

Application of Bloom's Taxonomy in the Instruction of Islamic Education

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Abstract

Islamic education has over the years been taught using traditional methods. One of the modern approaches used in preparation of the lesson is the Bloom's taxonomy. It has been used for setting objectives and learning outcomes as well as determining the content of the lesson and evaluation. In this paper, the position is that Islamic studies teachers should be equipped with contemporary pedagogical skills, techniques, approaches, strategies and theories such as Bloom's taxonomy. This will not only enable the instructors of Islam to teach more effectively and efficiently but also it will enable them to have a long-term positive impact on the learners in terms of behaviour and character.

Keywords: Bloom's taxonomy, instruction, Islamic education, pedagogy

Islamic education is a comprehensive and integrated process that involves producing a wholistic person who is balanced through spiritual, intellectual and sensory training (Al-Attas, 1979). It is a process of becoming a Muslim but also includes vocational and other forms of abstract knowledge (Progler, 2005), and it is a combination of *tarbiya* which loosely means 'to educate', *ta'alim* meaning knowledge, and *ta'adib* meaning morality (Salleh, 2009). The aim of Islamic education curriculum is to identify and develop the various abilities of students such as talents and several skills as well as inculcating morality, spirituality, equipping learners with skills of knowledge acquisition and preparing them to be future leaders who will assume communal responsibilities (Nasution et al., 2022). Moreover, in order to achieve these objectives with the contemporary generation learners, institutions have to employ strategic twenty-first century methods of instruction to teach Islamic studies appropriately and effectively (Khanif, 2023). However, the instruction of Islamic education has been characterised by traditional methods where a junior teacher was given permission (*ijaz*) by a senior one to transmit the acquired knowledge and the chain would continue down to remote villages (Nkonge, 2018). The main methods were teacher-centred approaches and the homes of teachers as well as mosques were used as schools. Rote learning was mainly used especially for Qur'an memorisation and learning of simple Islamic doctrines.

Problem Statement

The philosophy of Islamic education entails ideas of developing the human mind, body, heart and soul enabling man to establish a healthy relationship with God and live in harmony with fellow humans and the surroundings. If this

philosophy of training a holistic, all-round Muslim who is spiritually sound and physically ready to serve the community is to be achieved, then a variety of methods have to be used during the process of instruction (Mustaffa & Rashid, 2018). Moreover, Cheng (2019) suggests an interdisciplinary approach combining both theoretical and empirical research in understanding and improving morality in all institutions of learning. Besides, Zulkifli et al. (2022) opine that Islamic education instructors lack adequate skills techniques, strategies and attitudes required for training the learners of the 21st century and suggest an integrated approach of instruction to be able to achieve the aims of Islamic education. Basically, contemporary learners cannot be effectively taught with only classical methods, techniques, strategies and approaches. Rapid changes in technology, demographic and social-cultural dynamics have greatly shifted the method of instruction of Islamic education (Ibrahim, 2022). Hence, the application of Bloom's taxonomy would facilitate the preparation and arrangement of the Islamic education content into teachable units, and tailor accordingly, lesson preparation and evaluation.

Bloom's Taxonomy in Preparation and Planning of an Islamic Education Instruction

Benjamin Bloom was an educational psychologist who classified learning levels into a variety of ranks basing on the effect to learning. According to the taxonomy, learning has three domains and that is the cognitive, the affective and the psychomotor (Hoque, 2016). The cognitive domain is to do with knowledge acquisition, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Bloom, 1956). The affective domain focuses on the emotions and feelings of self and others. Whereas the psychomotor domain is to do with actions and explains sub aspects such as adaptation, responses, perceptions, etcetera (Dave, 1970).

While planning for the teaching-learning environment, Bloom's taxonomy can be used in formulation of instructional objectives or learning outcomes. The learning objectives or outcomes are in line with the level of knowledge difficulty which makes comprehension systematic and easy. Objectives should be in line with the educational goals of the nation (Bloom et al., 1956). They further argue that each discipline or subject expert may decide on how both the general and specific objectives should be constructed borrowing the Bloom format as well as the nature of the subject content (Bloom et al., 1956, p.26). Anderson and Krathwol (2001) indicated that objectives, instructional strategies and assessment should be consistent and in line with each other. It is relatively easier to formulate instructional objectives of lower cognitive processes like aiding memory than constructing objectives for higher-order learning such as synthesis, application and creativity (Baxter et al., 1996). It is important for a teacher of Islamic education to understand such instructional dynamics at the preparatory level such that the content and learning activities as well as tasks are well thought about rather than impromptu activities and tasks bombarding the teaching-learning environment unsystematically.

