

ANALYZING THE NEEDS FOR AQIDAH AND AKHLAK INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS THROUGH A COMMUNICATION APPROACH AND STORYTELLING METHOD

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the needs for Akidah Akhlak teaching materials based on a communication approach and storytelling methods among students at MIN Pekanbaru, Riau. This study employed a qualitative approach involving 77 students as participants. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation to explore students' learning experiences, difficulties, and preferences regarding the teaching materials used. The results indicate that most students perceive Akidah Akhlak lessons as unengaging, difficult to understand, and supported by conventional teaching materials that lack visual elements and interaction. Students demonstrated a high interest in story-based teaching materials that help them understand moral values and make sound decisions. This study also underscores the importance of integrating a communication-based approach to enhance student engagement and understanding. The novelty of this research lies in the integration of needs analysis with story-based methods and a communication-based approach as the foundation for instructional material development. The implications of this study suggest that the development of innovative, communicative, and story-based instructional materials is necessary to enhance students' moral understanding and foster holistic character development.

KEYWORDS

Aqidah Akhlak, Storytelling Method, Communication Approach

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kebutuhan bahan ajar Akidah Akhlak berbasis pendekatan komunikasi dan metode kisah pada siswa MIN Pekanbaru, Riau. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan melibatkan 77 siswa sebagai partisipan. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi untuk mengeksplorasi pengalaman belajar, kesulitan, serta preferensi siswa terhadap bahan ajar yang digunakan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar siswa menganggap pembelajaran Akidah Akhlak kurang menarik, sulit dipahami, dan didukung oleh bahan ajar yang bersifat konvensional, minim visual, dan interaksi. Siswa menunjukkan minat tinggi terhadap bahan ajar berbasis kisah yang dapat membantu mereka memahami nilai moral serta mengambil keputusan yang tepat. Penelitian ini juga menegaskan pentingnya integrasi pendekatan komunikasi untuk meningkatkan keterlibatan dan pemahaman siswa. Novelty penelitian ini terletak pada integrasi analisis kebutuhan dengan metode kisah dan pendekatan komunikasi sebagai dasar pengembangan bahan ajar. Implikasi penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pengembangan bahan ajar inovatif, komunikatif, dan berbasis kisah diperlukan untuk meningkatkan pemahaman moral dan pembentukan karakter siswa secara holistik.

KATA KUNCI:

Aqidah Akhlak, Metode Kisah, Pendekatan Komunikasi

INTRODUCTION

Advances in science and technology in today's era of globalization have complex implications for society, particularly regarding the moral values of the younger generation (Afifah & Tumin, 2024; Alamsyah, 2019). On the one hand, technological advancements facilitate access to information and broaden horizons; on the other hand, they also contribute to an increase in various forms of deviant behavior among adolescents. Moral degradation phenomena such as violence, promiscuity, drug abuse, and a decline in polite behavior indicate that the internalization of moral values has not been optimally implemented within the education system. Data indicates that violence among adolescents in Indonesia is estimated to reach 50% (Amalia et al., 2025), while promiscuous behavior leading to pregnancy and abortion reaches 58% (Astuti et al., 2020). Additionally, approximately 90% of adolescents are reported to have dated with a tendency toward negative behavior (Cici et al., 2021), and 3.8% of students and college students admitted to having abused drugs. The rate of fights among students also increased from 12.9% in 2017 to 14% in 2018. These facts reinforce the view that the Indonesian nation is facing a serious moral crisis (Vemas Janualdi & Deka Adesta Saputra, 2026).

In the context of Islamic education, particularly in the subject of Akidah Akhlak, this situation highlights a gap between the intended educational goals and the reality on the

ground. Learning should not only focus on cognitive aspects but also be capable of shaping students' character and behavior holistically. One factor influencing the success of learning is the availability of teaching materials that are relevant and tailored to students' needs. Teaching materials serve not only as a source of information but also as a means to instill moral values and foster a deep understanding. This aligns with the view that instructional materials are a systematically organized collection of content designed to create effective learning conditions and outline the competencies students must master (Anita et al., 2020; Humaira et al., 2022).

However, in practice, the teaching materials used in schools still tend to be conventional, unengaging, and not yet fully capable of accommodating students' learning needs. Teaching materials often focus solely on knowledge without providing opportunities for the development of critical and reflective thinking skills or the internalization of values. In fact, in accordance with education policies outlined in Government Regulation No. 19 of 2007 and Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia No. 22 of 2016, teachers are required to design lessons that are interactive, inspiring, and capable of motivating students. Therefore, the development of innovative teaching materials has become an urgent need in efforts to improve the quality of learning.

