Self-Paced Learning: Islamic Religious Education Learning Method in Elementary School during COVID-19 Pandemic

Efi Tri Astuti*
ISIMU Pacitan, Indonesia
Email: efitriastuti@gmail.com

M. Fahmi Maulana
STAINU Pacitan, Indonesia
Email: maulanafahmi2@gmail.com

Hussein Saadi Mohammed Ali
Kerbala University, Iraq
Email: hussein.s@uokerbala.edu.iq

*Corresponding Author
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Abstract
Teachers must be creative educators and be able to choose the right learning methods. This study aims to describe the implementation of the Self-Paced Learning method in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at SDN Pucangsewu, Pacitan District, Pacitan Regency. This study uses a qualitative approach, with a descriptive qualitative approach. The results of the study indicate that the application of the Self-Paced Learning method in Islamic Religious Education learning can help students increase enthusiasm, response, material understanding, and learning outcomes for fourth and fifth grade students. The application of this method is very relevant to the conditions of the physical distance policy. This method has the concept of independent learning with flexible time and is in accordance with Islamic Religious Education material. The learning media used include YouTube, Website, WhatsApp, and E-Books. The teacher provides material through media that is in accordance with the material during face-to-face learning at

school. The evaluation process is carried out according to the provisions of the 2013 curriculum. Besides having a positive impact on students, it also has an impact on teachers, namely increasing teacher creativity. However, the application of this method has drawbacks, depending on the availability of mobile devices.

**Keywords:** Self-Paced Learning, PAI, Pandemic, Elementary School

**INTRODUCTION**

Since the beginning of 2020, there has been a Covid 19 pandemic in Indonesia, which has changed the entire order and lifestyle of the Indonesian people (Amalia & Sa’adah, 2020), including the national education system that starts from basic education (the lowest level of education) to higher education. Basic education is held in order to develop attitudes and abilities, provide basic knowledge and skills as a provision for social life, and prepare themselves to take education to the next level (Maryono, 2017). The substance of the subjects taught at the elementary school level consists of thematic (Astuti, 2017), physical education, sports and arts, and Islamic religious education. Daradjad revealed that Islamic Religious Education is an effort to nurture and foster students so that they always understand the teachings of Islam as a whole, live their goals, and can practice them as a way of life (Ainiyah, 2013). Islamic religious education really contributes to the formation of the character of students (Musya’Adah, 2018). The subjects of Islamic Religious Education in Elementary Schools as a whole have similarities with religious education in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, but they are grouped into one package of subjects. In essence, the scope of it includes the realization of harmony and balance in the relationship between humans and Allah SWT, oneself, fellow humans, and also the environment (Sulistyowati, 2012).

Among government policies set to break the chain of the spread of the Covid-19 virus was in the field of education. In response to the spread
of the outbreak, the government initially gave instructions for implementing distance learning (Baber, 2020). Entering the 2021/2022 academic year, based on the Joint Decree of the four Ministers, educational institutions are given the flexibility to organize learning with limited face-to-face techniques (Husna & Sugito, 2021). Meanwhile, several other areas also apply blended learning strategies.

The Blended Learning strategy is believed to be effective in learning (Abdullah, 2018). The implementation of this strategy consists of three components, namely 1) online learning, 2) face-to-face learning, and 3) independent learning (Istiningsih & Hasbullah, 2015). One of the methods of independent learning is Self-Paced Learning—a learning method that allows students to learn anytime and anywhere online. The learning content needs to be specially designed, in terms of both text and multimedia, such as videos, animations, simulations, images, audio, or a combination of all of them. In addition, can also be packaged in the form of books, web, mobile, streaming audio, or streaming video (Nasution et al., 2019). The Self-Paced Learning method has several advantages, including time flexibility, the nature of providing comprehensive and comprehensive instructions, increased motivation and responsibility of students in their duties, and the ability to train teachers to be more creative in determining an interesting and effective learning media (Misko, 2000; Kindy et al., 2021).

In a pandemic condition that requires the implementation of limited face-to-face learning, this also affects the level of effectiveness of the achievement of learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education subjects. At SDN Pucangsewu, Islamic Religious Education teachers chose self-paced learning as the most effective learning method. In this regard, the results of this study will describe the concept and implementation of the self-paced learning method in Islamic Religious Education at SDN Pucangsewu, Pacitan District, Pacitan Regency.
Based on the results of an experiment conducted by Benjamin and Aaron (2011) with the title ‘On the effectiveness of self-paced learning,’ that the application of the Self-Paced Learning Method to students is more effective than traditional learning methods. This method gives time to students according to their respective abilities/captures (Tullis & Benjamin, 2011).