It is important to understand the individual differences and abilities in any given teaching-learning environment. For this reason, Shabatara (2022) argues that while designing a lesson or course or unit, Bloom's taxonomy helps through determining the dynamics of students and the kind of content or knowledge they have to acquire. In addition, Bloom's taxonomy can be used to design and develop the curricula (Clotilda, 2022). Correspondingly, the learning strategies and all activities conducted in a learning environment could be guided by the same taxonomy. Designing and coming up with instructional materials may also be done with the guidance of Bloom's taxonomy. If effectively applied, the taxonomy will enable the instructor to detect learner differences, abilities and talents. Additionally, while preparing an Islamic studies lesson, like any other subject, a teacher ought to prepare in advance by determining the content, the intended learning outcomes or instructional objectives, materials, instructional methods and strategies, classroom environment and learners' dynamics (Khanif, 2023). Instructional objectives entail whatever learners should learn by the end of the instruction while learning outcomes involve whatever learners know and whatever they need to know by the end of the instruction (Kumari, 2022). Nevertheless, both instructional objectives and learning outcomes are pertinent in the planning of a lesson including the one of Islamic education. Bloom's taxonomy comes into play to address most of these aspects to do with outcomes and instructional objectives (Persaud, 2021).

The lower-order Bloom's skills can be used in building the foundational knowledge and this is usually whenever either the concept is new or the learners are. Higher-order Bloom's skills may be applied when the learners are a bit more advanced or familiar with the basic knowledge of the concept at hand or content. While setting the learning outcomes or instructional objectives, they are stated in measurable terms which implies that once effectively executed, they lead to observable change in behaviour and conduct. Once Islamic education is taught with a single old-fashioned method, all these important aspects of knowledge and behavioural change may be left out (Mustaffa & Rashid, 2018). Bloom et al. (1956) opined that the desired behaviour may not be achieved with the same intensity among learners after the completion of a unit due to individual differences and also the variations in acquiring the intended skill or competence may be affected by the instructional methods (p.12).

MuQeet (2019) demonstrated the integration of Bloom's taxonomy by illustrating that Islamic education has some topics such as Qur'an memorisation and narrating prophetic stories require recall and retrieval of facts therefore Bloom's low level of remembering is applicable; while at the level of understanding the learner may be required to make inferences, generalisations, estimations, interpolations and sometimes describing situations in the learners' own words. To achieve this the teacher needs a better understanding and sufficient knowledge of the all the levels and domains of Bloom's taxonomy as well as adequate skills for applying the taxonomy in an Islamic classroom. Furthermore, the level of application the instructional design would require the

learners to perform real life Islamic tasks such as calculation of *zakāt*, computing inheritance and application of prophetic wisdom in one's daily life (MuQeet, 2019). At the analysis level instruction takes a different twist where learners are engaged using various techniques such as mind mapping, debating, dialogue and linking (MuQeet, 2019). Dahari et al. (2019) emphasised the application of Bloom's taxonomy in the instruction of Islamic education to promote critical thinking to enable learners acquire deeper insights, understanding, make proper judgements and know how to deal with real-life situations.

With evaluation, learners are exposed to another set of techniques such as critiquing, comparisons, survey, testing and moderation (MuQeet, 2019). Kosasih et al. (2022) argues that the application of techniques in Islamic education instruction that would enable learners to think critically, analytically, be creative and in position to solve problems largely depends on the teachers' appreciation of the concept of reasoning in Islam. Furthermore, creation of new knowledge, production of new work, justifying a position by carefully analysing the situation and making fair judgements are some of the elements in behaviour that Bloom's taxonomy intends to bring out in a learner (Persaud, 2021).

Learners should be empowered to ask questions and should not be intimidated nor limited but rather guided by the instructor of Islam. With creativity, instead of asking learners to mention, give or outline the pillars of Islam, they could instead be tasked to relate the Islamic rituals and pillars of Islam with the holistic Islamic personality and how the rituals can help someone become a better person in terms of morality and discipline (MuQeet, 2019). Additionally, Jailani and Suyadi (2022) argue that creative imagination harmonises and strikes a balance between the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains during and after an Islamic education instruction consequently producing citizens with optimized potentials. It is important to create an environment for learners to think in an Islamic studies class and be free to interact with the teacher and among themselves.

