



Descriptive Study of The Application of The Mind Mapping Method in Learning Islamic Civilization History Courses

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Abstract

This study addresses the monotonous use of lecture-based methods in teaching the History of Islamic Civilization (SPI) at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, UIN KH Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan. It aims to examine the implementation of the mind mapping method as an innovative alternative to enhance student engagement and comprehension. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach within a case study design, data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings reveal that the integration of the mind mapping method in SPI learning occurs through several key stages: establishing learning contracts, deepening conceptual understanding, creating and presenting mind maps, delivering material using mind mapping, and conducting interactive discussions. The study identifies both supporting and inhibiting factors influencing the implementation process. Supporting factors include students' enthusiasm, collaborative learning, and the flexibility of online learning platforms, while inhibiting factors relate to limited digital skills and time constraints. Overall, the application of the mind mapping method fosters creativity, strengthens analytical thinking, enhances comprehension of historical materials, and provides a reference for developing more interactive learning models. The findings imply that adopting mind mapping in higher education, particularly in historical studies, can transform traditional pedagogical practices into more participatory and student-centered learning experiences.

Keywords: *Mind Mapping; Islamic Civilization; Teaching Method; Descriptive Study; History Course*

Introduction

One of the essential obligations of university lecturers under the *Tridharma of Higher Education* is education. This responsibility goes beyond merely transmitting knowledge and presenting material according to textbooks or personal expertise. Lecturers are also required to deliver content effectively, create a conducive learning atmosphere, and encourage active student engagement during the learning process. Although anyone with adequate knowledge may assume the role of a lecturer, the teaching profession demands mastery of pedagogical competence. A professional lecturer should therefore possess the ability to apply appropriate learning methods, develop learning tools, and stimulate students' curiosity and motivation (Samoda 2022). In this regard, the lecturer functions not only as a source of knowledge but also as a facilitator and regulator of classroom dynamics, ensuring that the process of teaching and learning is both meaningful and effective.

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A Research Article

Learning itself is a process rather than a product. It involves a dynamic system of interconnected elements—student motivation, learning materials, instructional tools, the learning environment, and the condition of the learners—all of which influence behavioral change (Hamalik 2011). Within this system, learning aids and methods play a pivotal role in fostering students' capacity to express ideas and realize their potential. With appropriate pedagogical strategies, the learning process can activate students' internal motivation and cultivate awareness of the importance of learning, leading to deeper understanding and retention of knowledge (Djamaluddin et al., n.d.). Consequently, the selection of teaching methods has a direct impact on students' engagement and the overall effectiveness of learning.

In the context of history education, however, these pedagogical ideals are often not fully realized. History as a discipline is frequently perceived as monotonous, overly theoretical, and lacking practical relevance. Many students and even the public tend to underestimate the importance of studying history, viewing it as a subject that deals merely with the past and offering little contribution to contemporary life. Yet, understanding the past is crucial for interpreting the present and shaping the future. Historical inquiry connects time, events, and interpretation, and its learning process requires active engagement and critical reflection. Unfortunately, history classes often rely heavily on rote memorization and textual learning, which restrict students' analytical abilities and critical awareness (Nggermanto 2002).

This problem is also evident in the teaching of the *History of Islamic Civilization* (Sejarah Peradaban Islam or SPI). The SPI course explores the intellectual, political, scientific, and cultural achievements of Islamic societies from the time of the Prophet Muhammad to the modern era (Zubaidah 2016). Through this subject, students are expected to develop historical awareness and appreciation for the evolution of Islamic civilization. However, despite its rich and dynamic content, the teaching of SPI in Islamic higher education institutions (PTKIN) often remains dominated by conventional lecture-based approaches (Fauzi 2019; Fauziah 2013; Widyawati 2022). Such methods tend to position students as passive recipients of information, thereby limiting opportunities for inquiry, creativity, and deeper conceptual understanding.

To address these pedagogical challenges, the integration of innovative learning models is crucial. One such model is the *mind mapping* method, which visually represents connections between ideas, encourages active learning, and helps students organize complex information systematically. Mind mapping can stimulate both hemispheres of the brain, balancing analytical and creative thinking (Nggermanto 2002). In the context of SPI learning, this method has the potential to transform abstract historical narratives into structured, meaningful, and memorable knowledge frameworks.