Research by Abdul Wahid Ulya in 2021 under the title ‘Problems of Learning Islamic Religious Education in a Pandemic Period,’ showed the problems faced by students in learning Islamic religious education online through virtual meetings; they found it difficult to understand the material, they had signals and network problems, laziness issues, students’ burden of practical religious tasks, and the lack of spiritual encouragement from educators (Ulya, 2021). To fill the research gap in the previous studies in the said domain, this study will discuss one method of Self-Paced Learning used in learning Islamic Religious Education in Elementary Schools.

METHODS
The study used a qualitative approach (Cresswell, 2013), which aims to maintain the form and content of the action and analyze the quantity to be converted into a qualitative entity (Mulyana, 2018), using descriptive qualitative research methods (Nurmalasari & Erdiantoro, 2020; Subandi, 2011). The research subjects were taken based on a purposive sampling technique (Bungin, 2011), namely, Islamic Religious Education teachers and students at SDN Pucangsewu fourth and fifth grades. Data collection was undertaken through interviews (Sugiyono, 2014), documentation (Suwandi, 2008), observation, and literature study. The interview stage was conducted with an audience of Islamic Religious Education teachers and students. Observations were made by looking directly at the learning process carried out. Meanwhile, the documentation stage was carried out by looking at the
media and student learning outcomes. Researchers were directly involved to examine the learning process at SDN Pucangsewu, Pacitan District, Pacitan Regency. The research was conducted over a period of 3 months. The data obtained was then analyzed with data reduction techniques, data presentation, conclusions, and verification. The results of the analysis will be tested for validity using the data triangulation method (Sugiyono, 2013).

DISCUSSION
The Problems of Learning Islamic Religious Education in Grades IV and V of SDN Pucangsewu, Pacitan District, Pacitan Regency.

The Covid-19 pandemic is a situation where the SARS-Cov-2 virus has attacked all regions of the world, one of which is Indonesia (Aeni, 2021). This pandemic was able to paralyze all aspects of life in a short time, including the field of education (Putri, 2020). Government policies set to break the chain of the spread of COVID-19 in the education sector have had a major impact on the learning process. One of the policies implemented in 2021 was the implementation of limited face-to-face learning. In the implementation of limited face-to-face learning, it is also necessary to apply the precautionary principle because it is related to the health and safety of residents in schools so the use of health protocols must be applied strictly in accordance with the rules of limited face-to-face implementation.

Limited face-to-face learning is a limitation on the number of students in one class, so it is necessary to regulate the number with a rotation system and a capacity of 50% of the normal number of students and arrange parental approval, implementation of strict health protocols, vaccinated education personnel, available supported facilities and infrastructure for implementing health protocols (Fitriansyah, 2022). Based on the interview results with the head master and the teacher, SDN Pucangsewu, Pacitan District, Pacitan Regency is a primary education level school that supports
government policies in breaking the Covid 19 chains. Since the odd semester of the 2021/2022 academic year, SDN Pucangsewu has implemented limited face-to-face learning. In its implementation concept, SDN Pucangsewu divided the total number of students into 2 study groups in each class, odd and even groups. The average number of students who entered every day was 12-15 students, whose health was previously confirmed good and whose parental permission was obtained. The school, together with the teacher, also prepared the infrastructure in accordance with the limited face-to-face learning standards.

The application of the limited face-to-face concept at SDN Pucangsewu, Pacitan District has an impact on the effectiveness of learning, one of which is in learning Islamic Religious Education. Some problems that arise in the learning process of Islamic Religious Education in the odd semester of the 2021/2022 academic year are:

First is student attendance; the presence of students at school is the physical and mental presence and participation of students in school activities and effective hours at school. The presence of students in the class (in this context is Islamic Religious Education learning of SDN Puacangsewu) can never reach 100% (calculated from 50% of students who are scheduled to enter). This is influenced by unfavorable physical conditions, such as flu, cough, runny nose, fever, etc. The absence of these students will automatically make hinder their understanding of the learning materials they have. This is exacerbated by the limited number of Islamic Religious Education package books that can be used by students, as well as the learning methods used by teachers (conventional learning methods, namely lectures/demonstrations).

Second is availability of material; during the process of implementing learning with limited face-to-face concepts, the materials that must be taught in Islamic Religious Education textbooks are not delivered optimally.
Although the curriculum has been simplified (as recommended by the minister of education), the learning materials have not been delivered as planned. Even at one time, there was often a difference in the limits of the content delivered between group 1 and group 2. Another factor that caused the material not to be delivered is the limited teaching materials (books) and learning modules.

