taught in many pieces of training. Mind mapping is based on the natural workings of the brain and can ignite the spark of creativity in the brain because it involves both hemispheres of the human brain [41, p. 15]. Since ancient times, the notion of mind mapping has existed and can be interpreted as a revolutionary system in planning and making notes that have changed people's lives worldwide [44, p. 16].

Mind mapping explores creativity in summarizing the whole material in subtopics on a sheet of paper, using pictures of symbols, words, arrows, and lines [45, p. 25]. Mind mapping is a way to utilize the brain using visualization and illustrative tools to trace something, generate ideas, and trigger a memory and makes learning more straightforward, fun, and creative [46, p. 105]. Essentially, mind mapping puts a wide range of ideas into a visualized piece of lines and pictures representing their coverage, which helps the students learn.

Mind mapping is one of the practical tools to help remember and comprehend the material studied. Mind mapping is a tool used to convey new ideas and make better and more exciting notes [47, p. 75]. Using mind mapping can produce initially convoluted material more precise, attractive, and comprehensible. Creating a mind mapping begins by placing the main topic in the middle of the paper, and the subtopics selected are placed around them randomly. A variety of subtopics must surround the subject because they follow the patterns that exist in the brain when describing information [48, p. 73].

Besides using face-to-face media in the classroom, either manually or using technology, mind mapping is also applicable in online learning that utilizes internet technology, such as using Google Classroom. The use of mind mapping with the help of the google classroom application for JSS students effectively increases student learning outcomes, and the goals set are achieved well [23]. The use of mind maps has a good impact on students, making them easy to learn the material, increasing the critical thinking power of students, making the interaction between teachers and students more lively, and making student achievement better [21]. The use of mind mapping can minimize the complaints that teachers have for transferring the substance of the lesson to the students [13]. The mind map can improve teacher motivation at school. The mind map is mapping ideas of a lesson topic or material in subtopics using words, arrows, lines, and symbols to strengthen memory and build creativity.

Some characteristics would help a mind mapping function properly, namely (1) using easy-to-remember words, (2) using symbols, arrows, lines, and (3) using attractive colors. With the fulfillment of these characteristics, conveying ideas or material using mind mapping will be more effective and

attract students' attention. According to Buzan [42], [43], mind mapping provides six benefits: (1) knowing the overall design of material and the detailed information in it, (2) information can be grouped according to the topic, (3) it attracts the reader's attention, (4) it improves concentration, (5) the making process is fun as there are images, colors, and lines, and (6) it is memorable because there are symbols.

Furthermore, Buzan [42], [43] has provided seven steps to formulate a mind mapping effectively. First, it starts writing/drawing ideas/material in the middle of a paper arranged horizontally to contain many subtopics and descriptions. Second, use the picture in the middle of ideas to focus on and activate the brain's work. Third, using attractive colors to evoke the brain's work and applying various colors makes the mind map more lively and fun and attracts students' interest. Fourth, make detailed branches or subtopic explanations and connect them with lines to the subtopics, then the subtopics are connected with a line or arrows of topic/idea arrows. Fifth, it is better to use curved connecting lines so that the brain is not saturated and bored. Sixth, use one keyword in each branch of the mind map to facilitate students' memory. Seventh, use pictures related to the material or ideas on each component.

To make a good mind mapping, a teacher should pay attention to the following seven things: (1) neat writing and use capital letters, (2) write the initial letter of the idea in a bigger size to make it look different and exciting, (3) use symbols, (4) use an underline in each word, (5) make a creative design, unique and different from the others so that the brain can remember more easily, (6) use random shapes to explain specific ideas, and (7) make mind mapping in a horizontal form so that it contains more branches of thought [49, pp. 110–111].

Each learning method has advantages and disadvantages. The benefits of mind mapping include: (1) seeing the overall picture of the material, (2) there is information grouping, (3) attracting students' attention with the form of pictures and symbols, (4) facilitate student concentration, (5) it makes it easier to remember because of the help of signs and symbols, and (6) the making process is fun and hones creativity. Meanwhile, the three weaknesses in mind mapping are (1) it involves only active learners, (2) the learning center becomes 50:50 between the teacher and students, and (3) the various mind mapping makes the teacher a little overwhelmed [50, p. 76]. Despite some deficiency in mind mapping, teachers benefit from using it in their teaching of Islamic History when appropriately used.

