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## The Use of Crossword Puzzle Media in Fiqh Learning at Mts Nurus Syafi'i Gedangan Sidoarjo

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**Kata Kunci:**

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**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini berfokus pada penerapan media Crossword Puzzle (Teka-Teki Silang) dalam pembelajaran Fiqih di MTs Nurus Syafi'i Gedangan, Sidoarjo. Permasalahan utama yang dikaji mencakup tiga aspek penting, yaitu: perencanaan penggunaan media tersebut, pelaksanaan pembelajarannya, serta bentuk evaluasi yang diterapkan setelah media digunakan dalam kelas. Ketiga aspek ini dipilih untuk memberikan gambaran komprehensif mengenai efektivitas media Crossword Puzzle sebagai alternatif strategi pengajaran berbasis aktivitas. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap secara mendalam bagaimana guru merancang media Crossword Puzzle sesuai perangkat pembelajaran yang berlaku, bagaimana proses implementasinya dalam kegiatan belajar-mengajar Fiqih, serta bagaimana hasil evaluasi yang diperoleh setelah media diterapkan kepada peserta didik. Pendekatan kualitatif digunakan karena mampu menggambarkan fenomena secara alami dan holistik. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi observasi langsung di kelas, wawancara dengan pendidik dan siswa, serta analisis dokumentasi, sehingga data tersaji secara deskriptif dan kaya secara konteks. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perencanaan pembelajaran Fiqih telah disusun berdasarkan modul ajar yang distandarkan melalui MGMP, kemudian disesuaikan dengan karakteristik sekolah serta kebutuhan peserta didik. Pada tahap pelaksanaan, media Crossword Puzzle digunakan sebagai penunjang pemahaman konsep Fiqih sekaligus sebagai aktivitas yang meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa. Proses pembelajaran berlangsung melalui langkah-langkah terstruktur yang menempatkan teka-teki silang sebagai alat bantu latihan konsep. Evaluasi penerapannya menunjukkan respons positif dari siswa yang merasa terbantu dalam memahami materi. Meskipun demikian, beberapa kekurangan tetap ditemukan, terutama terkait perbedaan kemampuan siswa dalam menyelesaikan teka-teki.

Namun hal tersebut masih dapat diterima karena mencerminkan beragamnya karakter dan kecepatan belajar peserta didik.

**Keywords:**

Crossword Puzzle, Media learning, Fiqh

**Abstract:** *This study focuses on the use of Crossword Puzzle media in Fiqh learning at MTs Nurus Syafi'i Gedangan, Sidoarjo. The core issues examined include three essential aspects: the planning of the media's implementation, the execution of its use within classroom instruction, and the evaluation conducted following its application. These three points were selected to provide a comprehensive understanding of how effective the Crossword Puzzle is as an activity-based instructional strategy. The research aims to explore in depth how teachers design the Crossword Puzzle media in alignment with existing instructional documents, how it is implemented within Fiqh learning activities, and how the evaluation outcomes reflect its influence on students. A qualitative approach was employed because it enables natural and holistic interpretation of classroom phenomena. Data were gathered through classroom observations, interviews with teachers and students, and documentation analysis, resulting in rich and descriptively presented findings. The results indicate that Fiqh learning at MTs Nurus Syafi'i is structured based on teaching modules standardized through MGMP, then adjusted to the specific needs and characteristics of the school and its learners. During instruction, the Crossword Puzzle is used to reinforce students' understanding of Fiqh concepts while encouraging active participation. Learning activities proceed through structured steps in which the crossword serves as a concept-reinforcement tool. Evaluation findings reveal positive student responses, with many acknowledging that the media enhanced their comprehension. Minor shortcomings were identified, mainly related to differences in student abilities when completing the crossword. However, these variations are considered normal, as they reflect the diversity of learners' characteristics and learning paces.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is a deliberate effort to realize a learning process that produces individuals who are intelligent, well-mannered, and of noble character. Education is considered successful when it achieves the goals of national education. According to Law No. 20 of 2003, (UU No. 20 Tahun 2003, n.d.) the goal of national education is to develop the potential of learners so that they become individuals who believe in and are devoted to God Almighty, possess noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens. In Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards, Article 19 states that "The learning process in educational institutions shall be conducted in an interactive, inspiring, enjoyable, challenging manner and motivate learners to participate actively." provide sufficient space for initiative, creativity, and independence in accordance with the talents, interests, and physical as well as psychological development of the learners. In the context of Islamic education, enjoyable learning is an implementation of the commands of Allah Almighty and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In the Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah verse 148 and Surah Al-Mā'idah verse 2, Allah Almighty says:

وَلِكُلِّ وِجْهَةٍ هُوَ مُوَلِّيٰهَا ۖ فَاسْتَبِقُوا ۖ الْخَيْرَاتِ ۗ أَيْنَ مَا تَكُونُوا يَأْتِ بِكُمْ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

*Meaning: "And every community has a direction toward which it turns. So compete with one another in doing good. Wherever you may be, Allah will bring you all together. Indeed, Allah is Most Capable of all things."*

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَىٰ الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَىٰ الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ الْعَقَابُ شَدِيدٌ

*Meaning: "And cooperate with one another in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and transgression. And fear Allah; truly, Allah is severe in punishment." (Qur'an, Surah Al-Mā'idah 5:2).*

To carry out the mandate of the regulations mentioned above, it is necessary to provide learning media that are not only enjoyable but also pedagogically meaningful for students. Effective learning media function as a bridge between abstract concepts and students' real experiences, (Amelia et al., 2024) allowing them to internalize knowledge in a more engaging and memorable manner. The availability of appropriate learning media is therefore a critical determinant of instructional quality, as it influences the level of student engagement, the depth of understanding, and the overall effectiveness of the learning environment (Harden, 2001). (Harden, 2001)

Among the various media that can strengthen the learning process, the Crossword Puzzle stands out as a dynamic tool aligned with the PAIKEM strategy (Jamilah et al., 2022) (Candrawati et al., 2021) (Active, Innovative, Creative, Effective, and Joyful Learning). This approach emphasizes learner-centered instruction, where students are stimulated to explore, inquire, and construct their own understanding. As a form of instructional media, the Crossword Puzzle supports these principles by encouraging cognitive activation, promoting problem-solving, and fostering an atmosphere of joyful participation. (Sandi et al., 2022; Kumar et al., 2015) (Jamilah et al., 2022; Candrawati et al., 2021)

In educational theory, learning media are defined as all forms, tools, and channels used to convey information in accordance with established learning principles. Their purpose is not merely to transmit content but to stimulate learners' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Through well-designed media, (Al Aluf, 2024) teachers can arouse curiosity, strengthen attention, and sustain motivation (Al Aluf, 2024), ultimately guiding students toward intentional, goal-oriented, and well-regulated learning experiences. Thus, integrating engaging media such as Crossword Puzzles into the instructional process becomes an essential strategy to meet regulatory mandates and enhance the quality of learning outcomes.

The Crossword Puzzle functions as an engaging learning medium that sustains the core objectives of instruction while creating a stimulating and enjoyable classroom atmosphere. Its interactive nature encourages active student involvement from the outset, prompting learners to think critically, analyze clues, and collaborate in constructing correct responses (Bawazeer et al., 2022). By filling in lettered grids to form words based on given prompts, students engage in cognitive processes such as recall, comprehension, and application skills that are essential for deeper understanding of the subject matter.

Within the framework of Islamic education, the use of enjoyable and participatory learning media such as Crossword Puzzles aligns with the pedagogical values emphasized in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The encouragement to pursue goodness, cooperation, and continuous learning core Islamic principles resonates with learning environments that nurture motivation, promote positive engagement, and cultivate meaningful educational experiences. Thus, integrating Crossword Puzzle activities into Fiqh instruction not only enhances cognitive engagement but also embodies the Islamic ethos of joyful, purposeful, and ethically grounded learning. (Nafi'ah & Faruq, 2025) (Nafi'ah & Faruq, 2025)

Fiqh stands as a foundational discipline within Islamic education, taught through conscious, systematic, and purposeful instructional design to cultivate learners' understanding of Islamic legal rulings governing the actions of mukallaf, whether in the domain of ritual worship or social transactions (Nurazizah et al., 2025). (Nurazizah et al., 2025) Its pedagogical aim extends beyond mere cognitive acquisition; it encompasses the internalization of religious norms so that students are able to know, comprehend, and consistently practice daily acts of worship in accordance with Islamic teachings. As an integral component of the Islamic Education curriculum at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level, Fiqh instruction inherently demands learning models that are intellectually stimulating, participatory, and aligned with national regulatory mandates emphasizing interactive and student-centered learning environments. (John, 2024)