In 21st-century learning, communication skills are among the key competencies that students must possess. Learning focuses not only on the transfer of knowledge but also on the development of communication skills, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. The communicative approach in education emphasizes the importance of interaction between teachers and students in building understanding. This approach aims to develop students' communicative competencies so that they are able to convey ideas and understand messages effectively. Therefore, the instructional materials developed need to accommodate communication as an integral part of the learning process (Jannah, 2020).

In addition to communication approaches, storytelling also plays a vital role in learning, particularly in instilling moral values. From a developmental psychology perspective, elementary school students tend to be drawn to stories and characters they can look up to as role models. Through stories, students can develop a sense of self and understand the values being taught in a more concrete way. The storytelling method has also proven effective in conveying moral messages because it can touch students' emotional aspects and foster deeper engagement. Furthermore, stories can instill religious, social, and cultural values more effectively, as well as provide psychological reinforcement in facing various life challenges (Arsyad, 2017; Busyra & Azizah, 2022).

Nevertheless, the integration of communication approaches and storytelling methods in Akidah Akhlak teaching materials has not yet been fully developed. Most previous studies have focused more on the development of teaching materials or the use of specific methods in isolation, without being preceded by a comprehensive needs analysis. This indicates a research gap that needs to be addressed, particularly in examining the need for teaching materials capable of systematically integrating these two approaches.

Based on these issues, this study aims to analyze the need for Akidah Akhlak teaching materials based on a communication-oriented approach and the storytelling method for elementary madrasah students. This study is expected to identify the needs of students and teachers for teaching materials that are not only informative but also communicative and inspiring in instilling moral values.

The distinctive feature of this study lies in its effort to integrate needs analysis with a communication approach and the storytelling method within a comprehensive research framework. This study focuses not only on the development of instructional materials but also on the identification of needs as the foundation for such development. Thus, this study offers a new perspective on the development of instructional materials that are more contextual and grounded in real-world needs.

The contributions of this study encompass both theoretical and practical

aspects. Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on the development of instructional materials in Islamic education, particularly those based on a communication approach and the storytelling method. Practically, the results of this study can serve as a reference for teachers and curriculum developers in designing instructional materials that are more effective and relevant to students' needs. Furthermore, this study is also expected to contribute to efforts to improve the quality of Akidah Akhlak instruction focused on character development.

The novelty of this study lies in developing an analytical framework for the needs of Akidah Akhlak teaching materials that systematically integrates a communication approach with the storytelling method. This novelty is expected to serve as a foundation for future research in developing innovative teaching materials capable of addressing the challenges of moral decline among the younger generation. Thus, this study not only makes an academic contribution but also has practical implications for the field of Islamic education.

THEORY DESCRIPTION

The theoretical framework of this study is grounded in the fundamental concept of instructional materials as a strategic component of the learning system, serving not only as a medium for conveying information but also as a means for constructing knowledge and internalizing values. Conceptually, instructional materials are understood as a systematically

organized set of materials designed to create meaningful learning experiences, enabling learners to develop cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in a balanced manner (Erde & Albina, 2024). From a constructivist perspective, learning occurs when students actively construct their understanding through interaction with their environment; therefore, instructional materials must be designed to facilitate active engagement, reflection, and meaning-making. Thus, instructional materials are not static but adaptive to students' needs, characteristics, and learning contexts (Lubis et al., 2024).

Needs analysis serves as a crucial foundation in the development of instructional materials, as it helps identify the gap between the actual and ideal learning conditions. Theoretically, needs analysis involves identifying student needs, teacher needs, and the requirements of the current curriculum. This approach aligns with instructional development theory, which emphasizes that effective learning products must be based on empirical data regarding user needs. Therefore, needs analysis is not only oriented toward content but also encompasses delivery strategies, learning media, and the approaches used (Nabihasnah et al., 2025).

The communicative approach to learning is rooted in communicative competence theory, which views language as a tool for social interaction and meaning-making. In an educational context, this approach

emphasizes the importance of dialogue, active participation, and the exchange of ideas between teachers and students. Communicative learning focuses not only on the delivery of messages but also on the process of negotiating meaning, which enables students to understand, interpret, and internalize the values being taught. Therefore, instructional materials based on the communicative approach must be designed to encourage interaction, provide space for expression, and develop students' critical and reflective thinking skills.

