Visual Book as a Learning Medium of Islamic Religious Education Courses for Politeknik Elektronika Negeri Surabaya (PENS) Students

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INTISARI

Mata kuliah Pendidikan Agama Islam merupakan mata kuliah wajib bagi mahasiswa muslim yang harus dilaksanakan di setiap perguruan tinggi di Indonesia. Hal tersebut tertuang dalam UU No.12 Tahun 2012 Pasal 35 Ayat 3 Tentang Pendidikan Tinggi. Dalam pelaksanaannya, Politeknik Elektronika Negeri Surabaya telah memberikan mata kuliah tersebut kepada para mahasiswa. Mata kuliah ini bertujuan untuk membentuk mahasiswa menjadi manusia yang beriman dan bertakwa kepada Allah Swt. serta memiliki akhlak yang mulia. Di lain sisi, pemahaman terkait materi mata kuliah Pendidikan Agama Islam sangat penting guna mewujudkan tujuan utama tersebut. Berdasarkan hasil riset yang berjudul Kuesioner Mata Kuliah Pendidikan Agama Islam di PENS, menyebutkan bahwa sebanyak 75% dari 40 responden merasa kesulitan untuk mempelajari dan memahami beberapa bab dikarenakan kurangnya visualisasi materi dan terlalu banyak istilah yang sulit dipahami atau dihafalkan. Permasalahan lain yang ditemukan melalui riset tersebut adalah intensitas kegiatan membaca responden masih terbilang rendah. Oleh sebab itu, penelitian ini diharapkan mampu meningkatkan pemahaman terkait mata kuliah Pendidikan Agama Islam melalui kegiatan membaca untuk mahasiswa PENS dengan memberikan kontribusi berupa pembuatan buku visual sebagai media pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam yang menarik.

Kata kunci: *Pendidikan Agama Islam, mahasiswa PENS, buku visual.*

ABSTRACT

The Islamic Religious Education course is a compulsory subject for Muslim students that must be implemented in every university in Indonesia. This is stated in Law No. 12 of 2012 Article 35 Paragraph 3 concerning Higher Education. In its implementation, Politeknik Elektronika Negeri Surabaya (PENS) has given these courses to students. This course aims to shape students into human beings who believe and fear Allah SWT. and have noble character. On the other hand, an understanding of the subject matter of Islamic Religious Education is very important in order to realize this main goal. Based on the results of research entitled Questionnaire for Islamic Religious Education Courses at PENS, it was stated that 75% of the 40 respondents found it difficult to learn and understand some chapters due to the lack of visualization of the material and too many terms that were difficult to understand or memorize. Another problem found through this research is that the intensity of respondents' reading activities is still relatively low. Through this visual book, respondents chose the presentation of materials using illustrations more easily understood and interesting with an index of 96.67%.The usefulness value of visual books reaches 94.67% which means that respondents strongly agree if this visual book is useful for the benefit of learning media.

Keywords: *Islamic Religious Education, PENS students, visual books.*

INTRODUCTION

College institutions in Indonesia cannot be separated from Law No. 12 of 2012 concerning College. The law consists of several articles, one of which is Article 35 Paragraph 3 which explains that the college curriculum is required to contain courses on Religion, Pancasila, Citizenship, and Indonesian Language [1]. Departing from the article, the provision of religious education aims to

shape students into human beings who believe and fear God Almighty and have noble character.

Islamic Religious Education plays an important role in preparing students to believe and obey Allah, have a good personality, and can apply Islamic values in all aspects of life [2]. Politeknik Elektronika Negeri Surabaya has incorporated the compulsory curriculum into the implementation of teaching and learning activities. In practice, Islamic Religious Education courses in PENS are given to students when they are in level one for one semester.

On the other hand, an understanding of the subject matter of Islamic Religious Education is very important in order to realize the main objectives of Law No. 12 of 2012. Based on the results of a research entitled Questionnaire for Islamic Religious Education Courses at PENS conducted by the author, it is stated that as many as 75% of 40 respondents find it difficult to learn and understand the chapter of Fiqh Ikhtilaf (Fiqh of Differences of Opinion). Followed by 10% difficulties in the chapter on the Concept of God in Islam, 7.5% chose Faith in Qada and Qadar as the most difficult chapter, and 7.5% chose other chapters.