This necessity stems from the nature of Fiqh material, which is concrete, detailed, and prescriptive, requiring clear explanation and a learning approach capable of translating abstract legal principles into meaningful, lived experiences for students. Consequently, educators must exhibit a high degree of pedagogical professionalism and creativity in designing and implementing instructional strategies. (Abdurrahman & Nihaya, 2025) They are expected to function not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as facilitators who guide learners through reasoning processes, encourage active engagement, and provide learning experiences that foster moral awareness, legal understanding, and practical competence. In this regard, deploying innovative, responsive, and contextually relevant learning models becomes essential to ensure that Fiqh education remains effective, transformative, and attuned to the developmental needs of students at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level (Abdurrahman & Nihaya, 2025).

One of the learning media that can be used is the Crossword Puzzle. This media engages students in active participation from the outset (Weisskirch, 2006). A crossword puzzle is a game in which players fill empty square spaces with letters to form words that correspond to given clues (Saxena, 2009). Selecting suitable learning media will result in effective and enjoyable learning. Thus, this study is necessary to examine how the Crossword Puzzle media is planned for Fiqh learning at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Nurus Syafi'i Wedi Gedangan Sidoarjo, how it is implemented, and how its evaluation is carried out in the Fiqh learning process at the same institution.

## METHOD

### Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research approach with a descriptive design. Qualitative research is chosen because it allows researchers to explore and understand phenomena in depth through natural settings and participants' perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach is particularly suitable for examining the implementation of innovative learning media, as it captures the complexities of educational practices, teacher strategies, and student experiences that cannot be fully understood through quantitative measures alone (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

### Research Setting and Participants

The research was conducted at Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Nurus Syafi'i Wedi Gedangan Sidoarjo during the 2024/2025 academic year. The study focused on eighth-grade students and Fiqh teachers who implemented Crossword Puzzle media in their teaching practice. Participants were selected using purposive sampling technique, which involves deliberately selecting information-rich cases relevant to the research questions (Patton, 2015). The key participants included: (1) two Fiqh teachers who have experience implementing Crossword Puzzle media, (2) 32 eighth-grade students enrolled in Fiqh classes, and (3) the school's curriculum coordinator to provide institutional perspective on learning innovation.

## Data Collection Methods

Data were collected through three primary methods to ensure triangulation and enhance the credibility of findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018):

### 1. Observation

Participant observation was conducted during Fiqh learning sessions to directly observe the implementation of Crossword Puzzle media. Researchers documented classroom interactions, student engagement, teacher facilitation strategies, and the learning atmosphere through detailed field notes (Kawulich, 2005). Observations were conducted across multiple class sessions to capture variations in implementation and student responses.

### 2. In-depth Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Fiqh teachers and selected students to gain deeper insights into their experiences, perceptions, and evaluations of Crossword Puzzle media implementation. Interview protocols included open-ended questions that allowed participants to elaborate on planning processes, implementation challenges, perceived benefits, and suggestions for improvement (Kallio et al., 2016). Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and lasted approximately 30-45 minutes each.

### 3. Documentation Analysis

Researchers analyzed various documents including lesson plans (Teaching Modules), Annual Programs (Prota), Semester Programs (Prosem), Learning Objectives Flow (ATP), Crossword Puzzle media materials, and student work samples. Document analysis provides contextual background and helps corroborate evidence from other sources (Bowen, 2009).

## Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of three concurrent flows of activity: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The process involved: (1) Data condensation: transcribing interview recordings, organizing field notes, and coding relevant segments; (2) Data display: organizing coded data into matrices and visual displays to identify patterns and relationships; (3) Conclusion drawing and verification: interpreting patterns, drawing conclusions, and verifying findings through member checking and triangulation across data sources.

## Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of findings, this study employed several strategies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985): (1) Credibility through prolonged engagement, triangulation of data sources and methods, and member checking with participants; (2) Transferability through thick description of the research context and findings; (3) Dependability through

maintaining an audit trail of research procedures and decisions; (4) Confirmability through reflexive journaling and transparency about researcher positionality.

