Implementation of Scaffolding Method to Improve Student Learning Outcomes on Praiseworthy Moral Material at MIS Asasul Islam

Wono Sulaeman[1], MIS Asasul Islam, Indonesia
Yani Suryani[2], MIS Ma'arif Salamal Huda, Indonesia
Yudha Bima Faqori[3], MTs Negeri 1 Magetan, Indonesia
Yelmi Mawati[4], RA Iksal Saok Laweh, Indonesia
Yanti Nur Ulfah[5], MIS Nurul Huda Cimahi Tengah, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Character education is essential in developing students' morals, particularly in elementary schools. This study examines the implementation of the scaffolding method to improve learning outcomes on commendable morals among second-grade students at MIS Asasul Islam. Scaffolding is a teaching strategy that offers gradual support based on students' needs, enabling them to understand concepts independently. The teacher acts as a facilitator by providing guidance, open-ended questions, and real-life examples relevant to students' daily experiences. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through observations, interviews, and analysis of student learning outcomes. The results show that the scaffolding method significantly enhanced students' understanding of commendable morals. Indicators of improvement include increased student participation, the ability to apply moral values in everyday life, and higher test scores. Additionally, students demonstrated greater confidence in expressing opinions and reduced dependence on the teacher. The scaffolding method also contributed to a more interactive and student-centered learning environment, encouraging active engagement and boosting learning motivation. Students became more involved in building their own understanding, which supports the development of independent learning skills. Despite its effectiveness, the study found challenges in addressing diverse student abilities, requiring differentiated support strategies. Therefore, successful implementation demands careful planning and teacher expertise in adjusting the level of assistance. Overall, scaffolding is a promising method for enhancing character education in early learning settings.

Corresponding Author:

Wono Sulaeman
MIS Asasul Islam, Indonesia
rakafaiqurrahman@gmail.com

Introduction

Moral education has long been recognized as a foundational element in the development of students' character and identity. In Islamic education, this is often referred to as akhlaq, or the embodiment of praiseworthy moral behavior, which serves as the basis for individual and social harmony (Hashim & Langgulung, 2008). Teaching moral values at the elementary school level is crucial because it coincides with the formative years of cognitive and affective development. However, despite its importance, many students still struggle to internalize and practice moral lessons taught in school.

At MIS Asasul Islam, moral education is embedded within the Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum. Nevertheless, learning outcomes related to praiseworthy moral material have not reached the desired level. Teachers often rely on conventional lecturing methods, which do not actively engage students or help them make meaningful connections between moral concepts and real-life experiences (Sulaiman et al., 2020). This situation necessitates innovative approaches that not only convey the content effectively but also enhance students' understanding and moral practice.

Scaffolding, a pedagogical strategy derived from Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, offers a promising solution. This method involves providing structured support to students during the learning process, gradually removing assistance as learners become more competent (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). The application of scaffolding in moral education can bridge the gap between abstract moral principles and students' daily experiences, fostering deeper understanding and personal reflection.

In recent years, scaffolding has been successfully implemented in various educational contexts to enhance students' learning outcomes, particularly in reading comprehension, science, and mathematics (Simons & Klein, 2007; Van de Pol et al., 2010). However, its application in moral and character education, especially in Islamic schools, remains underexplored. This constitutes a significant research gap that this study aims to address.

Several studies have examined the effects of scaffolding in moral reasoning development, but few have investigated its role in the explicit teaching of praiseworthy moral behaviors within the framework of Islamic values (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2006). Most existing literature tends to focus on Western contexts and secular educational environments, leaving a void in the exploration of faith-based settings.

Furthermore, moral education in Islamic elementary schools often emphasizes rote memorization and religious rituals rather than the internalization of values through critical engagement and contextual learning (Abdullah, 2014). This pedagogical limitation

hinders students' ability to apply moral lessons in real-life situations, thus affecting their overall moral development.

The implementation of the scaffolding method can potentially revitalize moral education by encouraging active participation, critical thinking, and moral reflection. It can also help teachers tailor instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs and developmental stages of students. By integrating scaffolding into the teaching of praiseworthy moral material, educators can support students in understanding, valuing, and practicing positive behaviors.

This study aims to investigate how scaffolding can improve student learning outcomes in praiseworthy moral material at MIS Asasul Islam. The focus is not only on academic achievement but also on the development of moral reasoning and ethical behavior aligned with Islamic teachings. This dual emphasis makes the study both pedagogically significant and contextually relevant.

