LOCATING LEARNER-CENTERED INSTRUCTION IN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS' CLASSROOMS: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

Emawati
Universitas Muhammadiyah Aceh, Indonesia
email: emawati@unmuha.ac.id

Teuku Zulfikar
Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry, Aceh, Indonesia
email: teuku.zulfikar@ar-raniry.ac.id

Habiburrahim
Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry, Aceh, Indonesia
email: habiburrahim@ar-raniry.ac.id

Anis Sundusiyah
Project Associate at IISE, Uni of Pittsburgh, USA
email: Ans161@pitt.edu

Abstract

Progressive Education (PE) aims to promote students' active participation and involvement in the learning process. PE strongly supports learner-centered instruction (LCI), enabling students to be active participants rather than passive recipients of knowledge. Nevertheless, the LCI has not yet gained popularity in the Indonesian school settings, particularly in Modern Islamic Boarding Schools. This enables us to do research on the potential and obstacles of implementing the LCI as required by Progressive Education in Islamic boarding schools. Data for this qualitative study was gathered through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), in-depth interviews and an online communication with 24 teachers from Islamic Boarding Schools in the province of Aceh. The findings indicate that although worries about the issues of the LCI are still arising, the teachers involved in this research believe that the LCI has promising prospects in the near future. The finding also found that although the LCI is considered an efficient method for facilitating optimal learning, it is deemed to be less successful in some courses.

Keywords: *Islamic Boarding Schools; Progressive Education; Learner-Centered Instruction*

Abstrak

Prinsip dasar Pendidikan Progresif (PE) adalah untuk mendukung pembelajaran aktif dan keterlibatan siswa dalam proses pembelajaran. Sistem pembelajaran dalam PE adalah pembelajaran terpusat kepada peserta didik (LCI), yang memungkinkan siswa menjadi lebih aktif daripada hanya pasif dalam menerima pembelajaran. Namun, LCI belum popular di Indonesia, khususnya di Pesantren Modern. Hal ini memungkinkan penelitian tentang prospek dan tantangan penerapan LCI sebagaimana diamanatkan oleh Pendidikan Progresif di pesantren untuk dilakukan. Penelitian kualitatif ini

mengunakna beberapa metode pengumpulan data, yaitu dengan menggunakan beberapa metode: wawancara mendalam; Diskusi Kelompok Terfokus atau FGD; dan telepon serta wawancara tertulis melalui media online. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa walaupun penerapan LCI masih merupakan tantangan tersendiri, para guru yang berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini meyakini bahwa LCI sudah menjadi semakin populer di Indonesia. Kemudian, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa LCI ini dianggap efektif dalam keberhasilan pembelajaran, namun LCI belium terbukti efektif untuk semua mata pelajaran.

Kata Kunci: *Pesantren Modern; Pendidikan Progresif; Pembelajaran bebasis Siswa*

مستخلص

المبدأ الأساسي للتعليم التقدمي (PE) هو دعم التعلم النشط ومشاركة الطلاب في عملية التعلم. نظام التعلم في PE هو التعلم المرتكز على المتعلم(LCI) ، والذي يسمح للطلاب بأن يكونوا أكثر نشاطًا بدلاً من مجرد تلقي التعلم بشكل سلبي. ومع ذلك، فإن LCI لا يحظى بشعبية كبيرة في إندونيسيا، وخاصة في المدارس الداخلية الإسلامية الحديثة. وهذا يسمح بإجراء بحث حول آفاق وتحديات تنفيذ LCI وفقًا لما نص عليه التعليم التقدمي في المدارس الداخلية الإسلامية. يستخدم هذا البحث النوعي عدة طرق لجمع البيانات، أي باستخدام عدة طرق: المقابلات المتعمقة؛ مناقشة جماعية مركزة أوFGD ؛ والمقابلات الهاتفية والمكتوبة عبر وسائل الإعلام عبر الإنترنت. تظهر نتائج هذا البحث أنه على الرغم من أن تنفيذ LCI لا يزال يمثل تحديًا في حد ذاته، إلا أن المعلمين الذين شاركوا في هذا البحث يعتقدون أن LCI أصبح يتمتع بشعبية متزايدة في إندونيسيا. بعد ذلك، وجد هذا البحث أن LCI يعتبر فعالاً في نجاح التعلم، ولكن لم يتم إثبات فعاليته في جميع المواد.

الكلمات الرئيسيّة : الداخلية الإسلامية الحديثة؛ التعليم.

A. Introduction

Progressive education (PE) supports the emergence of democratic learning at schools.[1] In democratic classroom, activities are shared between teachers and students. It is very important for teachers to share classroom authorities with students, which then allow them to freely express their thoughts. One way for teachers to share classroom authority is through leaner-centered instruction (LCI).[2] For PE, schools should cater students' needs and allow their voices to be heard and recognized. This suggests that in PE, lessons and how they are planned should reflect students' needs. John Dewey, the proponent of PE believes that children learn best if they are given freedom to be creative.[3] To achieve this goal, students should be given spaces to be creative and proactive, and learner-centered instruction or the

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[1]Sakari Saukkonen, Penti Moilanen & David Mathew (2016). Power, democracy and progressive schools. In *Educating for Democracy in England and Finland* (pp. 91-102). Routledge; Matukhin, Dmitry, and Daria Bolgova. "Learner-centered approach in teaching foreign language: Psychological and pedagogical conditions." *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 206 (2015): 148-155.