In addition, Figure 1. shows that respondents have difficulty in learning and understanding the material for Islamic Religious Education courses due to the lack of visualization of the material and too many terms that are difficult to understand or memorize.
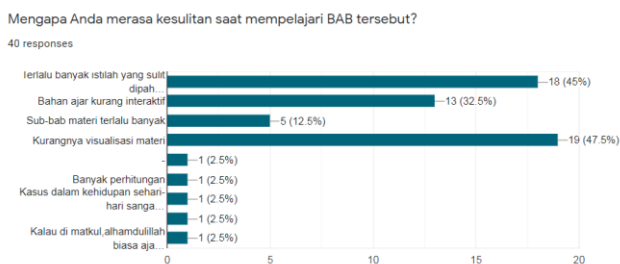

Figure 1. Students reasons for studying the hardest chapter

Another problem found through this research is that as many as 57.5% or 23 respondents claimed to like reading. However, the intensity of respondents' reading activities is still relatively low because 57.5% choose sometimes, 27.5% choose rarely, and 15% choose often.

Based on the problems above, it is necessary to make efforts to improve understanding related to Islamic Religious Education courses through reading activities for PENS students. This study aims to produce a solution in the form of making a visual book as an interesting Islamic Religious Education learning media. The existence of visual books as teaching materials in accordance with the syllabus of Islamic Religious Education lecturers is expected to make a positive contribution to PENS students. The use of this media is expected to be able to increase interest in reading and be able to understand the compulsory Islamic Religious Education subject matter easily[1].

METHOD

The research is divided into three processes, namely data collection method, book creation method, and testing method[2]. Each process has several stages of work described through the Figure 2 below:
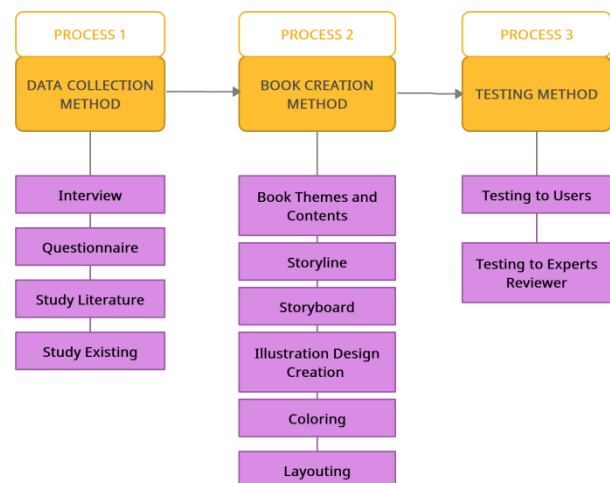

Figure. 2. Methodology

A. Data Collection Method

This method is the initial part of the process of making the research. The following are four stages to collect data:

a. Interview

The interview in this study was for Imamul Arifin, S.Sy., M.H.I, as a lecturer in the Islamic Religious Education course at EEPIS as the main resource person. The initial interview material was devoted to the difficulties of the lecturer when teaching some materials to students. Based on the results of the interview, there are three chapters

according to the lecturer whose delivery requires interesting and easy-to-understand learning media, namely material on *Fiqh Ikhtilaf* (*Fiqh* of Differences of Opinion), the Concept of God in Islam, and Faith in *Qadha* and *Qadar.*

b. Questionnare

This questionnaire is specifically intended for active Muslim EEPIS students. Respondents who have filled in are 40 people consisting of students from the 2017 2018 and 2019 batches.

c. Study Literature

Study literature is a series of activities related to the method of collecting references, reading and taking notes, and processing research materials. The main data source used in making this visual book comes from material compiled by Imamul Arifin, S.Sy., M.H.I, as a lecturer in Islamic Religious Education courses on the PENS campus. In addition, data sources also come from other references based on his recommendations.

d. Study Existing

Existing study is the process of searching for visual book references from various existing sources. The results of this existing study will be used as a reference in making visual books for Islamic Religious Education course materials.

A. Book Creation Method

In this section, the process of making a visual book begins. There are several steps that must be done.

a. Theme and Content of the Book

This visual book discusses Islamic Religious Education subject matter that is difficult for Muslim EEPIS students to understand. The contents include three chapters, namely the Fiqh of Ikhtilaf (Fiqh of Differences of Opinion), the Concept of God in Islam, and Faith in Qada and Qadar. In addition, this book is packaged in an explanatory language that is easily understood by students, so it can be used as a learning medium

b. Storyline

Storyline is a series of stories that will be created in a visual book so that the explanation is clear and directed. Here is a sample of storyline for the creation of a visual book of Islamic Religious Education course materials. Table 1 below is a storyline that was successfully created.