Meanwhile, the storytelling method has a strong foundation in narrative learning theory and developmental psychology. Conceptually, humans tend to understand the world through stories, as narratives are able to organize experiences into meaningful structures. In an educational context, stories serve as a medium for conveying values, norms, and role models in a concrete and contextual manner. Social learning theory also emphasizes that individuals learn through observation of models, so characters in stories can serve as representations of values that students internalize. Furthermore, from an affective perspective, stories can foster emotional engagement that strengthens the learning process and facilitates information retention (Rahman, 2019; Rosita, 2016).

The integration of communication approaches and storytelling methods in instructional materials reflects an effort to combine interactive and narrative dimensions in learning. Theoretically, this combination enables

a learning process that is not only informative but also transformative, in which students not only understand values cognitively but also internalize and implement them in their daily lives. Thus, the theoretical framework in this study positions teaching materials as a medium that integrates needs analysis, communication approaches, and storytelling methods into a mutually supportive whole to achieve the holistic learning objectives of Aqidah Akhlak.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with the aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of the need for Akidah Akhlak teaching materials based on a communication approach and storytelling methods from the students' perspective (Creswell, 2018). This approach was chosen because it is capable of comprehensively exploring students' meanings, perceptions, and experiences within a real-world learning context. The study was conducted among students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah schools throughout the city of Pekanbaru, involving 77 students selected purposively based on their engagement in the Akidah Akhlak learning process. In addition to the students', supporting information was also obtained from teachers as key informants to strengthen the understanding of the learning conditions and the use of teaching materials in practice.

Data collection methods included in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. Interviews were used to explore students' perspectives, experiences, and needs

regarding the instructional materials used, particularly those related to communication and the use of storytelling methods. Observations were conducted to directly observe the learning process, interactions between teachers and students, and the use of instructional materials in the classroom. Meanwhile, the document review involved analyzing the instructional materials used, learning resources, and other relevant supporting documents. During the data collection process, the researcher also utilized structured interview guidelines and field notes as tools to ensure the consistency and depth of the data.

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction was performed by selecting and focusing on data relevant to the research objectives, particularly those related to the need for teaching materials based on a communication approach and the storytelling method. The reduced data was then presented in the form of a systematic descriptive narrative to facilitate understanding of the emerging patterns and trends. Subsequently, conclusions were drawn in stages by interpreting the meaning of the data and relating it to the theoretical framework used in the study.

To ensure the validity of the data, this study employed source triangulation and methodological triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from students and teachers, while

methodological triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. In addition, the researcher also cross-checked the data with the informants (member checking) to ensure that the data obtained corresponded to their experiences and views. Thus, the results of this study are expected to have a high level of credibility and be able to provide an accurate picture of the need for Akidah Akhlak teaching materials at the elementary school level, based on a communication approach and the storytelling method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Learning Conditions and Limitations of Teaching Materials for Islamic Beliefs and Ethics

The current state of Akidah Akhlak instruction reveals fundamental issues that directly impact the low quality of students' learning experiences. This is evident in students' low levels of enjoyment during lessons, with only a small fraction of students reporting that the lessons are enjoyable, while the majority find them uninteresting. These findings indicate that the learning process has not yet been able to create a conducive and enjoyable atmosphere as expected in modern learning principles. According to Pramesti et al. (2020), enjoyable learning is determined not only by methodological factors but also by the availability of facilities, learning media, and teachers' readiness to design meaningful learning experiences. Thus, the low level of

student enjoyment serves as an early indicator of a mismatch between the implemented learning strategies and students' needs and characteristics (Pramesti et al., 2023).

Students' low interest in the Akidah Akhlak subject further highlights the challenges in teaching this subject. Data indicates that the majority of students do not consider this subject to be one they enjoy. This phenomenon cannot be separated from a teaching approach that tends to be monotonous and lacks variety. Interview results reveal that the methods used are still limited to conventional delivery of material, while the teaching materials employed have not been effective in capturing students' attention. Husada et al. (2020), state that students generally tend to prefer teaching materials that are visual, colorful, and aesthetically appealing. When teaching materials do not meet these criteria, students' motivation to learn tends to decline. In this context, teaching materials are not merely a medium for conveying information but also serve as a stimulus capable of sparking students' interest and engagement in the learning process.

