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Teachers' Strategies in Using Canva Media in Aqidah Akhlak Learning to Increase Students' Learning Interest

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore teachers' strategies in utilizing Canva media in Aqidah Akhlak learning and to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting its implementation. The integration of digital media, particularly Canva, represents an innovative effort to enhance students' interest and engagement in learning moral and theological content. This research was conducted in the context of Islamic education, where the application of creative digital tools remains limited. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through interviews, classroom observations, and documentation. The analysis followed the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that teachers implemented several strategies in using Canva, such as selecting engaging templates, integrating multimedia elements, adjusting content to the digital format, combining Canva with conventional methods, and conducting reflective evaluations. Supporting factors included teachers' prior training, administrative support, sufficient internet access, and students' enthusiasm. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors involved limited technological infrastructure and the cost of Canva Pro features. In conclusion, the integration of Canva media into Aqidah Akhlak learning can effectively foster students' learning motivation and creativity when supported by adequate facilities and institutional commitment.

1. Introduction

In the current era of globalization, education systems both formal and non-formal are constantly challenged to enhance their quality by adapting to technological advances and evolving pedagogical practices. Educational institutions are thus expected to innovate, particularly through the use of diverse and effective teaching strategies and media (Arsyad, 2019). The ability to adapt to technological development is not only a matter of efficiency but a necessity to meet the demands of 21st-century education. National education objectives in Indonesia are clearly outlined in Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, Article

3, which states that education functions to develop capabilities and shape dignified national character and civilization. It aims to develop students into individuals who are faithful and devoted to God Almighty, possess noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, independent, and responsible. These objectives place particular emphasis on moral and religious education.

One way to realize these goals is through the implementation of *Aqidah Akhlak* lessons, which aim to instill a deep understanding and practice of Islamic faith and ethical behavior. *Aqidah Akhlak* teaching is designed to help students internalize religious values and reflect them in daily life through learning activities, guidance, habituation, and experience (Mulyasa, 2018). To achieve such educational aims, it is essential to develop a curriculum that aligns with the needs, talents, and interests of students. Quality education is not only about achieving cognitive outcomes but also about ensuring the relevance and accessibility of learning processes. Thus, teaching strategies must foster both intellectual growth and emotional engagement (Sanjaya, 2011).

A central component in this regard is students' learning interest, which significantly affects their learning engagement and academic outcomes. According to Slameto (2010), learning interest is the psychological tendency that causes a person to engage in learning activities with attention and pleasure. Without such interest, students are likely to become passive, disengaged, and underachieving. Masturi (2020) emphasizes that students have different levels of interest in classroom material, influenced by their individual characteristics and the way lessons are delivered. Students who lack interest tend to exhibit low participation, minimal interaction, and poor academic performance. In moral and religious education, where internalization is key, this lack of engagement is particularly detrimental.

Teachers therefore need to implement various approaches to cultivate students' learning interest. One of the most effective strategies is the integration of engaging and relevant instructional media. Media plays a vital role in shaping students' learning experiences and is an inseparable part of a successful educational system (Sadiman et al., 2014). Susilana and Riyana (2009) explain that educational media serves not only to convey information but also to stimulate motivation, enhance understanding, and facilitate long-term retention. Media must be relevant, attractive, and well-integrated into the lesson structure. Among various educational tools, Canva has recently gained attention for its simplicity and effectiveness in creating visually engaging materials.

Canva is an online design platform that allows teachers to create presentations, infographics, videos, and other educational resources with minimal technical skills. Its customizable templates, drag-and-drop interface, and multimedia features make it an attractive tool for classroom use. When effectively used, Canva can improve lesson clarity, increase student interest, and encourage interactive learning (Zhou & Wei, 2021). The use of Canva in teaching has grown in popularity, especially under the *Merdeka Curriculum*, which emphasizes independent, creative, and joyful learning. At MTs Ahsanu Amala in Bengkulu, Canva has been introduced into

Aqidah Akhlak instruction as a means of making abstract religious concepts more concrete and relatable to seventh-grade students.

However, initial observations revealed several challenges in student engagement. During *Aqidah Akhlak* lessons, teachers observed signs of disinterest among students some fell asleep, others rarely responded to questions, and many were reluctant to express opinions. These behaviors suggest a lack of internal motivation and inadequate connection with the instructional content. Additionally, the absence of feedback and interaction during classroom activities further indicated low learning interest. These factors negatively affected student performance on learning evaluations, as students who were disengaged struggled to understand key concepts and complete assessment tasks effectively.