Table 1. Visual Book Storyline

Fiqih Ikhtilaf	
Materials and Sub-Materials	**Visualization**
Islamic Shari'ah ● Definition of Islamic sharia ● Between aqidah and sharia ● Islamic sharia sources ● Stages of Islamic sharia elements ● Urgency and scope of Islamic sharia	Visualization in the form of Arabic-style typography, Quran, and Muslims or Muslims. In addition, there will also be a form of diagram or cycle to explain islamic sharia material.
Fiqh of Ikhtilaf ● Definition of Fiqh Ikhtilaf ● The differences of the four sects	This section contains explanations related to the etymological definitions and terminology of the fiqh of Ikhtilaf. As for the differences of the four sects, there will be a visualization of the four major figures of the sect, along with explanations.
Dissent in Islamic Sharia ● Examples of dissent in Islamic sharia ● Why is there a difference of opinion? ● Addressing differences wisely	Presented visualization of differences of opinion about worship from the people who adhere to different sects. Examples are tahlilan, reading Qunut prayers, prophet's Maulid celebrations, etc. In addition, a visualization of the causes and solutions to solve them will be presented.

c. Storyboard

Storyboard is a visualization of a complete story that contains pictures, descriptions, additional information to facilitate the production process. The storyboard will later be used as a reference for making illustrations in digital form. Table 2 below is a storyboard that was successfully created.

Table 2. Examples of Storyboard

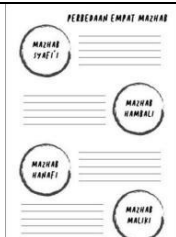| Fiqih Ikhtilaf	
Illustration	**Description**
Islamic Shariah APA ITU SYARI'AH ISLAM?	On the beginning page of the material, a question mark illustration will be displayed that points to the definition of the sub-material.
Fiqh Ikhtilaf	To present the theory of the differences of the four sects, it will be visualized in such a

	way that it is easy for the reader to understand.
Fiqh Ikhtilaf 	The appearance of the sub-material examples of differences of opinion in Islamic shari'ah will more or less be visualized in such a way and divided into several pages, depending on the number of examples.

d. Creating Ilustration Design

The process of creating or producing illustration designs is done in two ways, namely drawing illustrations digitally, and tracing design references from the internet. All illustration work is done in Adobe Illustrator. The first stage is to create character designs. The characters are made of two people, namely 1 male character and 1 female character. The poses of the two characters vary depending on the message or information to be conveyed. Figure 3 is the result of the design of the visual book character.
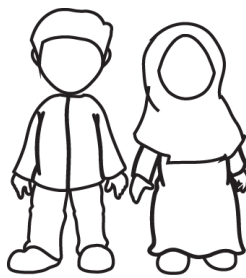

Figure. 3. Character design

The next illustration creation process is tracing a design that takes references from several sources. In addition, there is a process of creating design elements for decoration.

e. Coloring and Layouting

Selected color based on the most preferred color trend by the respondents of the questionnaire, namely earth tone color. There are several color palettes used for the visual book coloring process. Among them is shown in Figure 4.

Figure. 4. Earth tone color

In the layouting stage, the design of illustrations and other additional information will be arranged in a page to be used as a digital book (e-book). Things to set up include typography, illustration design, white space, and grids.

Literature Review

A. *Compulsory Islamic Religious Education Courses*

Based on Law No. 12 Article 35 of 2012 concerning Higher Education which explains:

1) The higher education curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding the objectives, content, and teaching materials as well as the methods used as guidelines for the implementation of learning activities to achieve the goals of Higher Education.

2) The Higher Education Curriculum as referred to in paragraph (1) is developed by each Tertiary Education Institution with reference to the National Higher Education Standards for each Study Program which includes the development of intellectual intelligence, noble character, and skills.

3) The Higher Education Curriculum as referred to in paragraph (1) must contain the following courses:
   a. Religion;
   b. Pancasila;
   c. Citizenship; and
   d. Indonesian.

4) The Higher Education Curriculum as referred to in paragraph (1) is implemented through curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular activities

5) The courses as referred to in paragraph (3) are implemented for undergraduate programs and diploma programs.