[2]Tony Leach (2018). Democracy in the classroom. *Power and Education*, 10 (2), 181–194; Smart, Karl L., Christine Witt, and James P. Scott. "Toward learner-centered teaching: An inductive approach." *Business Communication Quarterly* 75, no. 4 (2012): 392-403.

[3]John Dewey (1997). *Experience and education*. New York: Touchstone.

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LCI, as Gerald L. Gutek contends, meets this objective.[4] This is because the LCI develops curriculum that represents children's interests rather than the curriculum prescribed to them beforehand. The LCI then discourages schools to use prescribed and pre-determined curriculum that may ignore students' interests. A part of teaching methods promoted in LCI is collaborative learning, since through collaboration between teachers and students, and among students improve the likelihood for effective learning to take place.

Although LCI has been recognized in many settings, it only recently becomes popular in contemporary Indonesia[5], especially in the Modern Islamic school and as a result, an alternative teaching paradigm is promoted and introduced.[6] However, 'the so called effective' classroom practice is not always successful in the Indonesian educational context.[7]

This research investigates classroom behaviors in two Islamic Modern Boarding Schools in Aceh Besar to see if LCI has been implemented in these Islamic educational institutions. These two schools are significant as they are two prominent Islamic boarding schools in Aceh Besar, and they adopt a somewhat similar curriculum model, which is the integrated curriculum model. This manuscript begins by asking: How do teachers view learner-centered instruction (LCI)? What strategies are used to enhance the LCI in their classroom and what problems arise during its implementation? The questions were explored using qualitative research methods such as Focus Group Discussions (FGD), in-depth interviews, and online communication.

Glance at Progressive Education (PE)

Progressive education (PE) originated from the concept of pragmatism.[8] The PE recognizes informal learning mechanism to be an effective learning process. This allows

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[4]Gerald L. Gutek (2004). *Philosophical and ideological voices in education.* Boston: Pearson

[5]H. A. R. Tilaar (2002). *Membenahi pendidikan nasional*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.

[6]Nesrin Isikoglu, Ramazan Basturk, & Feyyaz Karaca (2009). Assessing in-service teachers' instructional beliefs about student-centered education: A Turkish perspective. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 25*, 350-356.

[7]Akhmad Habibi, Amirul Mukminin, Johni Najwan, Septu Haswindy, , Lenny Marzulina, Muhammad Sirozi, & Kasinyo Harto, Muhammad Sofwan (2018). Investigating EFL classroom management in pesantren: A case study. *The Qualitative Report*, 23(9), 2105-2122; Pam Nilan (2009). The 'spirit of education'in Indonesian pesantren. *British Journal Of Sociology of Education*, 30(2), 219-232; Teuku Zulfikar. (2009). The making of Indonesian education: an overview on empowering Indonesian teachers. *Journal of Indonesian Social Sciences and Humanities, 2*, 13-39; Sutarto Hadi (2002*). Effective teacher professional development for the implementation of realistic mathematics education in Indonesia*. University of Twente [Host]; Hasan Tanang & Baharin Abu (2014). Teacher Professionalism and Professional Development Practices in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. *Journal of curriculum and teaching*, 3(2), 25-42.

[8]James Scott Johnston (2010). *John Dewey and educational pragmatism. The Sage Handbook of Philosophy Of Education*, 99-110; Kevin J. Pugh (2011). Transformative experience: An integrative construct in the spirit of Deweyan pragmatism. *Educational Psychologist*, 46(2), 107-121; Waks, Leonard J. "John Dewey and the Challenge of Progressive Education." International Journal of Progressive Education 9, no. 1 (2013).

students to construct knowledge as a result of their interaction with their learning counterparts. However, PE may mean different things to different people, since the PE not always found with success. In certain contexts, PE was an effective paradigm, while in different contexts, it is not seen to have yielded effective instructional process.[9]

One of the basic attributes of PE is its proponent for the LCI. Geraldine O'Neill and Tim McMahon noted that as cited in Sydney Enock Msonde and Charles Enock Msonde state that "terms such as flexible learning, experiential learning, self-directed learning, and independent learning." have all been connected to LCI.[10] It has a strong root in pragmatism and constructivism, transformative, and humanism.[11] All these *isms* have a strong support for active learning. LCI is based on Vygotsky's social constructivist views of learning, "which emphasize on activities, discoveries, independent learnings, and social interactions".[12] This suggests that classroom interaction and active learning are paramount to the development of students' knowledge.