Furthermore, students' difficulties in understanding the Akidah Akhlak material indicate problems in both cognitive and pedagogical aspects. More than half of the students reported having difficulty understanding the material taught. This suggests that the material presented has not yet been fully and optimally internalized by the students. According to Humaira et al. (2022), learning difficulties are a condition arising from obstacles in the process of achieving learning

objectives, whether stemming from internal or external factors. In this context, internal factors may include students' still-developing cognitive abilities, while external factors may include inappropriate teaching methods and instructional materials that do not support the comprehension process. Pakanna et al. (2025) add that a learning environment that lacks interactivity and the minimal use of learning media can also exacerbate students' learning difficulties. Thus, difficulty in understanding the material cannot be viewed solely as a weakness of the students, but rather as a reflection of a learning system that is not yet optimal.

Upon closer examination, the issues arising in the teaching of Akidah Akhlak lie not only in the teaching methods but also in the quality of the instructional materials used. The materials currently in use tend to be text-based, lack variety, and fail to comprehensively address students' learning needs. Husada et al. (2020) assert that good teaching materials should encourage students to think critically, analytically, and reflectively, rather than merely conveying information in a one-way manner. However, in practice, the teaching materials used remain focused on conveying content cognitively without providing space for the development of affective and psychomotor aspects. This results in learning that is less meaningful and fails to have a significant impact on the formation of students' character.

The limitations of instructional materials are also evident in the lack of integration between

learning content and approaches relevant to students' needs, such as a communicative approach. In fact, in 21st-century learning, communication skills are among the key competencies that must be developed. Rozani (2017) emphasizes that learning must be able to develop communication, collaboration, and critical thinking skills as part of students' life skills. However, existing teaching materials do not provide sufficient space for students to interact, discuss, and express their understanding. As a result, learning tends to be one-sided and does not actively involve students in the process of meaning-making.

Furthermore, the limitations of teaching materials are also evident in the suboptimal use of methods suited to students' developmental characteristics, particularly storytelling. In fact, from a developmental psychology perspective, students at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level are highly interested in stories and characters who can serve as role models. Dongoran et al. (2023) explain that children tend to build their self-concept through characters they admire in stories. However, the teaching materials currently in use do not fully utilize this potential, making learning less engaging and difficult to understand. This indicates a gap between student characteristics and the design of the teaching materials being used.

This situation further underscores that the challenges in teaching Akidah Akhlak are systemic and interrelated, involving teaching methods, instructional materials, and learning approaches. Zain (2017) states that the

development of innovative instructional materials is one of the key factors in creating enjoyable and effective learning experiences. Without innovation in instructional materials, learning tends to stagnate and fails to address the challenges of the modern era. In this context, teachers play a strategic role as learning designers who must be able to develop teaching materials in accordance with students' needs.

Thus, it can be concluded that the current state of Akidah Akhlak instruction still faces various limitations that result in low-quality learning. Low levels of student engagement and interest, as well as high levels of difficulty in understanding the material, indicate that the instructional materials currently in use are not meeting students' needs. These limitations are not only related to the presentation of the teaching materials but also to their substance, the approach, and the methods used. Therefore, comprehensive improvements are needed through the development of teaching materials that are more innovative, communicative, and tailored to students' characteristics so that Akidah Akhlak instruction can proceed more effectively and meaningfully.

Furthermore, when examined from the perspective of meaningful learning theory, this situation indicates that the Akidah Akhlak learning process has not yet been fully able to connect the material with students' real-life experiences. According to Ausubel's learning theory, learning is more effective when new information is linked to the cognitive structures students already possess.

However, instructional materials that are text-based and lack context make it difficult for students to connect concepts of Akidah and Akhlak to their daily lives. Consequently, learning tends to be rote memorization and does not have a long-term impact on character development. Additionally, the lack of variety in how the material is presented also results in low emotional engagement among students during learning. In fact, emotional engagement is a crucial factor in strengthening understanding and learning retention. In this context, a learning approach that emphasizes not only cognitive but also affective aspects is vital to develop. Therefore, the limitations of current teaching materials affect not only understanding but also the process of internalizing values—which should be the primary goal of Aqidah Akhlak education.

The Need for the Development of Teaching Materials on Islamic Beliefs and Ethics Based on a Communication Approach and the Storytelling Method

The research findings indicate a strong need for the development of Akidah Akhlak teaching materials based on storytelling methods and a communicative approach. This is reflected in the high percentage of students who expressed interest in materials containing stories, as well as their need for teaching materials that can help them form attitudes. The majority of students revealed that they prefer learning materials presented in the form of stories, and nearly all students stated that they need teaching materials

containing stories to help them understand and internalize moral values. These findings indicate that students' learning preferences tend to lean toward narrative and communicative approaches, rather than merely the textual delivery of information.