Zulkarnain et al. (2021) argued that Islamic education in and of itself cannot effectively mould behaviour and conduct without being integrated with other pedagogical theories, designs and models such as Bloom's taxonomy. Moreover, the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains can be aligned with teachings and values of Islam in order to integrate the Islamic education instruction (Mengki et al., 2023). Bloom's taxonomy enables teachers to establish clear and easy instructional frameworks that help in the alignment of the aims of teaching a particular subject with the instructional strategies and the entire teaching learning environment in general (Clotilda, 2022). In addition, the educators can easily identify, formulate and work with achievable objectives, learning outcomes, goals and aims of an instructional environment (Persaud, 2021). Furthermore, Bloom's taxonomy domains enable educators to determine and differentiate the appropriateness and complexity of the content to be delivered to learners (Lasley, 2023). Learning should be from the known to the unknown, from simple to complex, and at a variety of levels (Bloom, 1969).

Therefore, proper application of Bloom's taxonomy enables learners to develop metacognitive abilities because they are enabled to reflect on their own awareness of the known and the unknown and become sincere about what they know and what they don't know which helps them to change in knowledge and behavioural patterns (Sudirtha et al., 2022). Besides, Bloom's taxonomy enables all stakeholders to assess and discuss the progress of the achievement of the intended goals and aims of a particular field of study (Clotilda, 2022).

Suyadi (2022) argued that Islamic education did not have an independent learning taxonomy, he however forged one by blending the Islamic textual phrases on spirituality with Bloom's taxonomy. His study however, was a critical review and comparison of the texts and not applied to any case empirically. Nayef et al. (2013) compared three taxonomies including Bloom's taxonomy, Lorin Anderson's taxonomy, and Wilson's taxonomy and concluded that Bloom's taxonomy was more suitable as an analysis tool to Educational Objective domain. However, Fastiggi (2019) argues that Blooms taxonomy has related aspects with Bruner's spiral curriculum such as tailoring content accordingly to fit the learners age and cognitive abilities hence challenging learners proportionately. Conversely, Coloso and Neal (2018) argue that many of the teaching resources and materials of Islamic studies are too obsolete to be used in the 21st century and recommend blending of both the traditional materials and instructional styles of Islamic education with the ones of other disciplines and most preferably contemporary ones. Moreover, Ulfat (2023) alludes that Islamic education content needs to be revitalised and learners' contemporary experiences about the reality of life in general should be imbued with clear context and also be reflected in the instructional methodology.

Applying Bloom's taxonomy in the instruction of Islamic education would empower the learners to learn values such as co-existence, religious-cultural tolerance in a multi-faceted environment such as the global village and equip them with deeper insights on life enabling them to develop problem-solving abilities for their own individual selves and their respective communities. Hussien et al. (2021) discovered that the *Hikmah* pedagogy had empowered Islamic education learners with confidence, religious-cultural tolerance, inquiry skills, analytical and creative thinking. *Hikmah* is an Arabic word which means wisdom. In addition, from the context of *Hikmah* pedagogy, it is an instructional model focusing on refining the thinking abilities of children, rooted from Mathew Lipman's ideas of Philosophy for children (Hashim et al., 2018; Zulkifli et al., 2022). Additionally, the *Hikmah* pedagogy would inculcate in learners ethical, moral and spiritual dimensions while enabling them to express their religious and societal views without necessarily attacking one another in a multi-faceted environment such as Malaysia (Hussien et al., 2017). Moreover, cognition as per Bloom's taxonomy entails breaking down the acquired knowledge or information, internalising it and applying it appropriately in the suitable environment (Mustafa & Yakob, 2019, p.4). While teaching religious education in Kenya, the use of Bloom's taxonomy enabled learners to exhibit remembering,

understanding and application as compared to analysis, evaluation and synthesis, the researcher attributed this to the poor teacher-training in pedagogic skills (Gatumu, 2021).

Dees (2009) argues that the cognitive domain allows learners to connect with God at merely a knowledge level, and therefore suggests a spiritual domain maintaining that while teaching religious studies, it is deeper and achieves broader spiritual goals once infused with Bloom's taxonomy enabling learners to think critically about religion in context, analysing and applying the knowledge to real-life situations. Some lessons are basic and require the first levels of the taxonomy that aid memory and remembering scriptures, however there are some scriptural texts that may require advanced levels of Bloom's taxonomy such as application and exegesis that requires synthesis, analysis and application (Bruehler, 2018). This is not different with Islamic education, there are aspects of Islam that require basic learning aided by only memory for instance learning; performing prayers and memorisation of the Qur'an at a rituals level; but also studying it at an advanced level requires exegetical skills and extracting verses for application in real-life situations. Bloom's taxonomy enables learners to understand their level of knowledge and equips them with creative abilities to know what they need to know to achieve a given task and the stated goals (Persaud, 2021).