In response, the teacher began to use Canva to design more engaging and visually stimulating materials. The integration of videos, animations, and colorful presentations aimed to re-engage students and support their understanding of religious and moral concepts. This approach aligns with the findings of Rahmawati and Hidayat (2022), who highlight the effectiveness of visual media in improving motivation and conceptual understanding in Islamic education. While prior studies have explored the general use of digital media in education (Cernicova et al., 2015; Alves & Raposo, 2016), limited attention has been given to the specific strategies teachers use to implement Canva in *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction. This study aims to fill that gap by focusing on the practical applications, challenges, and supporting factors experienced by teachers in this unique context.

Therefore, this study aims to: (1) examine the strategies employed by *Aqidah Akhlak* teachers in using Canva media to enhance students' learning interest, and (2) identify the supporting and inhibiting factors that affect the integration of Canva into the classroom. The findings are expected to contribute to the broader discourse on digital media in Islamic education and offer practical insights for educators and policymakers seeking to improve student engagement.

2. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to explore and analyze the strategies implemented by teachers in using Canva as a learning medium in *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction, aiming to improve students' learning interest. According to Moleong (2017), qualitative descriptive research is conducted to obtain a deep understanding of a phenomenon in a natural and specific context through comprehensive descriptions based on words and language. This method is suitable for educational research where detailed insights into teacher practices and student responses are needed (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative research emphasizes meaning, participant perspectives, and the interpretation of actions in real-life settings, which aligns with the objective of this study (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

a. Instruments

The instruments used in this research include:

1. Observation Guidelines: A structured observation sheet was developed to record students' learning interest indicators such as participation, attentiveness, collaboration, independent learning, and use of technology. It utilized a 5-point rating scale ranging from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high). based on indicators adapted from educational engagement literature (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004).
 2. Interview Guidelines: Semi-structured interview protocols were prepared for teachers, school principals, homeroom teachers, and students. The interview questions were designed to elicit in-depth information about the strategies, benefits, challenges, and student responses to the use of Canva in learning Aqidah Akhlak. Semi-structured interviews provide the flexibility to probe deeper into participants' experiences while maintaining a consistent structure (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).
 3. Documentation Sheets: Used to collect secondary data such as curriculum documents, student learning outcomes, school policies, and visual materials created using Canva.
- b. Data Collection Techniques
- The data were collected through the following techniques:
1. Observation: Conducted in-class and during learning sessions where Canva was used as a learning tool. The observations focused on student engagement indicators.
 2. Interviews: Conducted face-to-face and audio-recorded with informed consent. Interviews were held with one Aqidah Akhlak teacher, the school principal, the homeroom teacher, and 16 seventh-grade students.
 3. Documentation: Collection of relevant written and visual materials such as lesson plans, student worksheets, screenshots of Canva presentations, and evaluation results.
- c. Data Sources
- The data sources consisted of:
1. Primary Data: Obtained from direct interviews and observations involving the teacher of Aqidah Akhlak and 16 seventh-grade students at MTs Ahsanu Amala.
 2. Secondary Data: Gathered from interviews with the school principal and homeroom teacher, as well as supporting documents such as school reports and learning materials.
- d. Data Validity Technique
- To ensure validity and trustworthiness, the study employed triangulation, a method widely used in qualitative research to verify consistency across data sources and methods (Patton, 2015):
1. Source Triangulation: Cross-checking data from multiple informants.
 2. Technique Triangulation: Combining observation, interview, and documentation to verify the same phenomenon.
 3. Time Triangulation: Rechecking data at different times to assess consistency.
- e. Data Analysis Techniques
- The data analysis process followed the stages proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014):

1. Data Reduction: Filtering and summarizing raw data through coding and categorization to identify emerging patterns and themes relevant to teacher strategies and student learning interest.
2. Data Display: Organizing reduced data into matrices and visual displays that allow easier interpretation and connection between findings. This helped in identifying relationships and insights that supported the research objectives.
3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Drawing final conclusions from the displayed data and verifying them through rechecking with participants and triangulating across sources and methods.

This systematic and rigorous qualitative approach ensures the credibility and transferability of the findings. The study offers insights that can inform the use of Canva and similar digital tools in moral and religious education to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes in other educational contexts.