Theoretically, this trend can be explained through the perspective of developmental psychology, which states that elementary school-aged children have a strong interest in stories as a learning tool. Sadik (2008) asserts that stories play a crucial role in shaping children's self-concept, as students can identify values, attitudes, and behaviors considered ideal through the characters in the stories. In this context, stories serve not only as entertainment but also as an educational medium capable of transforming abstract values into something more concrete and easily understood. Therefore, students' high interest in stories represents a significant potential that needs to be accommodated in the development of instructional materials.

Furthermore, the need for story-based teaching materials is also closely linked to efforts to improve students' understanding of Akidah Akhlak material. As found in the research results, the majority of students still struggle to understand the material being taught. This indicates that the approaches used thus far have not been fully effective in helping students develop a deep understanding. In this regard, the storytelling method can serve as a relevant alternative solution. Arsyad (2017) states that the storytelling method can improve students' memory and

comprehension because information is presented in the form of a structured and meaningful narrative. Additionally, stories can stimulate students' imagination and emotional engagement, which ultimately strengthens the learning process.

The need for story-based teaching materials is also inseparable from their role in instilling moral values. The teaching of Akidah Akhlak is fundamentally aimed at shaping students' character and behavior in accordance with Islamic values. In this regard, the storytelling method has an advantage because it is able to convey moral messages implicitly through the plot and the characters presented. Jannah (2020) explains that through stories, students can learn from the characters' experiences, understand the consequences of each action, and emulate good behavior. Thus, stories become an effective tool in the process of internalizing values, as students not only understand them cognitively but also internalize them emotionally.

On the other hand, the research findings also indicate that the instructional materials currently in use do not make optimal use of storytelling methods. Most students stated that the textbooks they use do not contain stories, making learning less engaging and difficult to understand. This situation indicates a gap between students' needs and the availability of existing teaching materials. From the perspective of instructional material development, this gap serves as a crucial foundation for innovation. Husada et al. (2020) emphasize that innovative teaching materials must be able to adapt to students' needs and

characteristics, thereby enhancing motivation and learning outcomes.

In addition to the storytelling method, the need for a communicative approach is also a key aspect in the development of instructional materials. Effective learning depends not only on the content being presented, but also on how that content is communicated to students. The communicative approach emphasizes the importance of interaction between teachers and students, as well as students' active involvement in the learning process. Dongoran et al. (2023) state that the communicative approach aims to develop students' communicative competencies so that they are able to understand and convey messages effectively. In this context, instructional materials must be designed in such a way as to facilitate interaction, discussion, and reflection.

The integration of storytelling methods and a communicative approach in instructional materials is a necessity that is highly relevant to the characteristics of 21st-century learning. The combination of the two enables the creation of learning that is not only engaging but also interactive and meaningful. The storytelling method provides content rich in values and experiences, while the communication approach provides space for students to process, discuss, and internalize those values. Busyra and Azizah (2022) assert that the use of stories in learning can enhance students' critical and reflective thinking skills, especially when combined with discussion and question-and-answer activities.

Students' need for instructional materials that can help them form attitudes also highlights the importance of developing moral intelligence in the learning process. Nearly all students stated that they need teaching materials that can train their decision-making skills. This aligns with the view of Mulyono (2018), who states that education must equip students with the ability to make wise decisions when facing various situations. Anita et al., (2020) also emphasize that moral intelligence is a crucial aspect that must be developed through learning, as it is directly related to students' ability to distinguish between right and wrong.

Thus, the need to develop Akidah Akhlak teaching materials based on storytelling methods and a communicative approach is grounded not only in student preferences but also in pedagogical requirements and educational objectives themselves. The teaching materials developed must be able to address various existing issues, ranging from low interest in learning, difficulty in understanding the material, to weak internalization of values. Therefore, the development of teaching materials must be carried out systematically by considering the results of needs analysis, student characteristics, and the principles of effective learning.

Overall, the findings of this study confirm that the development of teaching materials based on storytelling methods and a communicative approach is an urgent need in the teaching of Akidah Akhlak. The integration of these two approaches is expected to create a more engaging, interactive, and meaningful

learning experience, thereby enhancing students' understanding and internalization of moral values. Thus, teaching materials serve not only as a medium for conveying content but also as a vehicle for value transformation that contributes to the holistic development of students' character.