To strengthen the theoretical foundation of this study, the use of the mind mapping method can be situated within the broader framework of constructivist learning theory and cognitive learning perspectives. From a constructivist viewpoint, learning occurs when students actively construct meaning based on their prior knowledge and experiences (Olusegun, 2015). Mind mapping facilitates this process by enabling learners to visualize relationships among concepts and reorganize knowledge into coherent structures that reflect their understanding. In line with cognitive learning principles, mind mapping also helps to reduce students' cognitive overload by transforming complex information into visual and hierarchical forms, thereby improving retention and comprehension (Kefalis, Skordoulis, & Drigas, 2025). This alignment suggests that mind mapping not only functions as a learning strategy but also enhances meaningful learning through structured and creative engagement.

Furthermore, in the context of teaching the history of Islamic civilization (SPI), mind mapping plays a crucial role in developing historical thinking skills, such as chronological reasoning, causal interpretation, and contextual understanding of past events (Prayogi, 2025; Prayogi et al., 2025). Through mind mapping, students can connect historical narratives, identify thematic relationships, and synthesize the intellectual and cultural developments that shaped Islamic civilization. Despite the increasing number of studies on Islamic education, discussions on innovative pedagogical methods in Islamic civilization learning remain scarce. Therefore, this study contributes to bridging that gap by exploring how the mind mapping method can enrich SPI pedagogy, promoting cognitive engagement, creativity, and a deeper appreciation of Islamic intellectual heritage.

Several studies have previously examined the use of mind mapping in history or SPI education. For example, Damanhuri and Sumaryati (2020) demonstrated that mind mapping increased student motivation in the SPI course at PIAUD STAI Darussalam Lampung. Similarly, Samoda (2022) found that this method enhanced students' understanding of Islamic history at IAIN Ponorogo. While these studies underscore the pedagogical value of mind mapping, they primarily adopt a classroom action research (CAR) approach and focus on measurable outcomes such as motivation and comprehension improvement. Few studies, however, have explored the *processual dynamics* of how mind mapping is implemented in different institutional contexts and how lecturers and students experience this method in practice.

Based on this research gap, the present study aims to provide an in-depth descriptive account of the implementation of the mind mapping method in SPI learning at UIN KH Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan. Unlike previous studies that emphasize quantitative improvement or action research cycles, this article adopts a qualitative, case study approach that highlights the nuances of the teaching–learning process, student responses, and contextual factors influencing implementation. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on *how* the method operates in practice rather than *how much* it improves learning outcomes. It seeks to capture the lived experiences and interactions that occur during SPI instruction using mind mapping, thus contributing to the broader discussion of innovative pedagogies in Islamic higher education.

Ultimately, this research aims not only to illustrate the practical application of the mind mapping method but also to reframe the discourse on history learning within Islamic studies. By emphasizing creativity, critical engagement, and active participation, this study aspires to demonstrate that teaching Islamic civilization can move beyond traditional narration toward a more student-centered, reflective, and transformative learning experience.

Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design to explore the implementation of the mind mapping method in learning the History of Islamic Civilization (SPI) at UIN KH Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan. The case study design was chosen because it allows an in-depth and holistic understanding of a specific phenomenon within its real context (Hardani et al. 2020). The qualitative descriptive approach emphasizes process over outcome and seeks to capture meaning from participants' experiences through inductive reasoning (Prayogi, Nuryani, and Shilla 2022). This approach was considered

appropriate for examining how lecturers and students perceive and experience (Prayogi 2022) the use of mind mapping as an instructional method in a natural educational setting.

The research was conducted during the 2021–2022 academic year in an online learning environment. Participants consisted of five classes enrolled in the SPI course, comprising three classes from the Islamic Education (PAI) study program and two classes from the Early Childhood Islamic Education (PIAUD) program. Each class consisted of approximately 30 to 35 students. The researcher served as both the lecturer and the main instrument of the study, directly involved in the teaching and learning process. To enrich the data, information was also gathered from two other SPI lecturers and five student representatives who participated in interviews to share their perspectives and experiences related to the application of mind mapping in SPI courses.

Data collection techniques included interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were used to explore the perceptions and experiences of lecturers and students regarding the implementation of the mind mapping method. Observations were conducted during online learning sessions to record the teaching and learning activities, including how mind mapping was introduced, applied, and discussed in class (Latipah and Adman 2018).. Documentation was also collected in the form of teaching materials, student assignments, and written reflections to support the interpretation of the research findings. The triangulation of these three techniques allowed for a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of the studied phenomenon.