According to Law number 12 Article 35 Paragraph 3 point a, it is stated that what is meant by

"religious courses" is education to shape students into human beings who believe and fear God Almighty and have noble character. This religious course must be implemented by higher education institutions in Indonesia, including PENS.

B. *Visual Book*

A visual book is a medium formed from bound sheets of paper in which there are visual elements such as, pictures, photography, charts dominate more than writing elements [3]. Visual books can also be interpreted as a communication medium that conveys information that combines language and graphics with visuals such as pictures and illustrations. Visual communication combines art, symbols, typography, images, graphic design, illustrations, and colors in its delivery [4].

C. *Learning Media*

Media is a tool that functions as a communication channel. The word media comes from Latin which is the plural form of the word medium. Meanwhile, literally, media means intermediary, namely the intermediary between the source of the message and the recipient of the message [5]. Learning is everything that can bring information and knowledge in an ongoing interaction between educators and students [6]. In learning activities, media can be defined as something that can be used as a means of channeling communication and messages[13].

From these two definitions, it can be concluded that learning media are tools used in the learning process, with the intention of conveying learning messages from message sources (educators and other sources) to message recipients (students). The existence of learning media greatly helps the teaching and learning process at the higher education level, this is because the media facilitates lecturers in their teaching activities and can increase students' attention to their learning activities.

D. *Flat Design*

The design style applied to this visual book is flat design. Flat design was chosen based on the results of the study, as many as 28 out of 40 respondents chose this design style. An example of a flat design style can be seen in Figure 5.
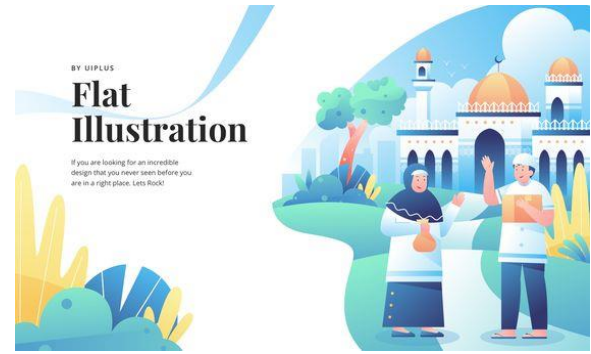

Figure 5 : An example of a flat design

Flat design is a design with a minimalist approach that uses simple two-dimensional elements. Generally, there are several design elements that make up a flat design, namely:

a. Illustration

According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, illustrations are pictures (photos, paintings) to help clarify the contents of books, essays, and so on. Illustrations are used to provide explanations or convey messages visually.

b. Typography

Typography in a broad sense means covering the arrangement and pattern of pages, or any printed matter. In a narrower sense, it means only covering the selection, arrangement, and various arrangements of the typeset lines [7]. Lazlo Maholy argues that typography is a communication tool. Therefore, typography must be able to communicate in its strongest, clearest, and legible form [8].

c. Layout

Layout is the layout of design elements to a field in a certain media to support the concept or message it carries. there are several principles in making a good layout, including:

- *Sequence*, which is a hierarchy or order of attention.
- *Emphasis*, which is to give a certain emphasis. That emphasis can be the main focus for attracting attention.
- *Balance*, which leads to the division of space weight, including fill and empty space. There are two kinds of balance, namely symmetrical balance that gives a formal and sturdy impression, and asymmetric balance that gives the impression of movement so that it is more dynamic and not static.

- *Unity*, which is the relationship between the design elements combined into a whole unity and has a new function.
- *Consistency*, namely as aesthetic control is especially useful for the coordination of the entire material to be layout [9].

d. Color

Color is a phenomenon that occurs due to the presence of three elements, namely light, object, and observer (eye or measuring instrument) [10]. This element is often used to reflect an implied meaning or a certain feeling. In this visual book, the color chosen is based on the color trend that is most chosen by the questionnaire respondents, namely earth tone color. Earth tone is a color scheme taken from a palette of browns, warm grays, greens, etc. This palette can create a warm and nature-friendly atmosphere.