Analysis of Findings and Research Novelty

Based on the research findings and discussion outlined above, several key findings can be identified that reflect the actual state of Akidah Akhlak instruction as well as the urgent need for its development. These findings not only illustrate the various challenges faced in instructional practice but also reveal a significant gap between student characteristics and the design of instructional materials used in the classroom. Teaching that still tends to be conventional, dominated by a textual approach, and the lack of integration of communication aspects and storytelling methods are the main factors contributing to low student interest, engagement, and understanding of the material. This situation indicates that teaching has not yet been fully able to meet the dynamic and diverse learning needs of students, particularly regarding the affective aspect and meaningful learning experiences.

Furthermore, the results of the needs analysis indicate a strong preference among students for instructional materials that are more engaging, communicative, and contextual. Students not only need material that is easy to

understand, but also desire a presentation style that sparks their interest and actively involves them in the learning process. This indicates that instructional materials play a strategic role—not merely as a medium for conveying information, but also as a means to build a holistic learning experience that involves cognitive, affective, and even psychomotor aspects. Thus, the development of innovative instructional materials is a necessity, particularly those capable of integrating communication approaches and storytelling methods as learning strategies that are more relevant to students’ characteristics.

In this context, this study does not merely stop at identifying problems but also

leads to the formulation of broader needs and scientific contributions. To provide a more systematic and structured overview, all research findings are summarized in a table that includes subtopics, key findings, and the novelty of the research. It is hoped that this tabular presentation will make it easier for readers to understand the relationship between the factual conditions in the field, development needs, and the theoretical and practical contributions resulting from this study. Thus, readers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the direction for developing more effective, innovative, and meaningful Akidah Akhlak learning.

Table 1. Analysis of Research Findings and Novelty

No	Subsection	Research Findings	Novelty
1	Learning conditions and limitations of akidah akhlak teaching materials	Learning is unengaging, student interest is low, and students struggle to understand the material. Teaching materials remain text-based, lack visual elements, are non-interactive, and do not align with students’ characteristics or support the internalization of values	Reveals that the problems in Akidah Akhlak learning are systemic (methods, teaching materials, and approaches), not limited to the students
2	The need to develop akidah akhlak teaching materials based on a communication approach and the storytelling method	Students need story-based, communicative, and visual teaching materials that help them understand the material and form attitudes. Learning preferences lean toward narrative and interactive approaches	Key innovation: the integration of storytelling methods and a communication based approach in the development of student-centered instructional materials
3	Synthesis of research novelty	The research formulates a direction for the development of innovative teaching materials that integrate pedagogical, psychological, and instructional design aspects to support more meaningful learning	It offers a conceptual model for Akidah Akhlak instructional materials that holistically integrates storytelling, communication, visualization, and the internalization of values

The table above shows that the challenges in teaching Akidah Akhlak cannot be understood in isolation but must be viewed as an interconnected whole comprising teaching methods, instructional materials, and the approaches employed. Low student interest and understanding are not solely due to internal factors but also stem from limitations in instructional design that have not yet been able to optimally accommodate students' learning needs. In this context, the need for innovative teaching materials is urgent, particularly those capable of integrating storytelling methods and a communicative approach. These two approaches have proven to have significant potential in enhancing student engagement—both cognitively and emotionally—thereby strengthening the process of internalizing moral values. Furthermore, the synthesis of innovations generated in this study makes a significant contribution to the development of more holistic Akidah Akhlak instructional materials, emphasizing not only knowledge but also the formation of attitudes and character. Thus, the results of this study are not merely descriptive but also provide practical guidance for teachers and curriculum developers in designing more effective, interactive, and meaningful learning experiences in line with the demands of 21st-century education.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, the main results indicate that the current teaching of Akidah Akhlak has not yet been able to meet students'

needs, whether in terms of engagement, understanding, or the internalization of values. This is evidenced by students' low levels of enjoyment and interest in the subject, as well as their continued difficulty in understanding the material. Furthermore, the instructional materials used tend to be conventional, unengaging, and do not yet accommodate approaches suited to students' characteristics. On the other hand, this study also found that students have a very high need for teaching materials that include stories and can help them understand the material and form attitudes. The storytelling method has proven to be an approach that students find appealing, as it provides a more concrete, emotional, and meaningful learning experience. This finding also underscores the importance of integrating a communicative approach into teaching materials to encourage student interaction and active engagement in the learning process.

The implications of this study are the need to develop innovative teaching materials for Akidah Akhlak by systematically integrating storytelling methods and a communicative approach. The teaching materials developed are expected not only to enhance cognitive understanding but also to holistically strengthen students' character development and moral intelligence.

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