To address potential bias arising from the researcher's dual role as both lecturer and researcher, several measures were implemented to ensure objectivity and data credibility. During the learning process, the researcher positioned himself as a facilitator rather than a direct evaluator of students' performance. Observations were conducted through systematic documentation, including reflective notes, recorded online learning sessions, and students' submitted assignments. Additionally, triangulation was performed by comparing observational data with interview responses from two other SPI lecturers and five student representatives who were not directly involved in the researcher's class. This step aimed to validate findings and reduce subjective interpretation. Ethical considerations were also maintained by informing participants about the dual role of the researcher and ensuring voluntary participation and confidentiality of responses.

Data analysis was carried out using an inductive approach, involving the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The researcher first organized and coded the data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation, then identified recurring patterns and themes related to the implementation of mind mapping in SPI learning. The analysis focused on understanding how the method influenced student engagement, creativity, and comprehension of historical materials. Through this process, the study sought to describe the dynamics that occurred during the application of the mind mapping method and how it shaped the overall learning experience.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the research, this study followed four criteria proposed by Afiyanti (2008): credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Credibility was achieved through prolonged engagement, triangulation of data sources, and validation of findings with participants. Dependability was maintained by documenting the research process

systematically, while confirmability was ensured through reflective and transparent analysis. Transferability was strengthened by providing detailed descriptions of the research context, participants, and procedures, allowing other researchers to apply the findings in similar educational settings. Overall, this methodological framework provided a reliable foundation for understanding how the mind mapping method was implemented in SPI courses and how it affected student and lecturer experiences in the context of Islamic higher education.

Results and Discussion

In many studies, there is a positive relationship to learning using the mind mapping method in learning SPI courses. Broadly, various studies have shown that learning models using the mind mapping method in SPI courses can improve student learning outcomes and comprehension. This can be evidence that the mind mapping method can be applied to SPI courses, especially to increase student creativity in drawing conclusions in learning. The use of the mind mapping method makes students more creative in drawing conclusions from the learning that has been done according to their own understanding. On the other hand, the use of the mind mapping method makes it easier for teachers (lecturers) to explain SPI material. As a result, there is an increase in student learning outcomes and activity. The use of the mind mapping method also makes students bolder in asking questions and expressing opinions because students understand the material according to their respective understandings from the explanations given by the teacher.

SPI courses in the academic environment of UIN KH. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan is a compulsory course with a weight of 2 credits which is charged to all students in all faculties within UIN KH. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan. Because it is a compulsory subject, this is a challenge for some lecturers who teach courses, especially those who do not have a foundation in Islamic history and culture. This is because SPI Learning invites understanding, and living Islamic culture, which then becomes the basis for his way of life through guidance, teaching, training, use of experience and habituation. In the context of learning, SPI has several functions, including: educative, scientific, and transformational (Departemen Pendidikan Agama RI. 2004). To realize these functions, SPI learning requires an integrated approach that can be carried out by involving several components such as the following: faith, experience, habituation, rational, emotional, functional, and exemplary. Furthermore, SPI learning at the tertiary level should have entered the advanced stage of studying in more detail related to Islamic civilization.

The use of the mind mapping method in the learning process in the FTIK UIN KH Abdurrahman Wahid Pekaongan environment for students is actually not something new. Several lecturers who support other courses have practiced the mind mapping method in their learning. However, the application of the mind mapping method in SPI learning is a new thing, because this method has never been applied before, especially in online learning situations. The choice of mind mapping, apart from being an answer to the challenges of learning SPI which tends to be monotonous, is also chosen because with mind mapping a topic will be recorded and expressed ideas effectively and efficiently (Puspitasari 2016; Buzan 2010).