LCI mandates that teachers incorporate their students' input when determining the kind of content to be studied. Implementing this approach in the Indonesian educational system is challenging due to the use of planned uniform curriculum contents.[13] The curriculum was created by policymakers at the central government. The Indonesian education system has implemented decentralization by incorporating local curriculum content. However, the central government still retains the authority to decide which key courses are included in the curriculum.[14] Due to the consistent curriculum, the assessment method has also been standardized. The centralized education system has hindered teachers from being

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[9]Gerald Guthrie (2011). *The progressive education fallacy in developing countries: In favour of formalism*. Springer Science & Business Media; Daniel Tanner (2015). *Crusade for democracy, revised edition: Progressive education at the crossroads*. SUNY Press; Pecore, John L., and Bertram C. Bruce. "Editorial for progressive education: Antecedents of educating for democracy." *International Journal of Progressive Education* 9, no. 1 (2013): 10-13.

[10]Sydney Enock Msonde & Charles Enock Msonde (2019). Re-Innovation of Learner-Centered Pedagogy in Tanzania's Secondary Schools, *Journal of Education*, *199* (3), 142–154

[11]Selina Mushi (2004). Multicultural competencies in teaching: a typology of classroom activities. *Intercultural Education*, *15* (2), 179-194; Sadovnik, Alan R., Susan F. Semel, Ryan W. Coughlan, Bruce Kanze, and Alia R. Tyner-Mullings. "Progressive education in the 21st century: The enduring influence of John Dewey." The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era 16, no. 4 (2017): 515-530.

[12]Sydney Enock Msonde & Charles Enock Msonde (2019). Re-Innovation of Learner-Centered Pedagogy... 143

[13]Brett Riley Noel (2008). *Conflict resolution education in Indonesia: Mapping adaption and meanings.* Ohio University, Athens; Abdelmalak, Mariam, and Jesús Trespalacios. "Using a learner-centered approach to develop an educational technology course." International Journal of Teaching & Learning in Higher Education (2013).

[14]Christopher Bjork (2004). Decentralization in education, institutional culture and teacher autonomy in Indonesia. *International Review of Education, 50*(3), 245-262.

creative in their instruction. They are required to teach a set curriculum and must also fulfil its requirements.[15]

The lack of success of LCI in the Indonesian school context is driven by many factors, such as teachers' incompetence in adopting this approach, a standardized curriculum, and the educational system. These factors play a crucial role in contributing to the lack of success in implementing LCI.[16] Furthermore, some Indonesian schools have large classroom sizes, indicating that they accommodate a significant number of pupils in each classroom. There are approximately 35 to 40 students in a typical classroom. The large classroom size hinders teachers from reaching their full teaching capabilities.[17] Indonesian instructors who have graduated from different universities abroad are unable to apply their knowledge effectively due to inadequate classroom size and environment.[18]

The Indonesian context: Challenges and prospects for the PE

Cultural values shape individuals' cognition and behavior, serving as the foundation of their identity.[19] Identity is fluid, multiple, and hybrid, shaped by the specific environments in which individuals reside, leading to the formation of collective identities. This is due to their exposure to comparable social and political environments.[20] It is probable that certain qualities are common among specific societies and are unlikely to be relevant outside of their group. For instance, individuals residing in specific areas often adopt the ideals prevalent in that environment.

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[15] Georges Vernez, Rita T. Karam, Jeffery H. Marshall (2012). Transforming Indonesia's Centralized Education System to School-Based Management. RB-9671-WB, https://doi.org/10.7249/RB9671; Chiara Logli (2016). Higher education in Indonesia: Contemporary challenges in governance, access, and quality. In *The Palgrave handbook of Asia Pacific higher education* (pp. 561-581). Palgrave Macmillan, New York; Tatang Suratno (2014). The education system in Indonesia at a time of significant changes. *Revue internationale d'éducation de Sèvres;* Agustinus Bandur (2012). Decentralization and school-based management in Indonesia. *Asia Pacific Journal of Educational Development* (APJED), 1(1), 33-47.

[16] Teuku Zulfikar (2009). The making of Indonesian education: an overview on empowering Indonesian teachers. *Journal of Indonesian Social Sciences and Humanities, 2*, 13-39.

[17] Valerie E. Lee, & Susanna Loeb (2000). School size in Chicago elementary school: Effects on teachers' attitudes and students' achievement. *American Educational Research Journal, 37*(1), 3-31; Barbara Nye, Larry V. Hedges, & Spyros Konstantopoulos (2000). The effects of small classes on academic achievement: The results of the Tennessee class size experiment. *American Educational Research Journal, 37*(1), 123-151.

[18] Zulfikar, Teuku. "The making of Indonesian education: An overview on empowering Indonesian teachers." Journal of Indonesian Social Sciences and Humanities 2 (2009): 13-39; Songbatumis, Aisyah Mumary. "Challenges in teaching English faced by English teachers at MTsN Taliwang, Indonesia." Journal of foreign language teaching and learning 2, no. 2 (2017): 54-67.

[19] Anthony Giddens (2001). *Sociology* (4th ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press; David M. Newman (2004). *Sociology: Exploring the architecture of everyday life* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Pine Forge Press; Stuart Hall (1996). Introduction: who needs 'identity'? In S. Hall & P. D. Gay (Eds.), *Questions of cultural identity*. London: Sage Publication.

[20] Richard Jenkins (1996). *Social identity*. London: Routledge.