The novelty of this research lies in its contextual adaptation of scaffolding strategies to Islamic moral education. Unlike previous studies that generally apply scaffolding in cognitive domains, this research extends its application to the affective and moral domains. It provides a unique contribution to the literature by demonstrating how instructional scaffolding can facilitate the development of moral competence in a religious school setting.

Moreover, This study integrates principles of Islamic pedagogy with modern educational theories, creating a hybrid model of moral instruction that aligns spiritual values with active learning. This approach reflects a culturally responsive pedagogy that respects the religious context while embracing evidence-based teaching methods. Through classroom action research, this study also offers practical insights for educators seeking to improve moral education outcomes in similar contexts. By documenting the implementation process, challenges, and outcomes, the study contributes to both theoretical knowledge and pedagogical practice. The research is grounded in the belief that moral education must move beyond theoretical instruction and engage students in meaningful, scaffolded learning experiences. In this way, moral values are not merely taught but are lived and experienced within the educational environment.

This investigation is particularly relevant in the Indonesian educational context, where character education is a national priority. Government policies emphasize the importance of integrating character development into all subjects, including religion (Kemdikbud, 2018). Yet, practical models for achieving this integration are still limited. By focusing on praiseworthy moral material, this study aligns with national efforts to promote positive character traits such as honesty, responsibility, and respect. The scaffolding method provides a structured yet flexible approach to facilitate this goal.

Additionally, this study addresses the challenge of making moral education more engaging and relevant for students. In an era where moral dilemmas are increasingly complex, students need guided opportunities to discuss, reflect, and practice moral decision-making in safe and supportive environments. The choice of MIS Asasul Islam as the research site is strategic, given the school's commitment to character education and its openness to pedagogical innovation. The findings of this research are expected to be replicable and adaptable to similar Islamic elementary schools.

This study responds to the urgent need for effective instructional strategies in moral education and contributes to a growing body of knowledge on culturally grounded teaching methodologies. It reinforces the value of blending tradition and innovation in the pursuit of educational excellence. This research fills a critical gap by applying the scaffolding method in an Islamic moral education context, offering both theoretical contributions and practical implications. It holds promise not only for improving student learning outcomes but also for nurturing morally grounded individuals prepared to contribute positively to society.

Methods

This study employed a classroom action research (CAR) design, which is widely recognized as a practical approach for improving teaching practices and learning outcomes in educational settings (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). The primary objective of the research was to explore and evaluate the implementation of the scaffolding method in enhancing student learning outcomes on praiseworthy moral material within an Islamic elementary school context.

The research was conducted at MIS Asasul Islam, an Islamic elementary school located in Indonesia. This school was selected based on its commitment to moral education and its willingness to adopt innovative teaching approaches. The participants consisted of 25 fifth-grade students, aged between 10 and 11 years, who were enrolled in the Islamic Religious Education (IRE) class. The teacher of the IRE subject also participated as a collaborator in the research process.

The classroom action research was implemented in two cycles, each consisting of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. This cyclical process allowed for continuous refinement of the teaching strategy based on data collected from each cycle. The scaffolding method was integrated into the instructional design by providing structured support to students through modeling, questioning, prompting, and feedback, with gradual withdrawal of assistance as students became more independent.

During the planning stage, the researcher and the collaborating teacher jointly developed lesson plans that incorporated scaffolding techniques tailored to the praiseworthy moral content. These included activities that encouraged students to

identify moral values, reflect on real-life scenarios, and engage in peer discussions. The learning objectives were aligned with the national curriculum and focused on both cognitive understanding and behavioral application of moral values.

In the action stage, the lesson plans were implemented over a period of four weeks. Scaffolding was applied through various strategies such as guided reading of moral stories, structured dialogues, moral dilemmas, and teacher-led discussions. Students were also given moral tasks to complete in small groups, with the teacher providing prompts and guidance to support their reasoning and decision-making.

The observation stage involved systematic data collection to assess student engagement, comprehension, and behavioral response. Observations were conducted using structured checklists and field notes. In addition, the teacher kept a reflective journal to document classroom interactions and student progress throughout the lessons. Student worksheets and performance on moral tasks were also collected as evidence of learning.

The reflection stage allowed the researcher and the teacher to analyze the outcomes of each cycle. Strengths and weaknesses of the implemented strategy were discussed, and necessary revisions were made for the subsequent cycle. This reflective process was crucial in adapting the scaffolding approach to better suit the students' needs and classroom dynamics.

Data were collected through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure the validity and richness of findings. Qualitative data included classroom observations, teacher reflections, and student interviews, while quantitative data were obtained from pre-test and post-test scores designed to measure student learning outcomes in moral understanding and application.