## 6. A Model of Mind Map

Preparing Islamic History teaching materials using mind mapping should refer to theories about mind mapping [51]-[52]. Below is a scenario of mind mapping in Islamic History learning developed based on the steps formulated by Buzan [41]–[43].

The summary of the topic is “Abbassiyah Dynasty material (750-1250M) for class XI learning. The Abbasids were the second dynasty in Islam to rule Baghdad. In the Abbasid period, Islamic civilization developed very rapidly and made Islam the center of knowledge globally. The Abbassiyah dynasty

stood because they were able to seize and conquer the Umayyad dynasty. The founder of the Abbassiyah dynasty was Abu Abbas al-Saffah, the Prophet Muhammad's uncle. In approximately 500 years, there were many histories, progress, and conflicts.”

Making a mind map for that material can be started from the middle side of the paper, which is writing down the core of the material discussed, the Abbasid dynasty, then at the top, the name of the founder is given, namely Abu Abbas al-Saffah, the center of government in Baghdad, and glory achievement which is during the time of the caliph Harun and his son al-Mamun. Then, it continued with the material distribution from the Abbasid dynasty, starting with the establishment of the dynasty, the caliph who ruled during the Abbasid dynasty, the heyday, and the period of disintegration.

The material about the first Abbasid dynasty was a factor that influenced its founding. In teaching materials using the mind mapping method, this factor is placed in the first subtopic. The subtopic of the founding process of the Abbasid dynasty is divided into three branches, namely internal factors, external factors, and the Abbas movement. The core of the factors is written in each unit read from books, the internet, and other sources. Each word can be underlined to clarify and emphasize. For example, internal factors that influenced the formation of the Abbasid dynasty were the calls for the caliph's right to vote, opposition to the Umayyad dynasty, and the formation of cities as the seat of the Abbas dynasty's government.

After the first subtopic is completed, it is followed by the second subtopic. This section places the names of the caliphs who served during the Abbasid dynasty and is divided into five parts according to the five times of the Abbas dynasty reign. The first branch is filled with caliphs during the Persian first era or the Abbas dynasty, bringing Islam to its heyday, especially during the caliphate of Harun al-Rashid and his son al-Mamun. The star symbol can be given to the two caliphs to differentiate them from the other caliphs. The following branches are Turkey 1, Persia 2, Turkey 2, and a period free from the influence of the Persians and Turks. In the last period, many areas left the Abbasid dynasty and created minor dynasties.

The Abbassiyah dynasty had its heyday as well as being the heyday of Islam at that time. The heyday of the Abbas dynasty is divided into four parts. In Mind Mapping, the four divisions are placed in four different branches: general Science, religious knowledge, politics, and an economic perspective. In each unit, more sub-branches are made to explain the form of progress at that time. For example, the branch of general Science is marked by the establishment of Darul Hikmah, the development of philosophy, and the many new universities in Iraq and Baghdad. Then, the branch of religious knowledge is marked by the evolvement of Sufism, Hadith, interpretation, fiqh, kalam, and others. Each branch that has been written is also emphasized by giving an underline to focus readers' attention.

The last subtopic, namely during the period of disintegration or division, is divided into three major branches, namely the factors that influenced, then the decline of the Abbas dynasty and the destruction



of the Abbas dynasty. Each branch has a sub-branch to explain briefly but clearly. For example, the branch of the factors that influence the division of the Abbas dynasty was a large number of dynasties that broke away, power struggles, and the existence of large-scale crusades.

The material above can be made in a mind map (see Figure 1). The first thing to do is prepare materials for making a mind map. The materials needed are blank or buffer papers, ballpoints, color markers or colored pencils, and brain creativity. In this article, the Abbassiyah dynasty teaching materials are arranged in the following steps. First, prepare the tools and materials to be used to create mind mapping. Second, determine the main topic (Abbasid dynasty) or ideas to discuss and convey to students. Third, write the main topic in the middle of the HVS paper/horizontal buffer. Fourth, identify the subtopics related to the main topic. Fifth, the main topics and subtopics are connected with straight lines, curves, and arrows decorated with colorful markers to make them look attractive. Sixth, write down the sub-branches of the subtopics previously determined. Seventh, after writing the sub-branches, it can be emphasized by providing a picture or an underline so that students can easily remember the mind mapping.