Indonesian pupils in classrooms are typically exposed to cultural and social circumstances that emphasize the importance of respecting seniors, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. Students are often trained to suppress their voices and ideas when arguing with their elders. This behavior becomes ingrained in their learning process, leading them to keep mute and passively receive knowledge through teaching.[21]

This qualitative research delved into classroom behavior at two Islamic Boarding Schools in Aceh Besar, enabling researchers to thoroughly investigate and comprehend the issues being explored. These boarding schools are considered to be popular within the Aceh Besar region. To assist in addressing our inquiry, we interviewed 12 teachers, a principal, and a selection of students from each school. The participants were interviewed about their ideas on promoting the LCI. The interviews with these participants were crucial for obtaining reliable information about their teaching methods.[22] There were a total of 24 instructors and two principals. The participants were questioned through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), with 2 FGDs conducted in each school, involving 6 instructors in each FGD. Furthermore, the principals of the boarding schools were interviewed via phone, in-person, and through textual communication on WhatsApp. The data obtained from these principals enhanced the information provided by the participants in the FGDs. The data from the FGDs was transcribed verbatim to provide a detailed overview of the topic. The data was analyzed by finding significant themes using coding techniques. We analyzed the data by applying theoretical frameworks previously discussed to determine commonalities and variations.

Table 1 Research Settings and Participants

School	Islamic Boarding School 1	Islamic Boarding School 2
Principals	P1-1	P1-2
Teachers	T1-1	T1-2
	T2-1	T2-2
	T3-1	T3-2
	T4-1	T4-2
	T5-1	T5-2
	T6-1	T6-2
Students	S1-1	S1-2
	S2-1	S2-2

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[21]Didik Suhardi (2012). Peran SMP berbasis pesantren sebagai upaya penanaman pendidikan karakter kepada generasi bangsa. *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter*, (3). 316-328; Marsh, C., Richards, K., & Smith, P. (2001). Autonomous learners and learning society: systematic perspectives on the practice of teaching in higher education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 33*(3 & 4), 381-395.

[22]Muylaert, Camila Junqueira, Vicente Sarubbi Jr, Paulo Rogério Gallo, Modesto Leite Rolim Neto, and Alberto Olavo Advincula Reis. "Narrative interviews: an important resource in qualitative research." Revista da Escola de Enfermagem da USP 48 (2014): 184-189; Alshenqeeti, Hamza. "Interviewing as a data collection method: A critical review." English linguistics research 3, no. 1 (2014): 39-45; Buriro, Abdul Ghafoor, Jawad Hussain Awan, and Abdul Razaq Lanjwani. "Interview: A research instrument for social science researchers." International Journal of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Education 1, no. 4 (2017): 1-14; Mahama, Habib, and Rihab Khalifa. "Field interviews: Process and analysis." In The Routledge companion to qualitative accounting research methods, pp. 321-338. Routledge, 2017.

| S3-1 | S3-2 |
| S4-1 | S4-2 |

The research participants were anonymized and identified as follows: P1-1 for the principal at Islamic boarding school 1, T1-1 for Teacher 1 at school 1, and S1-1 for students at school 1. P1-2 denotes the principals of school 2, and the rest are organized in a comparable manner.

B. Discussion

Three main themes were derived from the data: teachers' perspectives on the LCI, strategies used to enhance the LCI during learning, and obstacles encountered in promoting students' learning engagement. The conversation elaborated on three major themes.

1. Teachers' views of Learner-centered Instruction

One of the first and foremost theme generated from our research is in regard with teachers' views of learner-centered instruction (LCI). Three main themes emerged from our FGDs.

a. Effective approaches to teaching

All teachers interviewed at the two Islamic boarding schools agree that the LCI is crucial for fostering efficient learning. This is relevant to how Debiec elaborate in his study-that learner-centered instruction motivate students to engage in learning.[23] The LCI is deemed beneficial as it provides students with increased opportunities to actively participate in the learning process. When pupils are provided with opportunities to articulate their opinions, learning will increase. This is also in line with the work of Hakan Sivri, and Semiha Sahin.[24]

T2-, for example recommended:

The students will be happy to participate in the instructional process if we give them time to speak up. This is important to note that creating good teaching atmosphere and allowing them to be active in learning are parts of our job (T2-1)

Most teachers stress that for successful implementation of the LCI, teachers must first get actively involved. Teachers should be dynamic and forward-thinking to facilitate the implementation of the LCI. Omalara et. al confirmed in their research that teachers'

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[23] Dębiec, Piotr. "Effective learner-centered approach for teaching an introductory digital systems course." IEEE Transactions on Education 61, no. 1 (2017): 38-45.

[24] Sivri, Hakan, and Semiha Sahin. "Adopting learner-centered education and perceptions of school effectiveness." Osmangazi Journal of Educational Research 8, no. 1 (2021): 48-76.

attitude is an asset for students' learning as it helps improve students' motivation in their learning.[25]

In line with this argument, T3-2 stated that:

The students will be active when teachers are active themselves. It is important to note that before teachers encourage students' learning participation, they should first become active teachers themselves. This is important because only by doing so, the teachers can show good practices to students.