Third is focus and student response. Learning is defined as the process of changing behavior as a result of the interaction between stimulus and response, while the response is the result or impact in the form of a physical reaction to the stimulus resulting from the act of learning (Sudarti, 2019). The Covid-19 condition that hit as well as the Study From Home (BDR) policy, which was implemented before face-to-face meetings, were limited and had quite an impact on the decrease in the enthusiasm of students to learn. The atmosphere of learning from home, which resembles a prolonged holiday, makes students lazy and careless about the subject matter that should be mastered. Fourth and fifth-grade students seemed less focused and active in learning Islamic Religious Education. Their focus continued to be diverted to gadgets that were always an alternative to finding answers to every given practice question. The response to activity during learning takes place was also very low. They tended to be passive and only listened to the material presented by the teacher and did not answer quickly and precisely the questions asked by the teacher.

Fourth are student learning outcomes. Unpreparedness and lack of focus in students' learning have an impact on the learning outcomes. Based on the results of the previous semester's evaluation (with reference to authentic assessment guidelines (Machali & Astuti, 2018)), 57% of the fourth and fifth-grade students at SDN Pucangsewu Pacitan experienced KKM (Minimum Completeness Criteria) not being achieved. Regarding an example of a case that occurred in fourth grade regarding the pillars of faith
material, almost 60% of the number of students who did not reach the KKM had to repeat. It is the same as the fifth grade case, one of which is on the subject of fasting.

This is considered a failure for Islamic Religious Education teachers. Moreover, when knowing the results of the evaluation of students who turned out to be not fluent in reading the verses of the Qur'an contained in the package book or Student Worksheet.

So in this context, the problems that arose during the learning of Islamic Religious Education took place until the evaluation was fully carried out. The researcher concludes that new policies and models in the learning process have a significant impact on students. One of the negative impacts is the decline in student learning outcomes in terms of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects.


The emergence of problems in learning Islamic Religious Education demands a new solution that must be taken by the teacher. In the context of limited face-to-face learning, Islamic Religious Education teachers at Pucangsewu Elementary School, Pacitan District, Pacitan Regency applied the Blended Learning model. The teachers combined the concept of face-to-face learning with the Self-Paced Learning method.

Self-Paced Learning is an independent learning method, a learning method that is not bound by time or place. By using the Self-Paced Learning method, students can repeat the learning material presented until they master it. According to the Islamic Religious Education teacher, this method is considered very relevant to the current policy conditions. This learning method does not require participants to be online together with the teacher, as is the case with online schools or most online courses. Because all learning
materials are available, students can freely access material and learn at a pace of their own understanding (Misko, 2000; Kindy et al., 2021). The Self-Paced Learning method has advantages: the learning process is more independent (allows students to determine the study time according to their wishes and needs); it minimizes stress; it can adapt to learning styles (both relaxed and serious); and content is available and permanent (learning content can be listened to repeatedly until students understand). The weaknesses of this method include, on the other hand, include: students do not know what to learn; absence of direct interaction is an issue (making it possible not to answer the questions they want to know); and some students are constrained by learning tools (this is influenced by the different financial conditions of the parents of students)(Misko, 2000; Tullis & Benjamin, 2011).

The application of the Self-Paced Learning method in learning Islamic Religious Education in four and fifth grades at SDN Pucangsewu, Pacitan District, Pacitan Regency is as follows:

First is the combination of learning models. Technically, the Self-Paced Learning method goes hand in hand with the direct/face-to-face learning method. The introduction of the material was initially given face to face at the school. Due to limited time and sources of teaching materials (modules and textbooks), it is difficult to provide direct and comprehensive materials. The concept in the Self-Paced Learning method has the same goals as face-to-face learning, so in its implementation it goes hand in hand.

Second is the learning media of Self-Paced Learning method to be specially designed, both text and multimedia, such as: videos, animations, simulations, images, audio, or a combination of all of them. In addition, they can also be packaged in the form of books, web, mobile, streaming audio, or streaming video (Nasution et al., 2019). The learning media used in the Self-Paced Learning method in learning Islamic Religious Education at SDN Pucangsewu in four and fifth grades are:
Third are Youtube videos. Along with the habits of students operating gadgets, the material is presented in the form of animated videos. Some videos are made directly by the teacher and some take videos from other people's YouTube channels (the material is adjusted to the needs). Through these media, students can learn by listening, seeing, and even imitating the content presented. The YouTube link is shared with students through a Whatsapp group medium. Students can repeat the material presented via a YouTube link until they understand.

Fourth is Whatsapp, which is used as a medium of communication among students, teachers, and parents. After going through the learning process in the classroom, the teacher distributes additional material (sharing YouTube links or website links) through the Whatsapp group. The teacher also asks all parents to remind and monitor students so that they always listen to each material that is distributed independently.

Fifth are websites, which are online information windows. In the context of learning Islamic Religious Education, websites greatly contribute to the existence of materials that are relevant to the material of Islamic religious education being taught. Learning through this website also has easy access. In addition, it also has the appearance of a textbook at school.