For the application of mind mapping-based Islamic History teaching materials, it is necessary first to make the material that will be explained using a mind map on large paper so that all students can see well, then place the mind mapping results in the middle of the blackboard. The teacher can explain the chapters delivered using the mind mapping method and followed by additional explanations that cannot be included in the mind map.

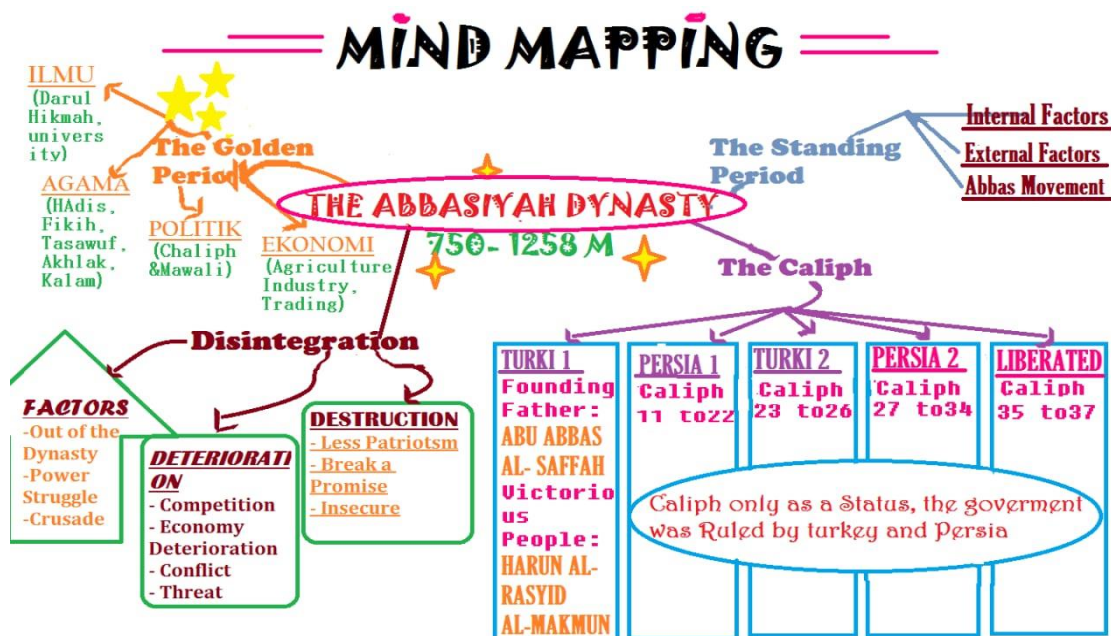


Figure 1: Teaching Material using Mind Mapping “Abbasids Dynasty”

In addition to learning Islamic History, using the mind map method in designing teaching materials has been applied in other subjects, such as the Indonesian Language [53, pp. 834–847] and Math and Science [54]. The mind mapping model needs to be made as attractive as possible to attract the attention and focus student learning from elementary, junior high, and high schools. Using the mind mapping method as the development of teaching materials is an alternative and an effective way to develop memory and improve student cognitive and affective achievement [55, pp. 337–352], [56, pp. 41–50], [57, pp. 62–68].

## 7. CONCLUSION

History is synonymous with a lengthy explanation of the past that is far from the reach of today's students. Many students feel bored when the teacher teaches History using monotonous and less creative methods. An alternative to designing a creative and innovative Islamic History teaching material is to use the mind mapping method. This method is very effective and suitable for all subjects, especially lessons that contain past events. Using mind mapping, complex and lengthy history teaching materials will be more concise and easy to understand and attract students who learn it, which positively impacts history learning objectives. The discussion and scenarios for using mind mapping in learning Islamic History offer a practical model for teachers. However, teachers need to pay attention to guidelines for making a mind map and design it creatively. A combination of logical thinking and artistic skills will improve the design of mind mapping useful for Islamic History teaching, particularly in online learning as an impact of the covid-19 pandemic.

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