The FGDs suggests that all teachers see LCI as an effective teaching method, since it gives opportunities for students to be expressive and engaging in instructional process. Research by Sumaya A. Ahmed 1 & Maysoon A. Dakhiel reiterates that LCI improve students' learning motivation.[26] However, these teachers also emphasize that LCI will only be effective if the teachers themselves are active, energetic, and proactive, which then enable students to be active as well.

In addition, since the LCI is important for effective teaching, the participants advice that LCI should be internalized from the early phase of education, as put forward by Catharine F. Bishop, Michael I. Caston, and Cheryl A. King.[27] The kindergarten and primary school system should incorporate this teaching approach into their system. Early internalization of the LCI will be culturalized in students learning and thus they will get used to LCI environment.[28]

b. Not necessarily effective for all courses and settings

While the LCI is undoubtedly important and effective, the FGDs also uncovered interesting findings. These teachers agreed that while LCI is considered effective, they also argue that the LCI cannot be applicable across all settings and all courses. They believe that while some courses could be taught through the LCI, the others may be inappropriate to cater through LCI, T3-2 stated:

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[25]Omolara, Shittu Rashidat, and Oanite Rukayat Adebukola. "Teachers' attitudes: a great influence on teaching and learning of Social Studies." *JL Pol'y & Globalization* 42 (2015): 131.

[26]Ahmed, Sumaya A., and Maysoon A. Dakhiel. "Effectiveness of Learner-Centered Teaching in Modifying Attitude towards EFL and Developing Academic Self-Motivation among the 12th Grade Students." English Language Teaching 12, no. 4 (2019): 139-148.

[27]Bishop, Catharine F., Michael I. Caston, and Cheryl A. King. "Learner-centered environments: Creating effective strategies based on student attitudes and faculty reflection." Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning 14, no. 3 (2014): 46-63.

[28]Nazir, Neelam, Huma Rauf, Paras Akhtar, and Iram Zehra. "An In-Depth Analysis Of Applicability And Effectiveness Of Learner-Centered Approach At Undergraduate Level In Pakistani Classroom Context." PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology 18, no. 18 (2021): 353-370; Burhan, Ü. Z. Ü. M., and Ramazan ÖZBEK. "Effectiveness of learner-centered methods in elevating positive attitudes towards English: Meta-analysis study." Turkish Journal of Education 13, no. 1 (2024): 24-52.

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Yes, we believe that some courses work well when taught in LCI, but some of them cannot be transferred in LCI. For example, the *Muthalaah* course, we cannot ask students to be very active and generate knowledge themselves, we have to approach this course differently.

This suggests that while LCI is considered important for effective teaching, certain courses, especially those specified designed coursework in the Islamic boarding schools' curriculum cannot be delivered through the learner-centered instruction. This also allows us to understand that teachers are required to engage in differentiated instruction to enable students to gain better understanding of the courses being offered.

c. Negative impacts of the LCI

While the LCI is considered effective instructional approaches, since students are active learners, in which they construct their own knowledge and ideas, the LCI also brings some negative impacts. Most of the teachers argue that their roles are still important in the learning process. In fact, educational practitioners believe that no matter what kinds of educational system are played out, the role of teachers to guide classroom instruction is still paramount. T4-1 and T5-2 agree that teachers' role in facilitating learning process is still paramount.

T4-1, for example elaborated that "our students are not ready to be independent learners, so I believe we cannot let them learn without our guidance"; Similar note is also revealed from the statement of T5-2 suggesting that "not all students in our institution are autonomous enough to seek knowledge themselves. We found that many of them are incapable of searching knowledge without the help of the teachers". These two statements confirm that while LCI help students learn in many ways, in many cases students are not independent to be knowledge seekers without their teachers' guidance.

Furthermore, teachers included in our Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) contend that the adverse effects of the Learner-Centered Instruction (LCI) may hinder students from performing well in their exams. The Indonesian educational system emphasizes summative assessment for learning evaluation, and the LCI does not prepare pupils for rote learning evaluations.

2. Classroom practices and strategies to boost students' learning participation

The FGDs conducted in two different schools revealed four important themes on this particular issue. These themes answer our inquiries regarding instructional process taking place at these two boarding schools:

a. Differentiated instructional approaches

One of the most important findings generated from four FGDs is the fact that teachers are aware of their responsibilities as teachers. The majority of teachers interviewed suggested that they need to use various ways of teaching approaches. For exampleT6-1 in the FGD stated that:

I used different teaching approaches to different students, and in fact also used different ways of teaching depending on different kinds of teaching materials. Sometimes, I used learner-centred instruction, while in others I approach classroom teaching using teacher-centred instruction.

This assertion shows that there is no so-called one effective way of good teaching. This allows us to refer these kinds of instruction as differentiated instructional approaches.[29] It means that teachers do not have a fixed teaching strategy; they instead need to shift their teaching should the condition required them to do so.[30]

In addition, we found that teachers used differentiated instructions. Sometimes they engage students with group work, while in another occasion, teachers need to approach classes differently.[31] T5-2 said that:

We as teachers need to look for alternative instructional methods depending to students' individual differences. I believe that effective educational process is pretty much depended on the quality of teachers actually. Students can be made active if teachers are also active themselves. For that reason, I believe that students should choose an appropriate instructional method that fits students' needs and learning styles.