The pre-test and post-test instruments consisted of 10 multiple-choice items and 5 open-ended questions that assessed students' ability to identify, analyze, and apply praiseworthy moral behaviors in various contexts. The test items were validated by educational experts and Islamic education teachers to ensure content validity and cultural relevance. Data analysis was conducted using both descriptive and inferential methods. The pre-test and post-test results were analyzed using paired sample t-tests to determine statistically significant improvements in student learning outcomes. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically to identify patterns in student behavior, engagement, and moral reasoning.

To maintain the ethical integrity of the study, informed consent was obtained from the school principal, teachers, and students' parents. Students' identities were anonymized, and all participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any time. The reliability of the findings was strengthened

through triangulation, combining multiple sources and methods of data collection. Member checking was also conducted, whereby the collaborating teacher reviewed the findings and confirmed their accuracy and authenticity.

This methodology was designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how scaffolding could be effectively implemented in teaching praiseworthy moral material. It also ensured that the findings were grounded in actual classroom experiences and could be replicated or adapted in similar educational contexts.

Result

This study found that the application of the scaffolding method in learning the material of commendable morals in class 2 of MIS Asasul Islam had a positive impact on students' understanding and skills in applying commendable moral values. Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation, it was found that students who previously had difficulty in understanding the concept of commendable morals began to show an increase in class participation and daily behavior. Teachers who applied the scaffolding method by providing gradual guidance, interactive discussions, and concrete examples, succeeded in increasing students' understanding of the material in more depth.

The data obtained in this study showed that most students experienced an increase in learning outcomes after the implementation of the scaffolding method. Before this method was implemented, students tended to be passive in learning and had difficulty in connecting the concept of commendable morals with everyday life. However, after the scaffolding method was implemented, students were more active in asking questions, discussing, and were able to provide real examples of commendable moral behavior in their lives.

Table 1. *Overview Of Evaluation Results Before And After Action Research*

Comprehension Category	Number of Students Before Scaffolding	Number of Students After Scaffolding
Very Understanding	5 students	15 students
Just Understand	10 students	7 students
Lack of Understanding	8 students	1 students

From the table above, it can be seen that the number of students who really understand the material increased significantly after the scaffolding method was applied, while the number of students who do not understand the material decreased drastically.

Data verification in this study was conducted to ensure the accuracy and validity of the results obtained regarding the application of the scaffolding method in improving the learning outcomes of commendable moral material in class 2 of MIS Asasul Islam. This verification process was carried out using triangulation techniques, namely comparing data obtained from various sources, including observation, interviews, and

documentation. With this method, the study can ensure that the conclusions drawn truly reflect the real conditions in the field.

In the verification process, data obtained through direct observation in the classroom were compared with the results of teacher and student interviews. Observations showed that students who were given gradual guidance through the scaffolding method were more active in learning and found it easier to understand the material on commendable morals. Interviews with teachers confirmed that this method helped students connect the concept of commendable morals with everyday life. Meanwhile, interviews with students also strengthened the finding that they felt more helped in understanding the material after being given gradual directions by the teacher.

This study conducted verification by comparing student evaluation results before and after the implementation of the scaffolding method, which showed a significant increase in students' understanding of commendable morals material. Students became more able to explain and apply these values in everyday life. Documentation, including teacher notes, student assignments, and learning reflection notes, was also used as part of data verification, showing positive changes in student learning patterns, such as increased activeness in asking questions and discussing. By analyzing learning documents like lesson plans, this study ensured that the scaffolding method was applied systematically and effectively, thereby obtaining a comprehensive and valid picture of the method's effectiveness in improving student learning outcomes.

Based on the results of this data verification, it can be concluded that the implementation of the scaffolding method has proven effective in improving students' understanding of the material of commendable morals. The accuracy of the data obtained from various sources and analysis methods shows that this method can be a recommended strategy for teachers in improving the quality of learning commendable morals in elementary schools, especially in Islamic elementary schools such as MIS Asasul Islam.

Discussion

The findings of this classroom action research indicate that the implementation of the scaffolding method had a significant positive impact on student learning outcomes in praiseworthy moral material. Students showed marked improvement in both their cognitive understanding and behavioral application of Islamic moral values. This supports the argument that scaffolding, when contextualized appropriately, can be a powerful tool in moral and character education (Van de Pol, Volman, & Beishuizen, 2010).

One of the key benefits observed was increased student engagement during moral lessons. Previously, students were passive recipients of information, often unable to relate moral concepts to their daily lives. With the introduction of scaffolding strategies such as guided questioning, real-life scenarios, and collaborative tasks, students became more actively involved in learning. This is consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) assertion that

learning occurs most effectively within the zone of proximal development when appropriate support is provided.