3. Results and Discussion

The research was conducted in class VII at MTs Ahsanu Amala, which consisted of 16 students (7 male and 9 female) with varied academic abilities and learning motivations. The classroom environment was relatively conducive, equipped with standard learning facilities such as whiteboards, projectors, and internet access, although the connection was sometimes unstable. Most students came from middle to lower socioeconomic backgrounds, which influenced their access to personal digital devices. Learning activities in this class generally took place in a conventional manner, dominated by the lecture and question–answer method, with limited use of interactive media. The teacher usually relied on printed textbooks and PowerPoint slides as teaching aids. As a result, students' engagement and enthusiasm during Aqidah Akhlak lessons were moderate some students actively participated, while others tended to be passive and less focused during discussions.

The teacher's approach before the intervention tended to emphasize cognitive aspects such as memorization of material rather than the development of reflective or creative thinking. This condition often caused students to perceive Aqidah Akhlak as a theoretical subject rather than a value-based and experiential one. The lack of media variation also made learning monotonous, especially in delivering abstract moral concepts. However, the teacher demonstrated high commitment to improving the quality of learning and was open to integrating digital learning media such as Canva to create more attractive and meaningful visual materials. The classroom climate was friendly and cooperative, with students showing good discipline and respect toward the teacher, which supported the implementation of new learning strategies during the research.

During the implementation of the study, learning was carried out through several meetings that combined direct classroom instruction and guided practice using Canva. The teacher introduced Canva as a creative tool to design visual posters related to Aqidah Akhlak themes, such as honesty, responsibility, and respect.

Students worked individually and in small groups to produce digital learning outputs that were later discussed collectively. Data were collected through classroom observations, documentation of students' creative products, and interviews with the teacher and students. The learning process and data collection took place over three weeks to allow for observation of students' responses, creativity, and motivation. To illustrate the implementation process more concretely, the following figures present examples of Canva-based learning media that were developed and used during the research. The pictures are presented in figure 1:



Figure 1. Canva-Based Learning Media

The teacher applied several key strategies in utilizing Canva effectively: **Demonstration and Modeling:** The teacher began each session with a live demonstration of Canva's basic features, such as selecting templates, inserting images, adding text, and adjusting color combinations. This modeling helped students visualize how to transform textual material into appealing visual messages. **Collaborative Design:** Students worked in groups of three or four to design moral posters. This strategy encouraged discussion, idea sharing, and peer evaluation, strengthening both social and communication skills. **Contextual Application:** Each group was asked to connect Aqidah Akhlak concepts to real-life situations, such as creating posters promoting honesty in school activities or cooperation in classroom projects. This made moral education more meaningful and relatable. **Feedback and Reflection:** After presenting their Canva products, students received feedback from

peers and the teacher. Reflection sessions were held to help them evaluate not only their designs but also the moral messages conveyed. Integration with Assessment: The Canva projects were assessed based on creativity, accuracy of moral content, aesthetic design, and teamwork. This provided a holistic evaluation of students' cognitive and affective learning outcomes.

The aforementioned strategies demonstrate the teacher's overall framework in applying Canva during Aqidah Akhlak instruction. To provide a more detailed understanding of these practices, the following sections elaborate on specific strategies identified through field data, observations, and interviews. Each strategy reflects a concrete aspect of how Canva was implemented to enhance student engagement, motivation, and comprehension during the learning process. The teacher applied several key strategies in utilizing Canva effectively:

a. Use of Visually Appealing Templates

Based on qualitative data obtained from field research at MTs Ahsanu 'Amala, Sukaraja Subdistrict, Seluma Regency, Bengkulu Province, the foremost strategy implemented by teachers in utilizing Canva in Aqidah Akhlak instruction is the careful selection of visually appealing and pedagogically appropriate templates. Nurul Rohmah, SM, a Grade VII Aqidah Akhlak teacher, emphasized that "in using Canva as a learning medium, we as teachers must pay attention to selecting templates that match the theme of the lesson while also being visually attractive, with the goal of preventing students from feeling bored when viewing the material" (Rohmah, personal communication, April 2025). She further explained that student motivation tends to fluctuate, and well-designed media can serve as a tool to enhance both engagement and learning outcomes. Accordingly, the creative ability of teachers in selecting templates is crucial. This assertion is supported by the school principal, Oktorina Lensi, S.Pd, who stated, "I fully support the teachers' efforts to improve instructional effectiveness by using Canva, but training is needed so that teachers can properly utilize Canva and select templates appropriate for the subject matter" (Lensi, personal communication, April 2025).