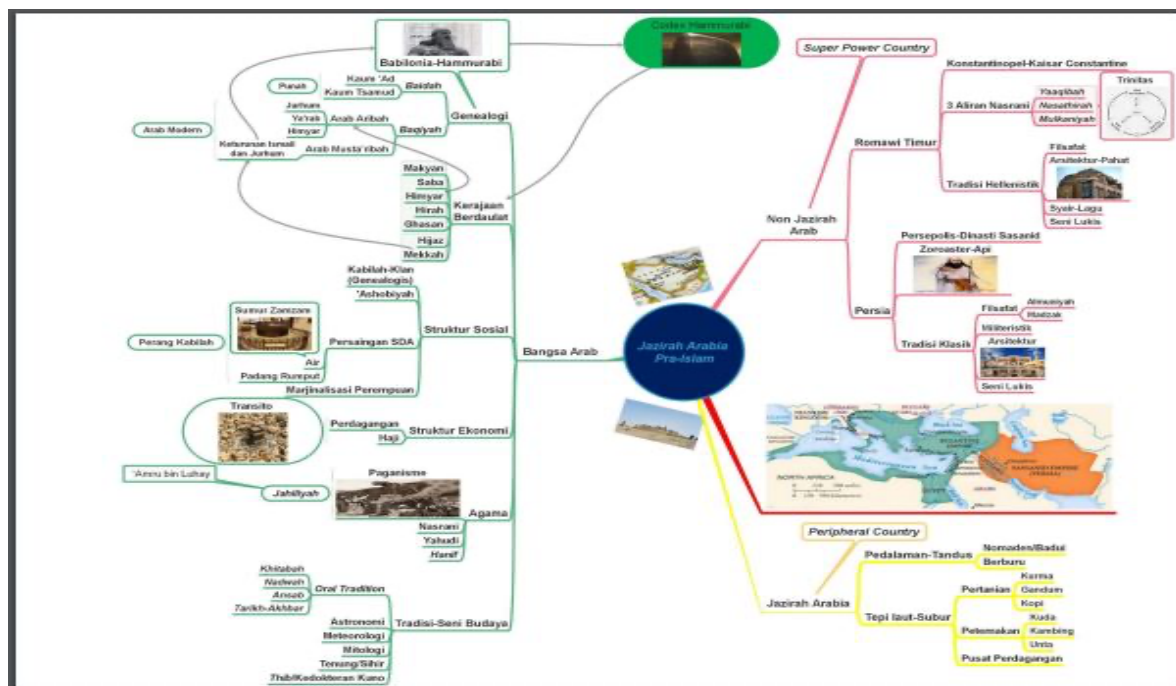


Figure 1. Examples of Mind Mapping Concepts Presented by Lecturers in Learning

As an illustration, in the picture above, it can be explained that the mind mapping explains the material "Pre-Islamic Arabian Peninsula". This material has a depth of three sub-materials that are branched out, there are sub-discussions of Non-Arabic Peninsula, Arabian Peninsula and Arab Nation. Then this sub-material is branched out again into other materials in detail. From this description, it can be concluded that mind mapping is one of the learning models that can help (facilitate) understanding learning through interrelated thought maps.

Description of Learning Implementation Based on Mind Mapping Method

Mind mapping is basically a method to make it easier to understand SPI learning effectively and efficiently with concept maps. However, in practice, mind mapping cannot be done (done) if students and lecturers do not master the SPI learning material well (in this case, reading perseverance is required). As it is known that the process of making mind mapping requires an in-depth understanding of the subject matter then imagination and art emerge in its application, so that the results obtained are able to present data that directly interprets the branches of the designer's mind, so that the designer can easily understand the contents of his notes even if he only looks at it at a glance (I Putu Agus Sunarman, Ni Wayan Suniasih, and Made Putra 2015).

This study aims to determine the application of the mind mapping method in learning SPI at FTIK UIN KH Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan. The boredom and monotony of the SPI learning process can cause students to finally not focus on the learning process in the classroom. In this case, the learning process for SPI courses is carried out through a distance learning process, where interactions are carried out online or without face to face so that the interaction is carried out using the internet network. Learning in the distance learning system which is the basic principle to require students to carry out learning activities independently. Distance learning activities can give students more thinking about subject matter without having to expect the teacher (Tahar and Enceng 2006).

It can be concluded that the mind mapping learning model is a model designed to assist students in the learning process, store information in the form of subject matter received by students during learning, and help compile the important points of lecture material in the form of maps, graphs and usage. symbols so that it becomes easier to remember the lesson. Through the mind mapping learning method, students are no longer required to always take notes on the writing on the blackboard or what the lecturer gives as a whole. Students will know the core of the problem, then make their own mind maps according to their creativity (Syam and Ramlah 2015).