## RESULTS

The results of this study indicate that the teaching of *Fiqh* at MTs Nurus Syafi'i Gedangan Sidoarjo has been carried out in a well-planned and systematic manner. Teachers have developed complete instructional documents, including the Annual Program (*Prota*), Semester Program (*Prosem*), Learning Objective Flow (*ATP*), and Teaching Modules aligned with the *Merdeka Curriculum*. This finding suggests that teachers act not merely as curriculum implementers but also as *curriculum developers* capable of adjusting their instructional designs to the learners' needs and the characteristics of the subject matter. The development of teaching materials through the MGMP forum (Subject Teachers' Deliberation) also reflects a culture of professional collaboration aimed at ensuring relevance and contextuality in instruction.

The *Fiqh* learning process in this madrasah has applied the principles of *student-centered learning*, in which teachers function as facilitators and motivators rather than as the sole source of information. This is evident from the learning structure that begins with *ice breaking* and stimulating questions. (Dewi & Meilina, 2025) Such activities serve an important psychological function in creating an active and enjoyable classroom atmosphere while reducing learning anxiety. This approach aligns with constructivist theory (Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978), (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978) which emphasizes that knowledge is built by learners themselves through meaningful experiences. Hence, in the introductory phase, teachers are essentially building the initial *scaffolding* necessary for students' cognitive and emotional readiness before entering the core learning phase.

The core learning stage demonstrates an innovative effort to integrate the *Crossword Puzzle* as a learning medium. This medium functions not merely as entertainment but as a pedagogical instrument designed to enhance critical thinking and conceptual understanding. Observational data show that students exhibit high enthusiasm during the implementation of the *Crossword Puzzle* activity. They become more active in asking questions, engaging in discussions, and participating in solving the crossword tasks. This phenomenon supports Mayer's (2021) *constructive engagement theory*, which argues that interactive media promote deeper cognitive assimilation and accommodation than conventional, lecture-based methods.

Furthermore, the use of *Crossword Puzzles* has had a positive impact on the enhancement of *collaborative learning*. The small-group setting, consisting of six to seven students, provides opportunities for social interaction, cooperation, and shared responsibility. Such interaction cultivates essential social values in Islamic education, namely *ta'awun* (mutual help) and *ukhuwah* (brotherhood). These values represent the implementation of *habl minannas* the social dimension of faith illustrating that Islamic education does not merely aim for intellectual mastery but also for moral and character

development (Azra, 2012). Thus, *Fiqh* instruction through *Crossword Puzzle* media successfully integrates cognitive and affective dimensions of learning.

From a methodological perspective, the *Crossword Puzzle* proved effective in addressing students' boredom toward abstract and theoretical *Fiqh* material. The activity provided an enjoyable variation of learning without sacrificing content depth. assertion that varied instructional media increase attention and motivation, as enjoyable learning generates *intrinsic motivation* for deeper understanding. In this sense,(John, 2024) the *Crossword Puzzle* serves as an *edutainment medium* a blend of education and entertainment that enhances the effectiveness of *Fiqh* instruction.

The assessment process during the implementation of this medium also aligns with the *Authentic Assessment* approach within the *Merdeka Curriculum*. Teachers assessed not only the final results (correctness of answers) but also students' collaboration, accuracy, and attitudes during group work. The cognitive domain was measured through students' understanding of *Sunnah Muakkad* and *Ghairu Muakkad* prayers, while the affective domain was evaluated through students' religious attitudes, discipline, and responsibility. The psychomotor domain, meanwhile, was assessed through their skill in completing and presenting the crossword results. Such holistic evaluation reflects Bloom's (1956) taxonomy, which conceptualizes learning outcomes as encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions.

Supporting factors for the success of this learning innovation include students' high learning motivation, teacher professionalism, and adequate school facilities. Teachers played a crucial role in managing the classroom atmosphere and facilitating effective collaboration. However, several challenges were also identified, such as limited instructional time, differences in students' cognitive abilities, and uneven participation among group members. These constraints highlight the need for adaptive classroom management and *differentiated instruction* strategies to ensure equitable participation among learners (Tomlinson, 2017).

Overall, this study reinforces the notion that innovative learning media have a positive correlation with improved motivation and learning outcomes in religious education. The *Crossword Puzzle* transforms *Fiqh* learning into a more contextual and applicable process, encouraging students not only to memorize religious laws but also to reflect upon their meaning and wisdom. This aligns with Dewey's (1938) *learning by doing* concept, where direct experience strengthens conceptual understanding and cultivates reflective thinking habits.