Sixth are online Books/e-books. The Islamic Religious Education teacher at SDN Pucangsewu, Pacitan District, Pacitan Regency also distributed PAI e-books to all students. The distribution of the e-book is intended to provide anticipation for students who, if at any time do not have an Internet quota, can still access it to learn.

Seventh are learning materials. Learning materials are knowledge, skills, and attitudes that must be mastered by students in order to meet the specified competency standards. Learning materials are chosen as optimally as possible to assist students in achieving competency standards and basic competencies. Things that need to be considered regarding the selection of
learning materials are the type, scope, sequence, and treatment of learning materials (Sabarudin, 2018). The learning material presented in the Self-Paced Learning method is the same as the material taught in face-to-face learning in schools. The material presented through Youtube, websites, and e-books is supplementary material that is complementary to the material that has been delivered during face-to-face learning at school. Thus, it is hoped that students will be able to understand more deeply the material being taught. Even in certain materials such as recitation, taharah, and prayer, it is expected that students be able to practice it perfectly.

Eighth is evaluation technique; the evaluation technique used in the Self-Paced Learning method is to become one with face-to-face learning at school. Students are given test and non-test questions. As the evaluation guideline or assessment in the 2013 curriculum, the assessment must be carried out by measuring learning outcomes in three aspects, namely cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects (Machali & Astuti, 2018). Test-based questions were used to measure their understanding in cognitive aspects, while non-test questions were used to measure their understanding in psychomotor and affective aspects (for example perfection of attitude in prayer, the perfection of ablution, accuracy in reading verses of the Qur'an in the lesson).


The implementation of the Self-Paced Learning method in learning Islamic Religious Education at SDN Pucangsewu in fourth and fifth grades certainly has negative and positive impacts. There are three positive impacts found in this research, including:

First, it is passion for learning with time flexibility. Based on the theory that has been written in the previous sub-chapter, one of the advantages of
the Self-Paced Learning method is to use the flexible time according to the needs of students. Study time is not tied to the time and place of learning. In the context of Islamic Religious Education Learning at SDN Pucangsewu, this is very relevant. The use of YouTube as a learning medium provides a new variation in the learning atmosphere. The material presented is packaged in the form of videos and book displays that are more attractive and colorful. Students who basically like to play with gadgets and watch YouTube have greater enthusiasm. More than that, students can learn according to their activities with no time or space constraints.

Second is student understanding. One of the other advantages in using the Self-Paced Learning method is that it allows opportunities for students to repeat learning materials. The application of the method can help students in fourth and fifth grades at SDN Pucangsewu, Pacitan District, Pacitan Regency understand more easily Islamic Religious Education learning materials in the context of memorization, practice movements, and reading verses of the Qur'an. It is easier for students to understand the learning material by giving examples in videos and e-books.

Third are learning outcomes. Based on the evaluation results that have been carried out, it was found that with the Self-Paced Learning method in Islamic Religious Education learning, student learning outcomes are more leveraged. The number of students undergoing remedial has decreased. In the affective and psychomotor aspects, student learning outcomes are also better. A simple example, students can read verses in textbooks and can also practice prayer movements perfectly.

Fourth is teacher creativity; the application of the Self-Paced Learning method will automatically make teachers more active and creative. In the context of applying this method, teachers must try to hone creativity in presenting material, both in the form of e-books and learning videos
uploaded on YouTube. Islamic Religious Education teachers must continue to try to establish closeness with students and their parents.

Beside that, an application of learning methods and media selection must have drawbacks or negative impacts. The negative impacts of applying this method are higher costs related to Internet quota purchases and the intensity of students in operating gadgets (it is feared that there will be radiation effects that can disrupt the eye health of students and teachers).

The inhibiting factors in the application of the Self-Paced Learning method are: (1) the topography of the Pacitan area, which is in the mountains so it can affect network stability; (2) the varying economic conditions of the students (the poor will object); and (3) the availability of gadgets (not all students have personal cellphones. Some of them still use their parents' cellphones).

CONCLUSION

The learning method is also a determinant of the success of the learning process. One of the effective learning methods applied in learning Islamic Religious Education during the Covid 19 pandemic is the Self-Paced Learning method. This method has the concept of independent learning with flexible time and has conformity with Islamic Religious Education material. The learning media used by the teacher in this method include YouTube, Website, WhatsApp, and E-Books. The teacher provides material through these media in line with the material when face-to-face learning at school. The evaluation process was also carried out by applying the provisions of the 2013 curriculum. This application of this method is very relevant to the current policy conditions and is also able to increase the effectiveness of the Islamic Religious Education learning process. Learning via this method makes it easy for students to understand practice-based material (in terms of worship practice), and it also has an impact on teachers, namely increasing teacher creativity.
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