After observing, we get an overview of the mind mapping learning strategies applied by the lecturers during the lecture process, including: (1) the lecturer provides a learning contract containing data related to learning targets that have been agreed upon and adhered to by both teachers and students. One of them is the division of groups that will determine the turn of presentation in a certain week; (2) students explore the material obtained through various reference sources that have been recommended by the lecturer; (3) students make mind maps based on the themes they get. Generally, students use the Mind Master application in making it, but there are also those who make it using other applications; (4) students make video presentations, then the videos are combined by each group including individually. The delivery of this video is via a youtube link that has been prepared by the group. The use of YouTube itself is carried out with the fact that this media has an important aspect in interacting and sharing information widely; (Yusi Kamhar and Lestari 2019). (5) students send the link no later than h-1 before the day of presentation to the lecturer. It is intended that lecturers can correct learning outcomes; (6) the lecturer delivers SPI material with a mind mapping design that has been made by the lecturer himself using video conference media in the form of zoom or google meet; (7) students start discussions and ask questions to the presenters. This discussion started when the lecturer finished delivering his mind mapping presentation.

In its application, there are several steps of mind mapping learning that must be done. The mind mapping learning step consists of seven steps, including:

- a) Recording the results of the lecture and listening to the keywords or points of the lecture.
- b) Show relationships and networks among these various keywords/ideas/points related to the subject matter.
- c) Brainstorm all that is known beforehand about the topic.
- d) Planning the early stages of idea mapping by visualizing all of the topics aspects been discussed.
- e) Organize informations and ideas by making them accessible on one sheet only.
- f) Stimulating solutions and creative thinking to problems related to the topic of discussion.
- g) Reviewing lessons to prepare for tests or exams (Huda 2014).

In addition, it is also obtained an illustration that the implementation of a learning strategy carried out by lecturers or educators must have supporting and inhibiting factors. Based on the results of observations made, there is a description of the supporting and inhibiting factors in the application of the mind mapping method in SPI learning. In this case, the supporting factors in the implementation of the application of the mind mapping method in SPI learning include: (1) the professionalism of the lecturer in delivering the material along with an overview of the mind mapping model; (2) good student interest and attention to the material being taught; (3) the availability of adequate learning facilities that can be used to help explain the material and steps for making mind mapping and displaying mind mapping images (4) the

existence of support from the institution by providing freedom for lecturers to use any method that is considered suitable in carrying out learning.

Meanwhile, the inhibiting factors that exist in the implementation of the application of the mind mapping method in SPI learning include: (1) only active students are involved; (2) not fully students learn, mainly because of technical constraints and in the context of learning ethics; (3) understanding of students' varied mind map models so that lecturers will be overwhelmed to examine students' mind maps. The inhibiting factors in the implementation of the mind mapping method in SPI learning are multifaceted and extend beyond technical limitations. First, class participation tended to be dominated by more active students, resulting in unequal engagement. This imbalance limited opportunities for quieter or less confident students to express their ideas through mind maps, thereby reducing the overall collaborative potential of the method. Second, some students were unable to engage fully in the learning process due to technical challenges, particularly in the online learning environment. Limited internet access, inadequate digital devices, and inconsistent attendance disrupted the continuity of learning activities and constrained students' ability to complete and present their mind maps effectively. Third, variations in students' understanding of how to construct and interpret mind maps posed difficulties for lecturers in assessing learning outcomes consistently. The diversity of students' designs—ranging from overly detailed to overly simplified—required lecturers to invest additional time to evaluate conceptual depth and creativity. These inhibiting factors indicate that while mind mapping promotes active and creative learning, its success depends on careful facilitation and clear instructional guidance. Therefore, lecturers need to provide explicit modeling of mind mapping techniques and structured rubrics for evaluation. Furthermore, institutional support in improving students' digital literacy and ensuring equitable access to online learning resources is essential for optimizing the use of the mind mapping method in SPI courses.

However, in responding to this, lecturers have roles including: a) Facilitator, namely the lecturer provides an open space for students in each learning process. If a problem is found, it can be expressed and resolved together. b) Motivators, namely lecturers can provide assistance in the form of encouragement to students when completing assignments or provide reinforcement to students who like to write scientific papers, especially in the scope of history. c) Evaluator, namely the lecturer carries out the function of evaluating the entire process of learning activities and providing an assessment of the results of learning activities. Lecturers carry out evaluations for each meeting, this is also intended to provide encouragement to students to be better at the next meeting. In addition, the lecturer also checks the results of student work, although the task takes a lot of time to look at it, this also indicates that the lecturer provides an assessment of the results of learning activities (Elita, 2018).