E. Rules of Drawing Digital Illustrations in Islam

There are differences of opinion among scholars regarding the drawing (*tashwir*) of animate beings [11]. In the first category, scholars agree on the prohibition of making animate statues, because the term *tashwir* in Arabic is a statue. While in the second category of understanding, *tashwir* in the sense of drawing two dimensions, the majority of scholars allow it with the argument that the painting or cartoon image is not in the form of a animate creature. If referring to the meaning and practice, graphic design or digital illustration can be categorized as drawing (*tashwir*). This graphic design law is allowed with certain rules or limitations, including:

a. The designs made must not be in the form of things that are religiously cult by its adherents, such as pictures of prophets, angels, and pious people
b. If drawing a human, the face is not given eyes, nose and mouth, and the head is cut off (no neck) [11].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, it is explained the results of the testing and analysis of visual books that have been made and broadcast to the audience and expert reviews. As for the general technique in giving a good score used in this research questionnaire is Likert Scale technique [12].

Testing of respondents was carried out using an online questionnaire with a scale of 1-5. Data calculation is done by interval analysis using this formula.

$$Index(100) = \frac{n}{N} x100 \quad [12]$$

n= total score
N= maximum score

Rating Intervals:
Index 0% – 19.99% : Strongly Disagree
Index 20% – 39.99% : Disagree
Index 40% – 59.99% : Not sure
Index 60% – 79.99% : Agree
Index 80% – 100% : Strongly Agree

A. Audience

Testing to visual book users is used to determine the success rate of the research. Respondents were PENS Muslim students from various generations with a total of 30 people. Aspects assessed in the visual book are illustrations and subject matter Islamic Religious Education. This test was conducted through an online questionnaire and contains three sections, namely visual book assessment, Islamic Religious Education material pretest, and Islamic Religious Education material postest. Visual book assessment data will be processed and the following analysis results:

a. The average index of illustrations that have been created is 88.67% which includes the interest and ease of respondents in understanding the material in the visual book. This average index is represented by questions number 1 and 2
b. In terms of visual book layout, the average index is 84.67% which means respondents strongly agree if the book layout makes the information easy to read.
c. Color selection in visual books has an average index of 84% on question number 4.
d. The readibility of fonts in visual books has an average index of 91.3%. The data is obtained in question number
e. In question number 6, the average interest index with the selection of visual book covers is 75.3%
f. 96.67% of respondents chose pai material presentation using easy-to-understand illustrations rather than presentation of material without illustration

g. The average usefulness index of this visual book reaches 94.67% which means that respondents strongly agree that this visual book is useful for the benefit of learning media.

B. Expert Reviewer

Testing of illustrations and material content contained in the visual book was conducted by 2 experts in their field. The two experts are Mrs. Delicia Rosanna as an illustrator and Mrs. Choliliyah Toha as a preacher. The result is :

a. The average index value of the illustration quality level in visual books is 80% which includes compliance with drawing rules in Islam, the material presented, the flat design style, and the earth tone color scheme.

b. The assessment of the type of font gets an average index value of 80% which includes ease of reading, size, and color selection.

c. Visual book layouts get an average index value of 75% which includes ease of reading material, hierarchy, balance, and consistency.

d. Illustration experts provide criticism and suggestions regarding the consistency of the application of illustration style which is still very lacking. There are only 2 characters in the visual book with uniform illustrations. In addition, consistency has not been applied to the use of ouline in illustrations.

e. According to illustration experts, this book is appropriate to be distributed to Muslim PENS students as a medium for learning Islamic Religious Education courses.

f. Ikhtilaf Fiqh material gets an average index value of 100% which includes source credibility, completeness, conformity with illustrations, and easy-to-understand presentation.

g. The material on the concept of God in Islam gets an average index value of 100% which includes source credibility, completeness, conformity with illustrations, and easy-to-understand presentation.

h. Faith on Qadha and Qadar material gets an average index value of 100% which includes source credibility, completeness, conformity with illustrations, and easy-to-understand presentation.

i. Material experts suggest adding a few words to the title of the visual book

CONCLUSION

From the results of the research to the stage of making and testing visual books made can be concluded as follows:

a. Based on the results of testing on the illustration experts, the level of quality of illustrations in visual books gets a score of 80% which includes the alignment with the rules of drawing in Islam, the material delivered, the flat design style, and the earth tone color scheme.

b. Based on the results of testing on material experts, the credibility value of the material sources contained in the visual book is 100% which means that this book deserves to be disseminated as a learning medium.

c. Through this visual book, respondents chose the presentation of materials using illustrations more easily understood and interesting with an index of 96.67%.

d. The usefulness value of visual books reaches 94.67% which means that respondents strongly agree if this visual book is useful for the benefit of learning media.

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