This suggests that effective instructional process is very much related to the way students learn and also teachers' teaching methods. Differentiation involves teachers

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[29]Ismajli, Hatixhe, and Ilirjana Imami-Morina. "Differentiated instruction: Understanding and applying interactive strategies to meet the needs of all the students." International journal of Instruction 11, no. 3 (2018): 207-218.

[30]Bogen, Elisa Cruz, Christine P. Schlendorf, Peter A. Nicolino, and Elsa-Sofia Morote. "Instructional Strategies in Differentiated Instruction for Systemic Change." Journal for Leadership and Instruction 18, no. 2 (2019): 18-22.

[31]Suprayogi, Muhamad Nanang, Martin Valcke, and Raymond Godwin. "Teachers and their implementation of differentiated instruction in the classroom." Teaching and teacher education 67 (2017): 291-301.

adapting their instruction to accommodate the diverse needs of students in the classroom. When a teacher adjusts their teaching methods to cater to the needs of individual students or small groups in order to enhance the learning experience, they are engaging in differentiated instruction.[32]

b. *Energizing classroom atmosphere*

The second theme emerges from the study is that to produce effective and successful teaching, teachers should be able to energize classroom atmosphere.[33] This can be done through many ways possible, one of which is by becoming energetic teachers. The majority of teachers interviewed during the FGD, T3-1, for example stated that:

> We believe that the level of students' learning is very much related to our passion in teaching. If we are teachers full of teaching energy, it will influence students' learning. I believe that when teachers are active, the students will be active as well.

Information from FGD explains that teachers' creativities are very much important in the attempt to boost effective learning.[34] The other way to energize classroom environment is through making jokes with students. Jokes may not be considered as one of the most effective ways in classroom teaching. Jokes if used effectively could in fact give positive atmosphere classroom instruction. One of the teachers in fact states that jokes are effective ways to get the students tuned in learning.

c. *Get acquainted with students*

The other important component of good teaching is to get to know students. All teachers in the FGD suggested that knowing students by name is so important in teaching that allows them to get connected with us the teachers.[35] These teachers believe that in the

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[32]Tomlinson, Carol Ann. "Differentiated instruction." In Fundamentals of gifted education, pp. 279-292. Routledge, 2017.

[33]Suyatno, Suyatno, Asih Mardati, Wantini Wantini, Dholina Inang Pambudi, and Ganis Amurdawati. "The impact of teacher values, classroom atmosphere, and student-teacher relationship towards student attitude during learning process." International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research 18, no. 8 (2019): 54-74; OZSEZER, M. Sencer BULUT, and Ayten IFLAZOGLU SABAN. "An investigation on teacher candidates' perspectives about behaviors positively affecting classroom atmosphere." Eurasian Journal of Educational Research 16, no. 66 (2016): 139-158.

[34]Ahmeda, Ibrahim, Aswati Hamzah, and Melissa NLY Abdullah. "Effect of Emotionally Positive Classroom Atmosphere on Student Social-Emotional Competence." International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change, 12 (8) (2020): 320-339.

[35]Hill, Heather C., and Mark Chin. "Connections between teachers' knowledge of students, instruction, and achievement outcomes." American Educational Research Journal 55, no. 5 (2018): 1076-1112; Sadler, Philip M., Gerhard Sonnert, Harold P. Coyle, Nancy Cook-Smith, and Jaimie L. Miller. "The influence of teachers' knowledge on student learning in middle school physical science classrooms." American Educational Research Journal 50, no. 5 (2013): 1020-1049.

Islamic boarding school, knowing students by name is much more feasible than those studying in different schools.

T3-2 reiterated that:

We understand that it is not easy to know all students by their names, but it is worth striving to remember their names. This is because calling individual students' names will increase emotional attachment between students and teachers.

The teachers in both Islamic Modern Schools believe that remembering students' names is important to allow effective teaching to occur. There are ways that teachers can take to improve their memory of the students' names. For instance, the teachers may need to ask students to use their name tag for easy recognition, or at least the teachers could ask students to sit at the same seating for a couple of weeks.

d. Being an active teacher

The data from the FGDs reveals that all teachers agree that teacher and learners are both responsible for effective learning to take place. They state that the teachers cannot merely blame students for ineffective learning, since classroom instruction has been significant for effective learning.[36] They for T2-1 stated that:

I believe that if the teachers are active and effective, students will be triggered to be active too. For that reason, I am always trying to be very active, energetic and also creative. This I am sure will influence students' learning attitude.

When asked for some clarification, other teachers agree that this is very much the case. This is because in many instances, students lose their learning interest because of their teachers' ineffective instructional approaches. T4-2 added:

I agree with my other colleagues' opinion, it is indeed important that teachers engage in professional development. This enables them to be more creative and energetic in teaching, which in the end allows them to boost their students' learning motivation.

All teachers interviewed are in agreement that teachers should be taken responsible for effective classroom to take place.[37] Therefore, it is important to note that blame for ineffective teaching cannot be automatically born into students.