Situations and Conditions of Learning Implementation Based on Mind Mapping Method

The professionalism of the teaching staff/lecturers in the applied mind mapping learning strategy must be appropriate and good so that the learning process can run smoothly. In addition, lecturers must be able to manage time and allocate it properly and appropriately during the teaching and learning process, because SPI learning which contains a long history like this requires a relatively long time in delivering material so that the time for its implementation must also be considered. In SPI courses, the use of mind mapping applications is also needed to shorten material about the history of Islamic civilization. Furthermore, the mind mapping application is very helpful for teachers in delivering learning materials to students in a concise, concise and clear manner in the teaching and learning process.

Based on the results of interviews and observations made to students, the results obtained related to learning situations and conditions in SPI learning at FTIK UIN KH Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, among others:

Adding a reference to learning methods.

The competence of the lecturers and the learning environment resulted in the application of different learning processes, although the learning objectives were almost the same. This diversity gives rise to various references to learning methods. One of them is mind mapping, where by using the mind mapping method, students get to know one method in compiling and organizing SPI material more concisely/effectively and efficiently.

Creative mind mapping of SPI learning materials

Student learning creativity is developing well, which is indicated by the ability to develop discussion material based on an expanding community approach. The material is compiled starting from an environment that is close to the reach and then being developed into a wider community, not only taking material, both concept facts and generalizations from places close to the main case, but also taken from cases or examples from communities far from the study site. main, but can be understood based on the range of conceptual abstractions. Mind mapping can be a tool to generate creative ideas for students in understanding learning by summarizing the main ideas of learning in the form of notes. Notes made by students form a pattern such as a thinking map, starting with a large title in the middle, then continuing with an explanation branch in the subtitles. Mind mapping is a good technique to help the creative thinking process by using graphic techniques that are useful for unlocking the potential of the brain (Ristiasari, Priyono, and Sukaesih 2012).

Another form of student creativity is the ability to find new ways of delivering discussion material and providing answers to questions submitted by discussion participants. The intended new method is a model and variation of mind mapping that is compiled to explain the study material, as in the example of the material "khulafaur rasyidin" below.

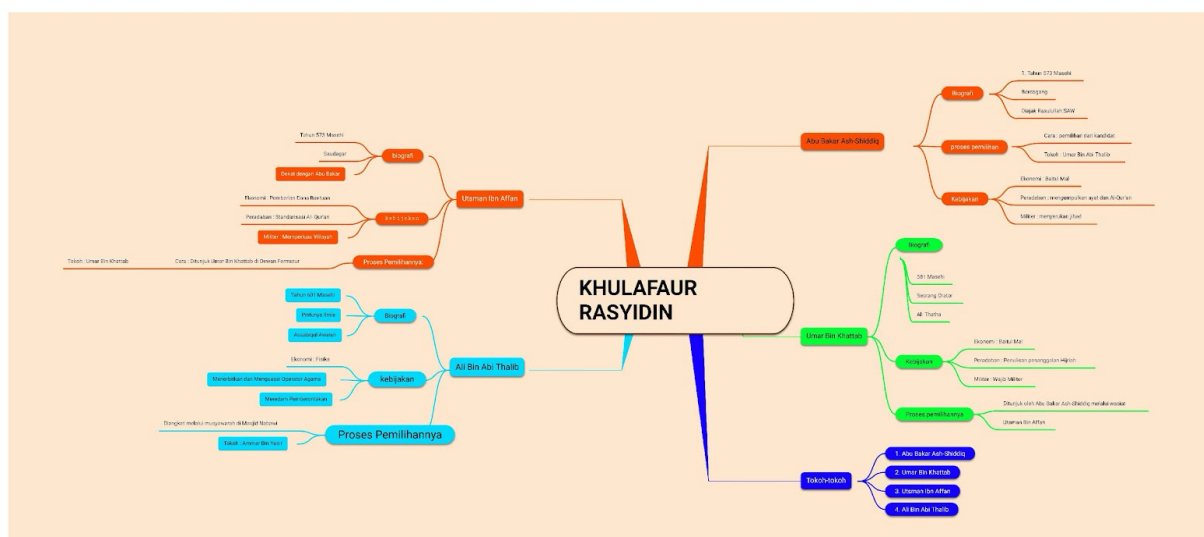


Figure 2. Examples of Mind Mapping Concepts Presented by Students in Learning

Increase knowledge in analyzing events

A good historian is not only able to mention the details of the name, place, and time of a historical event. However, a good historian is someone who is able to analyze history with a

good contemporary perspective. For example, taking the concept of various events in Islamic history, such as the transfer of power between dynasties.