Smith (2017) alludes that Bloom's taxonomy can be applied in teaching religion through presenting questions to learners that require higher-order thinking skills thereby enabling them to develop problem-solving abilities. In addition, any instructional process involves questions or questioning segments and Bloom's taxonomy plays a significant role in helping the teacher determine the category of questions to ask learners and how they are going to trigger and awaken several cognitive chambers of the learners' brain (Fastiggi, 2019). These questions can either be items that require immediate answers or rhetoric questions to aid the thinking process. The Islamic literature especially the Qur'an has several rhetoric questions and parables. Allah says:

وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَلُ نُضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

"...Such are the parables which We put forward to mankind that they may reflect" (Sūrat-al-Hashr 59:21 Tafsir Ibn Kathir)

Therefore, critical thinking and application of higher-order thinking abilities has been engraved in Islamic literature since the very inception of Islam itself. However, the traditional methods of teaching Islamic studies such as memorisation and apprenticeship may not be favourable for the same as questioning, discussion and guided discovery are more practical for teaching Islamic education in this contemporary generation. Moreover, Faizin et al. (2022) argued that discussion method was by far a superior approach in the instruction of Islam in Indonesia as opposed to rote learning because discussion involves learners and allows them to reason and think critically enabling them to develop problem-solving abilities and improve their behavioural patterns.

Bloom's Taxonomy in the Assessment and Evaluation of Islamic Lessons

Islamic education assessment and evaluation should be rooted from the aims of teaching Islam such as upholding morality and instilling discipline among the learners for the betterment of the society. Mustafa and Yakob (2019) proposed Malik Badri's thinking phases in the assessment of Muslim education as an alternative to Bloom's taxonomy. Their argument was rooted from the idea that Bloom's taxonomy does not accommodate spirituality and Islamic world view, however they were not so clear on the process of assessing spirituality using the alternative approach. Since one of the aims of teaching Islam is to achieve behavioural growth and development, the method of assessment where learners are given written and oral exams and tests may not give accurate information on whether the instruction was successful or not. Consequently, Kristiawan et al. (2016) argued that affective assessment was efficient and effective in evaluation and assessment of Islamic education while applying Bloom's taxonomy through the use of observational sheets to appraise the learners' behavioural patterns and spiritual conduct of learners.

In addition, Nurmaliyah et al. (2023) revealed that in Indonesia, assessment of Islamic education is conducted following the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. Furthermore, assessment rooted from Bloom's taxonomy should not only be used for examinations and grading but also used to improve teaching-learning process through minimisation of rote-learning, foster critical thinking and analysis, and also to improve on pedagogy (Chandio et al., 2016). Whereas cognitive assessment may enable learners acquire basic knowledge and help teachers in the process of lesson planning and implementation of Islamic education, it is not sufficient to achieve higher-order thinking abilities in the same (Sulistyarini & Maemonah, 2022). Notwithstanding, Setiawan and Jatmikowati (2020) revealed that the instruction of Islamic education inspired by the higher-order thinking techniques improved positively on the attitude of learners towards religiosity and had a positive impact on the spirituality of the learners. In addition, Cullinane (2009) alluded that Bloom's taxonomy could be used to assign tasks and home projects to learners at different cognitive levels and further illustrated how the taxonomy can be used during the process of instruction to test learners' various abilities. Furthermore, written, oral and practical tests can be used to assess and evaluate learners in the cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and spiritual dimensions of Islamic education (Nursyamsiyah, 2023). Moreover, Nursyamsiyah (2023) asserted that these tests can also be administered using online evaluation and assessment platforms such as video conferencing in *madrasa* programs which can be used for instance to monitor Qur'an memorisation progress. The nature of the topic in Islamic education, the extent of content coverage, the instructional objectives set, the instructional materials used and the level of learners being taught may all be considered to determine the most appropriate method of assessment at a given stage of instruction.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Islamic education instruction should be integrated with modern approaches of instruction in order to achieve the aims and values of teaching Islam. Bloom's taxonomy plays an important role from the planning phase to assessment and evaluation level. Islamic education instructors using Blooms taxonomy are able to determine the right instructional objectives and learning outcomes which are in line with the established goals for teaching Islamic studies. The taxonomy further helps the Islamic education teachers to determine the content as well as preparation of appropriate instructional materials. It helps the Islamic education teachers develop relevant and efficient multiple instructional strategies and methods. Moreover, the evaluation of learning largely depends on the set instructional objectives and learning outcomes. Therefore, with Bloom's taxonomy, assessment and evaluation of Islamic studies lessons and track of the progress of learners becomes easier. The Islamic education instructors should receive adequate training and refresher courses to equip them with necessary skills and knowledge on how to apply and use Bloom's taxonomy in the preparation of Islam lessons, assessment of learners and evaluation.

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