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[36]Cheung, Peggy. "Teachers as role models for physical activity: Are preschool children more active when their teachers are active?." European Physical Education Review 26, no. 1 (2020): 101-110.

[37]Aksela, Maija, and Outi Haatainen. "Project-based learning (PBL) in practise: Active teachers' views of its' advantages and challenges." Integrated Education for the Real World (2019).

e. Administered rewards and punishments

The other important way to encourage students' learning is through rewards and punishments. Rewards for good practices will boost students' energy and motivation to learn and participate actively in their learning. At the same time, punishments for lacked learning outcome will sometimes also open up the door for learning participation. T1-2 argued:

> I see rewards for good achievement is important. It does not have to be a big reward. The teachers for example could provide a small token of appreciation for students when they progress well. The punishments should not be a kind of corporal punishments. The teachers would perhaps choose a light punishment, in a form of giving extra assignment for students who are reluctant to engage in classroom participation.

This quote indicates that rewards and punishments are considered as the majority of the teachers as effective ways to encourage students' learning. It is important to note here that what we meant as the punishment is not necessarily to give physical pain, such as corporal punishment that would hurt someone physically or mentally.

Rewards and punishments are two important issues required for effective learning. However, these rewards and punishments are not meant to hurt them physically and mentally. These rewards and punishments should be more towards encouraging students to do their best in their learning.

f. Consistent Learning assessment

Assessment is one of the most important components. This is because assessment triggers students to learn better and get most of their potencies.[38] The data suggests that when students are regularly assessed for their learning, it will trigger them to participate in learning. The information from the FGDs indicates that teachers viewed assessment as important learning component. T3-2 for example stated:

> I could not imagine if the teachers in any way do not assess their students regularly. Students will not feel responsible for their learning if they are not   assessed for what they have learnt. This is because I believe that assessment   should be regularly implemented to students to keep them alert of what they have to review for their lesson

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[38]Cope, Bill, and Mary Kalantzis. "Big data comes to school: Implications for learning, assessment, and research." aera Open 2, no. 2 (2016): 2332858416641907; Tosuncuoglu, Irfan. "Importance of Assessment in ELT." Journal of Education and Training Studies 6, no. 9 (2018): 163-167.

The quote informs us that learning assessment is important to keep students learn best. Some of the students might feel reluctant to take the best out of themselves if they are not assessed for what they have learned.[39] This also suggests that learning participation can be encouraged through assessment.

There are two kinds of assessment appropriate to be implemented in the classroom: the formative and the summative assessment. The former tests students on the basis of day today classroom activities; while the latter is administered at the end of academic year, such as final examination at the end of school year.

3. Challenges in enhancing students' learning participations

Our interviews in the FGDs also reveal important messages on the challenges teachers face in encouraging classroom participation. The majority of the participants in the research agree that encouraging students' learning participation is challenging. Most of them believe that students' individual backgrounds; their previous educational backgrounds; and lack of learning facilities in their previous schools.

a. Students' individual differences

The majority of teachers interviewed in four FGDs believed that students' individual differences play major role in inhibiting teachers to activate students' learning interests. Some students tend to be passive and silent in the classroom, but not necessarily considered as low achievement students. Some of the students choose that attitude as they prefer to be quiet and only communicate if they feel it necessary. A teacher, T4-1for example stated:

> We as teachers should learn our students' individual differences; some of them may like to learn with partners in group, the group work. In the other instances, some students are lone fighters; they like to learn themselves in isolation, detaching themselves from their classmates. These individual differences sure are as challenging for teachers to encourage their students to learn.

This quote indicates that one of the challenges in encouraging students' participation is students' individual differences. Some of the students are quiet, some are

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[39]Boud, David. "Assessment and learning: contradictory or complementary?." In Assessment for learning in higher education, pp. 35-48. Routledge, 2012.

talkative, some individual learners, while other social learners. These differences inhibit teachers' effort in encouraging students to participate in classroom learning.[40]

Our FGD also suggest that some students indeed do not want to learn; they are not very motivated to be active and choose to be quiet. Therefore, this requires us as teachers to be active and work hard to ignite their motivation to participate and to learn.[41]

b. **Students' educational background**

In addition to students' individual differences, students' educational backgrounds also contribute to difficulties in encouraging students' participation.[42] One of the teachers in the FGD states that students in their boarding school come from many different types of school, and definitely they bring their own learning styles, as T2-1 said:

> Students at school come from multiple school backgrounds. Some of them come from very low-achieving schools, somewhere in remotes areas. While some thers were the graduate of high-achieving schools.

It is important to note that different levels of schools produce different types of students. For example, most students studying in high-achieving schools have been trained to work harder than those in low achieving schools. Most students graduated from those top schools learn differently; they are often very active, sometimes talkative, and in fact, they are most of the time assumed to be impolite.

On the other hand, students coming from low-achieving schools produce students with different attitudes. Research has revealed that students coming from low level schools tend to be quiet and switch off; they are not very active, since the instructional process they have gone through did not allow them to be active and critical in the classroom.[43]

For this reason, it is understandable if this issue were seen as contributing factors for teachers' challenges in making students active in class. Some of the teachers in the both boarding schools visited argued the fact that most of their students come from low achieving primary schools; that's why the teachers found it difficult to encourage

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[40]Kubat, Ulas. "Identifying the individual differences among students during learning and teaching process by science teachers." International Journal of Research in Education and Science 4, no. 1 (2018): 30-38.