Students play an important role in learning

No matter how good a concept or method is, if there is no support from students, learning will not work. This is in line with the concept of muballah education. Muballah in education is a concept of equality, justice, equal access and opportunity between lecturers and students, namely that both have room to uphold their rights and potentials to contribute to the learning process (Imtihanah 2020). The implementation of mind mapping model learning in the SKI material course is able to stimulate students to increase learning activities. Previously, the willingness to ask questions was still low, this was because students did not understand the learning material because they were not interested in historical material. The response to the application of the mind mapping method among students with a total of 153 respondents can be seen in the following diagram.

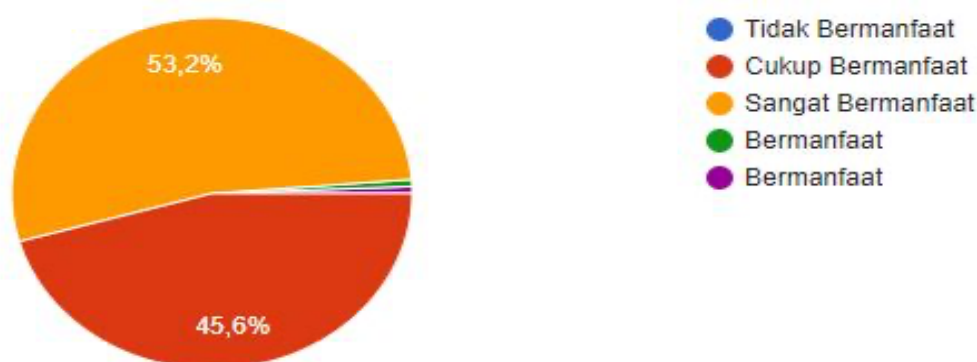


Figure 3. Student Responses to Mind Map-Based Learning

In this context, learning communication occurs in multi-way. This can mean a form of successful learning caused by several things, including, first, students understand the scope of the study of the material being studied through mind mapping. Second, students at least have study material as reference material, even if it is limited to photocopies or searches from the internet. Third, students are more active in discussing discussion material with their group of friends before going forward to submit papers, than before learning through mind mapping. Fourth, lecturers provide relatively loose opportunities for students to develop SPI material through various sources of information or other relevant and supportive insights.

Understanding the material can be optimal

The application of mind mapping learning strategies in SPI learning requires the ability of a lecturer or educator to manage the class well, which allows the class atmosphere to be conducive. Mind mapping is only one alternative problem solving to achieve the learning objectives of the teaching and learning process. Mind mapping is only in the form of material branches so that the scope of the material is not too broad. In addition, if the explanations of the presenters are convoluted, this also makes the listeners reluctant to listen to the material given. Actually, this can be minimized if by before making a mind map to explore the relevant material. When the teacher can apply this learning can run according to the target.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the mind mapping method serves as an effective alternative to overcome the monotony of lecture-based learning in the History of Islamic Civilization (SPI) course. Its implementation encourages students to organize ideas, visualize historical concepts, and enhance comprehension in a more interactive and engaging way. The findings show that the application of mind mapping at FTIK UIN KH Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan involves several stages, including the formulation of learning contracts, material exploration, creation and presentation of mind maps, and class discussions. This approach contributes to improving students' creativity, analytical skills, and conceptual understanding of historical materials.

However, this study has several limitations. The data were primarily derived from interviews and questionnaires without sufficient triangulation, limiting the reliability of the findings. Furthermore, the study only focused on one institutional context, which may restrict the generalizability of the results. Despite these limitations, the findings provide valuable insights for educators seeking to diversify instructional strategies in history learning. In practice, the use of mind mapping can be an innovative pedagogical tool to foster student engagement and critical thinking, particularly in courses that tend to rely heavily on lectures. Future research should expand this study by employing mixed-method designs, incorporating cognitive and psychomotor assessments, and comparing results across different universities to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the method's effectiveness.

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