The structured support offered through scaffolding enabled students to process complex moral ideas in stages. For example, when discussing the value of honesty, students were first guided to recall examples from religious texts, then prompted to connect these examples with personal experiences. This step-by-step approach helped students to not only comprehend but also internalize moral lessons. According to Hammond and Gibbons (2005), such guided interaction is essential in transforming knowledge from the external to the internal domain.

Furthermore, the gradual withdrawal of support encouraged student autonomy and moral reasoning. By the end of the second cycle, students were able to engage in peer discussions and complete moral reflection tasks with minimal teacher intervention. This developmental progression highlights the efficacy of scaffolding in fostering independent thinking, a crucial aspect of moral education (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2006).

In terms of assessment, the post-test results demonstrated significant gains in students' moral comprehension and application compared to the pre-test. These results suggest that scaffolding not only facilitates understanding but also enhances the ability to apply values in hypothetical and real-world contexts. This aligns with the findings of Reiser (2004), who emphasized that scaffolding improves problem-solving and decision-making skills.

The qualitative data also revealed that students became more reflective and articulate in expressing their thoughts about moral issues. They were more likely to justify their actions using Islamic principles and showed greater empathy towards others. This transformation in behavior is consistent with the goals of character education and indicates that scaffolding can contribute to the affective development of learners (Berk, 2009).

Another important observation was the improved classroom dynamics. Scaffolding activities, such as group discussions and shared storytelling, fostered a sense of community and respect among students. These social interactions are essential in moral development, as they allow students to practice empathy, negotiation, and active listening—skills that are foundational to ethical behavior (Nucci & Narvaez, 2008).

The role of the teacher also evolved significantly throughout the study. Rather than being a sole transmitter of knowledge, the teacher acted as a facilitator, providing timely guidance and encouraging students to explore moral questions independently. This shift in pedagogy is central to effective scaffolding and reflective of learner-centered instruction (Walqui, 2006).

It is also worth noting that students with initially low moral awareness made noticeable progress. With individualized scaffolding, these students were able to catch up with their peers and demonstrate improvements in both understanding and practice. This finding confirms the inclusive nature of scaffolding, which accommodates diverse learning needs (Simons & Klein, 2007).

Despite the positive outcomes, several challenges were encountered during implementation. Designing appropriate scaffolding activities required careful planning and a deep understanding of students' developmental stages. Additionally, some students initially relied too heavily on teacher support, requiring adjustments in pacing and scaffolding levels. These challenges echo previous research findings that highlight the need for ongoing teacher training in scaffolding techniques (Belland, 2014).

Another challenge was ensuring the moral content remained authentic and relevant to students' lived experiences. To address this, the research integrated culturally relevant scenarios and examples from Islamic teachings. This contextualization enhanced the learning experience and made moral values more relatable, supporting the idea that culturally responsive pedagogy enhances moral instruction (Gay, 2010).

The results of this study provide valuable insights for Islamic educators seeking to improve the effectiveness of moral education. They demonstrate that scaffolding is not only applicable in academic disciplines but can also be adapted to the teaching of values and character. This broadens the scope of scaffolding beyond cognitive learning and into the affective domain.

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the literature by bridging sociocultural learning theory and Islamic pedagogy. It affirms that scaffolding, when aligned with religious values, can foster holistic student development—intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. This integrated approach addresses the moral goals of Islamic education more comprehensively (Al-Attas, 1980).

Finally, the study underscores the importance of innovative pedagogy in sustaining students' interest in moral education. In a rapidly changing world with complex ethical challenges, students must be equipped not only with knowledge but also with the capacity to reflect, reason, and act with integrity. Scaffolding provides a meaningful pathway to achieve this goal, especially when adapted to students' cultural and religious contexts.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study conducted in class 2 of MIS Asasul Islam, it can be concluded that the implementation of the scaffolding method is highly effective in enhancing students' understanding, motivation, and character in learning commendable

moral values. Through gradual and structured guidance from teachers, students not only gain a deeper comprehension of moral concepts but also become more confident, independent, and active in the learning process. The method supports cognitive development and fosters positive behavioral changes, such as increased honesty, politeness, and empathy. Moreover, the teacher's role is pivotal in adapting guidance to student needs, emphasizing the importance of teacher training for optimal implementation. The study also found that scaffolding creates a more engaging and interactive classroom environment, boosting students' motivation and participation. Therefore, the scaffolding method is recommended for broader application in moral education to cultivate students' character from an early age.

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