[41]Eglington, Luke G., and Philip I. Pavlik Jr. "How to optimize student learning using student models that adapt rapidly to individual differences." International Journal of Artificial Intelligence in Education 33, no. 3 (2023): 497-518.

[42]Selvig, Daniel, Louisa W. Holaday, Joel Purkiss, and Michael Hortsch. "Correlating students' educational background, study habits, and resource usage with learning success in medical histology." Anatomical sciences education 8, no. 1 (2015): 1-11.

[43]Konstantopoulos, Spyros, and Geoffrey D. Borman. "Family background and school effects on student achievement: A multilevel analysis of the Coleman data." Teachers College Record 113, no. 1 (2011): 97-132.

students' learning participation. However, they also claimed that academic cultures played out in their particular boarding school stimulate learning participation. T3-1, for example said:

> Although most of our students graduated from surrounding schools considered as not good schools, when they come to us, they are able to adjust themselves to our programs, and as those programs we have transform these students rom quietness to become active students.

The quote informs that although some students in the two boarding schools come from many different schools, which may not be high-achieving schools, they are able to make them active using extra work and program. This suggests that these teachers need to do extra work to encourage students engage in active learning.

c. Lacked learning facilities

The findings of our FGD also suggest that lack of learning facilities limit the possibility to implement. One of the teachers states that it would be problematic to implement the progressive education or encourage learning participation without sufficient learning facilities.[44] It is important to note that learning facilities are important indeed to stimulate effective learning.

One of science teachers, T5-1 for example stated:

I am a chemistry teacher, in which I teach my students and plan to encourage their participation. However, I could not do much, since we do not have sufficient facilities in our school that support me to encourage students' participation. For example, we do not have enough facilities to do some experiment, since we do not have that fancy laboratories.

This suggests that teachers would find it challenging to encourage learning participation without sufficient learning facilities.[45] We indeed believe that while

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[44]Kingsley, Obasi Veronica. "Management of learning facilities." New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences 6, no. 7 (2019): 82-87; Eze, Sunday Chinedu, Vera Chinwendu Chinedu-Eze, and Adenike Oluyemi Bello. "The utilisation of e-learning facilities in the educational delivery system of Nigeria: a study of M-University." International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education 15, no. 1 (2018): 1-20;

[45]Firdausy, Ainun Rahma, Nining Setyaningsih, and Mohamad Waluyo. "The contribution of student activity and learning facilities to learning independency and it's impact on mathematics learning outcomes in junior high school." Indonesian Journal on Learning and Advanced Education (IJOLAE) 1, no. 2 (2019): 29-37; Frameiliada, Dila, Soni Setiawan, Tamara Azizah, and Kruger Margarida. "Learning Facilities in Supporting the Process Learning and Learning Motivation." Scientechno: Journal of Science and Technology 2, no. 2 (2023): 118-124; Sumadi, Conny Dian, Arif Hidayat, and Islamia Agustina. "Literature Study: Analysis of Learning Facilities in the Pandemic Era on the Effectiveness of Online Learning in Elementary School." Widyagogik: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran Sekolah Dasar 9, no. 2 (2022): 183-190; Zakaria, Z., E. Harahap, and Y.

qualified teachers are important, learning facilities also play big role in helping students learn effectively.

C. Conclusion

The research has identified key themes related to our inquiries on boarding schools' involvement in the instructional process, teachers' methods to promote student participation, difficulties in implementing learner-centered instruction, and teachers' efforts to enhance LCI in boarding schools. Learner-centered instruction is considered a crucial technique for delivering effective instruction. All these teachers concur that LCI provides more advantages. However, they also indicated that in certain cases, the LCI does not yield the anticipated good effects. The teachers in this study contended that pupils from specific primary education backgrounds lacked preparation for studying in the LCI setting. Some students in boarding schools are not accustomed to training that requires them to independently construct knowledge; they are used to being passive recipients of knowledge rather than actively seeking it. Some Indonesian systems, particularly in low-performing schools, have ingrained the role of knowledge receivers, which hinders the implementation of learner-centered instruction. Another significant finding from the FGDs is that some teachers believe that the LCI could potentially impact the academic performance of underperforming pupils during examinations. They contended that many students lack the ability to construct their own knowledge because they feel they do not receive enough guidance from their lecturers during class. The teachers said that the function of teachers remains crucial, and it is inconceivable that pupils could learn effectively without their presence. Furthermore, the research participants assert that LCI is becoming more popular in Indonesian educational settings, which contradicts prior claims that LCI is not suitable for Islamic boarding schools. The teachers involved in our research view LCI as a significant teaching method and it is expected to gain widespread popularity in the future. Nevertheless, they acknowledge that not all courses are suitable to be conducted via the LCI. However, this will not deter educational practitioners from implementing this instructional style. Recently, schools of various management and educational systems have recognized the importance of providing students with additional opportunities for self-expression to enhance learning.

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