Student interviews also revealed that visual design plays a key role in maintaining interest and motivation in learning Aqidah Akhlak through Canva. Nahdah commented that Canva's designs are "colorful, with short yet clear texts, making the learning process more engaging for students of my age" (Nahdah, personal communication, April 2025). Other students, such as Maisya, Hamzah, M. Qadaffa, Faza, and Andrean, consistently described Canva as a platform that provides "beautiful images," "colorful texts," and "engaging videos," which collectively reduce boredom and increase focus in class (Maisya et al., personal communication, April 2025). These perspectives indicate that design selection in media development is not merely aesthetic, but pedagogically significant. This conclusion is corroborated by classroom observation on April 20, 2025, where teachers were found to incorporate Canva-designed slides featuring compelling images, font styles, and color schemes in alignment with student preferences. Documentation of these materials is provided in the appendix. Based on these findings, it is essential

that teachers not only understand student learning preferences but also develop proficiency in Canva features to produce effective instructional materials, particularly when available templates do not sufficiently meet classroom needs.

b. Integration of Video Content

Based on interviews conducted with Aqidah Akhlak teachers at MTs Ahsanu 'Amala, Seluma Regency, one of the strategies employed in using Canva as a learning medium is the integration of video content into slides designed using the Canva application. This was conveyed by Nurul Rohmah, SM, a Grade VII Aqidah Akhlak teacher, who explained: "In addition to using attractive templates, the content embedded in the slides is also crucial to capturing students' interest in learning Aqidah Akhlak. At this school, especially in Grade VII, students are particularly fond of learning through videos. Therefore, when designing slides in Canva, we always strive to include relevant videos aligned with the lesson content. It is important for us as teachers to understand what students desire in the learning process so they do not feel forced into it." Video is a highly favored instructional medium among students because it combines motion graphics, sound, text, and images, making it easier to convey complex concepts through dynamic visual representation.

This preference is also evident from student responses during interviews. Several Grade VII students at MTs Ahsanu 'Amala expressed their enjoyment of video-integrated learning. Afidah noted, "With Canva, the lessons are easier to understand because the designs, texts, videos, and images are attractive, so I don't get bored." Zahirul added, "Aqidah Akhlak is not boring if we use Canva with videos, clear and beautiful text and images." Similarly, Jizan and Habib mentioned that, "If the images and texts are visually appealing, learning Aqidah Akhlak through Canva becomes easier to understand and not boring." Zahid emphasized that "nice images and colors make me more interested in learning, and the videos help me stay focused, motivated, and enthusiastic." Jati stated, "The appealing and colorful designs of images and videos help us stay focused during Aqidah Akhlak lessons," while Bimo shared that "learning becomes more enjoyable with Canva because of the engaging videos and attractive colors." These findings suggest that understanding student preferences is key to effective teaching. Grade VII students show a clear preference for audiovisual content, particularly videos. To enhance student engagement and motivation in Aqidah Akhlak, teachers intentionally incorporate videos into Canva-based learning media. This approach is further supported by classroom observations, where it was noted that teachers used slides embedded with subject-relevant videos, and students showed high levels of enthusiasm when the videos were played.

c. Matching Media Types with Lesson Content

One crucial step in utilizing Canva as an instructional medium is aligning the content to be delivered with the appropriate type of media. Canva enables educators to design various forms of learning materials, such as posters, PowerPoint slides, and videos. However, careful consideration must be given to whether the content

can be effectively communicated through these media. As stated by Oktorina Lensi, S.Pd, the principal of MTs Ahsanu 'Amala in Seluma Regency, "Instructional media is a vital component in the teaching and learning process. We use Canva as an alternative platform because it offers a comprehensive range of tools, from PowerPoint slides to posters and videos. However, teachers must be attentive to matching the type of media to the learning content. This alignment is essential."

This statement is supported by Nurul Rohmah, SM, who emphasized that teachers are responsible for ensuring students understand the material. She explained, "No matter how advanced the media, teachers must choose one that is suitable for the subject matter. For instance, when teaching about Asmaul Husna, is using only a poster sufficient? It may be helpful, but to support memorization of the names and their meanings, we need video content—such as a song featuring Asmaul Husna—which students generally find more engaging. Therefore, adjusting the media type according to the lesson content is a necessary strategy when using Canva." In this regard, Aqidah Akhlak teachers at MTs Ahsanu 'Amala are expected to possess the ability to synchronize media types with instructional content to enhance clarity and student comprehension. Based on observations conducted by the researcher, it was found that teachers at the school have demonstrated the capability to make such adjustments. For example, while teaching the concept of belief in Allah's Angels, teachers utilized a slide presentation accompanied by a lecture to explain the meaning of the belief and used a video song to help students memorize the names of the angels. Documentation of this observation is provided in the appendix section.