### **Innovation in Fiqh Learning through Crossword Puzzle Media**

In the context of learning innovation, the implementation of *Crossword Puzzle* media in *Fiqh* instruction represents a significant pedagogical advancement. This media is applied through two primary stages: the planning stage and the implementation stage. At the planning stage, teachers design comprehensive learning tools that include the Annual Program (*Prota*), Semester Program (*Prosem*), Learning Objectives Flow (*ATP*),

and teaching modules that integrate the *Crossword Puzzle* media as part of classroom activities. The preparation process not only follows curriculum standards but also takes into account students' characteristics and learning needs, making the learning process more contextual and engaging. Thus, the *Crossword Puzzle* serves not merely as a supplementary tool but as an innovative medium aimed at enhancing students' motivation and learning achievement.

At the implementation stage, the *Crossword Puzzle* is utilized to strengthen students' understanding of *Fiqh* materials, particularly on the topic of *Shalat Sunnah Muakkad* and *Ghairu Muakkad*. Through this activity, students are not only required to understand concepts theoretically but also to think critically, creatively, and engage in problem solving as they complete puzzles related to the material. This learning activity encourages students to be more active, collaborative, and capable of connecting *Fiqh* concepts with enjoyable and meaningful learning experiences. Consequently, the application of the *Crossword Puzzle* provides substantial pedagogical value because it: Enhances students' active engagement in the learning process. Develops critical and reflective thinking skills. Creates a joyful and non-monotonous classroom atmosphere. Integrates elements of gamification into *Fiqh* learning. Facilitates competency-based and experiential learning.

Overall, the implementation of *Fiqh* learning at MTs Nurus Syafi'i Gedangan Sidoarjo demonstrates that the institution is not solely focused on academic achievement but also on character development and fostering students' creativity. Through the integration of engaging and innovative strategies such as the *Crossword Puzzle*, teachers have successfully created a more dynamic, collaborative, and meaningful learning environment.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research conducted at MTs Nurus Syafi'i Wedi Gedangan Sidoarjo on "*The Use of Crossword Puzzle Media in Fiqh Learning at MTs Nurus Syafi'i Wedi Sidoarjo*", it can be concluded that the planning of using *Crossword Puzzle* media in *Fiqh* learning at the institution is considered effective. This is evidenced by the well-prepared learning plans, which include the Annual Program (*Prota*), Semester Program (*Prosem*), Learning Objectives Flow (*ATP*), and Teaching Modules that are systematically arranged in accordance with the MGMP (Subject Teacher Forum) format, and adapted to the specific characteristics of both the school and its students.

Each learning activity beginning with the preliminary session, continuing to the core activities, and ending with the closing session has been carefully adjusted to meet the needs and characteristics of the learners. The implementation of *Crossword Puzzle* media in *Fiqh* learning at MTs Nurus Syafi'i Wedi Sidoarjo was carried out in the learning competency area of understanding *Shalat Sunnah Muakkad* and *Ghairu Muakkad*. In this activity, students were provided with *Crossword Puzzle* (word puzzle) media and worked collaboratively in groups to complete it. The evaluation of the use of *Crossword Puzzle*

media in Fiqh learning at MTs Nurus Syafi'i Wedi Sidoarjo includes several key aspects: students' interest and engagement, the availability of school facilities, and the professionalism of the teachers involved. These elements collectively contribute to the success of the learning process.

However, several challenges were also identified. The main inhibiting factors include the relatively long time required to complete the activity and the differences in students' individual abilities when answering the questions. To overcome these obstacles, the Fiqh teachers at MTs Nurus Syafi'i Gedangan Sidoarjo provided several solutions. One strategy was to determine an agreed-upon duration to help students manage their time efficiently and complete the task effectively. In addition, the teacher arranged *heterogeneous groups*—each consisting of students with different levels of ability and gender—to maintain group dynamics and active participation. Students with varying abilities were expected to engage in discussion and communication to collaboratively find the correct answers.

Overall, the use of *Crossword Puzzle* media in Fiqh learning not only improves students' motivation and collaboration but also fosters critical thinking and mutual cooperation in line with the values of Islamic education.

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