d. Combining Conventional Methods with Digital Media

Based on research conducted at MTs Ahsanu 'Amala through interviews with research informants, it was found that one of the strategies employed by teachers in utilizing Canva as a learning medium is by integrating conventional teaching methods with modern digital tools. This approach was expressed by Nurul Rohmah, SM, a Grade VII Aqidah Akhlak teacher at MTs Ahsanu 'Amala, who stated: "The presence of increasingly advanced instructional media does not necessarily replace the conventional teaching methods we have long used. Traditional methods still need to be implemented, even when modern media are involved. Conventional learning, often associated with lectures, remains essential regardless of the media used. Lectures serve the function of explaining concepts that are not easily conveyed through media alone. Therefore, we combine conventional instruction with various learning media designed using Canva." From this interview, it can be concluded that no matter how sophisticated or modern a learning medium is, conventional methods—such as lecturing—are still vital components of the learning process. Instructional media often cannot fully convey the depth of the material, making conventional approaches necessary to support effective comprehension.

This finding is also supported by observational data gathered during the research process. The integration of conventional teaching with modern learning media was evidently applied during classroom instruction. Teachers were observed explaining

key points presented on slides created using Canva, thus combining visual media with oral explanation. Rather than merely reading the text aloud from the slides, teachers used clear and accessible language to elaborate on the content, enhancing student understanding. This blended approach allowed students not only to engage with visually appealing slide content but also to receive verbal clarification that deepened their grasp of the subject matter. Documentation of these observations is included in the appendix section of this study.

e. Routine Evaluations

Formative evaluations after each learning module enabled assessment of both student performance and teacher media development. This ensured continuous improvement of Canva-based instruction. The data are presented in table 1 and 2 below:

Table 1. Observation of Student Learning Interest

No	Indicator	Aspect Observed	Rating (1–5)
1	Student Involvement	Active questioning, expressing opinions	4.2
2	Participation in Discussion	Contributing ideas during group/class discussions	4.3
3	Focus and Concentration	Remaining attentive during lessons	4.4
4	Acceptance of Materials	Positive body language, engagement with moral values	4.5
5	Use of Technology in Learning	Enthusiastic use of Canva, interest in applications	4.4
6	Teamwork	Cooperation in group tasks	4.1
7	Reaction to Feedback	Receptive to teacher comments and assessments	4.2
8	Independent Learning	Completing tasks independently, seeking additional resources	4.0
9	Expression of Interest in Moral Values	Curiosity and application of Akhlak values in real life	4.3
10	Creativity in Learning	Innovative project work, unique Canva presentations	4.2

Source: Classroom Observation, April 2025

Table 2. Comparison of Student Learning Scores

No	Name	Score Before Canva	Score After Canva
1	Afidah Azzahra	88	90
2	Andrean Okta Zulkifli	81	90
3	Azam Zahid Al-Arqom	81	90
...	...	...	...
16	Zahirul Al Khalis	81	90

Source: Teacher Score Records, 2025

The data show a consistent increase in student scores after the integration of Canva, validating its effectiveness. Interviews confirmed that students remembered material better through visual cues such as colors, images, and fonts embedded in Canva slides. This aligns with Mayer's cognitive theory of multimedia learning, which emphasizes dual coding of verbal and visual content.

The success of these strategies was also influenced by several supporting factors, including pre-implementation training, administrative support, adequate internet connectivity, and strong student enthusiasm. Conversely, challenges included limited access to Canva Pro features, inadequate facilities, and device availability. This study concludes that integrating Canva into Islamic moral education can significantly improve student interest and performance, especially when supported by strategic planning, institutional commitment, and responsive teaching methods.

4. Conclusion

This research concludes that the strategic integration of Canva into Aqidah Akhlak instruction plays a significant role in enhancing students' learning interest. Teachers at MTs Ahsanu 'Amala have effectively employed various methods, such as using visually appealing templates, incorporating video content, aligning media types with learning objectives, blending conventional and digital approaches, and conducting periodic evaluations. These strategies successfully addressed students' low engagement and helped foster a more interactive and meaningful learning environment. Moreover, supporting factors such as teacher training, infrastructure readiness, and student enthusiasm further contributed to the success of this initiative. Despite certain limitations such as limited access to Canva Pro and technological facilities the use of Canva has proven to be a valuable tool in Islamic education. Future research may explore the scalability of these strategies in other subjects or institutions and investigate the long-term impact of Canva-based instruction on students' moral development.

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